

Hard job: Defining job descriptions and responsibilities of basketball managers a case study of Turkey

Arif Yuce¹, Hakan Katirci¹, Veli Onur Celik¹, Sevda Gokce Yuce¹, Ridvan Ekmekci², Coskun Tezic³

¹Eskisehir Technichal University, Faculty of Sport Science, Eskisehir, Turkey.

²Pamukkale University, Faculty of Sport Science, Denizli, Turkey.

³Independent Researcher, Bursa, Turkey.

Correspondence: arifyuce@eskisehir.edu.tr

Abstract

Sport clubs consist of simple or complex organizational structures that have typical properties of social organizations. For a sport club to continue its existence and to be managed effectively, the club needs specialised human resources and personnel with necessary training. Additionally, it can easily be stated that current sports do not allow an improvisational management style due to the complex structure of them and demands of professionals and that there are different duty and responsibility distribution within unique hierarchical structures of each sport club. It is possible express that general managers, working for basketball clubs or in basketball departments of sport clubs, have important roles at managerial level. However, there are no written scientific materials in Europe regarding job definition, scope of responsibility/authority, and competence of basketball managers. Well-defined job description should meet the priorities and needs of an organisation. Therefore, in basketball clubs, it is important to develop job description for general managers. Within this scope, the purpose of this study was to determine occupational definitions, duty-responsibility fields, and competences of basketball general managers working in teams competing in Turkish Men's Basketball Super League and Turkish Men's Basketball League. For this purpose, semi-structured interviews were conducted with total of 10 general managers. Obtained data were coded compliant with content analysis methods and divided into themes. In this context, total of 41 codes were created under 7 themes. Based on these codes and themes, it was found that general managers are individuals who have different roles to act as a bridge to provide happiness of team and organisation, who act in almost all stages of various management process within the club, who put efforts for all work and operation solutions, who have various personal competence in addition to certain level of sportive, education, management history, and who are generally responsible towards president and board of directors.

Keywords: General manager, basketball, basketball management.

Acknowledgments

This research was supported by Anadolu University BAP Commission (Project Number:1602S066).

INTRODUCTION

Especially since 1990s, sport has become a global, attractive industry with fans and wide range of opportunities for business development (Westerbeek, 2010). Concordantly, sections within sport industry have been developing and changing with social changes. Sport clubs that has an important place within this industry are identified as the main institutions to emphasise sports in social life, to realise social integration and make this integration permanent, and for organisation of sports (Masteralexis et al., 2005: 167). Sport clubs that have functions such as to identify national-regional identity, strengthen this identity, to answer socio-cultural and economic needs of the society, to unite players for a common goal can keep up to date such functions thanks to their own dynamics (Baloğlu and Davutoğlu, 2009:83).

Sport clubs consist of simple or complex organizational structures that has typical properties of social organizations (Andersen, 2011). For a sport club to continue its existence and effectively managed, the club needs specialised human resources and personnel with necessary training. Today, complex structure of sports and professional demands prevent improvisational management style (Simeva, 2015). At this point, although each sport club has different organisational structure, it could be stated that each club has unique hierarchical structure, different task and responsibility distributions (Michaela et al., 2014). Within this context, clubs put efforts to clearly identify and define tasks and responsibilities of personnel in this organisational structure for effective and efficient management (Robinson, 2010; Acimovic et al., 2013). Constantly increasing interest towards sports and diversification of this interest with inclusion of various sectors mobilise sport institutions/organisations towards growth and development (Beech and Chadwick, 2004:5; Covell et al., 2007:2). This leads increasing demands of sport federations and clubs to have sport managers with occupational competence (Horch and Schutte, 2003).

Generally, sport club employees can be analysed under two groups as managers and technical personnel. Technical personnel in sport clubs are individuals who work towards performance and managers are individuals with responsibilities and authority to direct activities of their subordinates i.e. technical personnel (Parks et al., 1998: 175-179). Additionally, it is possible to talk about a hierarchical structure under certain task/responsibility framework for sport club organisation (Parks et al., 1998: 175-179; Robinson, 2010; Acimovic et al., 2013). In the most general sense, structure for related hierarchy is shown in Figure 1.

