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Entrepreneurship in sport business strategy: What place in the DRC?

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Abstract

The objective of our study is to answer the following question: "How can entrepreneurship in sport business find its place in the Congolese context? With the appearance of sports sponsorship which marked a turning point in the history of sports business, the rapprochement of the entrepreneurial spirit and the discipline of sports management is an opportunity, but in the DRC, it evolves very difficult. Sports organizations are less competitive, and hardly invest in entrepreneurship due to lack of knowledge about converting sports practice into a professional activity. Sport, a social vector whose impact is no longer to be proven, is today at the center of a flourishing economy which attracts customers or consumers when they are faced with multiple choices of events or companies to satisfy their needs. Influencing mega sporting events, well-being, amateur sport and many others are determining factors in the impact of business in sport. In this study, we will approach sport through its economic aspect to raise awareness among Congolese entrepreneurs and stimulate the creation of businesses to address and/or reduce youth unemployment.

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1. Introduction

It nonetheless remains true that sports organizations are in perpetual search of efficiency. Representing one of the major challenges of recent years, the concept of efficiency within sports organizations continues to evolve and raise questions. Whether the objective of organizations is for-profit or not, they find themselves confronted with a good number of issues, of strategic, human, cultural and instrumental origins specific to their situations ^[1].

Sports entrepreneurship brings together a lot of areas. From sports events to corporate marketing and sports equipment manufacturers, the sports business has no shortage of resources to exploit. Obviously, taking up sport is an action in tune with the times. Between health benefits, economic opportunities or combining passion with work, there is no shortage of reasons to get involved in sport.

However, it would be a mistake to think that working in a field that coincides with private life necessarily sums up with success. It is very interesting to take the example of athletes (amateurs or professionals) who wish to retrain into sports entrepreneurship. Unfortunately, it often happens that the companies created by the latter are not sustainable due to lack of quality management. This notion is very well explained in the article "*Live your passion. When athletes become entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs take up sport*" (Dubois & Terral, 2016) ^[2].

We learn that having management qualities in order to launch your business appears to be an essential concept for the success of the latter. Conversely, and has said previously, many athletes starting an entrepreneurial adventure find themselves failing

¹ Winand, M., Zintz, T., Bayle., E et Robinson, L. (2010). Organizational performance of olympic sport governing bodies: Dealing with measurement and priorities. *Managing Leisure*, 15(4), 279-307.

² Dubois, F., & Terral, P. (2016). *Live your passion. When athletes become entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs take up sport: Practical sociologies*,

because a lack of management skills (administrative, financial, commercial) is quickly identified.

Regarding the technical part, experience as an athlete obviously appears to be an asset. We can think of the example of a sports coach who will have technical knowledge. However, it is important to remember that sports entrepreneurship, despite its “fun” side, does not change in any way the operation of a classic business with the management inherent to it.

The different strategies put in place to achieve efficiency have become more and more numerous and varied since the 2000s. With this ever-increasing desire to reach the summits, sports organizations are therefore obliged to compete in ingenuity to stand out and obtain results, both in the short term and in the long term.

Many companies take advantage of major world events, notably the Francophonie Games, the Olympic Games, etc., to showcase their goods and services. The spirit of the games is anchored in our morals but reveals itself more strongly as we approach such a big event at home. This dynamic surely plays on the entrepreneurial desire of certain individuals. For our part, this plays a role because such an organization represents a dream or, to be more factual, a model. This motivates us to undertake in this field which fascinates us so much. In addition, today we see many “start-up” type companies being created and this is also the case in the sports economy. The financial aspect has, in recent years, been reworked and financing solutions are now more accessible. These modern factors facilitate the creation of businesses and allow certain entrepreneurs to develop their projects.

Entrepreneurship can be seen as the outcome deployed by a group of individuals with the desire to expand their organizational efforts^[3]. Schumpeter's fundamental work (1965)^[4] defines this spirit as market opportunities exploited by people through innovation of organizational techniques. This definition was adapted by Wennekers and Thurik (1999, P.46)^[5] which define entrepreneurship as “the capacity and desire of an individual or a team to perceive and create new economic opportunities”.

