

THESES OF THE DOCTORAL (PhD) DISSERTATION

THE OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK OF YOUTH FOOTBALL ORGANIZATIONS

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1. THE BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES OF THE RESEARCH

In Hungary, organisations involved in youth development have undergone significant changes in recent decades, both in terms of professional work, organisational framework and funding (RÁBAI, 2018a). With the general development of the sport, youth development is now also characterised by a formalised operation, which requires an appropriate organisational framework (BÁCSNÉ, 2015a). In order for the training work to enable the implementation of the National Sport Strategy issued by the Government of Hungary, workshops are needed that can lay the foundations for achieving the social and economic goals that were set for youth development.

The NATIONAL SPORTS STRATEGY (2007) set the following objectives for youth development:

1. In order to achieve sustainable success and ensure a youth base for competitive sport, it is necessary to increase the number of certified athletes and to operate a coherent system of youth development.
2. The system of youth development must meet strict professional requirements, be consistent with the concept of competitive sport, serve its objectives and prevent children from specialising too early, and ensure a multifaceted and harmonious development.
3. The conditions for entry into the youth development system must be strictly and objectively defined, regulated and monitored. Special means (e.g. scholarships) should be used to help disadvantaged children and young people to participate in the clubs' youth development activities.
4. There must be a coherent system of youth development, in line with the performance objectives of competitive sport.
5. Work in competitive sport, youth sport, school sport and recreational sport should all aim to improve the quality of life. In the field of competitive sport and youth

development, the aim is to maintain the level of performance traditionally achieved in professional sport, especially Olympic performance, and to improve performance in internationally popular sports (ball games). In order to achieve sustainable success and ensure a youth base for competitive sport, it is necessary to increase the number of certified athletes and to operate a coherent system of youth development.

To achieve these objectives, the state channelled significant resources into spectator team sports, including football. With the introduction of the TAO assistance (BALOGH, 2017) and the establishment of a state-recognised academic system (SZALÁNCZI, 2021), there were significant opportunities for the development of youth sports organisations, which the organisational framework of the previous period was not able to exploit (VINCZE, 2008a; SZEGEDI, 2003b). Government Decree 303/2019 - XII. 12. (2019) and changes of the MLSZ (2021b) on the introduction of different training levels (in which academies, talent centres and district centres were designated) were already aimed at improving the organisations. However, despite the central measures, the functioning and productivity of the young development workshops remained below expectations (HAVRAN - ANDRÁS, 2022), even though youth development organisations, especially the academies, do not only nurture young people in the hope of social benefits, in addition to the national interests, but can also induce other revenues in addition to subsidies by selling them or transferring them to their parent association, thus providing additional motivation to operate efficiently (HAVRAN - ANDRÁS, 2018).

In my research, I am looking for answers to the question of how organisations pursue strategies to achieve their goals, and how these influence their identity. I would like to explore the differences in the operational framework, organisational structure and employee responsibilities at different levels of training, and the competences that characterise the leaders of youth sport. I believe it is important to look at the differences in selection, training and competition depending on the classification of the organisations, and how these differences affect the personal network of the organisations.

The main objective of my research is to investigate whether the organisational framework and the human resources used in youth development can ensure the youth base, international competitiveness and uninterrupted development of Hungarian football.

My other objectives:

C1: To explore the values that youth sports organisations at different levels of training, such as academies, talent centres and district centres, can transmit to young people and how this value creation is reflected in their strategic objectives.

C2: The aim of my research is to investigate which departments at different levels of training are necessary for effective functioning and which vary in importance depending on the classification.

C3: My aim is to explore whether the type and level of training of sport organisations determines the weight of selection, training and competition in the development process.

C4: I set the aim of investigating whether there are differences in the personal network of sports organisations depending on their classification, with a particular focus on domestic and international relations.

C5: To explore the characteristics of the human resources of youth development organisations, and the specificities that are reflected in the different levels of training.

C6: My aim is to assess the level of motivation of people working in youth sport organisations and their drive to work in sport.

C7: I set the aim of finding out what competences employees need in order to meet the requirements of leadership positions in organisations.

The basic hypothesis of my doctoral dissertation is that the operational framework and the human resources of the Hungarian youth development organisations enable the Hungarian training workshops to become a stable base for Hungarian football and to increase the international competitiveness of our football.

My further hypotheses:

H1: Youth sports organisations at different levels of training, such as academies, talent centres and district centres, transmit different values to their athletes and, accordingly, have different strategic objectives.

H2: I hypothesise that different organisational frameworks and organisational units are needed at different levels of training to function effectively and that their importance varies due to differences in the training objectives.

H3: There are significant differences in the types and objectives of youth sports organisations in terms of selection, training and competition in the development process.

H4: The classification of sports organisations reveals important differences in their personal network.

H5: Based on their approach to youth development and their role in training, workers can be divided into distinct groups.

H6: The motivation of those working in youth training is high.

H7: I assume that the roles and functions of the leaders of sports organisations require different professional competences.

2. DATABASE AND DESCRIPTION OF THE METHODS USED

The aim of my research is to assess the organisational background of youth football in Hungary. The relevance of the topic lies in the flow of capital into youth sport and the development of a state-recognised academic system, which, if it works well, could make our country's football competitive at international level in the long term by exploiting the potential of home-grown players.

In my dissertation, I intend to examine the system of training for youth from several angles, not only from a professional point of view, as in previous research, but also to explore the organisational structure, vision and management model of training workshops, which can be crucial for the management of a sports organisation and for the productivity of training in terms of youth development.

To answer these questions, I collected both primary and secondary data and information. As a secondary method, I reviewed the available national and international literature closely related to my topic. What made my work difficult was that youth sport has typically only been studied from the professional sport perspective of football, so there are few relevant sources on the organisational side. My primary research method was a questionnaire survey sent to the three levels of the training pyramid: academies, talent centres and district centres.

2.1 Databases and methods used for secondary research

Secondary data collection is essential to the success of the research. For the primary data collection to be successful, it is very important to have existing information on the topic, which can be obtained by processing and comparing existing relevant scientific literature.

As part of my secondary research, I examined the key concepts related to the topic, introduced the sports economics approaches related to the dual value creation of modern football and the player market through the factors affecting the value of athletes. In the following, I examined the functioning of youth training associations, the expectations regarding the training environment, and at the end of the literature review I identified several international good practices.

The secondary part of my research laid the theoretical foundations for my primary research, helped me to choose an appropriate primary data collection method, and helped me to better assess the functioning of domestic organisations through the characteristics of the second half of the literature review.

2.2 Theory and methodology of the primary research

Considering the research topic, I conducted my primary research using a quantitative method, a questionnaire survey, which has become a popular research method due to the relatively large number of samples it allows to process (BONCZ, 2015). The results of the study can be processed quickly despite the large number of elements. They are easily quantifiable, allowing the sample to be analysed using statistical methods and tests (GROVES et al., 2011)

In order to be able to develop the topic properly and to examine all levels of youth football, it was important to create three questionnaires, following the classification of the organisations, with questions adapted to the possibilities of each level.

