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Football in lower divisions – How do clubs manage their finance sustainability?

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Resumo

O papel do futebol no panorama mundial tem-se tornado cada vez mais significativo, tanto a nível desportivo como financeiro. O modelo de negócio dos clubes de elite, em competições internacionais e nacionais, é um aspeto fundamental do ecossistema futebolístico. Na era contemporânea, os clubes de elite, especialmente na Europa, alcançaram sustentabilidade financeira através de uma combinação de fatores, como os direitos de transmissão, patrocínios e transferências de jogadores. Neste contexto, surge a questão: O que é que acontece com os clubes "pequenos" e como é que conseguem sobreviver ao futebol moderno? Como é que gerem os desafios relacionados com a estabilidade financeira, a eficiência operacional, o envolvimento da comunidade e a viabilidade a longo prazo? Este estudo visa explorar como é que os clubes de futebol regionais nas divisões inferiores se sustentam financeiramente e examina se são capazes de sobreviver às crescentes exigências da sociedade e do desporto. Foi utilizada uma metodologia mista, que combina abordagens quantitativas e qualitativas. Foram realizadas entrevistas semiestruturadas com dirigentes de 24 clubes de futebol de âmbito distrital, que cumpriam os critérios estabelecidos. Além disso, foram recolhidos indicadores sociodemográficos e desportivos para complementar os dados qualitativos. Os resultados da investigação revelam que os clubes regionais enfrentam desafios consideráveis, particularmente na garantia de fluxos de receitas estáveis e financiamento externo. Os clubes dependem fortemente do envolvimento da comunidade e de patrocínios limitados. Adicionalmente, fatores sociodemográficos, como a densidade populacional e os níveis de rendimento local, influenciam significativamente a sua capacidade de prosperar. Conclui-se que a sustentáveis dos clubes regionais, implica diversificar as suas fontes de receitas, fortalecer o envolvimento comunitário e garantir um apoio externo mais consistente, tanto de entidades governamentais como não-governamentais.

Palavras-chave: Clube Desportivo, Voluntariado, Comunidade Desportiva, Gestão Desportiva

Códigos de Classificação JEL: L83 – Desporto; Z21- Economia do Desporto

Abstract

Football's role on the world stage has become increasingly significant, both in terms of sporting and financial influence. The business model of elite clubs in international and domestic competitions is a fundamental aspect of the football ecosystem. In the contemporary era, elite football clubs, particularly in Europe, have achieved financial sustainability through a combination of factors such as broadcasting rights, sponsorship deals, and player transfers. Against this backdrop, the question arises: What happens to the 'smaller' clubs, and how can they survive in modern football? How do they manage the challenges of financial stability, operational efficiency, community involvement, and long-term viability? This study aims to explore how regional football clubs in the lower divisions sustain themselves financially and examines whether they can survive the increasing demands of society and sport. A methodological mix was employed, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with managers from 24 district-level football clubs that met the necessary criteria. Additionally, socio-demographic and sporting indicators were collected to complement the qualitative data. The result of the investigation reveals that regional clubs face considerable challenges, particularly in securing stable revenue streams and external funding. Clubs rely heavily on community involvement and limited sponsorships. Moreover, socio-demographic factors such as population density and local income levels significantly influence their capacity to thrive. I can conclude that the sustainability of regional clubs involves diversifying their sources of income, strengthening community involvement and securing more consistent external support from both governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Keywords: Sport club, Voluntary work, Community sport, Sport management

JEL Classification System: L83 – Sports; Z21 – Economics of Sports

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1. Introduction

In Portugal, football is the most popular sport, with participation at both the adult and child levels. A significant number of children begin training at an early age in local and regional clubs, a practice that is based on the perception of proximity, which in turn fosters the development of strong social ties.

These clubs are non-profit sports organizations, and their aim is to facilitate the holistic development of not only the athletes, but also the wider integrated society. The goal of these clubs is not to generate profit for external investors but to serve the interests and well-being of its members. Thus, these ‘small’ clubs favor a healthy standard of living and encourage the involvement of society. They also, contribute to job creation, attract sponsorship and the solidarity of the community, which cheers on its local club.