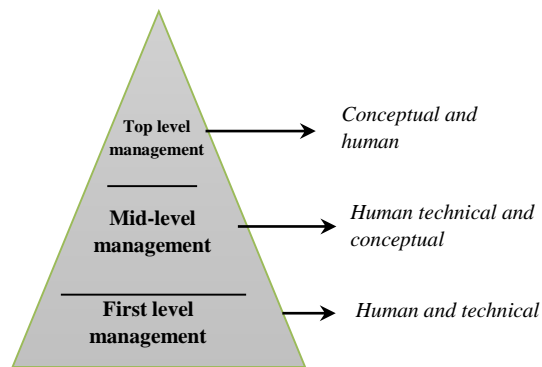


Figure 1. General hierarchical structure of sport clubs (Robinson, 2010)

Some managers in sport clubs are as follows (Parks et al.,1998: 175-179);

- President
- CEO (Chief executive officer)
- Site Managers
- Regional Directors
- Team Manager
- Coordinators (Supervisors)
- General Managers
- Sportive Director

When studies at international literature were reviewed (Parks et al.; 1998: 175-179; Wong and Deubert, 2010; Robinson, 2010; Wong and Deubert, 2011; Acimovic, 2013), it can be seen that managers are at

top level and mid level management (Figure 1) within sport club structure. Managers can be defined as individuals that affect current and future state of a sport club and individuals who are authorised to plan personnel policy as well as management of these policies. Based on this fact, for general managers working under basketball clubs or under basketball branch of sport clubs, it is possible express that these managers have important roles at managerial level.

Basketball managers can be considered as individuals who are devoted to coordination of various works in basketball clubs and basketball branches of sport clubs, who are active at every step to realise related process, and who work to keep functioning intact. Some of the responsibilities of managers can be given as identification of team needs, finding practical solutions to problems, and forming a team around provided resources (Wong and Deubert, 2010).

Since managers have multiple responsibilities, they may be forced to work every day, and every hour and can experience harsh working conditions (Aschburner, 2009). For success under these harsh conditions, managers need qualified managerial skills. Baum et al. (2001) divides managerial skills into two as general and special. General skills include decision making, conceptual skills, effective information processing skill, leadership, supply, using appropriate concepts, and using power and authority where special skills include technical and technological skills. Basketball managers with these skills can act as leaders within management structure, hierarchical order, and within their own job definitions in addition to having a voice in upper level management. Additionally, having job definitions for managers by basketball clubs is regarded as an important task to achieve targeted objective. Well-defined job description can address priorities and needs of an organisation and represent position responsibilities, working programs, and performance standards. With comprehensive job descriptions, basketball managers can have the chance to know their field responsibilities and how they will be evaluated (Robinson, 2010). However, it is possible to see different approaches in the U.S. and Europe regarding tasks and responsibilities of basketball managers. Wong and Deubert (2011) studied on National Basketball Association – NBA professional basketball league sample and stated that general managers can be responsible for operational business of the club such as finance, marketing, stadium/facility, media, and public relations under budget provided by title holders as well as quality and quantity management such as trainer selection, talent scouting, managers, trainers, individual trainers, assistant coaches, contract processes, and most importantly player transfers (Wong and Deubert, 2011). In other words, to make the team successful in every field, general control and directing all organisations is the task of manager (Wong and Deubert, 2010; Wong and Deubert, 2011; Deubert et al., 2013). Based on this fact, when scientific studies in Europe and Turkey were analysed, it was determined that there are no studies regarding job description, responsibility/authority field, and competence of basketball managers.

When basketball managers were evaluated for Turkey, it can be seen that Turkish Spor Toto Men's Basketball League is one of the most important European leagues in terms of audience, financial status, world-class players in teams, and trainers. Additionally, Turkish Men's Basketball Super League has become the league with the highest brand value in Europe with important investments and support of related sponsors (TBF, 2015). It could be said that this effected Turkish Men's Basketball Super League market share proportionally. Therefore, management of basketball teams or basketball branches of clubs that desire to take place under current conditions and that want to be successful and stable is becoming more important (Andersen, 2011; Benar et al., 2014). Under the scope of good management of basketball clubs/teams, based on the important and determinant role of the manager, the need to analyse tasks and

responsibilities of managers working in these teams and to determine competence levels of managers arises to well-manage basketball clubs or basketball branches of sport clubs in Turkey.

Based on these information, the purpose of this study was to determine occupational definitions, duty-responsibility fields, and competences of basketball managers working in teams competing in Turkish Men's Basketball Super League and Turkish Men's Basketball 1st League.

METHOD

Materials and Procedures

Based on the fact that experience of individuals working in manager positions of basketball teams can be obtained with interviews in depth, using qualitative methods for data collection was mandatory for this study. Accordingly, semi-structured interview technique among qualitative research methods was adopted to collected data in this study. When scientific studies in Europe and Turkey were analysed, it was determined that there are no written studies regarding job description, responsibility/authority field, and competence of basketball managers. Therefore, based on the fact that managers are individuals with the highest competence and knowledge on related subjects, universe of this study consisted of general managers working in professional basketball clubs or basketball branches of sport clubs in Turkey. Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with team managers selected with simple random sampling working in Turkish Spor Toto Men's Basketball Super League and Turkish Men's Basketball 1st League. The purpose of structured interview is to determine similarities and differences between information provided by individuals and make comparisons accordingly. Babbie (2006: 305-306), Gupta and Awasthy (2015:74) stated that semi-structured interviews can provide information that could not be collected with scale or survey. Within this context, to obtain more qualified information, semi-structured interview form developed by researchers with the help of the literature research was applied. Interview form include 9 questions about general manager job descriptions, responsibilities and experiences.

