A QUALITATIVE REPORT OF SPORT FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

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Abstract: This qualitative report aims to explore the management of sports facilities from the perspective of facility managers. The study utilizes a qualitative research approach and specific interviews with five facility managers from various sports facilities. The interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns in the managers’ responses. The findings of this study suggest that effective management of sports facilities requires a multidisciplinary approach, involving aspects of business, marketing, and facility operations. The managers identified key challenges in managing sports facilities, such as limited funding, maintenance issues, and changing technology. The study also highlighted the importance of effective communication between facility managers, staff, and stakeholders in maintaining and improving sports facilities. The study contributes to the growing body of literature on sports facility management by providing insight into the perspectives and experiences of facility managers. The findings can inform future research and assist in developing strategies for improving the management of sports facilities. Ultimately, this report aims to promote effective management practices that enhance the user experience and promote the value of sports facilities in the community.

Keywords: Qualitative; Management; Sports Facilities; Thematic Analysis; Value of Sports Facilities.
INTRODUCTION

Facility management is the process of planning, administering, coordinating, and evaluating the day-to-day operations of a facility (Janet B Parks B & Zanger, Beverly R.K-1998). These duties encompass a wide array of responsibilities, including marketing the facility, promoting facility events, facility maintenance, and hiring and firing facility personnel. Most sports facilities are managed by a personal manager or personal director. Directors are ultimately responsible for facility planning and administration. Often the director is appointed or hired by the city, so many of his or her duties will be political in nature. An additional duty will be negotiating major contracts about the facility, sometimes including events being scheduled in the facility.

Some studies have related the level of population physical activity with the sports facility location, indicating that places closer to the physical and sports facilities have a more active population. Sports facilities development and optimization of their use have been one of the main objectives of sports organizations to reach the goals concerning the sport, in particular the one of increasing the access contemplating the practices diversity.

Sport facility operations seek to maintain and care for public, private, and non-profit facilities used for sport, recreation, and leisure to ensure safe and secure production and distribution of products and services to users and ensure their satisfaction and utility (Eric, et al., 2009). The operations are either under the government or the sports authorities which have no interference from the government and have more resources to enhance the management activities (Megheirkouni, 2017). The manager responsible for the operations must oversee other members of the management team including marketing, facility planning, customer service, maintenance services, operations, and sales (Schwarz, et al., 2015). The dimension of technology as applied in sports facilities management is used in enhancing the value of facilities and acts as a surface for smooth operations or processes that account for a smooth interaction of people and place.

This paperwork focuses on two managers assigned to a facility management position and tried to assess how much they are performing their duties and also tried to compare each other.

Literature review

Facility management (FM) as an industry has emerged as one of the fastest-growing sectors over the years. However, the scope and identity of FM are still unclear as evidenced by the definitions and issues that attempt to describe its scope. FM is a multi-disciplinary kind of work that covers a wide range of various activities, responsibilities, and knowledge. What is more interesting, every aspect of an organization seems to be drawn into FM.

If the building is said to be one of the important things in real estate, facilities management is part of the management of the building that needs to be emphasized by the management body. One of the facilities management objectives is to reduce maintenance costs while maintaining quality or the quality of
facilities provided.

Management of sports infrastructure refers to the management of sports facilities which are areas with sports functionality where people gather for physical exercise, participate in athletic competitions, or watch sporting events. In other words, sports facilities involve individual buildings or groups of structures designed for exercising, sports training and practice, and competition in various sports. Several sports facilities are deemed to be involved including a stadium, arena, gymnasium, rinks, outdoor fields, pools, and supporting facilities. This research specifically addresses stadia management where stadia is the plurality word that refers to more than one stadium. According to Webster’s dictionary stadia is defined as “a large usually unroofed building with tiers of seats for spectators at sports events”. Stadium is described as the home of sports (Megheirkouni, 2017) which means the built environment includes sports facilities.

The emergence of contemporary forms of sports facilities is conditioned by their purpose and increased interest of the public, while architectural forms drop regional attributes and types, gaining a universal shape. Sports facilities become a reflection of the unique culture and technology of construction, and they are often observed separately from the building type of their environment by creating unique units, Olympic villages, sports-entertainment complexes, etc. (Farmer, Mulrooney, Ammon, 1996). Sports facilities built today are mostly of closed type, while the open type of construction is still used only in the case of hippodromes, ski jump ramps, and stadiums (but even more and more of them are constructed as semi-closed or closed). Stadiums gather the highest numbers of sports audiences, which is why these facilities get proportionally more attention from the media and public.

The Stadium and the City: Sports Infrastructure in late imperial Ethiopia and Beyond

The inauguration of the Haile Selassiel Stadium in Addis Ababa in 1947 marked the beginning of the construction of stadiums in Ethiopia. They became important signifiers of accelerated modernization after the end of the Italian occupation (1935 – 1941). Quite similar to developments elsewhere, open fields were turned into formalized sports infrastructures. Already in the 1930s, stadiums had become essential elements of modern town planning in Ethiopia. Later, political officials, town planners, and sports enthusiasts endowed them with specific meanings, involving ideas of progress, effective representation of political power, and ‘useful recreation.

