

## Social Environmental Determinants of Success in African Football Governance: A Case Study of CAF

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### ABSTRACT

The organizational operations of sports governing bodies are increasingly influenced by a variety of social environmental factors, particularly in the context of African football. This study examines the Confederation of African Football (CAF) as a case study to explore how globalization, organizational structure, culture, and policy serve as determinants of success in football governance. A descriptive survey research design of correlational type was used for this study. 72 selected participants who are members of the football body and have organized at least one CAF competition were drawn as samples using total enumeration and snowball sampling techniques. A validated and structured questionnaire of Social Environmental Factors Scale (SEFS) with a reliability index of 0.87 and Football Organizational Operations Scale (FOOS) with a reliability index of 0.77 was used as instrument for data collection. Data collected was analyzed using inferential statistics of multiple regressions. The results indicated that globalization, organizational structure, organizational culture, and policy were jointly significant to the organizational operations of CAF during its competitions. However, when considering the relative contributions, policy was the only factor that was significantly and positively correlated with the organizational operations of CAF during its competitions. At the end of the study, it was concluded that globalization, organizational structure, organizational culture, and policy are important social environmental factors that influence the organizational operations of CAF. However, policy stood out as the most critical factor ensuring the effective and efficient organization of CAF competitions, while the other factors (globalization, organizational structure, and organizational culture) did not show significant individual contributions in this study. The study recommended, among others, that CAF should prioritize the enactment of comprehensive policies to enhance their operational performance while also ensuring they strengthen the organizational culture, structure and global aspects of its operations.

**Keywords:** sports management, social environmental factors, organizational operations, competitions, policy, CAF.

### INTRODUCTION

Confederation of African Football (CAF) is globally recognized as the governing body for football in Africa, and it runs club, national, and continental competitions (Ngwafu & Ayuk, 2022). CAF is the biggest of the six continental confederations of the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and has 54 member associations. (Historical Dictionary of Soccer, 2011). CAF, as an organization, organizes competitions with the help of effective management to produce an outcome that enables it to meet its objectives. Effective sports management is an important factor associated with organizational operations. According to Chase et al. (2007), operations produce a product, manage quality, and create services. It is one of the major functions in an organization, along with supply chains, marketing, finance, and human resources. The operations function requires the management of both the strategic and day-to-day activities of the organization.

Deslandes (2014) defined management as a vulnerable force, under pressure to achieve results and endowed with the triple power of constraint, limitation, and imagination, operating on subjective, interpersonal, institutional, and environmental levels. Management is the coordination of human, material, technological, and financial resources needed for the organization to achieve its goals. It is also seen as responsibility for performance (Daniel et al., 2007). Therefore, management is the process through which the whole activities of an organization are planned, organized, directed, and controlled for the aim of achieving its stated goals and objectives. The effectiveness and efficiency of the management of an organization are geared towards the proper allocation of resources with a deep understanding of its mission and vision. Irrespective of the knowledge of management applied in an

organization, most organizations still face managerial challenges within their environment. Things are rapidly changing in the world we are in today. Therefore, operations, strategies, procedures, and policies need to follow the trend of change, especially in sports organizations.

However, there are certain social environmental factors (globalization, policy, organizational structure and culture) that influence the operations of sports organizations and these factors must be properly managed to ensure the optimum growth of the organization. Globalization has significantly influenced the production and consumption of sports (Hoye et al., 2018; Orunbayev, 2023). The improved integration of global economies has facilitated faster and more diverse communication between producers and consumers, with the sports industry being one of the beneficiaries (Hoye et al., 2018). Sports organizations in Africa are gradually becoming more global in every aspect, such as the media, marketing, and sponsorship. Lizandra and Gladden (2005) identified five ways for sports organizations to expand internationally: broadcasting, licensing and merchandising, playing exhibitions and formal competitions, the marketing of foreign athletes, and grassroots programs. Globalization has transformed the world of football, making it a business venture in which sports organizations such as CAF and FIFA organize competitions within and outside Africa for football fans around the world.