Participants

Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with team managers selected with simple random sampling working in Turkish Spor Toto Men's Basketball Super League and Turkish Men's Basketball 1st League. For Glaser and Strauss (2017:61), when answers to research questions and processes are repetitive (saturation point), data collection stage can be completed with the judgement of researchers. Within this scope, as data collected from total of 10 general managers from interviews were completed after reaching to saturation point.

Data Analysis

Interviews in this study were recorded with an audio recording device and these records were deciphered and turned into texts. Obtained data were analysed with content analysis method. Main objective of content analysis is to organise and interpret similar data under certain concepts and themes. Content analysis process consists of data coding, theme identification, code and theme organisation, findings definition, and interpretation (Taylor et al., 2016:161-194).

Researchers that conducted individual interviews were given two hours basic quantitative research and individual interview training to refresh research and individual interview information. Data obtained within the scope of this study were organised under the guideline of Kolpe and Burnett (1991) and coded by 5 researchers with doctorate degree complaint with content analysis methods. Reliability between coders regarding conducted analysis was calculated based on Conformity / (Conformity +

Unconformity) x 100 formula stated by Miles and Huberman (1994: 64) which is called internal consistency and represents conformity between coders. Accordingly, answers to each questions in semi-structured form were coded and collected under related titles. Reliability analysis of related titles varied between 0.83-1.00. For content analysis, it is stated that coefficients for reliability between coders should be 0.80 or higher (Miles and Huberman, 1994:64; Neuendorf, 2002:142-143; Patton, 2002). Accordingly, it could be stated that codes in this study and reliability between related coders are at acceptable levels.

RESULTS

Information about interviewed general managers and teams are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Information About Participants and Teams

<i>Team Symbol</i>	<i>National League in 2016-2017 Season</i>	<i>Did Team Participated Any International Organisation in 2016-2017 Season?</i>	<i>International Organisations in 2016-2017 Season</i>	<i>Success in International Organisations in 2016-2017 Season</i>
T1	<i>TMBSL*</i>	Yes	Euro league	Winner
T2	<i>TMBSL</i>	Yes	Euro league	Quarter Final
T3	<i>TMBSL</i>	Yes	EuroCup	Group Stage
T4	<i>TMBSL</i>	Yes	Champions League	Last 16
T5	<i>TMBSL</i>	Yes	FIBA European Cup	Top 16
T6	<i>TMBSL</i>	Yes	Champions League	Group Stage
T7	<i>TMBL**</i>	No	-	-
T8	<i>TMBSL</i>	No	-	-
T9	<i>TMBSL</i>	No	-	-
T10	<i>TMBSL</i>	No	-	-

Total interview duration with participants was 422 minutes 17 seconds.

* Turkish Men Basketball Super League

** Turkish Men Basketball League

As seen on Table 1. most of general manager who participated in research are working Turkish Men Basketball Super League and competing International organisations (Euroleague, Euro Cup, Champions League, FIBA European Cup).

Coding table and reliability coefficients for answers to interview questions are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Codes and Reliability Coefficients Between Coders After Content Analysis

Theme	Code	Reliability Coefficients Between Coders
Duty Definition	Being Bridge (Team-Management-Technical Team-Player)	1.00
	Happiness of Team	
	Organisation of Team	
Authorisation and Responsibility	Planning season	0.93
	Preparation camps and planning (pre-season, between season, camp season etc.)	
	Infrastructure planning	
	Planning tournament etc. organisations	
	Management of transfer process	
	Determining player fees (transfer payments, premium)	
	Management of relationship between manager and personnel	
	Management of relationship with federation and other institutions	
	Contract jobs (player, personnel etc.)	
	Mutual agreements (agreements with sponsors, agreement to supply sport materials, jersey etc., agreement to rent gym, agreement to rent lodgement, agreement for TV broadcasting income/advertisement)	
	General budget process and coordination	
	Marketing and corporate relationships	
	Match day organisations (ticketing etc.)	
	Licence procedures	
Foreign player procedures (work permit, immigrant management etc.)		
Background-Experience	Educational Background	1.00
	Sportive Background	
	Managerial Background	
Manager Properties	Communication Network	0.91
	Tenacity/Occupational Passion	
	Player Psychology	
	Manager Psychology	
	Patience	
	Sportive Background	
	Management Background	
	Practical Intelligence	
Analysis Skill		
Main Challenges	Communication Problems	0.83
	Economic Issues	
	Density of Fixture	
	Personnel Problems	
	Transportation Problems	
	Facility Problems	
Accommodation Problems		
Season Planning	Pre-Season Planning	0.86
	Season Planning	
	Post-Season Planning	
Hierarchical Responsibility	President	0.90
	Director of Boards	

