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## *Theoretical and methodological foundations for sports management in the Republic of Ecuador*

*Fundamentos teóricos y metodológicos, para la gestión deportiva en Ecuador*

*Fundamentos teóricos e metodológicos para a gestão esportiva no Equador*

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### **ABSTRACT**

Sports management includes the planning, organization, direction, execution and control of direct and indirect actions related to sport as a sociocultural and economic manifestation; requires prior analysis of the particularities that make up a specific management area; and based on this, development strategies are designed. Therefore, the objective was set to carry out a theoretical and methodological foundation on sports management in the Republic of Ecuador. The analysis-synthesis method was used to address the basic ideas related to the field of action of the research, describing that the sports system is structured in organizations that aim to satisfy the needs of sports practice and population physical activity. according to different functions that include support and regulation, and are related to social responsibility, quality of life, value formation and social integration. Strategic management allows sports organizations to design, apply and control strategies,



aimed at achieving goals and competing within a constantly changing environment. Each entity is developed, in particular, with its components and contents, where its orientation towards the current trends that regulate the management of sport is recommended.

**Keywords:** theoretical and methodological foundations, sports management Ecuador

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### *RESUMEN*

La gestión deportiva incluye la planeación, organización, dirección, ejecución y control de acciones directas e indirectas, relacionadas con el deporte como manifestación sociocultural y económica; requiere del análisis previo de las particularidades que conforman un área específica de gestión; y en función de ello, se diseñan estrategias desarrolladoras. Por ello, se planteó como objetivo realizar una fundamentación teórica y metodológica sobre la gestión deportiva, en la República de Ecuador. Se utilizó el método de análisis-síntesis, para abordar las ideas básicas relacionadas con el campo de acción de la investigación, al describir que el sistema deportivo se estructura en organizaciones que pretenden satisfacer las necesidades de la práctica deportiva y de la actividad física poblacional, según diferentes funciones que incluyen apoyo y regulación, y se relacionan con la responsabilidad social, la calidad de vida, la formación de valores y la integración social. La gestión estratégica permite a las organizaciones deportivas diseñar, aplicar y controlar estrategias, orientadas al logro de metas y competir dentro de un entorno en constante cambio. Cada entidad se desarrolla, en particular, con sus componentes y contenidos, donde se recomienda su orientación hacia las tendencias actuales que norman la gestión del deporte.

**Palabras claves:** fundamentos teóricos y metodológicos, gestión deportiva Ecuador

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### *RESUMO*

A gestão desportiva inclui o planejamento, organização, direção, execução e controle das ações diretas e indiretas relacionadas ao esporte como manifestação sociocultural e econômica; exige análise prévia das particularidades que compõem uma determinada área de gestão; e com base nisso, são desenhadas estratégias de desenvolvimento. Portanto,



objetivou-se realizar uma fundamentação teórica e metodológica sobre a gestão esportiva na República do Equador. O método de análise-síntese foi utilizado para abordar as ideias básicas relacionadas ao campo de atuação da pesquisa, descrevendo que o sistema esportivo está estruturado em organizações que visam satisfazer as necessidades da prática esportiva e da atividade física da população de acordo com as diferentes funções que desempenham. Incluem apoio e regulação e estão relacionados com responsabilidade social, qualidade de vida, formação de valores e integração social. A gestão estratégica permite às organizações desportivas desenhar, aplicar e controlar estratégias, visando atingir objetivos e competir num ambiente em constante mudança. Cada entidade desenvolve-se, em particular, com as suas componentes e conteúdo, onde se recomenda a sua orientação para as tendências atuais que regulam a gestão do desporto.

**Palavras-chaves:** fundamentos teóricos e metodológicos, gestão esportiva Equador

## INTRODUCTION

Sport for performance purposes has become one of the social phenomena with the greatest impact today. Its practice, visibility, study and sponsorship have caused a broad and diverse demand that requires higher quality, better human capital and resources, capable of meeting expectations.