In a globalized economic environment, small and large companies must react quickly to market fluctuations to remain competitive (Fayolle *et al.*, 2010). Additionally, organizations must have an entrepreneurial spirit, allowing them to identify new opportunities for expansion^[6]. A certain number of dimensions are put in place to assess the entrepreneurial level of the organization or individual, namely the capacity for innovation, risk-taking, proactivity, autonomy and competitive aggressiveness^[7].

So, the economic benefits of entrepreneurship include job creation, improved productivity and increased regional growth rates^[8]. Entrepreneurs are more likely to be alert to opportunities and willing to take risks^[9]. Therefore, when entrepreneurs recognize opportunities, desirable outcomes can result.

Many studies carried out over the last ten years on entrepreneurship have focused on different areas and, in fewer cases, on the sports sector. *However, some previous research has studied the link between sports and entrepreneurship.* Hall (2005)^[10] found that the development of mega-sporting events is linked to urban entrepreneurship. Spilling (1996)^[11] also examined entrepreneurship in the context of a sporting mega-event and found that sport is inherently entrepreneurial. Found that entrepreneurial spirit is well linked to the sports sector, as it allows for changing consumer demands and a greater emphasis on innovation.

However, there are necessarily obstacles to entrepreneurship in sport, especially in the current context of Africa and the DRC, the different factors are revealed and make the entrepreneurial task more complicated. These factors can be both external and internal. The world of sport has suffered an immense shock since the health crisis. Areas like events, like many others in sport, have experienced the full brunt of the consequences of COVID. It is certain that this crisis has impacted the desire and motivation for certain entrepreneurs to create their business or at least to delay it.

Internally, other problems also appear. Sport is a thriving sector attracting more and more entrepreneurs; the players in the sports entrepreneurship market are more and more numerous and more and more competitive. It is complicated to attract customers or consumers when they face multiple choices of events or businesses to satisfy their needs. How to stand out from the competition in a booming and evolving sector? More and more players are present in sports entrepreneurship, so it is important to succeed in finding the right idea that will make the difference.

However, from an internal and external point of view, we have noted that the strategic changes, successful or not, made by sports organizations and coming from various origins (reorganizations, change of direction, etc.).

It is important for us to understand the contribution of these strategic changes in effective business creation. Our study aims to stimulate the spirit of sports entrepreneurship in the DRC, especially in the development of sports business strategy. It is relevant for us to understand the need by targeting on the one hand the organizational strategy relating more to our specialty and, on the other hand, sporting efficiency, and more precisely business creation.

Entrepreneurship increases the number of actors likely to strategically develop sport business in the creation of companies. This is our hypothesis. Thus, our methodological approach consisted of responding to our problem by analyzing qualitative interviews carried out with four sports federations or organizations from the DRC in Kinshasa, in particular:

- Basketball Federation
- Football Federation
- Taekwondo Federation
- Wrestling Federation, etc.

³ TERJESEN S. (2008), Entrepreneurial Career Capital, Innovation and New Venture Export Orientation, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Siri_Terjesen/publication/5012632pdf, (consulté le 06/07/2024)

⁴ Schumpeter (1965) Cité par WENNEKERS S. & al (1999) “Linking Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth”, Volume 13, Issue 1, pp 27–56.

⁵ WENNEKERS S. & al (1999) “Linking Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth”, Volume 13, Issue 1, pp 27–56

⁶ M. Said OUHADII, Zineb JIBRAILI, Sports entrepreneurship in the service of regional development, Moroccan Journal Of Business Studies, Vol.1 Issue N°1, Pp. 233-254

⁷ LUMPKIN G. & all (2015) cited by M. Said OUHADII, Zineb JIBRAILI
⁸ Van Praag and Versloot 2000, Idem

⁹ Schneider *et al.*, 2007, Ibidem

¹⁰ BALL S. (2005), “The Importance of Entrepreneurship to Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism”, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/241284450_The_Importance_of_Entrepreneurship_to_Hospitality_Leisure_Sport_and_Tourism, (consulté le 06/07/2024)

¹¹ SPILLING O. (1996); “The Entrepreneurial System: On Entrepreneurship in the Context of a Mega-Event”, journal of business research, Volume 36, n° 1, pp. 15-24

We therefore decided to speak with these professionals in the sector so that they could provide us with the answers necessary for our study. The interviews were carried out remotely based on a previously established questionnaire. All these experts were able to provide us with answers to our hypothesis.