I used the ECA (2012) study on the survey of youth clubs as part of the secondary research and the DOUBLE PASS (2019) audit series on the functioning of Hungarian academies as a great help in designing my questionnaire. I tried to touch on the critical issues that these two studies explore.

The structure of the three questionnaires is almost identical, except that I modified the questions which cannot be interpreted at the given level of training due to the possibilities offered by the support system.

The questionnaire is divided into four parts, the first one is about the strategy of the organisation, the second one is about the structure, the third one is about the professional programme and finally I analysed the available infrastructure.

I was able to send out the questionnaires in the spring of 2023 after lengthy negotiations with the responsible Sports State Secretariat and the Hungarian Football Federation. A total of 426 respondents completed the questionnaires, a high proportion compared to the size of the population, as the respondents were exclusively employees of organisations at the three

training levels mentioned above. Of the questionnaires, 236 respondents completed the academic questionnaire, while 96 responded to the questionnaire sent to talent centres and 94 to the questionnaire sent to district centres. This is also in proportion to the number of staff in the sports organisations, because as the training pyramid approaches the top, the amount of subsidies makes more staff available for the workshops, while the number of staff in the centres below the academic level varies inversely, as there are 10 state-recognised academies in football, while only 27 district centres have been designated. The majority of youth training organisations are classified as district centres, with 95 in total. These organisations typically have a very small number of employees available and they are almost exclusively second-jobbers.

2.2.1 Presentation of the questionnaire:

The primary data collection was based on three questionnaires divided into four parts, 70 questions in the academic survey and 68 questions in the questionnaire sent to the talent centres and district centres:

1. Socio-demographic data (questions 1-14)

In this section, I examined the demographic data of the respondents, including their gender, age, place of residence, income, education and professional qualifications, the form of employment and the length of time they have worked in the organisation and in the position, their pre-qualification and history in the sport, and their motivation for working in youth sport.

2. Strategy (questions 15-34)

In this part of the questionnaire, I asked questions about the academy's strategy, the mission of the organisation, the main stakeholders, and how professional activities are aligned with these strategic goals.

3. Development directions, external relations (questions 35-50)

In this section, I asked questions about competing and the respondent's own job, mainly asking them to explain their current situation and to outline any ideal situation that might be different. I also covered the assessment of the tools needed for the work

and the directions for improvement, including questions on partnerships, as these are closely linked to the exploitation of training potential.

4. Identity, communication, governance model (questions 51-70)

In the last part of the questionnaire, I focused on the identity and main objectives of the sports organisation, and I also asked questions about the communication within the organisation and leadership competences related to the formulation of the identity and main objectives, and I examined the form and regularity with which respondents are evaluated by their superiors.

To overcome geographical barriers and to reach employees centrally, I sent my questionnaire to the heads of sports organisations. I first contacted the central supervisory bodies, which was the Nemzeti Sportügynökség Nonprofit Zrt. (“National Sports Agency” - NSA) for academies and the MLSZ for talent and district centres. After receiving permission to send out the questionnaire, I sent it out to sports organisations at the three training levels in April 2023, and then sent it out again at the end of April and in June to allow those who for some reason missed the first invitation to participate to take part. I also used my own personal network to increase the number of completions. At the request of the NSA, the questions did not include any data to identify the own organisation, so I could not check which workshops had fewer responses.

2.2.2 Statistical methods used

The questionnaire results were processed using the IBM SPSS 25 program. I first examined the descriptive statistical indicators with the analysis software. Next, I examined the scaling variables for the topics that process the functioning of the organization and performed factor analysis as a data reduction and structure exploration procedure. I performed the Bartlett test and examined the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin criterion. This was necessary in order to see if the variables could be reduced through factor analysis and if a correlation could be detected between them. The KMO test can give a value between 0 and 1 and if the value is higher than 0.6, a factor analysis can be performed (OZSVÁTH - ÁCS, 2011).

In the rest of my research, in order to be able to identify and homogenise the groups of people working in the training organisations, I carried out a cluster analysis. Cluster analysis

is a multivariate statistical procedure whose primary objective is to identify homogeneous groups in a somewhat heterogeneous sample, whose members differ from the other groups according to the factors defined, while individuals within the cluster show similarity according to the clustering criteria (SAJTOS - MITEV, 2007).

Once the clusters were established, I was curious to see how workers at each level of training appeared in the clustering, so I conducted a cross-tabulation analysis. Cross-tabulation analysis is a statistical method that describes two or more variables simultaneously with a table that reveals the joint distribution of two or more - limited number of - categorised or valued variables (GYULAVÁRI et al. 2017). In the cross-tabulation analyses, I used Pearson's chi-square test to detect correlations between variables, and then tested the strength of the relationships using Cramér's V. "The Cramér coefficient is one of the most popular and reliable chi-square-based indicators, applicable to almost all cross-sectional tables" (ÁCS, 2014 p 206-207). Cramér's V can take a value between 0 and 1, where at 0 the variables are independent of each other, while at 1 they are very closely related (PETRES-TÓTH, 2005)

Finally, I wanted to see if there was a relationship between each factor, so I used Pearson's linear correlation to test this. This method measures the strength of the relationship between two variables, with values between -1 and +1 (MALHOTRA et al., 2020).

2.2.3 Presentation of the sample

The questionnaire survey took place in spring 2023. A total of 519 people from the entire Hungarian training system completed the questionnaires. The demographics of the questionnaires were exactly the same, so I am processing them together. It was a clear criterion for those filling in the form that only employees of an Academy, Talent Centre or District Centre working as part of the youth pyramid established by the Sports Secretariat and the Hungarian Football Federation with a live employment contract could fill in the form. The exclusion criterion was if this condition was not met.

The questionnaire was distributed by e-mail to the academy CEOs and academy directors with the help of the National Sports Agency, who personally shared the questionnaire with

their staff through the online channels used by the sports organisations, such as internal communication systems, online platforms and e-mails.

For the Talent Centres and District Centres, using the database of the Hungarian Football Federation, I also sent my questionnaire by e-mail to the heads of the organisations, who, like the academic directors, distributed it centrally to their staff. I also used my personal network I have built up as an academy director to get as large a sample as possible.

In the following, I present the aggregated socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents to the three questionnaires.

The sample is characterised by the masculine nature of football in terms of gender ratio, which was already revealed by the LLOPIS (2016) research, as the total sample was 367 male and 58 female respondents.

If I further scrutinise the presence of women at the training levels, it seems that women are typically employed in academies, as 76% of all female employees work at the highest level in youth development. This is due to the fact that there are more functions to be performed that do not require a sports industry professional or specialised qualification, such as financial administrator, doctor, medical assistant, psychologist, physiotherapist, etc., in which the male dominance is no longer observed as in football-specific jobs.

Looking at the age distribution of the respondents, it can be seen that there are few young people working in youth sport, including in development. If we look at the proportion of age groups, we see that only 5.2% of the sample is under 25 years old. The 25-45 age group makes up 60% of the sample, but the 12% share of those over 55 is also higher than that of young people. People under 18 were not present in the sample at all.