To this end, sports provision is carried out in different contexts and organizations; their actions depend on factors such as possibilities, interests, origin and level of budget, social responsibility, market and the relations of subordination that countries and their territories have.

In this sense, it is important to express that each nation has its sports system, conceived as the set of all elements related to each other (network of organizations, technology, budget, resources and athletes) oriented to the development of sport in all its manifestations (Guzmán, 2006 as cited in Ávila, 2020).



It is agreed with Ávila (2020), Millán (2016) and Montero (2004) that sports systems are structured in organizations that direct sport at different levels and missions. According to Montero (2004), these organizations are classified as basic, which are responsible for directly offering sports services; supportive, which support sports practice; and regulatory organizations, responsible for establishing general sports policies, at the international, national and territorial level.

Regarding the organizations that regulate sport, the results of research in the last five years describe, from a legal point of view, the national sports systems that support this process, their subordination relationships, identification of public and private functions, budget management and sports policies and entrepreneurship. (Abrahamyan, 2023; Rondón, et al., 2022; Shchokin, et al., 2023).

Several authors establish the main differences between private and public regulatory organizations, (Carranza Bautista y Maldonado, 2020; Escamilla, Alguacil y Giménez, 2018), they identify public entities by managing sports, from a mainly social role, with a government budget and staggered by territories. They also highlight the need to establish positive relationships between the public and private sectors as a way to guarantee high sporting results, and the use of strategic management systems aimed at improving quality. (Barroso, Calero and Sánchez, 2015b; Barroso, et al., 2015a).

Ávila (2020), on the organizations of the Mexican sports system, carries out a correlational study of the number of medals in the national Olympics with the variables: organizational structure, sports programs and budget; as a result, he highlighted the importance of efficient use of the budget in the network of state entities by verifying that there is a significant relationship between the budget allocated for the development of sport with the sporting result achieved; however, the sports result is independent of the organizational structure and sports programs.

For their part, Cruz et al. (2020) consider entrepreneurship as one of the modern trends in sports management research; the author carried out an exploratory study from six dimensions: community, corporate, institutional, international, social and technological,



and obtained that the most researched dimension is the social one, on which the role of regulatory entities in promoting research in topics of this type.

These references allowed to affirm that each sports system and its organizations have their particularities for the management of sports, which are reflected in the legal, social, economic and structural aspects of each network of sports organizations and the management systems used. It is up to governments and public and private sports institutions at all levels, together with sponsoring entities and others involved, to meet the growing sports demand, in which people's satisfaction through sports consumption always appears as the center.

Various research on sports management, in Ecuador, have demonstrated the need to establish changes in the way sports are managed, but they do not emphasize territorial organizations, the contextualization of a specific entity or the tools to be used.

Below is background information that corroborates this approach. First, Silva (2017) advocates for the professionalization of the structural organization charts that govern Ecuadorian sports, by providing support for high-performance athletes and for minority sports, and Vásquez (2018) analyzes the efficiency of investment destined for high-performance sports and the sports results obtained in the period 2009-2016, and proposes actions that facilitate the improvement of economic management.

Meanwhile, Vines (2019) makes a description of the organizational management of the Ministry of Sports in Ecuador and concludes that there is little relationship between the organizational management of the Ministry and the satisfaction of athletes; while Barrios and Martín (2019) affirm that there is a management task that goes against a tight management culture that guarantees successful performance at the local, regional and international level.

In another sense, Rivadeneira (2020) analyzes the profile of sports leaders and their impact on the processes of sports organizations, to establish a profile more appropriate to management needs; González (2021) carries out an exploratory study that relates the



professional profile of sports managers and the quality of the management they carry out and concludes that sports managers need to raise their level of skills to lead organizations more effectively; additionally, Reinoso (2021) studies how generalization analysis is used as a flexible technique to estimate the sample size of a measurement design with a quantitative approach, used for quality management of sports services.

According to the above, it is necessary to update the references that address sports management in countries in the Latin American environment, with emphasis on Ecuador, which is why the purpose of this article is to provide a theoretical and methodological foundation on sports management in the Republic of Ecuador, in order to prospectively justify an empirical diagnosis and a strategy to manage sports organizations focused on a specific sociocultural and economic environment in the province of Orellana, in Ecuador.