2. Sports Entrepreneurship Marking

2.1. Theoretical framework of sports entrepreneurship

Sports organizations are frequently managed by non-profit organizations with the aim of maintaining economic growth. As the definition of sports entrepreneurship indicates. In this study, the focus is on sports organizations, which create professional businesses. A sports organization acts as an entrepreneur when its owners, managers, and employees identify and respond to a market opportunity.

Sports entrepreneurship represents both the process of creating a business and the value created by the process. In sports businesses the main objective should not be the achievement of profit, although most sports related businesses have a financial return, the financial objective will be important in achieving a sporting result. It is a sports company's ability to leverage social capital that allows it to be more competitive.

A sports-focused business requires sufficient resources to achieve its strategic sporting and social objectives. Individuals' skills and experience influence the nature of entrepreneurial activity (Ensley, Carland, & Carland, 2000). This means that the types of entrepreneurial activity adopted by sports companies are typically linked to the human skills available to this company. The performance of a sports company will depend on its ability to create new skills and new values. In China, for example, the National Basketball Association has grown because there is a large potential market in the country. Social capital has an effect on the management of a sports business. One of the main challenges for a company is to create effective involvement in decision-making of all members of the organization.

Entrepreneurship is a term used in several contexts^[12], most of them focus on the need to achieve a concrete result^[13], find new opportunities and develop notoriety^[14]. However, and despite the efforts made in this area, the literature does not provide a single definition. Most authors link the notion of entrepreneurship to the economic context, generally to business development and economic development (Drucker, 1995)^[23] while integrating innovation and the creation of new opportunities.

Entrepreneurship allows the emergence of economic efficiency^[15]. Promoting entrepreneurial spirit is necessary for a healthy economy and to support economic development through job creation (Henry *et al.*, 2003)^[16]. Entrepreneurs improve the competitiveness of an economy and create new wealth.

Sports is a global industry that has been influenced by changing environmental conditions around the world. Sports entrepreneurs are motivated by these changing conditions, but also by financial and personal factors. The complexity of

the sports field leads us to say that the key to success lies in the way in which companies are involved in this industry^[17]. Entrepreneurship is becoming a more popular research topic in sports. Sports entrepreneurship can be described as the mindset of people or organizations actively engaged in seeking new opportunities in the sports context. Sports entrepreneurship refers to any innovative activity in a sporting context. The very essence of sports entrepreneurship is due to the absence of any activity in most sports organizations^[18]. Sports entrepreneurship introduces a range of new issues related not only to technology (such as manufacturing tools and spectator-spectator interaction), but also to social, ethical and legal considerations, including diversity, privacy and social cohesion.

Sports entrepreneurship management is a situated social process and, in many cases, is carried out intuitively by those involved. Organizations develop different versions of entrepreneurship in different sporting conditions. In the dynamic global environment, the question of what constitutes sports entrepreneurship is not yet resolved, which means that a clearly accepted idea of what exactly is sports entrepreneurship remains to be developed. Few studies have empirically developed and tested the existing cohesion between these two axes. Furthermore, little conceptual or empirical research has been devoted to understanding the conditions that produce sport entrepreneurship.

The role that entrepreneurship plays in sports organizations is much different than that played in other industries. Exclusive sports factors related to entrepreneurship include the communicative power of mass media, social interaction, and general appeal.

Entrepreneurship is approached by sports organizations in a collaborative, community and strategic manner in order to improve their effectiveness. The beneficiaries of this enterprise include internal and external stakeholders – including athletes, fans, customers, governments, sponsors, communities and employees. Sports entrepreneurship is considered to be a sporting entity acting collectively with the aim of creating value. Entities involved in sport may include individuals, organizations or communities.

Sport and its relationship with entrepreneurial outcomes have not yet been fully examined in management research (Goldsby, Kuratko, & Bishop, 2005). Sports entrepreneurship is an entrepreneurial type that offers a promising strategy for increasing economic development. A sports entrepreneur is one who organizes, operates and assumes risk to develop a sports business enterprise.

The new theoretical framework of sports-based entrepreneurship proposed in this article combines both disciplines of entrepreneurship and sport management so that future research can use this theory as a framework for understanding entrepreneurial activity in the sport context. In this article it is argued that sport is essentially an entrepreneurial process due to the innovation, proactive activity, presence of technology, risk taking and value creation that takes place.