A growing number of non-profit sports organizations have sprung up in various European countries with the aim of using sport as a positive social impact. Thus, the impact of sport, particularly football, at local level is significant and has a substantial effect on the economy. However, many of these organizations face constant challenges related to inadequate resources, which hinder their long-term survival and highlight the crucial need for sustainability through a resource-oriented approach. In Portugal, sports organizations are mostly financed by public funds. Organizational sustainability is therefore vital to promote long-term engagement with communities. Consequently, the management of small local football clubs (lower divisions) in Portugal can be a complex and demanding task, but it also offers unique opportunities.

Football clubs at regional level face many challenges to survive, with the lack of funding from local councils and sports federations being a daily reality for most of them. And the logistical and financial support they need to operate in good conditions and give their players the best.

The availability of human resources is a significant challenge for these clubs. Their genesis was based on individuals who were willing to provide assistance on a voluntary basis. However, this model is now facing challenges as leisure activities have evolved in response to new social challenges.

The acquisition of advantageous sponsorship is also something that concerns these clubs, as sponsors are an important source of monetary and logistical support. Due to a lack of resources, these challenges culminate in a consequent lack of maintenance of sporting the infrastructure, and dilapidated infrastructure leads to young players dropping out of the club or even football.

The central research question is how do football clubs at regional level in the lower divisions sustain themselves financially? And can they survive the challenges faced by the demands of society?

Consequently, the study aims to examine the approaches and adjustments utilized by lower-tier football clubs to handle these difficulties and promote the wider football ecosystem. The challenge is contemporary and pertinent, focusing on the exceptional attributes of grassroots football clubs and their important position in the cultural and community context of the sport.

The objectives of this dissertation are understand what the main sources of income to the club at internal and external level and the main costs are of both; analyze the needs of district clubs, understand how lower division clubs sustain and manage themselves within the context of the Portuguese sports funding model and wider global changes and disruptions considering regional or local dimensions; examine the sustainability model of lower division clubs, considering their economic regulation functions, since these sports organization's benefit from public funding while also participating in competitive markets in search of benefits.

To build the database, I began by researching relevant sociodemographic and sporting data from reliable sources, such as government databases, regional sports associations, and other public records. This included variables such as population density, average income per capita, number of registered football players, public funding allocated to sports, and the number of football clubs per region. The aim was to identify key indicators that could explain how external factors influence the financial sustainability and management of district-level football clubs.

After collecting the data, it was organized in a structured format using Excel, where each variable was identified and categorized. Subsequently, a statistical analysis was conducted utilizing a correlation technique to explore potential relationships between the variables. Specifically, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between the variables that allowed me to identify significant patterns and trends within the data. Scatter plots were created to visually represent these relationships, facilitating the interpretation of results. This approach enabled a comparison between the statistical findings and the qualitative data gathered from interviews, thus facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the financial sustainability and operational management of district-level football clubs.

Given that the information available on the sustainability of district clubs is scarce on the Internet and in books, I subsequently decided to contact some district clubs directly in order to obtain relevant information that would help me develop my dissertation.

The direct contact was made through written interviews with directors of district clubs. The process of collecting data through written interviews was a long process. Started by drawing up a general script of interviews that included questions that were focused on the club's revenues, costs and funding, as they were the topics for which I needed answers. After elaborating the script, the next step was sending it to the clubs.

To analyze the data collected from the interviews, I elected to employ a thematic analysis approach. This entailed identifying key topics by detecting those that recurred frequently in the interviews and organizing the data into topics and sub-themes, thereby facilitating interpretation. The process was conducted using the MAXQDA software, which facilitated the organization and encoding of the data for subsequent analysis. This analysis was carried out on a sector-by-sector basis, with the data relating to revenue, costs and financing, respectively, being submitted to a set of questions which, when answered, enabled a sectoral analysis to be carried out. This analysis encompassed revenues, costs and financing, with each sector including a set of questions which, when answered, allowed conclusions to be drawn. The data was then represented graphically to make it easier to read and analyze.