Looking at the educational background of the respondents, the highest proportions of respondents are those with a bachelor's degree, a GCSE ("maturity exam") and some types of vocational training. This reinforces the criteria found in the sport federation's accountability system, which sets out the minimum qualifications required to perform non-sports industry professional functions.

If we look at the sports industry professional qualification of the respondents, it can be stated that 39% of the total sample hold a MLSZ/UEFA "B", "A" or "Pro" licence, while MLSZ "C" licence holders, which is a lower level professional licence, represent 21% of the sample. The overall share of university graduates is also high, accounting for almost 25% of the sample. Of course, respondents could choose more than one option, since sports industry professional training courses in sports are typically based on each other within the MLSZ system. There were people in 6.1% share in the sample who had not completed a sports industry professional education. This typically includes employees who were trained as fitness trainers, massage therapists, mental trainers, etc.

When looking at job roles, it can be seen that the respondents confirm the hierarchical organisational structure typical in sport, as also found in the research of SAMUR (2018), so that training centres are also characterised by a typical hierarchy, as the results show that 66% of the sample are staff, while managers or team leaders account for 17.8% and senior managers for 15.5%. The high proportion of senior managers may have been due to the fact that I sent the questionnaire to them during the sampling process.

Female senior managers are significantly underrepresented in the sample, which is similar to the findings of SONIA and VASILICA (2019). Of the 66 senior managers surveyed in my sample, only 4 (6%) were women.

Analysing the jobs further, I looked at the proportion of respondents who were divided between sports industry professionals and operational staff. It can be seen that 81% of the sample are sports industry professionals and only 19% of the respondents are employed in a general, operational capacity. This is due to the specificity of football, but also of the sport sector in general, as confirmed by research by DOHERTY (2014).

Looking further at the employees of the youth sports organisations, the responses show that 64% of the total sample of employees are employed full-time and only 35.2% are employed part-time or based on a contract for services.

If I further analyse the full-time employees, I see that academies account for 64% of the high number of 8-hour employees. This is thanks to the introduction of the state-recognised

academy system at the end of 2019, which has provided significantly more resources for selected academies.

In terms of years of work in youth sport organisations, I also looked at the time spent in sport by professionals at different levels of training, in their current organisation and in their current position. An analysis of these durations shows that workers spend the shortest time in academies and the most time in district centres. This may be due to the fact that, on the one hand, the academic system has been able to recruit more new staff thanks to an increase in resources 4 years ago and, on the other hand, that workers at lower levels of education are typically employed part-time.

I further investigated the correlations with the demographic characteristics of the employees and found out what factors motivated them to join a sports organisation. Professional motivation clearly dominates, chosen by 74%, while taking advantage of financial opportunities in recent years was the second most important factor, at 14.5%. Other related factors also appeared, such as regional constraints (no other organisation is available in the region), love of football and loyalty to a club. (In this case, respondents were allowed to select more than one response option.)

Looking at the sporting background of the staff, it was found that 61.8% of those working in youth sport had played sport "only" at amateur level, while 33.8% of respondents had joined as employees of these training centres after a professional career. Only a tiny minority of the sample, 4.23%, did not play sport.

3. MAIN FINDINGS OF THE DISSERTATION

The main objective of my research was to explore the organisational framework of youth development in football, and to characterise the human resources employed at all levels of education, in order to assess whether these organisations are able to create a quality base for Hungarian football.

In order to achieve this objective, I collected good practices already in use from relevant literature sources, and my primary research provides a comprehensive picture of the functioning of youth sports organisations.

The main findings of my dissertation are presented along the hypotheses.

The basic thesis of my research is that *the operational framework and the human resources of Hungarian youth training organisations enable the Hungarian training workshops to become a stable base for Hungarian football and, thanks to their operation, to increase the international competitiveness of our football.*

My main objective was to find out whether the operation of Hungarian training organisations in youth football and the skills of the professionals employed in them create the potential for these organisations to become the basis of our football, to help its development and to increase its international competitiveness. Based on my secondary and primary research, I concluded that the system established by the MLSZ (2021b) and Government Decree 303/2019 (XII. 12.) (2019) may be able to meet these requirements, but it will take time for the young people entering the system in 2021 to be able to exploit their potential by going through the new structure. However, the problems that my research has identified can nuance the picture and slow down the training process. One of the most significant factors is the dependence of organisations on public funding, which can both jeopardise their operations in the event of a change in funding and reduce motivation if they become complacent and are not forced to generate their own market income. The academic productivity scheme introduced in previous years, as well as the one set up this year, is designed to transform this, and its impact will be worth further exploring in the coming years.

H1: Youth sports organisations at different levels of training transmit different values to their athletes and have different strategic objectives.

My hypothesis has been confirmed. Responses to questions on the strategy, identity and values of organisations revealed that organisations at different levels of training contribute differently to the transmission of sports industry professional aspects and social values through sport. Table 1 shows that the lower the ranking of the organisation, the less employees feel that they contribute to the goals of the national sport strategy, and a similar trend can be observed in terms of raising the standard of the Hungarian league. Based on the responses for each type of organisation, the higher the rating, the more emphasis is placed on selection, and through the training of children, the aim is to provide a good basis for adult professional teams connected with them and reduce their transfer costs, and indirectly contribute to the international competitiveness of Hungarian football.

| Strategy | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Strategy | | Total sample mean | Mean of organizations according to classification | | |
| | | | Academy | Talent center | District center |
| Fitting into the national sports strategy | The operation of the sports organization contributes to the achievement of the "sporting nation" objective | 4,190 | 4,354 | 4,089 | 3,903 |
| | The results related to the operation of the sports organization strengthen the local and national identity | 4,202 | 4,360 | 3,987 | 4,056 |
| | The sports organization contributes to raising the standard of the Hungarian adult championship | 4,064 | 4,366 | 3,823 | 3,597 |
| | The sports organization contributes to Hungarian football becoming internationally competitive | 3,929 | 4,343 | 3,532 | 3,361 |
| The organization's own strategy | The sustainability of the long-term operation of the sports organization depends on state subsidies | 4,147 | 4,217 | 3,911 | 4,236 |
| | The most important task of the sports organization is the "production" of professional footballers, which ensures the economic success of the sports | 3,776 | 4,183 | 3,557 | 3,028 |
| Training and education strategy | The goal of the sports organization is for the player to be professionally prepared for a professional sports career | 4,236 | 4,600 | 4,089 | 3,514 |
| | The goal of the sports organization is for the player to be prepared for civilian life after a sports career. (professional qualification) | 3,862 | 4,029 | 3,823 | 3,500 |
| | The goal of the sports organization is for the player to be prepared for integration into society. | 4,460 | 4,451 | 4,456 | 4,486 |

Table 1: Presentation of the results of the Strategy topic

Source: Own research, own editing (2024)

As shown in Table 1, across the sample as a whole and for organisations at different levels of training (4.190), it is clear that their operations contribute to the objectives of a “Sporting Nation”. Among the types of organisation, however, it is academy staff (4.354) who are the most likely to believe that their work is more conducive to achieving this goal and as we move from the “elite” level to the talent centres (4.089) and then to district centres (3.903)

where less frequent trainings and a lower level of competition are observed, the averages decrease, reflecting the fact that coaches and staff at lower levels feel less able to contribute to the achievement of the national sport strategy objectives.