Jacobides (2007) considered organizational structure as the viewing glass or perspective through which individuals see their organization and its environment. Organizations that face changes internally and externally (e.g., market share, customer taste, technology) have to alter their structures to adapt to the new conditions (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967). Therefore, Lim (2017) stated that organizations need to be efficient, flexible, innovative, and caring in order to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage. According to Needle (2004), organizational culture is the sum of the values, beliefs, and principles of all members of the organization and is influenced by a variety of factors, including history, product, market, technology, strategy, employee type, management style, and national culture. It encompasses the organization's vision, values, norms, systems, symbols, language, assumptions, environment, beliefs, and habits (Tara & Theresa, 2018). Ravasi & Schultz (2006) established that organizational culture is a set of shared assumptions that guide what happens in organizations by defining appropriate behaviour for diverse situations. In addition, Abu-Jarad et al. (2010) stated that organizational culture affects various employees and organization related outcomes. Policy, which is seen as a social environmental factor, has been defined as a definitive course of action selected from various alternatives to guide and determine present and future decisions (Parkhouse, 1996). Policies are established based on mission statements, which should serve as the foundation for all operational procedures (Chrispen et al., 2010). According to Parkhouse (1996), policy constitutes the rationale behind organization's decision to function in a specific manner. The formulation of policies is crucial for the effective functioning of any sports organization.

Football is the most-watched sport globally, with five billion fans (FIFA, 2021). Africa, with a population of over 1.5 billion, is the second-most populous continent after Asia. The Confederation of African Football (CAF) is the largest of the six continental confederations of FIFA, with 54 member associations. The UEFA Champions League is well-organized, drawing 360 million viewers. However, CAF has not studied its social environmental to maximize their success. The 2019 CAF Champions League match between Esperance de Tunis and Wydad Casablanca highlighted the need for better organization. Stadia used for CAF competitions do not meet FIFA standards to host games, and globalization has shifted local football fans to European and American leagues. This study aims to examine CAF organizational operations through the lens of social environmental factors to move the football body toward organizing competitions effectively and efficiently. The following two hypotheses were tested in this study:

1. There will be no significant joint contribution of social environmental factors of globalization, organizational structure, organizational culture, and policy on organizational operations of the Confederation of African Football during its competitions.
2. There will be no significant relative contribution of social environmental factors of globalization, organizational structure, organizational culture, and policy on the organizational operations of the Confederation of African Football during its competitions.

## **Literature Review**

### **Globalization in football**

In contemporary society, the sports industry has increasingly grown commercialized and globalized over the years (Kenneth, 2013). Kenneth (2013) asserts that sports play a more substantial role in society and have a broader global appeal, and mega sports events such as the FIFA World Cup attract some of the largest media audiences. McLuhan (1994) describes globalization with the term 'global village,' and this is achieved through electronic technology and the speed at which information is disseminated. The dissemination and allocation of information are elements that have influenced the contemporary sports organization, wherein individual athletes, professional teams, sporting events, and other stakeholders encounter enhanced potential to achieve global reach (Kenneth, 2013).

FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) data indicates that the FIFA World Cup in Korea and Japan set a record of 49.2 billion global viewers for a sporting event. The 2002 Final between Brazil and Germany holds the record as the most-watched match in FIFA World Cup history, with an audience of 1.1 billion viewers and televised in 213 countries globally (Wikiwand, 2002). Football has unequivocally surpassed other team sports, securing its position as the preeminent sport in terms of media exposure and global audience engagement (Horne & Manzenreiter 2002).