As seen from Table 2, based on interviews, there were total of 41 codes under 7 themes. Some selected samples from themes and codes are given as follows:

Duty Definition

Being Bridge (Team-Management-Technical Team-Player)

T6: “...being a bridge between management, between president and board of directors and team is one of the most important factors.”

T8: “...general manager is the most important transition point of the team. Manager will sustain dialogues with team and management and present notifications from both sides.”

T5: “..We are a bridge between trainer-player, player-trainer, and trainer, player and management.”

Organisation of Team

T5: “...things a manager will do is to organise the entire team and to make basketball team, 12 players, 4 assistant coach, one main coach, 1 ball boy, and physiotherapist without any question marks in their head and win that game.”

Happiness of Team

T2: “...my duty is to make the player to be on field with happiness and health and to make the player perform in that game.”

Authorisation and Responsibility

T2: “making agreements, licencing, programming all trips, if necessary, organise cars, houses, resistance permit of all foreign players and all works in Turkey.”

“I have the authority with single signature to sign agreements, in correspondence with federation, or any other representations...”

T10: “It starts from the moment of agreement with player, rom the first agreement... Special agreements in legal framework, health agreements, licencing, health, accommodation, eating...all types of problems if you add life problems...”

“...All organisations in Europe, flights, drawings, all organisation is made via me...”

T8: “What needs do you have to represent the team? You say, I need this number of players, personnel, and assistant personnel. You identify the need. You allocate certain budget. You do what needs to be done. You collect that unit, people with that need, and bring them...”

T5: “I am talking with the coach, he says I need 3 Turkish players, 2 young players, and 6 really well foreign players. We can pay maximum 300 thousand dollars to foreign players but we need to lower the price as much as we can. ...we make player scale. Then, how many hotel do we have, how many away games? There are 7 İstanbul teams. There are 8 away games. How much will the hotel cost for 8 away games? For example, it is 100 thousand lira, you make it 125. Buses, planes, and other stuff... For organisations... You make the budget at the beginning of the season. You find a sponsor for that budget. When you are in Super league, you make agreement with tour company...”

T1: “General managers are actually individuals who do filtering operations, sustain balance between operation side and management side, complete ticketing, technical sides, team, players, trainers, marketing, and all other decisions, and in reality all departments have their own responsibilities but there is one person to make all decisions...”

T7: “...then, after selecting technical team, of course we need team setup, we call it team engineering. I mean, we have a budget here. We form our budget at the beginning of the season. Here, I mean, I try to take solid steps. At the beginning of the season, we are meeting with club sponsors or individuals and people that support the club and create a budget. After guarantee of this budget, we move on to team engineering...”

Manager Properties

T10: “everything is under the control of the club... We pay the money, we organise the house, restaurants to eat, and even cars. Some of them want to include education of their children in the agreement. In such cases, we take them to day-care and introduce them. With all these and all responsibility of foreign players, club creates work intensity...”, “I think a general manager should have player psychology, sociology, diet, legal knowledge or some of these knowledges, if a person will be assigned for the first time, as a general manager, that person should have those” “I mean, that person must know basics, additionally, manager title is a completely different thing. ”

T8: “I mean, certainly that person must have good personal relationship, amazing analysis skill, practical intelligence, and instantly produce solutions... Because this job we are living have no definition.”

T5: “...I mean, how can an outsider do that? A person should be in this business for at least 10 years to know psychology of couch and players... But still, it is too hard... As long as that person doesn't do that job.”

T1: “Having a sport background is extremely beneficial. I mean, if he is working in the same branch, the branch he played in, for knowing people in that branch, I was a renowned basketball player when I quit basketball. I knew all referees, all federation authorities, all other people in the team. This was an easy transition for me. Because imagine that you take a person who has no idea about basketball, that person will meet with people, communicate with them, develop a network. I say this in all other things but the most important thing in sports is network.”

T6: “Of course, during the season, people fight at home with their wife or father. There are these problems during the season. I am one of those people who will find the best solution to those problems, to manage that crises.”