When asked how convinced respondents were that their work could raise the standard of the Hungarian adult professional league, a greater contrast emerged between the types of organisation. In the case of the academies, which have a clear aim of providing a base for Hungarian professional clubs (4.366), it is clear that they are able to fulfil this task by their own admission. Respondents from organisations at lower levels show a much lower average (Talent Centre - 3.823, District Centre - 3.597), which is due to the fact that, in accordance with the concept of the MLSZ and the expectations of the public bodies directly funding the academies, they should bring talented children to the academy level at a young age, leaving their training system with a large proportion of youth footballers who can only succeed in lower divisions later on.

The highest combined average (4.488) in the strategy topic was the response that the most important task of youth development organisations in football is to identify and train talented youth players. Employees in the three tiers of organisations clearly indicated that this is a priority for them. The average for responses from the academy is also higher (4.617) compared to the other two types of organisation (Talent Centre - 4.354, District Centre - 4.319), which is important because the government decree granting the status of a state-recognised academy also centrally formulated this expectation. The result suggests that all academies included this in their operating rules and that staff have been able to take a clear position.

The last aspect related to the strategic choices of sport organisations is linked to financial awareness and economic stability, where I examined whether organisations consider the development of professional players as an investment, and whether the “production” of players is done in the spirit of economic success. The combined average of the responses was the lowest in this topic (3.776), but this is mainly due to differences in training levels and selection as mentioned above. Employees of the academies agreed with this statement, but as we start to look at the responses from other lower ranked organisations, we see that

here too, employees are less and less likely to believe that the sale of the players they develop can be an economic success.

The last part of the topic is an examination of the direct training and development tasks, in which I first wanted to know whether the main objective is to prepare the player for a professional career in terms of sports industry professional aspects. In the case of the statement, academy staff clearly indicated (4.600) that a priority for them in terms of operations is to get players into their training system who will leave prepared for the challenges they will face in their careers. Looking further into the question, talent centres also scored relatively high (4.089), as they are also responsible for the preparation of the pre-academic age groups in the current MLSZ system, which leads them to provide the highest possible quality of professional work for their players, thus facilitating their subsequent integration into the academy system. The low average for district centres (3.514) is due to the fact that their main priority is to promote the sport and lay the foundations for a more active lifestyle later on, while also “upstreaming” talents.

| Identity and values, stakeholders | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Identity | | Total sample mean | Mean of organizations according to classification | | |
| | | | Academy | Talent center | District center |
| Social values (n=253) | It is based on local talent | 3,704 | 3,547 | 3,825 | 3,965 |
| | It gathers talents nationwide | 2,585 | 3,245 | 1,754 | 1,807 |
| | A place where children like to be | 4,304 | 4,367 | 4,158 | 4,298 |
| | It provides a cohesive community | 4,202 | 4,259 | 4,105 | 4,158 |
| | The focus is on maintaining and developing Hungarian football values | 4,099 | 4,245 | 3,912 | 3,930 |
| The identity and values of the club (n=253) | The sports organization educates young people in the hope of economic success | 3,067 | 3,345 | 2,965 | 2,491 |
| | The education of the sports organization reduces the transfer expenses of the professional club | 3,115 | 3,453 | 2,877 | 2,526 |
| | The base of our adult team | 3,451 | 3,734 | 3,105 | 3,105 |
| | Trains players for a professional career abroad | 3,016 | 3,712 | 2,474 | 1,860 |
| | It is very important that the sports organization maintains its classification in the ranking of youth training | 4,601 | 4,691 | 4,474 | 4,509 |
| | Our goal is to be the best sports organization in the country | 3,791 | 4,460 | 3,439 | 2,509 |
| | The goal is to maintain an internationally recognized and successful sports organization | 3,383 | 4,209 | 2,632 | 2,123 |
| | Only sports success is important | 2,581 | 2,935 | 2,263 | 2,035 |
| | Championship ranking is more important than training | 2,134 | 2,439 | 1,860 | 1,667 |
| | It provides a dual career for students/athletes | 3,700 | 3,950 | 3,526 | 3,263 |
| | The goals and values defined in the mission are reflected in everyday work | 4,091 | 4,201 | 4,000 | 3,912 |

Table 2: Presentation of the results of the Identity topic

Source: Own research, own editing (2024)

In the next section, I looked at the club's own identity and the values they convey to their players. With the first statement, I was curious to know how much employees think their

organisation's training system relies on local talent as opposed to players who have come from rural areas, further afield. The responses show that smaller organisations, typically working as district centres and talent centres, tend to look more locally, while academies are looking more widely for talented players. The second statement also confirms this fact, as I was wondering how much the selection is being extended to a nationwide level by the organisations. It became clear that the academies are the ones who are trying to find the right players at national level, while organisations in the other two categories do not consider this important at all, probably because of the competition for talented children and also because in accordance with the current MLSZ concept of youth support they receive subsidies for local selection programmes to become the base for the academies.

I have already analysed the next aspect in a global angle, when I was discussing the strategic objectives of organisations, but now I wanted to go beyond the objectives and look at the day-to-day operations of organisations to find out whether the training of children is driven by professional or financial interests. Once the strategic goals and objectives have been formulated, in terms of actual operations, it can be seen that economic success is slightly overshadowed and both the average for the sample as a whole (3.067) and the average for the responses given at different levels of the organisation (Academy - 3.345, Talent Centre - 2.965, District Centre - 2.491) are significantly lower. The differences in classification levels remain. In the strategic planning process, most of the organisations articulated that “youth production” can lead to economic success, but this aspect was not as important when considering their identity. This is not good from the point of view of financial sustainability, but considering the previous issues, it may give greater emphasis to the need for youth development organisations to be more than just professional workshops, and also to focus on building local communities and educating children. Of course, this can be greatly influenced by the level of training they provide, because the academies have a centrally stated mission to produce valuable, professional players, and the averages in the table show that they are trying to do this.

I also wanted to explore whether there is an opportunity for parent clubs, professional football clubs, which are above these sports organisations, to reduce transfer spending by youth development. The responses show that academy employees believe that these costs

can indeed be reduced by integrating home-grown players into the adult team. The answers given by talent centres and district centres are nuanced by the fact that they often do not have a first (adult) team or have a first team in a lower division, so the answers given by academy staff are the most relevant for this statement. The organisation as a base for the adult team also resulted in a higher average for academies (3.734), but not nearly as clearly as would have been expected from a system where almost all first division teams have an academy.