## *DEVELOPMENT*

### **Current legal justification, in the Republic of Ecuador**

In Ecuador, the national sports system is based on the Sports Law, Physical Education and Recreation of 2010 (MINDE, 2010). This law considers sports organizations as private law entities, with social and public purposes whose purpose is to satisfy the needs of physical activities, in accordance with the policies, plans and guidelines established by the Sector Ministry, in accordance with the provisions in the Constitution, laws, international instruments and applicable regulations.

Each organization of the Ecuadorian sports system complies with its staggered powers according to the Law, that is, the national sports organizations are nourished by the provincial organizations and these are nourished by the cantonal (municipal) organizations. This dynamic allows maintaining a methodology in relation to the legal powers that each organization has in the sphere of performance sports.

Therefore, the provincial sports federations are in charge of directing the sport, in order to obtain high results and promote athletes to the national centers. To achieve this, the Sports Law recognizes the autonomy of Ecuadorian organizations for the free exercise of their



management functions. This leads each provincial sports federation to direct in a particular way, depending on the potential and interests of each territory.

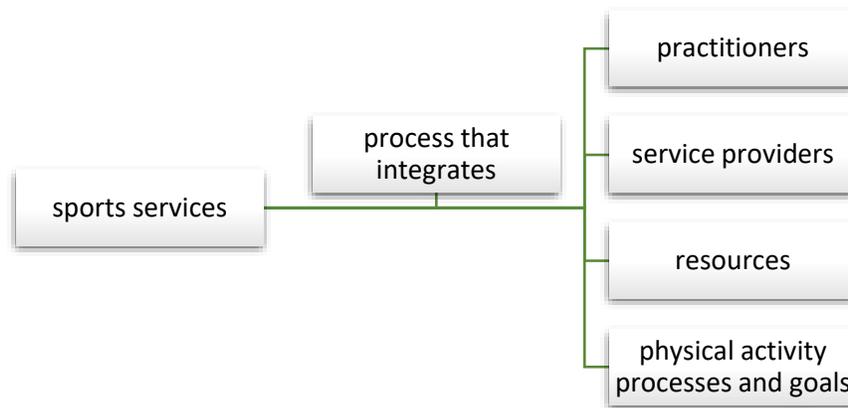
The Ecuadorian sports system, according to Rivadeneirai (2020), is supported by the Sports Law, Physical Education and Recreation in Ecuador, which constitutes the legal basis and establishes the general policies for the development of sports in the country and, as in the definitions previous, the Ecuadorian sports system has the mission of satisfying the needs of its practice in the population.

In this sense, it is agreed that the sports system must adjust to the different collectives and social groups that make it up, according to their values and cultures. Indeed, different groups or social states of sports can reconstruct and express their collective identity (Capretti, 2010). Sports systems organize the offer into groups of physical activity services that, in turn, respond to the most diverse needs of the population of a given country or territory. For Montero (2004):

"The process through which the practice of physical activity and sport is verified and also the viewing of sporting events, which are directly related to the fulfillment of the system's objectives and are developed by a basic organization, is called: physical activity service and sport". (p.67)

It is understood then that sports services guarantee that sports systems fulfill their social responsibility; they are the process through which sports practice is materialized in organizations, whether directly (execution) or indirectly (visualization); and they include the people who demand sports practice, those who offer it, as well as the resources needed to carry it out. Figure 1.





*Figure 1: Elements linked to sports services*

Sports activity in its different manifestations and objectives is consumed by practitioners; the providers direct it through the influence they exert on the practitioners; and the resources are used to execute the activity, in accordance with the laws in force in a given country (Rivero, 2008; Valverde, 2021).