### **Organizational Culture and Structure**

Organizational culture and structure within the framework of organizational theory have been examined by both social scientists and sport management scholars as a perspective in organizational theory over the past decades (Ouchi & Wilkins, 1985; Girginov, 2014; Garmamo et al., 2024). The origin of organizational culture from a national culture point of view is based, among others, on the work of Deal & Kennedy (1982). The modern interest in organizational culture originates from four main sources: climate research, national cultures, human resource management, and conviction approaches that emphasize the rational and structural nature of the organization, which fail to provide an in-depth understanding of organizational behaviour (Brown, 1998).

Organizational culture is a comprehensive framework to understand the beliefs and attitudes of people regarding their organizations (Brown, 1998). Martins & Martins (2003) argue that while changing an organization's culture can be extremely challenging, it is still achievable. On the other hand, O'Reilly et al. (1991) suggests that we can transform or manage organizational culture by choosing the necessary attitudes and behaviours, recognizing the norms that support or hinder them, and then taking action to achieve the desired result. According to Brown (1998), the strength of culture lies in its ability to be highly successful in environments where the market is competitive, product life spans are short, and constant innovation is necessary. Consequently, organizational culture is considered the ideal "cure-all" for most organizational problems (Wilson, 1992).

Organizational structure is defined as a framework describing the relationships across various roles, systems, operational processes, and people or groups working towards achieving organizational objectives (Daft, 2000). After the organizational goal, the organizational structure is one of the most significant dimensions of an organization (Powell, 2002). It indicates the levels within the formal hierarchy and defines the level of power for supervisors and managers (Shoghi & Nazari, 2012). Different organizations apply different structures based on their unique conditions, with the most effective structure being one that adapts to the demands of the environment (Gresov & Drazin, 2007).

### **Policy**

Policies can be found in the form of official legislation or the guidelines that govern how laws should be put into operation (Ken & Edwin, 2007). Organizational policies establish the rules of conduct within an organization, outlining the responsibilities of both employees and employers. Russell et al. (2012) reported that the enactment of policies to support, control, and regulate the activities of sports organizations eventually led to economic and social development. Therefore, as seen in western countries, the focus of sports policies should be on enhancing elite sports performance and increasing the proportion of people involved in formalized competitive sport (Stewart et al., 2004; Green & Houlihan, 2005; Bergsgard et al., 2007). Bucher & Krotee (2002) pointed out that efficient management of sport requires the establishment of sound policies if it is to achieve its goals. Policies function as a definitive framework outlining the operational procedures and conduct of operations within sports organizations. According to Donnelly et al. (1984), an effective policy must possess the attributes of flexibility, comprehensiveness, coordination, ethicality, and clarity to achieve its objectives. If the policy fails to meet its objectives, it should be amended, and policies should be evaluated often.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Institutional Theories**

Institutional theories provide a framework for understanding how organizations operate within a larger social context. Institutional theorists (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, 1983; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Zucker, 1988; Tolbert & Zucker, 1996) suggest that organizations frequently implement changes in their formal structure to align with "rationalized myths" (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Schmid, 2004). Institutional theories propose that organizations adopt reasonable practices and procedures that adapt to their environment. For instance, organizations adopt work strategies and methods that align with their institutional environment, securing essential resources for their survival (Schmid, 2004).

#### **Contingency theory**

Lawrence and Lorsch first introduced contingency theory in the context of organizational structure in 1967 (Donaldson, 2001). It describes and provides a framework for the relationship among organizational structures, environmental variables, and the actual performance metrics of an organization (Luthans & Stewart, 1978). Contingency theory is "a way of finding a fit between

organizations and contingency factors in the external environment and provides an important paradigm for analyzing organizational structure” (Schmid, 2004). Organizations are individually different, face different situations, and require different ways of managing (Donaldson, 1996). Organizations that align with the contextual characteristics of their environment are more likely to achieve high performance levels and also have greater chances of survival compared to those that do not (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Thompson, 1967; Schmid, 2004).