Main Challenges

T3: “I mean, we frequently face communication. Communication. Communication within the club. Communication outside the club...Generally, club has good communication with outside. Sometimes there may be lack of communication between people in the club. When there is no communication, there are misunderstandings and that causes us to lose time. It causes us to lose energy actually it doesn't have major impact but I think the hardest thing is to manage finance.

T10: "...First, economy...because if you don't have money, you need to find sponsor, health sponsor, accommodation sponsor, advertisement, and money." "...we experience gym problem. We try to solve this problem with bilateral relations. I mean, we have that major economic problems."

T5: "...It is important, the coach is shouting, getting angry, trainer is offended. What happened? He doesn't understand me and all that, he always favours foreign players... Let's go and have dinner. Get into his subconsciousness, talk, I am also a player, I did this, I did that, all that stuff... He gets nary. A player who can understand can make it. Some doesn't understand..." "...he makes all organisation. Books hotel, books dinner, coach says ok. He says I found the money... But when it is about dialogue between player psychology and trainer, he sizzles."

T1: "The biggest thing is we have numerous people that we don't talk the same language. I mean, when the things you want to do and things the opposite side wants to understand are different, you experience lots of problem. Second, we are competing in European championship, Euro League, for a long time. But there are serious legal and economic difference between Euro League, Europe, and Turkey. This is challenging."

T9: "...We face with various problems to solve in just one day. Because we face with challenges that can be called donkey work. I believe that general manager position should create and manage a team. But other than that team, you are bringing 13 high ego player together and each one of them has different background, different culture, different city, or different country. Bringing them together and forming a chemistry between them is challenging and you are also forming a coach team where they will spend all their days and times."

T6: "...away game preparations, hotel accommodations, finding these with affordable prices, you request prices from 3-4 hotels. Making rooms lists and determining who will stay with who. All check-in and check-out processes, you need to notify the police, we ask for private security, escort, all these. We need to give driver name, licence plate of the bus to Eskisehir security branch manager. We need to write to federation for TV."

Season Planning

T7: "...I mean, we make agreements with technical team at the beginning of the season. Like, we first select technical team. The most important thing in management is to select the right people. I mean, if you select the right people, your work load decrease almost by half."

T4: "Beginning of the seasons is intense. My most intense period is between 15 August and 15 October. Until the first game of the league starts... Because the player, actually we don't even have a player. They don't need to come. When the training starts, all these materials, interviews, everything about players, bringing players one by one, settling them to their houses..." "...all preparations, hotel preparations, road preparations, from service to materials, I mean everything is hard... You can relax when the first game starts. Ready. Then what? Routine. Definitely the hardest period is before the season. The hardest period... Second hardest period...is when Europe starts... If you are playing in European cup, if you don't, you have nothing. Nothing... Because you play one game per week. Playing one game per week is nothing... Playing two games is extremely hard..."

T1: *“It is intense for me at the beginning of the season. I mean planning the season with administrative manager, I need to sit and talk with trainer, actually, we need to talk to all. Who will go and who will stay at the end of the season? Who will be our new players? After determining these, there is certain agreement period.*

...When season starts, these thing, I mean there is also licencing at the beginning of the season, completing agreements and licencing. After the season starts, we have normal tempo. Of course it is intense, currently, we are complaining about intense game tempo. We play a game at every 2.8 days. As managers, we always thing of the next game, the next game. We even think of the next two games...”

T6: *“...at the beginning of the season, yes, that two month, that one and a half-two month period is the most serious. After that, of course the season starts, in the first month, you have order. I mean in the meantime, you may have some extras of course, but still you have order in the first three month period...”*

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

Based on interviews with participants, main titles regarding job descriptions, duty-responsibility field, and competence of general managers working in basketball clubs or basketball branches of sport clubs was formed. Accordingly, information and details regarding general manager duty can be discussed as follows:

When general manager job description is evaluated based on participants views, this description emerged as executing team organisations, being a bridge between team-management-technical team and providing happiness of team. In the interviews, general managers expressed that managers, players, and technical teams take certain successful-unsuccessful events with high emotion, and there may be lack of communication between each piece of the whole under these circumstances. Similarly, it was emphasised that demands or complaints should be presented for mutual evaluation or there is need for intermediary to transmit these demands, and this mission should be taken by general manager. Managers characterised this mission as *“being bridge”* and identified this as one of the fundamental duties. Wong and Deubert (2011) stated that in basketball, general manager concept is underdeveloped and with developing conditions, things will become more complex and complicated. At this point, general manager duty that is not only restricted with team organisation has brought together missions such as happiness of team and being a bridge. General manager of a team that played quarter final at Euro League level used the following expressions to define general manager job:

“...my duty is to make the player to be on field with happily and healthy and to make the player perform in that game.”