In slight contrast to the latter question, I also wondered whether organisations are trying to train young people for a professional career abroad. The responses show that there are significant differences between the averages of the organisations (Academy - 3.712, Talent Centre - 2.474, District Centre - 1.860). It is not important for district centres to lay the foundations for youngsters to compete in foreign leagues that are ranked higher than ours, nor do they have the opportunity to select children who are suitable. The district centre is no exception. However, this should not necessarily be seen as a negative aspect, as a talented player going abroad and having the opportunity to show his skills at a higher level can improve the international position and recognition of Hungarian football, increase the success of the Hungarian national team and then use his valuable experience in domestic training after his career.

In relation to dual careers, I was curious to see how this translates into real life. The averages (Academy - 3.950, Talent Centre - 3.526, District Centre - 3.263) are close in this case and show a largely positive bias, but the fact that the aforementioned career choice is made after the academic years influences the responses.

The hypothesis is further supported by the cross-tabulation analysis of clusters and organisational classification formulated during the cluster analysis, which clearly shows that both academies and talent and district centres have different emphasis on strategic mission knowledge, mission creation and the transfer of human and professional values.

Table 3: Examination of the clusters defined in the field of the sports industry profession

| | Competitors | Undermotivated | Educators | Total |
|-----------------|-------------|----------------|-----------|--------|
| Academy | 90 | 11 | 6 | 107 |
| | 84,1% | 10,3% | 5,6% | 100,0% |
| Talent center | 35 | 22 | 10 | 67 |
| | 52,2% | 32,8% | 14,9% | 100,0% |
| District center | 9 | 23 | 43 | 75 |
| | 12,0% | 30,7% | 57,3% | 100,0% |
| Total | 134 | 56 | 59 | 249 |
| | 53,8% | 22,5% | 23,7% | 100,0% |

Source: Own research, own editing (2024) ($p < 0,05$; Cramer V: 0,466)

In particular, I would like to highlight the lack of emphasis on economic success as a productivity factor at different levels of training. The responses show that the majority of respondents associate public support with continuity and long-term operation. This could put organisations in a difficult position if the sports funding system changes.

H2: I hypothesise that different organisational frameworks and organisational units are needed at different levels of training to function effectively and that their importance varies due to differences in the training objectives.

My hypothesis has been confirmed. The answers to the questions on organisational structure show that while at the academic level there is a strong need for different specialised units for "elite" training, their importance decreases as we move down the classification levels. This is partly due to the availability of financial resources and partly to the fact that children of different ages at different levels of training require different types of specialist support. While for the younger age groups it is only important to have coaches who can lay the foundations, in the older age groups there is also a need for specialists such as psychologists or analytical coaches in the day-to-day work. In terms of which units should be given more emphasis, it can be said that while there is a greater and growing demand for

psychological units from district centres towards the academic level, the importance of individual training is decreasing. However, those working in the organisations unanimously identified mental development as an area for improvement, in line with the requirements of modern sport.

Table 4: Presentation of the results of the organisational structure topic

| Organizational structure | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Identity | | Total sample mean | Mean of organizations according to classification | | |
| | | | Academy | Talent center | District center |
| Size of units (n=249) | How many people work in your work group? | | | | |
| | 0 | 0,80% | 0,72% | 1,82% | 0,00% |
| | 1 | 2,41% | 1,45% | 1,82% | 5,36% |
| | 2 | 7,23% | 3,62% | 10,91% | 12,50% |
| | 3 | 10,84% | 11,59% | 10,91% | 8,93% |
| | 4 | 18,88% | 23,91% | 16,36% | 8,93% |
| | Több, mint 5 | 59,84% | 58,70% | 58,18% | 64,29% |
| Importance of organizational units | Which organizational units are separated at your academy? Rate their importance! | | | | |
| | professional, coaching section (n=245) | 4,690 | 4,737 | 4,704 | 4,556 |
| | administration department (n=237) | 4,308 | 4,326 | 4,275 | 4,294 |
| | supply department (transportation, catering, accommodation, etc.) (n=207) | 4,068 | 4,246 | 3,775 | 3,757 |
| | psychology department (n=179) | 3,916 | 4,076 | 3,679 | 3,200 |
| | analyst department (n=182) | 4,027 | 4,364 | 3,394 | 2,647 |
| | rehabilitation department (n=211) | 4,431 | 4,616 | 4,385 | 3,333 |
| | fitness and health department (n=214) | 4,290 | 4,504 | 4,173 | 3,360 |
| | physiology, diagnostic department (n=161) | 4,043 | 4,295 | 3,500 | 2,250 |
| | scouting department (n=195) | 4,154 | 4,417 | 3,650 | 3,522 |
| | economic department (n=239) | 4,351 | 4,423 | 4,132 | 4,388 |
| technical, operational (n=224) | 4,085 | 4,206 | 3,756 | 4,047 | |
| educational and social (n=192) | 4,042 | 4,165 | 3,976 | 3,500 | |
| Development directions (n=1286) | Which special task in your sports organization should be paid more attention to? (You can check more than one) | | | | |
| | professional sports training | 7,93% | 8,17% | 4,91% | 10,76% |
| | selection | 10,42% | 12,66% | 8,09% | 8,54% |
| | school and language training assistance | 7,62% | 9,78% | 6,94% | 4,11% |
| | dietetics | 8,86% | 9,29% | 10,98% | 5,70% |
| | physiological surveys, diagnostics | 6,22% | 3,53% | 9,54% | 7,91% |
| | psychological assistance | 8,71% | 8,81% | 9,83% | 7,28% |
| | individual development | 10,34% | 8,81% | 10,98% | 12,66% |
| | strategic planning | 5,05% | 4,65% | 4,05% | 6,96% |
| | injury prevention activities | 8,09% | 7,21% | 8,67% | 9,18% |
| | mental preparation | 11,35% | 12,18% | 10,12% | 11,08% |
| | match and performance analyses | 6,69% | 4,65% | 8,96% | 8,23% |
| | educational tasks, development of social skills | 8,55% | 9,94% | 6,94% | 7,59% |
| | other | 0,16% | 0,32% | 0,00% | 0,00% |

Source: Own research, own editing (2024)

H3: There are significant differences in the types and objectives of youth sports organisations in terms of selection, training and competition in the development process.

My hypothesis has been confirmed. My results show that as the level of training decreases, organisations are using less formalised selection methods, with a similar decreasing trend in the existence of training principles and the definition of the expected style of play. There are also significant differences between the classifications of organisations in terms of training outcomes and integration into adult football. This result also confirms the conclusions drawn earlier from research conducted by MORRIS et al (2015), where it was shown through a case study that the different strategies of clubs have a major impact on

their productivity. In line with this, from the district centres upwards, it is increasingly important whether the training has an outcome towards a professional or an amateur adult team. This is presumably due to the fact that the primary goal of academic development is integration into the adult professional environment, where experiencing the adult football environment is an important stepping stone, while at lower levels young people do not always play football in the hope of a professional career and many drop out of sport at an early age.