**Methodology**

**Study Design**

A descriptive survey research design of correlational type was used for this study. This design was considered appropriate as it helps to describe, explain, analyze and interpret the variables to be studied. This design of correlational type is suitable for use because it involves no manipulation of variables (Thomas et al., 2015). Information was collected on dependent and independent variables in order to examine the influence of sports management environmental factors on organizational operations of CAF during its competition.

**Participants**

The participants for this study comprised those who have once or more been involved in the organization of any CAF competition. Seventy-two (72) participants were used as samples. A total enumeration sampling technique was used to select the respondents who had once or more been involved in organizing any CAF competitions. Also, the use of the snowball sampling technique was involved in this study because it is a chain-referral sampling whereby one respondent was able to refer the researcher to another respondent who had been involved in organizing one or more CAF competitions.

**Research Instrument**

A self-structured questionnaire of the Social Environmental Factors Scale (SEFS) and the Football Organizational Operations Scale (FOOS) was used for data collection. To ensure the validity of the instrument, copies of the questionnaire were presented to experts in the field for content and construct validation to ensure that the instrument has all the necessary psychometric properties to measure what it is supposed to measure. A reliability index of  $r=0.87$  for SEFS and  $r=0.77$  for FOOS was obtained for the instrument using Cronbach Alpha. The questionnaire had three sections: A, B, and C. Section A elicited information on the demographic characteristics of the participants. Section B gathered information on the Social Environmental Factors Scale (SEFS), while Section C collected information on the dependent variable of the Football Organizational Operations Scale (FOOS). The collected data were analyzed using inferential statistics of multiple regressions to test hypotheses.

**Results**

**Hypothesis One:** There will be no significant joint contribution of social environmental factors of globalization, organizational structure, organizational culture, and policy on organizational operations of the Confederation of African Football during its competitions.

**Table 1: Multiple regression showing the joint contribution of social environmental factors (globalization, organizational structure, organizational culture, and policy) on organizational operations of the Confederation of African Football during its competitions.**

R=.802 R <sup>2</sup> =.644 Adj. R <sup>2</sup> =.622 Std. Error=3.06539						
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p value)	Remark
Regression	1137.706	4	284.426	30.269	.000	Significant
Residual	629.572	67	9.397			
Total	1767.278	71				

As indicated in the table above, it was found that the joint contribution of the social environmental factors (globalization, organizational structure, organizational culture, and policy) on organizational operations of the Confederation of African Football was tested significant. The result of the composite contribution was tested at  $p < 0.05$  while the analysis of variance for the regression yielded an F. ratio of 30.269 (significant at 0.05 level). The result also yielded a coefficient of multiple regression of  $R = 0.802$  and a multiple R-square of .644. This means that 64.4% of the variance was accounted for by four correlating variables when taken together. The result also revealed that adjusted  $R^2 = 0.622$ , indicating that about 62.2% of the variance was accounted for by the independent variables. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. Therefore, this underscores the significance of these social environmental factors in influencing organizational performance of CAF.

**Hypothesis Two:** There will be no significant relative contribution of social environmental factors of globalization, organizational structure, organizational culture, and policy on the organizational operations of the Confederation of African Football during its competitions.

**Table 2: Multiple regression showing the relative contribution of social environmental factors of globalization, organizational structure, organizational culture, and policy on the organizational operations of the Confederation of African Football during its competitions.**

Variables	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig. (p value)	Remark	Rank
	B	Std. Error	Beta ( $\beta$ )				
(Constant)	59.577	2.545		23.411	.000		
Globalization	.030	.274	.013	.108	.914	Not Sig.	
Organizational structure	.077	.187	.046	.410	.683	Not Sig.	
Organizational culture	.128	.194	.049	.658	.513	Not Sig.	
Policy	1.445	.192	.777	7.515	.000	Sig.	1 <sup>st</sup>