These statements emphasise the above mentioned complex structure. Additionally, team organisation duty expected from general managers brings together certain authorisation and responsibilities. Depending on the organisations, although certain authorisation and responsibilities of general managers differed, there were certain emphasised points in this study. These authorisation and responsibilities can be listed as follows:

- Planning season
- Preparation camps and planning (pre-season, between season, camp season etc.)
- Infrastructure planning

- Planning tournament etc. organisations
- Management of transfer process
- Determining player fees (transfer payments, premium)
- Management of relationship between manager and personnel
- Management of relationship with federation and other institutions
- Contract jobs (player, personnel etc.)
- Mutual agreements (agreements with sponsors, agreement to supply sport materials, jersey etc., agreement to rent gym, agreement to rent lodgement, agreement for TV broadcasting income/advertisement)
- General budget process and coordination
- Marketing and corporate relationships
- Match day organisations (ticketing etc.)
- Licence procedures
- Foreign player procedures (work permit, immigrant management etc.)

When authorisation and responsibilities of general managers were evaluated, it can be seen that planning process was one of the most important process. Planning and managing all season under different titles can be expressed as main success factors (Watt, 2013:20). A general manager who is working in a team that has championships national and international organisations and was interviewed within the scope of the project emphasised the importance of planning as follows:

“...You always need to have a strategy and a plan. Being a general manager is not only about selecting players or coaches. You need to know everything about basketball and how everything is done. There are various elements...”

In addition to these, there were authorisations and responsibilities containing audit process simultaneously with transfer, budget processes, and intense player procedure management. Processes for transfer, budget, and agreement executed under planning decisions were expressed as one of the hardest processes general managers experienced at the beginning of the season. Under these circumstances, some general manager expressed their opinions as follows:

T10: “...compensations from player agreements or other things... We were in FIBA. We experienced transfer bans. We couldn't pay player fees due to economic crises and as a result, we experienced legal problems, and we learned by experiencing these problems...”

T2: “...you are making rent contract. We have tons of rent contract for player. Cars, I mean we have contracts for cars, I mean, everything works on contracts...”

T1: “...I was managing my budget by enabling cash flow in the team, I was sending monthly reports, I was controlling everything. Within our power, I could only get 3 million dollar worth players. I could do anything. But I knew what I need to do and that was we couldn't lose money...”

T9: “Budget is the most important part of management... One of my most important responsibilities in this club is to make budget planning at the beginning of the

season and complying to this budget as much as I can. Other than extreme events, not to make any unnecessary change or spending...”

In addition to these, procedures related with foreign players were expressed as important and emphasised responsibilities.

T6: “...when foreign players come, they have residence permits, bringing them here, flight organisations... Of course, all these are duties of general manager...”, “Bringing a foreigner here has enormous cost...Because when you bring them, you buy plane tickets. You need to give a house when they come. Then, you need to go civil registry for residence permit. Then, you go to immigration office. We have these procedures for residence permit...”

T7: “...having player visa for foreign players in foreign consulates, completing correspondence with ministry of sport or more precisely with ministry of interior about player visas, then, health controls, making the contract valid after health controls, when you look at the following stages, these are about accommodation, placing players, field organisations...”

In addition to all these, marketing and corporate relationships were expressed as responsibilities of general manager. Marketing activities and corporate relations that can be expressed as indispensable factors of sustainability of sport clubs (Wakefield, 2007:30; Funk, 2009:4; Shank and Lyberger, 2014:5; Kaser and Oalkers, 2015:15) and healthier organisations are generally executed with a team under hierarchical structure of the clubs.

When educational, managerial, or sportive background answers of general managers for their duties were analysed, it was seen that importance of education, sportive, and managerial background were emphasised. To better understand in-field and outside field situations experienced by players and technical team, in other words, to form empath, advantages of sportive background was emphasised, and importance of education and managerial background was emphasised to manage all processes in healthy manner especially, the legal procedures. Most significant expression on this topic was as follows:

“...I mean, how can an outsider do that? A person should be in this business for at least 10 years to know psychology of couch and players... But still, it is too hard... As long as that person doesn't do that job.”

Properties that should be under general manager duties may be expressed to have common properties under sportive background, management background, player psychology, and manager psychology titles. It could be said that experiences and sportive/managerial background are key roles to be a successful general manager. In addition to these properties, all of the participants expressed that network was the main requirement of general management duty. Network that was emphasised as important for almost all management processes including transportation, accommodation, facility management, and official procedures was expressed as follows:

T10: “...I mean, no matter where you graduate, if you have no experience, if you didn't do anything, you have a hard job...”

T2: "...I say this in all other things but the most important thing in sports is network. Who do you know and at what level? How do you know them? How will you approach people? Of course, doing the job correctly is important but the network you form shows you more..."