Table 5. Presentation of the results of the Selection topic

| Selection | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------|
| Selection | Total sample mean | Mean of organizations according to classification | | | |
| | | Academy | Talent center | District center | |
| Vision of selection (n=325) | Every player in the teams of the sports organization has the potential of a professional career | 2,437 | 2,651 | 2,244 | 2,125 |
| | The sports organization selects the talents based on guidelines and profiles. | 3,465 | 3,720 | 3,346 | 2,972 |
| | Talent selection and recruitment work well in the sports organization. | 3,575 | 3,629 | 3,603 | 3,417 |
| | There are talented young people who are not selected. | 2,772 | 2,834 | 2,872 | 2,514 |
| | Are there young people who "drop out" during training? | | | | |
| | Yes | 89,23% | 89,14% | 85,90% | 93,06% |
| No | 10,77% | 10,86% | 14,10% | 6,94% | |
| Success (n=675) | If so, why? (You can check more than one) | | | | |
| | due to the sports organization's inadequate professional training | 5,78% | 5,50% | 3,76% | 8,45% |
| | due to injuries | 17,78% | 19,50% | 15,04% | 15,49% |
| | due to the lost motivation of young people | 31,11% | 28,50% | 36,09% | 33,80% |
| | due to the integration difficulties of young players | 10,22% | 10,00% | 11,28% | 9,86% |
| | due to the inappropriate selection of players by the sports organization | 4,89% | 6,00% | 2,26% | 4,23% |
| | due to the physical lag of young players (relative age effect). | 11,41% | 12,75% | 11,28% | 7,75% |
| | due to the genetic factors (body structure, muscles) of young players | 13,19% | 13,75% | 14,29% | 10,56% |

Source: Own research, own editing (2024)

In terms of competition, it is clear that the higher the level of the organisation, the greater the need for players to compete against higher level opponents, and have as many matches as possible. For lower-ranked organisations, the introduction of territorial limits would be important, probably to reduce travel and other costs. The cluster analysis also showed that the proportions of the clusters that were formed authentically reflect the primary tasks and objectives of the organisations.

Table 6: Presentation of the results of the Competition topic

| Competition | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Competition system (n=227) | How satisfied are you with the current system of MLSZ? (Classification of level A-B-C organizations) | 3,335 | 3,119 | 3,714 | 3,500 |
| | How satisfied are you with the competition system provided for your sports organization? | 3,458 | 3,175 | 3,816 | 3,808 |
| Modification of competition system (n=352) | What would you change about the competition system? (You can check more than one) | | | | |
| | I wouldn't change it | 12,22% | 9,60% | 23,53% | 9,30% |
| | more matches | 22,16% | 22,73% | 17,65% | 24,42% |
| | fewer matches | 4,83% | 6,06% | 2,94% | 3,49% |
| | creating an "elite" league | 26,14% | 35,35% | 11,76% | 16,28% |
| | increase in staff | 10,51% | 9,09% | 10,29% | 13,95% |
| | introduction of territorial restrictions | 11,93% | 5,05% | 20,59% | 20,93% |
| | lifting territorial restrictions | 7,10% | 8,08% | 5,88% | 5,81% |

Source: Own research, own editing (2024)

H4: The classification of sports organisations reveals important differences in their personal network.

My hypothesis has been confirmed. For the questions analysing domestic and foreign relations, it can be seen that the answers indicate different directions of cooperation. The relationship between the youth development organisations is a clear reflection of the MLSZ's vision that, in order to ensure upward mobility, the regional centres are responsible for coordinating grassroots clubs in the region and then transferring talented players through cooperation with the talent centres. The talent centres are located in the middle of the system and are equally important for liaising with district centres and academies.

There are also significant differences in the existence of international relations, as it is the academies that are most interested in these partnerships to assess the effectiveness of their training activities, and they are the ones mostly in touch with the professional adult teams. However, the talent and district centres work closely with the amateur adult teams, which is due to the fact that several of them were already coordinating the youth development of an existing amateur organisation before they received their classification from MLSZ, while the academies were acting as the base for an NB1 league team.

Table 7: Presentation of the results of the Cooperation topic

| Cooperations | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------|
| Cooperations | | Total sample mean | Mean of organizations according to classification | | | |
| | | | Academy | Talent center | District center | |
| Existence of relationships (n=258) | Does the organization have official cooperation agreements with domestic sports organizations? | | | | | |
| | Yes | 92,16% | 95,83% | 83,33% | 84,21% | |
| | No | 7,84% | 4,17% | 16,67% | 15,79% | |
| | Does the organization have official cooperation agreements with foreign sports organizations? | | | | | |
| Collaborations with domestic organizations (n=733) | Yes | 46,51% | 70,42% | 22,03% | 12,28% | |
| | No | 53,49% | 29,58% | 77,97% | 87,72% | |
| | grassroots associations within the immediate region | 21,96% | 19,32% | 26,58% | 25,19% | |
| | grassroots associations outside the immediate region | 7,37% | 9,77% | 5,70% | 1,48% | |
| | district centers | 19,92% | 21,14% | 24,68% | 10,37% | |
| | talent centers | 21,69% | 25,68% | 10,76% | 21,48% | |
| | academies | 12,69% | 7,05% | 13,29% | 30,37% | |
| | professional adult teams | 9,41% | 11,59% | 7,59% | 4,44% | |
| | amateur adult teams | 6,55% | 5,23% | 10,13% | 6,67% | |
| | other | 1,16% | 0,23% | 1,27% | 0,00% | |
| | Collaborations with foreign organizations (n=175) | with foreign grassroots associations | 10,29% | 8,78% | 11,76% | 30,00% |
| | | first-class foreign supply with sports associations | 25,71% | 28,38% | 5,88% | 20,00% |
| | | with foreign academies | 40,00% | 42,57% | 29,41% | 20,00% |
| with foreign amateur adult teams | | 0,57% | 0,00% | 0,00% | 10,00% | |
| with foreign professional adult teams | | 22,86% | 19,59% | 52,94% | 20,00% | |
| other | | 0,57% | 0,68% | 0,00% | 0,00% | |
| The usefulness of relationships | Domestic relations (n=245) | 4,069 | 4,138 | 4,038 | 3,926 | |
| | International relations (n=172) | 3,942 | 4,256 | 3,323 | 3,208 | |

Source: Own research, own editing (2024)

H5: Based on their approach to youth development and their role in training, workers can be divided into distinct groups.

My hypothesis has been confirmed. Based on the cluster analysis, it can be concluded that, both from sports industry professional point of view and in terms of the operational framework, the employees can be grouped into well-defined categories. On the professional side, three clusters emerged: *competitors, under-motivated individuals and educators*. And according to the operational framework, I distinguished four clusters, called *recruiters, professionals, coaches and “off the pitch staff”*.

Table 8: Employee groups formed by cluster analysis in the study of the field of sports industry profession

| | Development | Selection | Competition | N |
|---------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-----|
| Recruiters | 0,0898449 | 0,7287413 | -0,8752884 | 45 |
| Professionals | 0,3816069 | 0,1788760 | 0,7708766 | 100 |
| Coaches | 0,5685091 | -0,6497151 | -1,0714134 | 36 |
| Off the pitch | -1,3623921 | -0,5932872 | 0,0189392 | 46 |
| Total | 0,0000000 | 0,0000000 | 0,0000000 | |

Source: Own research, own editing (2024)



Figure 1: Graphical representation of the cluster analysis of employee groups in the sports industry profession

Source: Own research, own editing (2024)

H6: The motivation of those working in youth training is high.