1.2 Entrepreneurial process in the sporting context

¹² Spencer et al., 2008 cited by M. Said OUHADII, Zineb JIBRAILI, Op. cit.

¹³ The same

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ball 2005, Op. cit.

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Lechner & Schmidt, 2002 cited by M. Said OUHADII, Zineb JIBRAILI, Op. cit.

¹⁸ A sports organization is a company which manages sporting activity, we can distinguish different forms, those considered as non-profit associations, in the case of sports clubs, or others having a supervisory character, such as ministries of sport or federations

a) Innovation sportive

The development of sports business is in tune with the times. Subject to new technologies, the field we study has been able to take advantage of this technological change occurring within our society. The objective is to successfully integrate technological developments within sport business in order to make it an even more attractive and flourishing field^[19]. First of all, it is therefore interesting to note that in the sports industry, we find different approaches to market analysis. Indeed, depending on the sector of activity and sport, the economic activity will not be the same (Hillairet, 2002)^[20]. Also, it is important to dissociate the needs linked to sport tourism/leisure from the needs linked to performance. Certain sports will be more easily subject to technological development such as motor sports for example “The technologies inherent to motor sports are generated by the automobile industry, not by the sports industry” (Hillairet, 2002)^[6]. This quote clearly shows us that the two worlds of business and sport are closely linked but different at the same time (Barbusse, 2009)^[1]. It is more difficult to compare the impact of entrepreneurship and its progress in the sporting field than in other industrial sectors. The innovations are obviously correlated to the sports market target. The entrepreneurial innovations implemented must be adapted whether they are aimed at a broad audience (leisure sport) or more specific (performance).

“In a context characterized by increasing levels of satisfaction and product requirements, imagining, designing and marketing innovative goods and new activities then becomes an imperative for survival for all firms present on the market” (Hillairet, 2002)^[6]. Based on this idea, we understand that innovation becomes vital in a market as changing and competitive as that of sport. The customer aspect is also taking up more and more space and makes it possible to have criteria and requirements commensurate with the amount given. Finally, is innovation brought within the sporting world or does the sporting world force innovation to create itself? The difference between these two concepts is very important.

b) Sports proactivity

Sports organizations are proactive in managing their teams and developing better organizational performance. However, sports organizations have been proactive in pursuing new business opportunities.

Entrepreneurship is an integral part of sports development because it focuses on valorization. The proactive nature of sports entrepreneurship is evident across different business subcategories. Social entrepreneurship in sport is the use of social issues to create change in the sporting context. Community entrepreneurship involves a sporting community acting in innovative ways to create social and financial benefit. Common examples of community deprivation are the partnership of schools or sports teams with government agencies to create sports fields. Corporate entrepreneurship involves sports businesses involved in innovative activity and is typically found in professional sports leagues.

c) Technology

It is impossible to talk about innovation without addressing the subject of technology. An inherent characteristic of innovation, technology today represents one of the greatest spearheads in this environment. This correlates to the changing world we live in today. In addition to the idea developed previously on the obligation to innovate within a sports sector, technology in a sector so exposed to competition must constantly evolve. Apart from instrumental techniques and those of industrial production, there are other techniques which play a role in the emergence of the sporting world. Among them, we find “gestural techniques” which concern body skills, “instrumental techniques linked to sports equipment, services and spaces”, “manufacturing and implementation techniques” and finally “promotion and dissemination of the offer” (Hillairet, 2002)^[6]. What ultimately emerges from these examples is that the technologies within sport are not exclusive to this sector and even that they come from other professions and have undergone “adaptations” in order to be able to be applied in the best possible way manners.

d) Sports risks

When we talk about the qualities necessary to become an entrepreneur, we must emphasize the main characteristic which is risk-taking. It is generally accepted that people participating in sport are risk takers. Stakeholders who take risks in sport include athletes, sporting event organizers, officials, coaches, sports administrators and members.

The level of risk taking in sport depends on personality traits that include emotional and physical risk. Adventure sports such as big wave surfing and free diving are more risk-prone. Risk taking in sport is not limited to the people who play the sport. Sports organizations are involved in a number of types of risks such as projects, innovation and social development.