The above table revealed that social environmental factors, the unstandardized regression weight ( $\beta$ ), the standardized error of estimate (SEB), the standardized coefficient, the t-ratio, and the level at which the t-ratio are significant. As indicated in the table, policy ( $\beta = 0.777$ ,  $t = 7.515$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) was tested significant on organizational operations of Confederation of African Football, while globalization ( $\beta = 0.013$ ,  $t = 0.108$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), organizational structure ( $\beta = 0.046$ ,  $t = 0.410$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) and organizational culture ( $\beta = 0.049$ ,  $t = 0.658$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) was not tested significant. The null hypothesis that there will be no significant relative contribution of policy on the organizational operations of the Confederation of African Football during its competition was rejected partially. This is so because policy independently had significant impact on the organizational operations of Confederation of African Football during its competition.

### Discussion

The outcome of this study is based on the significant joint contribution of the independent variables of globalization, organizational structure, organizational culture, and policy as social environmental factors on the organizational operations of CAF during its competitions. The findings of this study emphasize the importance of addressing these factors in a holistic manner to improve the way competitions are organized. However, when examining the relative contributions of these factors, the results indicated that policy was the only significant contributor to CAF's organizational operations. This underscores the critical role that well-developed policies play in enhancing organizational performance during competitions. The finding concerning policy aligns with Russell et al. (2012), who reported that enacting policies to support, control, and regulate sports organizations positively influences their activities and ultimately contributes to economic and social development. For CAF to improve the organization of its competitions, better policies must be enacted and implemented effectively.

In contrast, the results showed that globalization, organizational structure, and organizational culture were not significant contributors to CAF's organizational operations. While these factors are widely recognized in the literature as influential in organizational performance, their lack of statistical significance in this study suggests that they may not currently play a decisive role in the specific context of CAF's competition operations. For instance, Sylvia et al. (2015) highlighted the importance of organizational structure for organizational performance, noting that a planned structure facilitates proper working relationships among various subunits. Although organizational structure was not a significant contributor in this study, addressing structural inefficiencies in CAF may still improve the organization of competitions. Similarly, while organizational culture has been linked to organizational outcomes in studies like those of Lok & Crawford (2004), its non-significance here implies that other factors, such as policy, may have a more immediate and measurable impact in the CAF context.

Finally, globalization, though extensively studied as a driving force in sports organization (Russell et al., 2012), was not a significant contributor in this study. This could reflect the unique challenges CAF faces in integrating global trends into its operations. Despite this, understanding the global environment remains crucial for sport managers, as globalization enables enhanced communication and integration of sports events worldwide.

In addition, the study revealed that while all four factors collectively contribute significantly to CAF's organizational operations, policy stands out as the sole significant individual contributor. Therefore, to improve the way competitions are organized, CAF must prioritize policy development and implementation while also exploring ways to optimize the roles of globalization, organizational structure, and organizational culture to achieve long-term improvements.

### Limitation and future research

The major limitation of this study is its focus on football only in Africa, specifically the Confederation of African Football. Therefore, we recommend that future researchers carry out a longitudinal study capturing the evolving impacts of these factors on the organizational operations of CAF, especially if it adapts to changing global dynamics. A comparative study can also be conducted between CAF and other continental football federations such as UEFA and CONCACAF, highlighting contextual differences and best practices to inform better strategies for modern football.

### Conclusion

The findings of this study emphasize the importance of addressing social environmental factors in improving the organizational operations of CAF. While it revealed that the social environmental factors of globalization, organizational structure, organizational culture and policy were jointly significant in the organizational operations of CAF during its competitions, indicating the collective impact of these factors, only policy had a significant relative contribution to the organizational operations of CAF during its competitions. This highlights the important role of developing a strong policy framework that can enhance CAF's operational performance. To achieve a well-organized competition, CAF should prioritize the enactment of comprehensive policies while also ensuring they strengthen the organizational culture, structure and global aspects of its operations. This balanced strategy will position CAF to effectively address the dynamic demand of contemporary sport management.

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