Based on my findings, I reject my hypothesis. In the cluster analysis, it can be seen that when looking at operational frameworks, a so-called *under-motivated* group has emerged

alongside *competitors* and *educators*, for whom there is no area of the organisation's operation which they could embrace. They are professionals who lost their motivation and are mainly represented from lower levels of education. This could pose a threat to the training system as a whole in the future, according to research by MUYNCK et al. (2021), since the Belgian study confirmed that the motivation and commitment of sport industry workers has a major impact on children's development.

Table 9: Employee groups established through cluster analysis when examining the operational framework

| | Strategic mission | Knowledge and creation of strategic goals | Social benefits | Human and professional value creation | Sports productivity | Knowledge of the role | Organizational framework | N |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----|
| Competitors | 0,5207301 | 0,0674825 | 0,1006441 | 0,1697434 | 0,6669949 | 0,2461940 | 0,2447403 | 134 |
| Under motivated | -0,8973878 | -0,7290475 | -0,7280269 | -0,8813190 | -0,5768981 | -0,8310194 | -0,9884756 | 56 |
| Educators | -0,3761768 | 0,5390018 | 0,3624127 | 0,4637047 | -0,9392879 | 0,2296116 | 0,3823632 | 59 |
| Total | -0,0107241 | 0,0000687 | -0,0236982 | 0,0030134 | 0,0066387 | 0,0000000 | 0,0000000 | |

Source: Own research, own editing (2024)

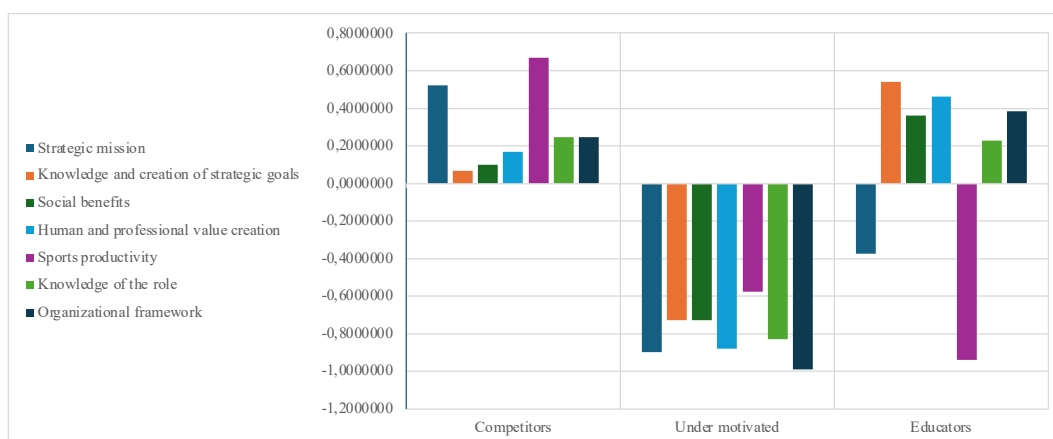


Figure 2: Graphical representation of the groups of employees in the cluster analysis, looking at the operational framework

Source: Own research, own editing (2024)

I would add that it is not only the responsibility of employees to stay motivated, as the responses showed that organisations at lower levels of training pay less attention to setting realistic development goals for employees and providing training programmes and professional guidance to keep them up to date and motivated. There was also no clear answer as to whether there are regular performance appraisal interviews where managers can give

feedback on the quality of work. Another important aspect is that employees are not satisfied with their financial and non-financial appreciation, which can also lead to a loss of motivation. This satisfaction is decreasing towards the lower levels of training, which may be a problem because the coaches working here are responsible for making young people love the sport and educating them through sport, which requires motivated, agile staff. If the work at these levels is already not adequate, it could affect the whole of Hungarian football.

H7: I assume that the roles and functions of the leaders of sports organisations require different professional competences.

My hypothesis has been confirmed. The questionnaire on managerial and coaching competences clearly shows that respondents consider that different professional competences are required for the different jobs. While economic, organisational and management skills are important for the CEO, the professional manager needs to have knowledge of the sports industry, pedagogy and sports science. The role of the operational manager is similarly different, requiring administrative skills, organisational and planning competences. Like the professional manager, coaches need to have knowledge of the sports industry, pedagogy and sports science, but in their case management skills are not yet essential. This result also demonstrates that, as in the research by GUIDOTTI et al. (2023) on professional organisations in the field of sport management, the existence of relevant expertise is essential in the field of youth sport.

Table 10: Presentation of the results in the topic of leadership, coaching competences

| Managerial and coaching competencies | | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Managerial and coaching competencies | Total sample mean | Mean of organizations according to classification | | |
| | | Academy | Talent center | District center |
| up-to-date football professional knowledge | 6,42% | 15,76% | 4,38% | 17,02% |
| work experience in the given position | 13,19% | 12,02% | 13,67% | 13,11% |
| economic knowledge | 14,85% | 1,90% | 12,46% | 0,14% |
| project management, organizational skills | 13,74% | 6,24% | 16,47% | 2,02% |
| language skills | 12,29% | 10,57% | 12,01% | 10,74% |
| pedagogical knowledge | 7,25% | 13,66% | 4,08% | 16,53% |
| psychological knowledge | 5,52% | 10,77% | 4,00% | 14,64% |
| knowledge related to strategic planning | 13,81% | 10,57% | 15,33% | 4,53% |
| knowledge of sports science and physiology | 2,76% | 12,74% | 1,89% | 14,92% |
| proficiency in logistics and administrative tasks | 9,53% | 3,74% | 15,56% | 2,72% |
| professional playing past | 0,62% | 2,04% | 0,15% | 3,63% |

Source: Own research, own editing (2024)

4. NEW AND NOVEL FINDINGS OF THE DISSERTATION

There has been a lot of research on the organisational framework of professional football, but there has been no study on the related issues of youth football in Hungary. The novelty of my research lies in the fact that it explores the views of those working in the system that has been established in recent years on how football training organisations work in Hungary. Another novelty of my dissertation is that I examined these organisations separately in terms of their training classification, which allowed me to identify their individual characteristics and to compare different types of organisations.