The dissertation presents a theoretical framework based on an integrative literature review. The Economic theories of nonprofit organizations (Anheier & Toepler, 2023) provide the base to understand the financial behaviors and sustainability models of these entities. The theory of organizational capacity in voluntary organizations (Ibsen & Seippel, 2010) emphasizes the internal capacities and the necessary resources for nonprofit football clubs to function effectively despite limited sources. In terms of football clubs' dynamics, the Theory clubs (Heinemann, 1999) offer a detailed examination of the structural and operational characteristics of sports clubs, particularly within Europe. The dependence theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) is essential to understand how these organizations are reliant on external resources and stakeholders to sustain their operations, particularly in financially constrained environments. Finally, Stakeholder theory (Freeman et al., 2017) highlights the importance of managing relationships with various stakeholders, such as local communities, fans, sponsors, and governing bodies, which are critical to the clubs' ongoing viability.

This is followed by a presentation of the methodology, a discussion of the results and finally a conclusion.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Related literature

Local sport relies heavily on volunteers who serve as coaches, referees, organizers, and more. This fosters a culture of volunteerism and leadership within the community. Are these volunteers who often provide the backbone of support that allows the clubs to function effectively.

Based on Porter's (1980) and Wicker et al. (2015) investigation about the the impact of generic strategies on organizational issues in German sports clubs. Their research explores how strategic choices influence the day-to-day management and decision-making within these clubs.

Gumulka et al. (2005) conducted a study that highlights the voluntary nature of small sports clubs, and the crucial role played by volunteers in their management and operation. These findings align with Lamprecht et al. (2011) perspective on volunteering theory. The authors contributed to this discussion by analyzing the prevalence of volunteering in sports clubs across several European countries. Therefore, comprehending management practices in small European football clubs requires an examination of their strategic decisions and their impact on organizational challenges.

Table 2. below shows the most common distribution of non-profit organizations by activity in five European countries. The sample includes countries from southern to northern Europe. It is noteworthy that in Portugal, non-profit organizations dedicated to sport and recreation have a 22% share.

Table 2.1. The most common nonprofit organization types

Portugal	In Portugal, the most common nonprofit organization types are culture and the arts (26%), sports and recreation (22%), social and humanitarian causes (16%), education and research (14%), and environmental conservation and animal welfare (12%).
France	The most common organization types are sports (24%), culture (23%), leisure (2%), humanitarian/social/health (14%), and defense of rights and causes (11.5%).

German	The most common fields of activity according to an organization's stated purpose are sport (23%), education (18%), and culture/media (16%).
Italy	Most nonprofits in Italy are involved in culture, sport, and recreation (64%).
Sweden	The most common fields of activity organizations reported working in were housing, social and societal development (29%), recreation and culture (26%).

Source: (Salamon et al., 2004)

2.2 The architecture of the European sports model

The governance of football at the European level can be conceptualized as a pyramid, with each layer assuming distinct responsibilities within different geographical areas. The formation of this pyramid has its roots in the early stages of organized football in Great Britain (Ducrey et al., 2003). The intricate interplay of factors that have shaped the current landscape has not been a uniform process, not least due to the historical and cultural diversity of Europe itself (Breuer et al. 2019). Figure 2.1 below illustrates the current organizational structure of European football, which is represented by a pyramid.