### **Classification of sports services**

Due to their diversity, sports services are classified into groups that respond to the broad and diverse demand of people and are structured according to the particularities of the sports systems. For example:

- Morales (2003) refers to the European nomenclatures of sporting activities and classifies them into: sport as an economic activity, which is limited to physical education; sports activities, responsible for competitive sports at various levels, including adapted sports; and sports support activities, whether construction, equipment, scientific research, the press and others.
- Montero (2004) establishes among these groups: physical education (which includes adapted sports and rehabilitation), physical recreation, participatory, high-performance sports and finally, sports competitions.



- Ecuador's sports services, according to the Sports, Physical Education and Recreation Law (MINDE, 2010), are structured into: competitive, recreational, student, professional and Paralympic sports.

Millán (2016), as described by Montero (2004), summarizes the essence of the service groups with their objectives, type of client, personnel, processes and resources in table 1.

*Table 1: General characteristics of the sports service groups*

| Services                              | Customer                                | Staff   | Processes   | Goals   | Resources   |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| High sports performance               | Athletes                                | Coaches   | Sports training<br><br>Competence                 | High sports results<br><br>Comprehensive training of the athlete  | Premises, sports and technological implements that depend on each sport             |
| Physical education and rehabilitation | School sector and population in general | Physical Education Teachers,<br><br>Physical rehabilitators | Physical education<br><br>Physical rehabilitation | Training and development of physical-sports skills and abilities<br><br>Recovery and maintenance of health<br><br>Improving the quality of life | Premises, sports and technological implements that depend on each group of services |
| Physical recreation                   | General population                      | Recreation teachers   | Physical recreation                               | Recreation, creative use of free time<br><br>Improving the quality of life  |   |
| sports competitions                   | Spectator, general population           | Organizations   | Sport show  | Recreation, creative use of free time   |   |

As can be seen, both in the table and in the classifications of the services of the sports systems, these are oriented towards achieving high competitive results and are made up of a broad group of services. That sports systems achieve high national and international



results reflects the country's development in sports, economic and social matters. Therefore, sport is an activity that is budgeted and structured, based on achieving better goals.

### **Regulatory sports organizations**

To achieve high sports results, sports systems are structured into organizations. These entities constitute the way in which sport is distributed in hierarchies and fields of action. (Ávila, 2020; Escamilla, et al., 2018; Guzmán, 2006; Montero, 2004; Rial, 2014 Fajardo).

In the literature, based on organization theory, multiple criteria and approaches can be found to define what an organization is as an object of study of administration.

A concept that can be applied to any context, from a sports team to the largest companies, is the one presented by Stoner et al. (1996) "Two or more people working together in a structured way to achieve a goal or set of goals" (p. 6). Therefore, any organization, including sports organizations, is made up of people who have common processes and objectives and for whose fulfillment they need material, financial and technological resources.

That is why it coincides with Millán (2016); Slack and Parent (2006, 2007) when pointing out that for sports organizations it is important to know what elements identify them, beyond trying to put together a particular concept; taking into account that, from theory, the definitions of organization (such as the one presented above) are quite clear and can be contextualized.

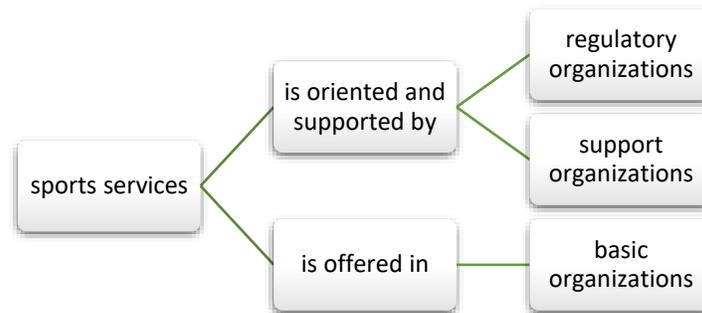
Millán (2016), for the specific cases of organizations that are directly related to sporting activity, describes the following as particularities:

- The client: physical activity practitioners, athletes and spectators.
- Staff: sports trainers, Physical Education teachers, rehabilitators, recreational promoters, managers and sports support staff.
- Processes: sports services and others that support their development such as logistics, research and professional training.