I consider the following as new findings of my dissertation:

1. Using cluster analysis, I identified the employees working in youth football and based on the operational framework of their organisation, I identified the groups of *competitors, under-motivated individuals and educators*, while considering their sports industry professional activities, I identified the groups of *professionals, recruiters, coaches and “off the pitch”* workers.
2. Using correlation analysis, I found that there is a strong relationship between operation in sports industry aspects and a well-chosen strategy, and that social benefits and human and professional value creation can be best achieved through the training process, so that work on the field not only helps to achieve football results but also to transmit other human and social values.
3. I have found that football training organisations transmit different values to players at different levels of training, mainly in terms of social benefits.
4. The dual objective of youth development organisations in football is to focus on teaching life skills in addition to professional training.
5. The funding of youth sports organisations depends almost entirely on indirect or direct state subsidies, which is counterproductive to increasing efficiency. Productivity-based subsidies are likely to have a positive impact on this, but organisations would need market revenues and financial awareness because my research showed that economic success is one of the least important aspects of their

operations. This is confirmed by the fact that the highest average score in the identity topic was given to the retention of the classification of the sports organisation, i.e. the amount of funding available.

6. According to respondents, despite organised selection processes in football, many children drop out of training, resulting in noticeable attrition. Related to this, my research also revealed that academy professionals believe that not all players have the potential for a professional career, and that, in addition to selection problems, the number of academies is too high in terms of the number of talented players available per age group.
7. I showed that the pyramid system, based on the reforms of the Hungarian Football Federation and the National Sports Agency, links the actors of youth sport in the way it was intended.

I consider the following to be novel results of my dissertation:

1. In youth sports organisations, the jobs of managers and other staff require different competences.
2. At the lower levels of training, an age-specific training plan is not always available, which negatively affects conscious work and jeopardises the possibility of a professional career later on by not laying the foundations required in the sport.
3. In the organisations surveyed, professional and general, operational management roles are separated, but the importance of this was not clearly expressed by employees.
4. In factor analysis, I have shown that factors related to *strategic mission, knowledge of strategic goals, social benefits, human and professional value creation, productivity in the sports industry profession, selection, training, competition, job knowledge, and organisational framework* play a major role in the functioning of youth development organisations.
5. Thanks to the large amount of resources invested in training, organisations have the infrastructure to provide quality training and the tools for the diverse range of jobs.

6. In the case of competition, there is a need to create a closed, elite league at academy level, where teams would have the opportunity to compete under pressure without the risk of elimination.
7. As we move down the training levels, youth development football organisations are increasingly focusing on team development, which has a negative impact on the work to develop individual talent that is so prevalent in modern football.
8. For district centre staff, most organisations do not set minimum qualifications for the position, nor do they focus on professional guidance and training of staff, so this could be a problem in the long term, as their primary role is to recruit and lay the foundations, which if not done can be difficult or impossible to make it up later,
9. Different organisational units at different levels of training are needed to achieve the objectives set for the institutions, as while academies need all the specialist staff who can help with the transition to adult sport, because these institutions act as the gateway to a professional career, whereas for talent centres and district centres, individual development or individual performance enhancement and prevention sessions may be more important for an outstanding player, to enable him to develop his potential without any hindering factors.

5. PRACTICAL APPLICABILITY OF THE FINDINGS

One of the most important goals of the dissertation was to find an answer to the question of what kind of base youth sports organisations provide for Hungarian football. For my PhD dissertation I wanted to choose a topic that could be of interest to actors such as the Hungarian Football Federation, the National Sports Agency and Hungarian youth development organisations.

Based on my research, it would be important for organisations to align their strategic and professional objectives with principles of the sports industry profession that help to achieve them, especially at lower levels of training, because failure to clearly articulate these may limit the effectiveness of the professional programme. If the basics of the sport are not taught to youngsters at the lower levels of training, then the players who are sent to academies will arrive at the gates of adult football with a serious deficit.

In order for our football to develop, it is essential that all talented players are included in the national training system. According to the responses from those working in youth development organisations, some players do not reach the level they are predestined for in consideration of their talent. This highlights a complex problem. It would be important to develop selection in rural areas and regions close to the organisations and to provide career plans for the children thus integrated into sport, so that their development remains uninterrupted. The career plan should not only focus on professional training within football, but should also prepare players for civil life, the importance of which has already been highlighted by GÉCZI and BAJI (2016).

It would certainly be important for organisations to put more emphasis on training coaches at lower levels at the federal level and there is a strong need for full-time staff in the lower age groups. In addition to the increased financial reward, the selection and development of basic skills would be placed in the hands of professionals who do this work besides full-time employment, are often overburdened, endeavouring to meet the demands of youth development

It is essential that, within the organisation, in line with the development of football, greater emphasis is placed on the development of specific areas, especially at lower levels of

training. LARSEN's (2020) research also showed that, in addition to training football players, other areas are becoming increasingly important in elite training in Europe. The study showed that different levels of training require different specialised competences or departments for quality training.

In order to achieve their training objectives, it is important for youth development organisations to employ professionals (managers and other staff) who have the relevant professional qualifications and knowledge. At all levels of training, it would be necessary to set stricter requirements for filling the given positions, because currently only the MLSZ (2023) registration card regulations set such requirements. I would also emphasise the need to implement internal training courses on a permanent basis, which should be based on the organisations' own professional guidelines, and to introduce them also at lower levels of training, so that competent professional managers can help coaches and other staff to develop without the involvement of the Federation. Part of this is the introduction of performance appraisal interviews, where managers have the opportunity to assess employees and set individual development goals.

Based on the results of my research, it would be important to create a closed, elite league in which academic teams have youngsters compete without the pressure of delivering results, because currently the threat of dropping out of the first division, and therefore the fear of suffering a competitive disadvantage, puts a burden on organisations that forces them to focus on results rather than training. For the lower ranked organisations, the responses suggest the introduction of regional limits and an increase in the number of participant teams in championships would be necessary, which would reduce their expenditure but have a positive impact on the volume of matches and therefore on the development of children.

My proposals, in outline, are as follows:

1. Generating market revenues for organisations through the productivity system or through the sale of players;
2. Aligning strategic objectives and training principles, and better define professional guiding principles at lower levels of training;

3. Improving regional selection, introducing (dual) career plans for young people integrated into the training system, thus facilitating upward mobility;
4. Professional training for those working on lower levels of the training, and employing full-time professionals with the help of funding;
5. Higher level involvement of specific areas in training (mental, sports science, analysis), development of internal communication lines between units;
6. More emphasis should be placed on training employees and requiring them to have the relevant professional competences. More emphasis should be placed on their internal training and their performance should be regularly assessed in a formalised framework;
7. Establishing an elite league for academies and tighter limits for regional leagues to reduce costs;

6. PUBLICATIONS ON THE TOPIC OF THE DISSERTATION



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Candidate: Zoltán Szalánczi
Doctoral School: Doctoral School of Management and Business
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List of publications related to the dissertation

Articles, studies (9)

- Szalánczi, Z.**, Bácsné Bába, É.: Az utánpótlás labdarúgással kapcsolatos szülői szerepek vizsgálata = Investigation of parental roles in relation to youth football.
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8. **Szalánczi, Z.:** A nonprofit jellegű sportvállalkozások bevételi struktúrájának és szervezeti felépítésének vizsgálata a Debreceni Labdarúgó Akadémia esettanulmánya alapján.
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Conference presentations (1)

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The Candidate's publication data submitted to the iDEa Tudóstér have been validated by DEENK on the basis of the Journal Citation Report (Impact Factor) database.



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