2.2. Dynamic aspects of sports entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship can flourish in various contexts, due to the absence of cultural and social obstacles which could constrain its emergence in one or more areas. States that in a sporting context, entrepreneurs provide the basis for innovative activity. Through sport, new ideas can flourish and provide the basis for entrepreneurship. Sports entrepreneurship is dynamic and impacts a number of management areas such as business strategy, crisis management, new sports development, performance management, innovation, promotional strategies, issues social issues, sustainability issues and technological developments.

2.3. Place of sports entrepreneurship in job creation

Sports companies intervene in different areas with a social vocation^[21], environmental, financial... They can also position themselves in the for-profit, non-profit and governmental sectors. The economic and social impact of sports businesses varies depending on their geographic location. Additionally, regional and urban community development has allowed local sports businesses to flourish or be integrated into a larger sports body.

Many sports businesses are required to be both economically

¹⁹ According to “Sport business, an entrepreneurial way of life”, <https://bordeaux.business/le-sport-business-un-mode-de-vie-entrepreneurial/>

²⁰ Hillairet, D. (2002). Is there an innovative environment in the sports industry? *Innovations*, 16(2), 71

²¹ Sports businesses have a social purpose when their main mission is based on community or social objectives

and socially responsible. They must also ensure their long-term sustainability based on a triple balance sheet (social, environmental, financial). Innovation is the key to success of every organization, including those operating in the sports sector. It makes it possible to face the challenges that sports companies face ^[22]. It is important to develop a solid theoretical platform to understand the existing cause and effect relationship between sports entrepreneurship and regional development.

New businesses serve as an engine of regional growth and job creation, thus, entrepreneurs must leverage resources and institutions that are crucial for regional development.

Thus, sports entrepreneurship will be able to ensure territorial development through these different types of intervention:

- **Community-based:** Community-based entrepreneurship involves a community acting collectively as both an entrepreneur and a business in pursuit of a common goal. In the sports context, community entrepreneurship occurs when sports teams, organizations or players partner with community organizations ^[23]. The entrepreneurial spirit in sport is dynamic and affects the economy and society through community development. Sporting events and teams encourage the development of a community by encouraging participation in sporting activities.
- **Ethnic:** Ethnic entrepreneurship in sport is one of the engines of social change. Sports allows ethnic groups to excel in their chosen profession without discrimination due to their social status. The most famous example of ethnic entrepreneurship was in 1947 when Jackie Robinson became the first African American to play Major League Baseball. Entrepreneurs have used the best players in different fields, regardless of their ethnicity in order to produce results that exceed those of competitors.
- **International:** International entrepreneurship ^[24] in sport also occurs at the individual level. Other professional sports leagues have internationalized by recruiting international players and focusing on international fans as several teams do today, FC Barcelona, Real Madrid Manchester City. This internationalization affects all segments of the industry athletic. Today, no one will be able to deny the propaganda of fitness clubs in different regions of the world, they are developing as much as service companies with an organized structure, aimed at promoting sports and health protection, which also constitutes an important axis in supporting regional and national development.
- **Social:** Sports entrepreneurship also aims to combat climate change and promote sustainable development, the UN has recruited several athletes to help promote the achievement of 17 sustainable development goals by 2030, by encouraging partnerships with governments, civil society and the private sector.
- **Technological:** Technological entrepreneurship is the integration of innovation into technology. Advances in

technology over the past decade, such as the use of the internet and podcasts, have innovated sports practice. Fantasy sports and online sports gaming sites have created new opportunities for sports through sponsorship and merchandising opportunities. The National Hockey League has been entrepreneurial by sponsoring a glow puck which makes it easier for viewers to watch the game.

3. Entrepreneurial and Investors IN Sport

Another very interesting aspect to discuss concerns the different resources available to these entrepreneurs and to notice how they influence the management of the business. Relying on the resources of your “past” life appears logical and it is instructive to see how they have the same profile as the entrepreneur or athlete in question. If we take into account the second profile, more heterogeneous resources; conversely, in the first profile (athletes becoming entrepreneurs) the resources remain around the sporting world and less in management.

Despite the diversity of these two very distinct profiles of sports entrepreneurs, we can notice some common aspects. First of all, compromises in personal life must be taken into account in both cases during an entrepreneurial adventure in sport. Also, we are forced to notice that there is a strong “commercialization” aspect behind the passion. This notion, consistent with athletes becoming entrepreneurs, appears inevitable today and above all essential in order to have a long-lasting business.