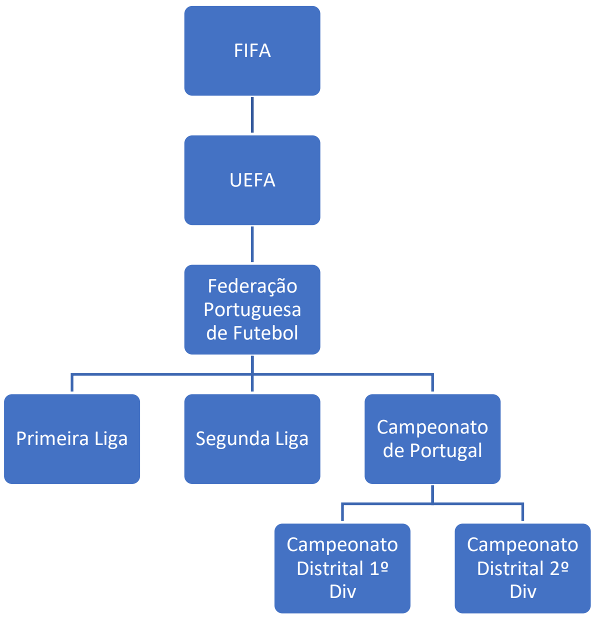


Figure 2.1 The pyramidal structure of European football

Source: Based on Ducrey et al. (2003)

The structure of football associations is hierarchical, with FIFA representing the global authority and UEFA overseeing European football. In Portugal, the Federação Portuguesa de Futebol (FPF) is the entity charged with the administration of the national leagues, which include the Primeira Liga, Segunda Liga and Campeonato de Portugal. Under the FPF, there are various Associações Distritais, such as the Associação de Futebol de Lisboa and the Associação de Futebol do Porto, which organize regional and district championships.

The historical evolution of football governance in Europe has contributed to the diversity and complexity of governance structures in different European countries (Ducrey et al., 2003). The historical evolution and heterogeneity of governance practices in Europe are crucial factors to consider when examining football governance at the regional level. The pyramidal structure of European football governance highlights an apex structure, the interpretation of which provides a valuable resource for understanding the intricate web of football governance in Europe.

2.3 The organizational structure of football in Portugal

The structure of the Portuguese football league system can be summarized as comprising two tiers of professional football. The Primeira Liga represents the primary division of professional football in Portugal, comprising 18 teams. The second tier of the Portuguese football league system is Liga Portugal 2, which is the second highest tier and comprises 18 teams. At the amateur level, the Third Division, otherwise known as Liga 3, represents the third tier of competition. The third tier, which was introduced in 2021, comprises 24 teams, which are divided into two series of 12. The fourth tier is the Campeonato de Portugal. The fourth tier comprises 56 teams, divided into four series. This is followed by the fifth tier, which includes several regional leagues that are organized by the district football associations. Each district has its own league, with the number of divisions varying depending on the region. The winners of these leagues may be promoted to the Portuguese Championship. Figure 2.2 shows the organizational structure of football in Portugal:

Figure 2.2 The organizational structure of football in Portugal

Source: FPF

2.4 Historical development of football in Portugal

The historical development of football in Portugal is deeply intertwined with the country's social and political changes.

Early beginnings and formation of the Liga Portugal: Football in Portugal has undergone significant organizational development since the 1970s, with the professionalization of clubs and athletes. This was heavily influenced by the political changes of the 1974 revolution. In response to the establishment of the Players’ Union in 1972, football club managers founded the Portuguese Football Club League in 1978, later renamed the Portuguese Professional Football League (Liga Portugal) in 1991.

Government and League Developments: The Portuguese government’s intervention helped increase the capability of clubs to manage their affairs effectively. Key meetings such as the one at Buçaco Palace Hotel in the 1980s were crucial in shaping the future structure of Liga Portugal, marking the beginning of significant organizational improvements and professional competitions under Liga Portugal’s governance.

Impact of the Salazar Regime: During the Estado Novo regime under Salazar, football was used as a tool for promoting the regime's ideology. The construction of the National Stadium in Lisbon and the involvement of clubs in international competitions were meant to display national pride and unity. This period saw the rise of clubs like SL Benfica and Sporting CP, which achieved notable success in European competitions.

Modern Developments and Challenges: Despite its strong history, Liga Portugal faces challenges such as maintaining competitive balance and ensuring fair revenue distribution from television rights. The league’s structure allows it to promote the interests of its member clubs and organize professional competitions effectively.