T1: "...network is key to increase your chance, develop, and learn..."

T9: "...a serious network is required. The most important thing in this job is network... This is not only for Turkey, it is around the world, it is global. Forming correct networks around the world, this is one of the biggest responsibilities of the general manager... When you get a good research network with these networks, this team, this team you formed in the summer will dream of minimum error..."

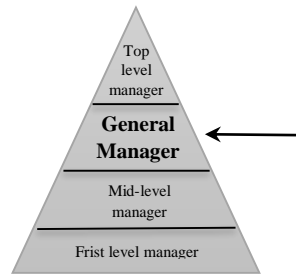
Relationship and network were regarded important for general managers to execute team organisation and execute various organisations and camp planning within season in healthy manner. Masterman (2014: 152) emphasised necessity to organise all data based on relationship with each shareholder group to execute event planning and organisation and to expand existing sectoral network. Within this scope, it could be said that social capital of general managers is an important element. Social capital is defined as a whole that connects interpersonal active relationships and human networks and groups, enables cooperation, and consists of trust, mutual understanding and common values (Cohen and Prusak, 2001:4). Main idea of social capital is that social communication networks are valuable assets (Field, 2006:16). At this point, it could be stated that general manager duty and social capital concept intersect at multiple points during relationship process and this intersection is important (Girginov, 2008: 281).

Watt (2013) listed qualities that sport manager should have as leadership, communication skill, thinking and evaluation skill, understanding and patience, planning, and resource use. Accordingly, patience, practical intelligence, and analysis skills that were presented within the scope of this study showed similarities with general manager properties. Similarly, Wong and Deubert (2010) stated that for general managers to effectively conduct business within the club, they need to express required vision and leadership and to make final decisions when necessary. Whitmore (2010:10) mentioned that leadership and coaching duty focused on revealing potentials of individuals and to maximise their potentials, and when applied correctly, this could help increasing employee involvement. At this point, it is possible to state that general managers who are communicating with numerous individuals in different departments and who act as a bridge with their leadership properties are important for all connections.

Main challenges experienced by general managers in their occupation was determined as the theme with major unconformity (Reliability Coefficient Between Codes=.83). The main reason for such circumstance was conducting interviews with general managers who work in different clubs with different economic and administrative structures. Main challenges experienced by general managers towards their occupation was expressed as communication, transportation, facility, accommodation problem, fixture intensity, personnel shortage, and economic issues. Related main challenges and certain economic issues can be eliminated. For example, by overcoming economic issues, accommodation, transportation, and personnel shortage can be overcome at certain levels while processes for fixture intensity, communication, and facility problems should separately be evaluated.

Under the scope of this study, it was determined that general managers were hierarchically responsible towards president or board of directors. Accordingly, it can be seen that general managers are regarded

as a part of management level in the structure of the sport clubs and they are among top and medium level managers within hierarchical structure (Figure 2).



Source Adapted from Robinson (2010).

Figure 2. Position of general managers within hierarchical structure

Although there are different structures, in terms of executed work and operations, general managers could be regarded as the captain of their own ship (Browne, 2010). Aschburner (2009) emphasised that work of general managers is complicated and harder from various duties within basketball structure, even from coaching with “as general managers, we have lots of works things to do. We need to have infinite energy because we have work 24/7” expression. Similarly, McPherson (2015) stated that being a general manager is more difficult than it is thought to be by saying “there are great difference between work of general managers and what we think” expression.

As a result, it was found that general managers are individual who have different roles to act as a bridge to provide happiness of team and organisation, who acts in almost all stages of various management process within the club, who put efforts for all work and operation solutions, who have various personal competence in addition to certain level of sportive, education, management history, and who are generally responsible towards president and board of directors.

References

- Acimovic, D., Spirtovic, O., Jonic, Z., Projevic, A. (2013). Organizational structure of management in sport and its significance for achieving sport results. *Activities in Physical Education and Sport*, 3(2), 251-253.
- Andersen, A.J. (2011). A New Sports Manager Does Not Make a Better Team. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 6(1), 167-178
- Aschburner A. (2009). Growing role of GM makes good front office leaders hard to find. <http://www.si.com/more-sports/2009/05/15/general-managers>. Erişim Tarihi: 10.09.2015
- Babbie, E. (2000). *The Practice of Social Research (9th ed.)*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing.
- Baloğlu, B. ve Davutoğlu, A. (2009). *Sporun Değişen Yüzü*. İstanbul: Derin Yayınları.
- Baum, R.J., Lock, E.A., & Smith, K.G. (2001). A Multidimensional Model of Venture Growth, *Academy of Management Journal*, 44, 292-303.
- Beech, J., Chadwick, S. (2004). *The Business of Sport Management*. Edinburgh: Pearson Education.
- Benar, N., Ramezani Nejad, R., Surani, M., Gohar Rostami, H., Yeganehfar, N. (2014). Designing A Managerial Skills Model For Chief Executive Officers (Ceos) Of Professional Sports Clubs In Isfahan Province. *Sport Science Review*, 23(1-2), 59 – 77.