- Mission and objectives: aimed at satisfying the physical activity needs of practitioners.
- Resources: mainly those that guarantee the practice of physical activity, such as sports equipment, facilities and technological means.

Sports organizations have specific missions in the provision of sports and respond to sports systems. These functions determine the classification of these entities. Analyzed in this way, sports organizations can be public or private; international, national or territorial; with or without profit, the difference lies in how they contribute to the offer of sports services. Figure 2.



*Figure 2: Relationship between sports services and organizations*

The three types of organizations have different functions, but are closely related by a common objective: to satisfy the physical activity needs of the population, through the offer of sports services. In general, regulatory organizations are subordinate to support organizations and basic sports organizations.

The Ecuadorian sports system, according to Rivadeneira (2021), structures its organizations according to the Sports Law, Physical Education and Recreation in Ecuador, which is described below, according to its order of hierarchy:

Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports

National Sports Council



Ecuadorian Olympic Committee  
National Sports Federation of Ecuador  
Ecuadorian Federations for Sports  
Provincial Associations for sports  
Provincial Sports Federations  
Cantonal Sports Leagues  
Neighborhood Leagues, Parish Leagues and Sports Clubs

### Structure of the Ecuadorian sports system

The complete structure of the Ecuadorian sports system is represented in figure 3.

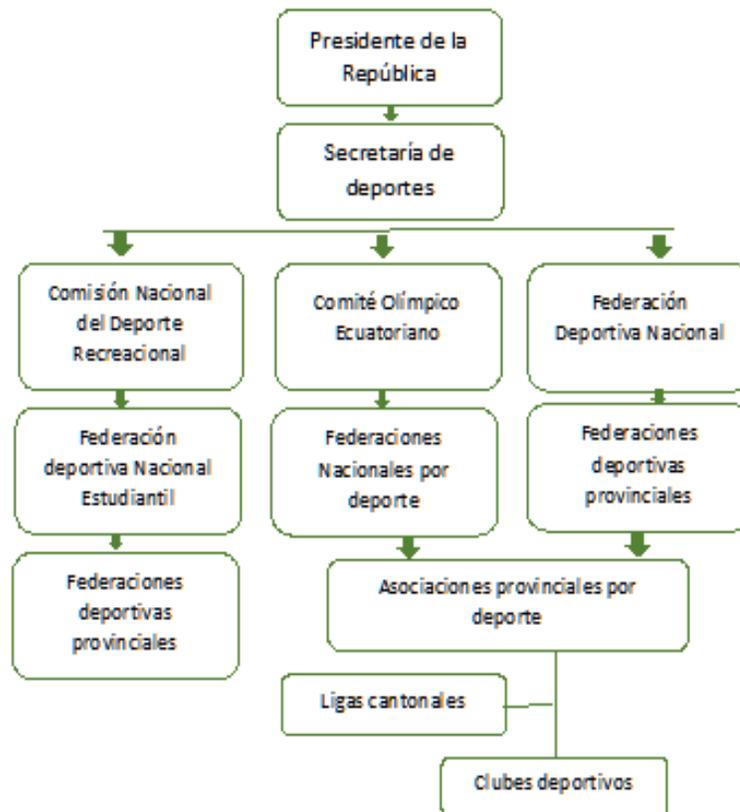


Figure 3: Structure of the Ecuadorian sports system. Source: Rivadeneira (2021)



In this way, the Law distributes sports services depending on the types of organizations in the system:

- Competitive sport. It includes competitive or professional sports activities and organized according to the development pyramid. It begins in training and high-performance clubs, cantonal sports leagues (municipalities), sport associations, and provincial and national sports federations.
- Recreational sport. It is massive and practiced by society for leisure and recreation purposes. It is made up of recreational clubs, the Cantonal Federation of Neighborhood Leagues, the Provincial Federation of Neighborhood Leagues and the National Federation of Neighborhood and Parish Leagues.
- Student sports. Practiced in educational centers throughout the country. It is classified into secondary and university level sports. It is structured in the provincial student federations and the National Student Federation; In higher education, the National University Sports Federation is the one that regulates this practice.
- Professional Sport. High performance sport for profit. It is made up of professional clubs of different sports. They are self-financed entities that receive sponsorships and other aid from the private sector for the products they offer.
- Paralympic Sport. Formed by disability clubs, associated with the National Federation of Sports with Disabilities.