The history of football in Portugal spans early amateur days to the sophisticated organizational structures of modern professional leagues. The evolution of Liga Portugal is particularly notable for its response to political and social changes, which have shaped its current form and operations (García-Fernandéz et al., 2023).

2.5 The role of small clubs in Portuguese football

Most sport clubs serve the amateur sport and recreational interests of the population. The continued dominance of associations in sports and their specific character is linked to historical and institutional relationships. According to institutional theory, the character of voluntary sport can be attributed to the roots of the sports movement and the traditions in different types of sports and physical activities, traditions in specific organizational solutions in this particular area of society, legislation, public support, etc. (Ibsen & Seippel, 2010).

A significant number of Portuguese clubs are structured around a membership framework, with their activities and operations driven by the contributions and active involvement of their members. Thus, the existence of a club is contingent upon the participation of its members, who provide the resources, engagement, and leadership that enable the club to function. Conversely, the club’s ability to provide services and opportunities to its members is dependent upon their involvement. An analysis of this relationship in the context of dependency theory reveals that the interdependence between members and clubs underscores the pivotal role of power dynamics (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). In this regard, it is important to recognize that the sustainability and functioning of the club may be significantly influenced by the actions of individual members or external entities.

In Portugal, many clubs have strong cultural and community roots. The membership structure strengthens this sense of belonging and identity. Clubs like Sporting CP, SL Benfica, and FC Porto, the so-called 'big three', for example, have millions of members and deep connections to their local communities. Community means different things to different people in different times and locations. Community is a complex construct composed of many important dimensions (García-Fernandéz et al., 2023).

The role of small clubs in Portuguese football has been crucial despite the dominance of the bigger clubs in terms of championships and revenue. Small clubs contribute significantly to the development and competitiveness of Portuguese football, acting as breeding grounds for talent and community hubs. Here's a summary of their role based on the information from your document:

Development of players and coaches: Small clubs in Portugal play a pivotal role in developing football talent. They provide foundational training and exposure to young players who may later move to larger clubs or play in international leagues. This development pipeline is crucial for maintaining the competitive nature of the sport within the country.

Community Involvement and support: Small clubs are often deeply embedded in local communities, providing a sense of identity and pride to local populations. They are important social institutions that promote participation in sports among youths and help in community cohesion.

Economic and Competitive Impacts: Economically, small clubs often struggle with financial constraints, but they contribute to local economies through employment, match-day revenues, and related business activities. Competitively, while they rarely win major titles, their presence ensures a wider distribution of competitive matches and helps maintain a degree of uncertainty in outcomes which is vital for the sport's excitement and fan engagement.

These aspects highlight the indispensable role of small clubs in nurturing talent, supporting communities, and ensuring the ongoing competitiveness and vibrancy of Portuguese football (García-Fernandéz et al., 2023).

2.6 The management of football: from leisure to business

Football, once primarily a leisure and recreational activity, has transformed into a significant component of our social, cultural, political, and economic life. This transition has reshaped the management and organization of football clubs, turning them into multifaceted entities that go beyond the mere pursuit of sport. The shift from leisure to business is perhaps most evident in the economic dimensions of football. The commercialization of the sport, including television broadcasting rights, sponsorship deals, and merchandise sales, has turned football into a lucrative industry. Football clubs are now profit-driven organizations, navigating financial complexities while striving for success on the field.

It can be argued that sport has become an integral aspect of the social, cultural, political and economic landscape. Thus, football has become a central aspect of contemporary society, exerting influence on social interactions and cultural expressions (Hughson, Moore, Spaaij, & Maguire, 2018). The sport has become a powerful means of fostering community identity, bonding, and a shared sense of belonging. As such, football has transcended its recreational origins to become a significant social and cultural phenomenon.