- Browne, C. (2010). Role of General Manager in the NBA. <http://work.chron.com/role-general-manager-nba-9874.html> Eriřim Tarihi: 10.09.2015
- Cohen, D., & Prusak, L. (2001). *In Good Company: How Social Capital Makes Organizations Work*. Harvard Business Press.
- Covell, D., Walker, S., Siciliano, J., Hess, W.P. (2007). *Managing Sports Organizations: Responsibility For Performance (2nd Ed.)*. Oxford: Elsevier
- Deubert, C., Wong, G.M., Hatman D. (2013). National Football League General Managers: An Analysis of the Responsibilities, Qualifications, And Characteristics. *Jeffrey S. Moorad Sports Law Journal*, 20, 427-493
- Field, J. (2006). *Sosyal Sermaye*, (Çeviren: Bahar Bilgen, Bayram Sen). İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul.
- Funk, D. C. (2009). *Consumer Behaviour in Sport and Events Marketing*. Oxford: Elsevier
- Girginov, V. (Ed.). (2008). *Management of sports development*. Routledge.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (2017). *Discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Routledge.
- Gupta, R., K., Awasthy, R. (2015). *Qualitative Research in Management Methods and Experiments*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Horch, H. & Schutte, N. (2003). Competencies of sport managers in German sport clubs and sport federations. *Managing Leisure*, 8(2), 70-84.
- Kaser, K., & Oelkers, D. B. (2015). *Sports and entertainment marketing*. Nelson Education.
- Kolpe, R., Burnett, M., A. (1991). Content Analysis Research: An examination of applications with directives for improving research reliability and objectivity. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 18, 243-250
- Masteralexis, L.P., Barr, C.A., Hums, M.A. (2005). *Principles and practice of sport management*. Sudbury Massachusetts: Jones and Bartlett Publishers.
- Masterman, G. (2014). *Strategic sports event management*. Routledge.
- McPherson, S. (2015). What NBA General Managers Actually Do https://sports.vice.com/en_us/article/what-nba-general-managers-actually-do Access Date: 11.03.2017
- Michaela, I.T., Veronica, M., Dana, B. (2014). Importance of human resources in sports clubs and in sports performance management. *Scientific Journal of Education, Sports, and Health*, 15(2), 269-278.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded Sourcebook*. (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Neuendorf, K. (2002). *The Content Analysis Guidebook*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Parks, J. B., Zanger, B. R. K., Quarterman, J. (1998). *Contemporary sport management*. United States: Human Kinetics.
- Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods (3rd Ed.)*. London: Sage Publications, Inc.

- Robinson, M. J. (2010). Sport club management. United States: Human Kinetics.
- Shank, M. D., & Lyberger, M. R. (2014). Sports marketing: A strategic perspective. Routledge.
- Simeva, V. J. (2015). the connection between top managers education and their successful sport clubs management. *Research in Kinesiology*, 43(1), 11-15.
- Taylor, S. J., Bogdan, R., & Devault, M. L. (2016). *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods A Guidebook And Resource*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.
- Türkiye Basketbol Federasyonu (TBF), (2015). Başkan Erdenay'dan Yeni Sezon Mesajı. <http://www.tbf.org.tr/detay/2015/10/09/ba%C5%9Fkan-erdenay-dan-yeni-sezon-mesaj%C4%B1>. Erişim Tarihi: 15 Ekim 2015
- Wakefield, K. L. (2007). *Team sports marketing*. Elsevier.
- Watt, D. C. (2003). *Sports management and administration*. Psychology Press.
- Westerbeek, H. (2010). Sport management and sport business: Two sides of the same coin? *Sport in Society*, 13(9), 1293-1299.
- Whitmore, J. (2010). *Coaching for performance: Growing human potential and purpose-the principles and practice of coaching and leadership*. Nicholas Brealey.
- Wong, G.M., Deubert, C. (2010). Major League Baseball General Managers: An Analysis of Their Responsibilities, Qualifications and Characteristics. *A Journal of Baseball History and Culture*, 18, 74.
- Wong, G.M., Deubert, C. (2011). National Basketball Association General Managers: An Analysis of the Responsibilities, Qualifications and Characteristics, *Jeffrey S. Moorad Sports Law Journal*, 18(1), 213-262.