Each regulatory organization has its subordination relationships and particularities in the sport's offering. For example, the Ecuadorian Olympic Committee and its network of national federations by sport do not respond directly to the government, but to its higher entities and are in charge, in the country, of establishing the values of Olympism, the management of sports, the international participation of Ecuadorian athletes and the organization of competitions, among other functions.

### **Strategic management in territorial sports organizations**

The high competitiveness in sport means that organizations, in the search for improving results at all levels, need to constantly improve their functioning, both internally and



externally. To do this, they dedicate time, resources, specialized personnel and research, integrated into a process that leads to the achievement of goals: the management process.

### **Management process in sports organizations**

There are multiple concepts of management, also called administration, management or direction, that respond to various approaches: procedural, functional, influence of some people on others or that simply respond to the actions of organizations.

Stoner et al. (1996) define management as a functional process "The process of planning, organizing, leading and controlling the work of the members of the organization and of using all the available resources of the company to achieve established organizational objectives" (p. 7). For his part, Wehrich (1985) conceptualizes management from the ability of some people to influence others, mediated by psychological processes "Management involves the process of influencing human beings so that they contribute to organizational purposes. It consists of leadership, motivation and communication" (p. 259).

Another concept widely cited in administration studies is the one presented by Chiavenato (2019) who, from a technical and structural approach to the functioning of the organization, proposes.

"Administration is nothing more than the rational conduct of the activities of an organization, whether profitable or non-profit. Administration deals with the approach, organization (structuring), direction and control of all differentiated activities, due to the division of work that occur within an organization". (p.1)

The concepts presented have common elements that allow the identification of management generalities, capable of being applied to any context:

- It is the process that makes organizations work.
- It is oriented to meet goals.
- It needs resources.
- It implies influence of some people on others.



- It is organized in phases.

Regarding this last aspect, the management phases: planning, organization, execution and control, proposed by Stoner et al. (1996), are the specific functions of managers defined since the late 19th century and generally remain the most accepted. The author calls the systemic functioning of these four phases, also called functions, the administration cycle.

In its essence, the management cycle responds to the activities carried out by managers in organizations, based on a strategy that guides work to achieve goals. In this way, Stoner et al. (1996) defines the four functions of management, which includes:

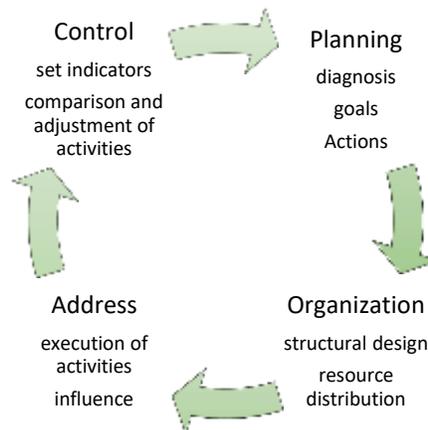
**a) Planning:** The process of establishing goals and an appropriate course of action to achieve them.

**b) Organization:** The process of engaging two or more people to work together in a structured manner for the purpose of achieving a specific goal or set of goals.

**c) Direction:** process of directing and influencing the activities of members of a group or an entire organization, with respect to a task.

**d) Control:** process to ensure that actual activities conform to planned activities. (pp. 11-13).

In the aforementioned research, other characteristics of each phase are determined that explain its systemic and procedural functioning, summarized in Figure 4.



