

Innovation strategies of the Royal Spanish Tennis Federation

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**Innovation, Management, and
Governance for Sustainable Growth**

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Research Relevance

- Role of sports in society
- Changes in the sport eco-system
- Importance of innovation in sports
- Lack of research on innovation implemented by NSGBs

What's new?

- Study of the innovation strategies of a tennis NSGBs
- Study on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its implementation

Research Context

- Tennis worldwide
- Royal Spanish Tennis Federation
- National Sport Governing Body
- Successful trajectory Spanish Tennis (i.e. Nadal, Muguruza...)
- One of most popular sports in Spain

Research Context

- COVID-19
- Impact in sport
- Impact in tennis
- Specific studies

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Research Literature

- Framework of innovation by NSGBs (Newell & Swann, 1995)
- Typology of sport federations based on their attitude towards innovation (Winand et al, 2013; 2016; 2017)
- Organizational intelligence and innovation (Staškevičiūtė-Butienė et al., 2016)
- Dynamic capabilities of NSGBs (Harris et al, 2020)

Innovation in Sport

- Definition
- Types:
 - Service
 - Product
 - Technology
 - Administrative

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Who Innovates in Sport?

- Organizations:
 - Federations, associations, communities, clubs and teams
- Individuals:
 - Players, administrators, coaches, officials, volunteers and fans.
 - Celebrities
 - Champions

Research Questions

- To which extent the RFET is pursuing innovations?
- How are these perceived by their stakeholders?
- Which role do the general sport context and the particular features of the RFET play in the innovations?

Research Design

- Case study
- Combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods
- Semi-structured interviews:
 - RFET volunteers and executives (n=10)
- Online semi-structured questionnaire:
 - RFET Stakeholders (n=205)

Research Tool

LEVELS AND CATEGORIES	SUB-CATEGORIES
MANAGERIAL LEVEL DETERMINANTS	
Attitude towards traditional management	Bureaucracy
	Inflexible structure
	Against change
Attitude favoring change and newness	Investment in new services
	Risk taking
	Openness to change
	Openness to members' expectations
	Openness to club's suggestions
	Openness to staff suggestions
Attitude towards contemporary management	Professional management
	Involvement in decision making processes
ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL DETERMINANTS	
Perception of organizational culture	Culture and relationships
Perception of innovativeness	General
	Specific services
	Strategies and policies
Perception of ability to lead change	Leadership within the organization
	Leaders champions
ENVIRONMENTAL LEVEL DETERMINANTS	
Perception of pressures	External pressures
Perception of competitive national environment	Attraction of members
	Attraction of grants
	Competition with commercial sports providers
Perception of cooperative environment	Cooperation with other organizations
Perception of competitive regional environment	Sport rivalry between regional sport federations
Perception of competitive international environment	High-level sport competition
Perception of COVID-19 impact	Impact on the strategy and structure
	Impact on the capacity to innovate

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Research Tool

Level and categories	Sub-category	
Tennis services		
Player development	Participation / grassroots tennis	Programs for players of different categories (i.e. 10, 12, 14, 16 and 18 and Under, adults and seniors).
	Performance / competition	Programs for players (i.e. sports policy, talent selection, training, “camps”, scholarships, etc.).
Competitive structure	Tournaments	Leagues, circuits, championships (i.e. organization, assistance, promotion, etc.).
Policy	Rules	Regulations, procedures for tennis play (i.e. amateur license, COVID-19, etc.).
Education	Activities	Education programs for coaches, referees, administrators (i.e. courses, conferences, congresses, publications, etc.).
Non-tennis services		
General	Management	General management and administration (i.e. procedures, registrations, sign-ins, etc.).
Marketing	Communication	Marketing and communication (i.e. campaigns, initiatives, etc.).
Resources	Equipment	Facilities and equipment (i.e. scholarships, grants, guidelines, etc.).
IT	Communications	ICT services (i.e. networks, platforms, etc.).
Other services	General	Other services (i.e. services provided but not included in the previous sections).

Results

- Managerial level:
 - Overall support attitude towards change and newness
- Organizational level:
 - Positive support for innovativeness
- Environmental level - Significant differences in:
 - Perception of competition between regional tennis federations
 - Perception of international competition
 - Perception of COVID-19 impact

Results

LEVEL AND CATEGORIES	SUB-CATEGORY	MOST CITED PROGRAM OR SERVICE
Tennis services		
Player development	Participation / grassroots tennis	“TenisXetapas”
	Performance / competition	Assistance to players
Competitive structure	Tournaments	National Amateur Circuit and National Future Master
Policy	Rules	COVID-19 regulations and “Tenis card”
Education	Activities	Online Symposium and National Congress
Non-tennis services		
General	Management	Global Tennis Platform
IT	Communications	App “e-tenista”

Conclusions

- Drive for change
- Awareness of the eco-system
- COVID-19 impact

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So what? Highlights

- Tennis players innovations refer to performance and participation
- Other tennis innovations relate to coach education and IT services
- COVID-19 has negatively affected the innovation ability of the RFET

And then? Practical Applications

- Better understanding of the variety of innovations being pursued by the RFET.
- Design of practical management resources
- Generation, management and assessment of innovation strategies in their sport settings

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