A quote from DUBOIS’ article sums up this idea very well: “The difficult reconciliation of the original culture of nature sports with lucrative concerns” ^[25] (Dubois & Terral, 2016) ^[14]. In this specific case, the example of nature sports is used but the idea is the same for sport in general. Reconciling passion and the need for profit is an aspect of entrepreneurship that is difficult to handle but so important. We therefore ask ourselves how to combine the culture of sport with the usual questions inherent to a company?

3.1. Approach to Sport Business

We therefore saw how the difference between an athlete becoming an entrepreneur and an entrepreneur investing in sport was important. We will now refocus our thinking on the intrinsic rapprochement between sport and business. Corporate sport is developing more and more these days, whether through promotions in sports halls thanks to the works council or the development of sports seminars to strengthen a team and advocate team-building, The presence of sport in companies is growing. As is very well explained in the article “Sport in business, a rapprochement that does not go without saying” ^[26] with the example of company seminars, we notice many positive points such as a different approach to hierarchy, better assimilation of company values or even a strengthening of internal cohesion.

However, and despite these positive aspects, we note that business logic is in contradiction with sporting logic on certain points. As said previously, the state of mind in sport and more particularly the way of undertaking can differ. The

²² Innovation includes perspectives, behaviors, strategy and operations (Chell et al., 2010)

²³ Community organizations include schools, colleges, universities, non-profit organizations and local government agencies.

²⁴ Certain sports players like David Beckham are a typical model of an international entrepreneur, he commercialized certain sports on an international scale, and therefore allowed their globalization “football”.

²⁵ Dubois, F., & Terral, P. (2016)., Op. go.

²⁶ Barbusse, B. (2016). Sport and business, a connection that is not self-evident: Practical sociologies, N° 32(2), 1-8. <https://doi.org>

focus on the sustainability of a business opposing the passion for sport still poses certain limits as to the rapprochement between sport and entrepreneurship. In addition, it is very likely that the economic aspect has taken precedence over passion. Indeed, today clubs are seen as sports companies belonging to parent companies which are the federations ^[27]. An in-depth look at sport in business will be carried out in the 3rd part: “Business and sport, two close and complementary worlds” of this literature review.

3.2. Impact of sports entrepreneurship in the future

The sports business sector is not experiencing the crisis. With a unifying and entertaining spirit for the general public, sport is and has a strong chance of remaining a very prosperous field. The financial stakes are so important and immense that this sector cannot be in financial distress and worried about the future. The development of marketing and new technologies also plays a significant role in the continuation of this success. Benefiting from a prosperous field, sports entrepreneurship can then envisage, provided it is well managed, a positive future. Value creation is therefore strong and an entrepreneur can find how to differentiate themselves in this sector full of opportunities. The sports industry above all displays a globalized and world-oriented spirit.

Sports entrepreneurship appears today as a dream for many people wishing to combine passion and work. This phenomenon is increasingly observed among young people due to the possible diversity of studies. The case of students in STAPS (Sciences and Techniques of Physical and Sports Activities) clearly reflects this desire to work in the world of sport. However, we again observe a difference between expectation and reality in sport and entrepreneurship. Like athletes becoming entrepreneurs ^[28], STAPS students find themselves confronted with current events in the world of sports entrepreneurship. As it is said “The tension between initial passion, success in studies and professional integration is strong (Terral, Dubois & Gojard, 2017) ^[5]; we find ourselves in a situation where it becomes complicated to aspire to your professional project in sport.

4. Entrepreneurship in the Congolese sports context

4.1 Professional practicability of sport

The youth of the DRC, with growing resources and increased accessibility to information today, represent the future of sports entrepreneurship. Student courses such as STAPS (Sciences and Techniques of Physical and Sports Activities) can represent an option in order to obtain both sporting and professional notions.

However, there is always the problem of reconciling the financial objective (inherent in the survival of a business, but especially in the customs of entrepreneurship in Congo) and the initial reason which is passion. In addition, it is essential to maintain the sporting aspect in order not to distort oneself and to transmit one's passion through one's business.

Concerning resources, we observe a great diversity of these as well as the social links of young entrepreneurs ^[29]. This diversity is seen as a strength through the youth of Congo/Kinshasa. According to DUBOIS' analysis, we can identify two types of entrepreneurial paths among young

people.