**Figure 4:** Characteristics of the phases of each administration function.

Authors who have assumed this cycle in sports organizations are Del Toro (2004); Espinal, et al., (2020); Millán-Caballero (2016); Montero (2004); Robinson who agree that to apply the functions of management in sport, the work of each organization must be particularized, based on:

- 1) The goals to achieve. They should be based on aspects such as the number of clients and their levels of satisfaction, service results (health improvement, sports results), efficiency in the budget achieved or profits (in the case of for-profit sports organizations).
- 2) The structure must be designed depending on the fundamental processes, related to the sports services they offer, types of clients, support processes, among others.
- 3) The direction is fundamentally based on the application of sports services in their various manifestations.
- 4) The control indicators are based on the results achieved with the application of sports services and their daily operation, quality of personnel, identification of problems and opportunities in sports practice.

#### **Guidelines that lead the operation of territorial organizations in Ecuador**

- Develop processes of initiation, massification, recruitment and selection of talents, through the application of plans and projects aimed at obtaining sporting achievements in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, the Sports Law, Physical Education and Recreation, its regulations and related laws.
- Plan, direct, control and evaluate the athlete's preparation processes, based on national and provincial guidelines.
- Increase the sporting contribution to the different national teams.
- Promote the development of scientific-technical research for the benefit of the province and the country.



- Establish sports policies, aimed at strengthening sports work in the cantons of the province.
- Comprehensively develop the competitive strategy of the province, in order to improve sports results.
- Project provincial sports to international events.
- Prioritize the province's participation in the four editions of the national sports games.
- Determine, according to sports planning, the participation of the different sports disciplines according to the programming in the sports calendars.

The Sports, Physical Education and Recreation Law of Ecuador establishes the autonomy of Ecuadorian sports organizations, but as could be seen in the previous aspects, provincial federations must comply with the general policies emanating from the Ministry, in addition to other regulatory organizations such as the Committee Ecuadorian Olympic and national sports federations.

### **Strategies and their management in sports organizations**

Within the autonomy established for Ecuadorian sports federations, they can determine the management systems to be used, general policies, instruments, methods or other elements that identify them and, in turn, allow them to meet their goals and guidelines from higher entities. An instrument that helps sports organizations materialize their management processes are strategies.

According to Menguzzato and Renau (2012), the term strategy comes from the military field, focused on the actions carried out to defeat an adversary in order to achieve the objectives. Regarding the business context, the author cites strategy concepts from different approaches and authors, considered as initiators of the topic, which are summarized in table 2.



*Table 2: Strategy concepts*

| Authors  | Concept   |
|--|---|
| Andrews (1962);<br>Ansoff (1976);<br>Chandler (1962) | Joint determination of the company's objectives and the lines of action to achieve them   |
| Tabatoni and<br>Jarniou (1975)                       | Set of decisions that determine the coherence of the company's initiatives and reactions to its environment   |
| Hofer and Schendel<br>(1978)                         | Basic characteristics of the <i>match</i> (game, party, competition) that an organization carries out with its environment  |
| Menguzzato and<br>Renau (1984)                       | The business strategy explains the general objectives of the company and the fundamental courses of action in accordance with the current and potential means of the company, in order to achieve its optimal insertion into the socioeconomic environment. |

Source: Menguzzato and Renau (1995)

In general, the concepts of business strategy exposed involve decision-making to establish organizational goals and actions to meet them, within a specific environment (social, economic, political) determined in many cases by high competitiveness. Strategy encompasses the actions of organizations in their drive to achieve goals.

## CONCLUSIONS

Sports systems are structured into organizations that allow the population's physical activity needs to be met from different functions such as directly offering sport, supporting it or regulating it; regarding this last function, national and territorial regulatory entities have the social responsibility of budgeting for sports practice, expanding it and guiding basic organizations in the search for improving the quality of life of people, the formation of values and social integration, among other aspects.

Strategic management allows sports organizations to design, apply and control strategies, aimed at achieving goals and competing within a constantly changing environment. Each entity is developed, in particular, with its components and contents, where its orientation towards the current trends that regulate the management of sport is recommended.



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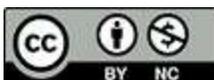
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The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest.

***Author's contribution:***

The author is responsible for writing the work and analyzing the documents.



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