Without any doubt, football was one of the main drivers for stadium construction, but it did not represent their sole purpose. Stadiums and sports centers became essential elements of modern town planning. Their construction was invested with specific meanings and expectations. These expectations involved particular notions of ‘useful’ (as well as ‘harmful’) recreation. Stadiums, as part of a rapidly transforming urban sport structure, were inculcated and manifested specific ideas of progress in a period called “Ethiopian modernity”. This period is
especially associated with Ras Teferi, later Emperor Haile Selassie, whose name the first Ethiopian stadium took. The Sport

The policy of Ethiopia declared in 1998, underlines the importance of developing public sports and recreational facilities to the community for enhancing mass participation. However, after 20 years of its implementation, residents in Addis Ababa still play ball games in derelict areas and complain about the scarcity of physical activity resources.

Performance indicators

The performance indicators are a management support tool that allows for defining and monitoring the evolution and performance of a service according to defined objectives. There are some fundamental characteristics in the indicators, namely, being relevant and in line with the organization's strategy and being representative of its operational performance, so, the better the performance of the building the better will the contribution to the organization's success. The data of a performance indicators system should be measurable and object to an easy reading allowing crossing with the reference levels (Parmenter, 2010). Despite the mentioned advantages of this system, the establishment of a model based only on indicators may lead to a narrow vision of the business and restrict the potential growth and evolution of the service. It is a useful tool but should be inserted into an overall business philosophy.

Standard 15221 – 3 (CEN, 2011) refers that performance indicators that may be defined as objective–hard (physical, temporal, functional, financial) or subjective–soft (sensory, behavioral, ergonomics). The hard performance indicators are not subjects or don't depend on individual interpretation. They're clear and objective, reflecting the attitudes of users towards the building. The soft indicators reflect subjective characteristics of needs and perceptions of users, normally measured through surveys, wanting to predict the level of satisfaction and identify problems still in an early stage making them possible to correct. These indicators can be used in the three levels of management, depending on the wanted degree of precision and evaluation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

Since these studies are used to investigate and understand a particular issue or topic area. Exploratory surveys were used. The design is mostly qualitative in nature, seeking input from respondents with interview questions focused on why and/or how they perceive and practice certain aspects of the facility management system and practice.

Participants of the study

This research utilizes qualitative data captured from in-depth semi-structured interviews of sports facilities managers (N=2). A purposive sampling approach was utilized to select sports facilities managers (N=2). A semi-structured approach offered flexibility for the researcher to ensure a conversational discussion to build rapport and address topics as they emerge (Cargan, 2007; Parnell et al., 2014; Walker
& Hayton, 2017). The approach adopted allowed the researcher to build familiarization with the participant, and bring clarity about roles and responsibilities during the initial phases of the semi-structured interview.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Semi-structured interview

1. What are the Roles and responsibilities in your institution?

FM is responsible for coordinating all efforts related to planning, designing, and managing buildings and their systems, equipment, and furniture to enhance the organization’s ability to compete successfully in a rapidly changing world.

Facility management has been adapted more within organizations. It has become a part of their governance structure because the primary function is to support the core process and meet the needs of an organization and its employees.

FM is a key function in managing facility resources, support services, and working environment to support the core business of the organization in both the long- and short-term.

They believe a facility manager’s most important role is to ensure all needs are being met for the employees to ensure maximum efficiency and profit for the company.

That includes a safe, stable environment, functional equipment, and adequate training in the facility’s machinery and technology.

They are overseeing and agree on contracts and providers for services including preparing the strategic and yearly plan, purchasing plan with specification, and supervising multidisciplinary teams of staff (especially the southern youth and sports office facility management director this much wide control the activity of the team), maintenance, grounds, and security.

2. How can the facility management structure be measured?

A manager of an organization has the intention to adjust the structure of an organization to his employees and resources in a way that goals can be reached. There the goals of external and internal stakeholders can be realized.

3. In what ways would you push to improve the workplace experience?

They think the culture here is one of the strongest features of the company, and I want to make sure that overall working conditions are up to par.

They would like to evaluate the technological needs and make sure that we are using updated equipment and ensuring that employees are properly trained and up-skilled if necessary, so they can work in tandem with the devices.

They also want to review the safety protocols and see if employees have concerns that might indicate areas of improvement or lapses in disability resources. I want my team to feel safe and comfortable at work.

What is your motivation to be the best facilities manager you can be?

They want to be successful at their job, and they’ve always been motivated by the challenge of solving problems and
finishing projects on time. Being thorough and producing quality work is a point of personal pride for me.

How do you stay up to date on the latest trends in facility management?
They regularly attend meetings and network with other professionals in the region to learn about what other managers are doing at their facilities. They also enjoy listening to podcasts about the topics on their way to and from work. I love hearing about cutting-edge solutions and thinking about how new methods and ideas can improve my facilities.

In your opinion, how does facility management impact company goals?
They believe if a company is going to operate like a well-oiled machine and maximize profits, it needs to have the right tools and workspace so employees can do their best work. That includes utilizing technology in a way that can optimize workflow without breaking the budget.

Regular inspections and maintenance can prolong the life span of equipment and prevent interruptions. In my opinion, the functionality and cleanliness of a company’s facilities are a direct reflection of the quality of the company.

CONCLUSIONS
FM has come a long way to establish itself as a new business opportunity, particularly with the advancement in IT operations, commercial buildings, and gated community residential buildings. With the advancement in technology, international competition, and tight budgetary control every organization wants to concentrate only on core business activities today. That allows FM business to grow by leaps and bounds. It also calls for seasoned professionals with both technical and soft skills coupled with the right attitude for making the business areas more users friendly and likable by the premise occupants.

REFERENCES


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