Initially, sports entrepreneurship is seen as a solution to the non-employability of its amateur players.

Secondly, we observe that young athletes who have actively participated in their studies can aspire to a more prepared entrepreneurial career.

Coming back to the first type of entrepreneurial path, entrepreneurship saves young people who are “failing at school” or who have not found their way. This aspect also allows you to make a transition between amateurism and the professional aspect.

We can notice the impact of evolution within a professional sports environment. Indeed, some young people will either decide to continue within the same company in which they currently operate, or in another case, have the idea of creating their own company in order to develop their activity.

In this situation, we can deduce that they are strongly influenced by a work environment that they like and pushes them to take action themselves. The notion inherent in these two cases is the practice of a concrete professional activity. The similarity between the two situations remains the “terrain”. The latter learned through concrete training within a company because they had not found their way during their studies.

However, this first scenario where employability appears as a solution for young people who have not found their way is double-edged. Indeed, evolving in a purely sporting environment (without a professional or other background) conditions its young people who only acquire sporting notions and resources during their years. There may therefore appear a lack in other skills inherent to the proper functioning of a business (commercial, administrative, financial, etc.) ^[30]. This lack of knowledge related to sports entrepreneurship is perceptible in the DRC in general, which blocks the emergence of sport business in the development of entrepreneurial strategy. Hence the need to invest in university studies in this regard.

The example of STAPS students could inspire young university entrepreneurs. The students, being firstly prepared thanks to theoretical courses and secondly, practice sport on an amateur basis, and present themselves with longer-term and therefore more complete projects. This mix between professional and sporting career has the consequence of leading a more prepared and, in theory, more prosperous entrepreneurial adventure in the future. The following sentence: “amateur sporting commitment is gradually becoming a useful resource for professionalization” ^[31] reflects this situation well.

Learning knowledge during studies, of all types (sporting or management) proves useful in the future for these young entrepreneurs. The know-how acquired will be used in particular in the management of businesses which, we have noted, is a sensitive point in the entrepreneurial adventure of many athletes around the world. A sector like STAPS can provide a balance between sporting skills (amateur or professional) and managerial and management skills.

However, it is important to remember that complications can arise when there is a desire to incorporate one's daily passion into one's professional life (Terral, Dubois & Gojard, 2017)

²⁷ Barbusse, B. (2016), Op. cit.

²⁸ Dubois & Terral, 2016, Op. cit.

²⁹ Dubois, F., & Terral, P. (2017). Young people more or less ready to become entrepreneurs: From amateur sports involvement to the creation of

sports tourism businesses. *Agora debates/youth*, N° 75(1), 103-116.

<https://doi.org>

³⁰ Dubois & Terral, 2017, Op. cit.

³¹ The same

[5]. The network, developed through an educational structure, is of paramount importance. The relationships acquired during different professional experiences, as well as knowledge, are essential.

4.2. Amateur practice in business creation

One of the many problems in sports entrepreneurship is having the opportunity to work on your passion and know how to transform it into a lasting activity [32]. Managing a business is not just about having knowledge of the environment in which you operate. It is important to master the concepts inherent to running a business. At a minimum, surround yourself with people who are competent in these areas.

The strong desire to create their own business even for people already part of the sports field in the DRC is lacking. Also, employees already working in the field of sports tourism but wishing to have their own business are less active. The feeling of entrepreneurial freedom is very strong in other areas. This phenomenon is called identity redefinition [33].

Arriving in sports entrepreneurship can be done voluntarily but can also follow a change in life. Many external factors can influence market players and act as a trigger for them. Resignation, change in family life or unexpected encounters are examples of decision-making elements pushing you to take action.

The social aspect is important to take into account because it can appear to be an essential determinant in converting a simple project into a real entrepreneurial adventure. Launching a project in sport, and even in another field, may be more reassuring if it is carried out with a partner or several. Finally, it is interesting to note that the sports entrepreneurial project does not necessarily rhyme with the total cessation of a so-called main activity. It appears that some of the Congolese companies in the field of sport (Mazembe, Imana, Renaissance, Lupopo, etc.) are created by managers of a company wanting to develop a second activity. A side activity allowing them to progress in a field they like and benefit from additional income.

4.3. Management and hierarchy of sport and business

A very interesting comparison is that between business managers and high-level sport. Ultimately, managing a team, whether high-level sports or business, comes down to managing humans, in an environment that they frequent almost daily in order to meet their needs. We must manage the sporting, intellectual or manual skills of each person while paying attention to the character of all individuals. The addition of all its strengths determines the power of a team. However, we also observe some differences such as remuneration. In business, hierarchy is much more present and influential than in sport. Concerning the measurement of the work provided, and therefore, the rewards that result from it, it is much easier to measure a sporting performance than a professional performance.

On the one hand, the media coverage of sport makes it easier to highlight performances and on the other hand, managerial structures in sport help to identify a sporting performance more easily than a performance achieved within a company.

Indeed, we observe greater proximity within professional sports teams than in a team of employees. As said previously, the hierarchy is much more important and therefore the rewards and recognition of professional achievement less recognized.

4.4. Profit maximization, another management model

“Sport should be the prerogative of “gentlemen”, that is to say, of those who practice it for entertainment and fun, not to win medals, and even less money” [34]. This quote is very interesting for many reasons but above all takes on more and more meaning over the years.

In a sporting society where corruption scandals emerge at exponential speed, it seems irresistible to imagine that sport was originally practiced purely out of passion. Money has today become the driving force of many athletes, of many federations but also of investors and entrepreneurs. The example of football can be easily taken. The amount of player transfers these days reaches sums that would have been unimaginable just ten years ago. There is an integration of business working methods within sports teams. One of the striking examples, which was already cited previously in our analysis, is that of Peugeot, which integrated management concepts within FC Sochaux. In the DRC, some companies have also done the same thing, but without any palpable economic impact. As mentioned “a stated desire to rationalize management and separate skills” [35], we notice a similarity in management with a large company like SNCC working on an assembly line with a clear distribution of tasks based on skills for its Fc Lupopo team.

4.5. Sponsorship approach

We were able to observe that business and sport could represent significant profit. Moreover, beyond the financial aspect, sport brings a state of mind to the company called “ethical profits” [36]. Companies therefore have an interest in being present in sport. They obtain legitimacy in view of the image they give off. In PICHOT's article, sports sponsorship is highlighted but we can make a general link with the ethics that sport delivers. Also, sporting values such as competitiveness, self-sacrifice, etc. echo those present in business in order to achieve the objectives set.

Sports sponsorship therefore marked a turning point in the history of sports business. This proves that the economic aspect in sport has been present for a long time with strong development over the last three decades. Nowadays, entrepreneurship in this prolific environment therefore represents a succession, an extension of a business already in creation for many years. The profitability of this environment encourages investment and entrepreneurship in this rapidly changing world.

5. Conclusion

Our literature review and the qualitative study carried out allowed us to locate sports entrepreneurship in the development of the sports business market in the DRC.

All the players in this market are influenced, sports consumers reacting regularly to market developments influenced by the creation of companies going crescendo, and

³² Dubois, F., & Terral, P. (2014). Business creation in the sports tourism sector: The subjective and objective dimensions of professional transitions. *Practical sociologies*, n° 28(1), 53-62. <https://doi.org>

³³ The same

³⁴ Barbusse, B. (2009). cit.

³⁵ The same

³⁶ Pichot, L. (2000). The uses of sport by companies: from entrepreneurial strategies to agent strategies. *Sociological Perspectives*, n°20, 53-65

the levers come from the demand of athletes, numerous opportunities appearing, of which sports entrepreneurship offers creative solutions.

The creation of companies causes positive rivalries because the companies will therefore pull each other upwards and an increase in quality can be noticed. However, this can also have negative consequences due to strong competition, and therefore the risk of closure of young or older companies present on the market.

In addition, sports entrepreneurship is modernizing the sports business market. The revolution brought by companies in the world of sport is technological with the appearance of GPS for professional sports clubs. Today, the DRC, with digitalization, has never been at the center of debates for sports entrepreneurship. The use of NFTs is now established in the world of sports business and this calls for awareness in the DRC to integrate itself into the process.

Thus, sports entrepreneurship can find its place in the development of sports business strategy in the DRC through its intervention in the community, ethics, international, social and technology, given that the business world remains, today close to the world of sport. Our sports federations must, despite the advances observed in modernity, draw inspiration from the model present in large sports organizations to achieve appropriate management.

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