James Buchanan (1965) developed club theory (the study of club goods in economics) in his seminal paper, "An Economic Theory of Clubs". The author affirms that a club is a voluntary group deriving mutual benefits from sharing one or more of the following: production costs, the members' characteristics, or a good characterized by excludable benefits. Buchanan also viewed clubs as a private, nongovernmental alternative to the optimal provision of a class of public goods, later known as club goods, that are excludable and subject to some rivalry in the form of congestion. Within the context of football, clubs function as private, nongovernmental entities aiming to provide a range of services, from competitive sports to fan engagement, that go beyond the provision of public goods. This shift in perspective from leisure to business has prompted football clubs to adopt a strategic and economically informed approach to their management.

2.7 Key management challenges faced by small clubs

Small football clubs operating at the grassroots level confront a multitude of management challenges that impact their sustainability and long-term viability. This section delves into the specific challenges faced by these clubs, drawing from existing research and microeconomic theories related to nonprofit organizations.

Several studies have investigated recruitment of volunteers in non-profit sport clubs (Østerlund, 2013; Schlesinger et al., 2015), some of them in combination with the retention of volunteers (Cuskelly & O'Brien, 2013; Wicker & Breuer, 2013). One of the fundamental challenges for small football clubs is the recruitment and retention of volunteers. Volunteers are the backbone of these organizations, and their dedication is essential for the club's operations.

Effective management practices and decision-making are critical for the success of small clubs. Existing research has different foci, including examine management practices within the context of non-profit sport clubs, shedding light on the strategies that can contribute to sustainability (Østerlund, 2013), exploration of decision-making practices, providing insights into how small clubs navigate key decisions related to their operations (Schlesinger & Weigelt-Schlesinger, 2013; Schlesinger et al., 2015), the transition of former players and its implications for the club's sustainability and the availability of organizational support (Cuskelly & O'Brien, 2013), organizational support in assisting small clubs to address various challenges, (Cuskelly & Hoye, 2013), club characteristics and their influence on management practices and sustainability (Wicker & Breuer, 2014).

According to Anheier (2014), a major strength of the following microeconomic theories on the existence of nonprofit organizations in developed market economies is that they are largely complementary rather than rival.

2.8 The economic and social impact of local football clubs

Local football clubs extend their influence well beyond the boundaries of the pitch, significantly impacting both the economic and social aspects of the communities they serve.

Local football clubs play a vital role in the local economy, serving as community hubs that attract participants, fans, and visitors. These clubs often host matches, events, and activities that generate revenue for local businesses, such as restaurants, pubs, and shops. This economic boost contributes to the vitality of the local economy, creating jobs and opportunities for businesses to thrive.

Associations provide institutionalized opportunities for social exchange and the strengthening of pro-social attitudes and social skills. Social capital – such as trust, norms, and networks – is a by-product of associational involvement (Adam, 2008). It fosters pro-social attitudes and social skills, creating a sense of community and belonging.

People join sports clubs to play sport. As a result, associations and associational involvement are crucial for solving collective-good problems efficiently and without coercion, especially in democratic societies.

The concept of social capital has been introduced to refer to norms, networks, and pro-social attitudes. By strengthening social capital, associational involvement directly and indirectly contributes to almost every aspect of our lives (Deth et al., 2016).

As Putnam (2000, p.290) points out the "social capital makes us smarter, healthier, safer, richer, and better able to govern a just and stable democracy". The impact of local football clubs goes beyond sports, enriching the lives of individuals and strengthening the social fabric of the community. The interconnectedness of economic and social aspects within the context of local football clubs, highlighting the broader significance of these organizations (Breuer et al., 2019).

2.9 Financial structure, development, and autonomy

Sports clubs as Nonprofit organizations, have multiple income sources (Young, 2007) as nonprofit organizations, these clubs have a primary mission that goes beyond profit-making, focusing on the betterment of the community and the development of sport.

Financial sustainability is a primary concern for under division football clubs, and they rely on multiple income sources to support their operations.

Membership fees mostly account for the largest share of income (Breuer et al., 2012). These fees are paid by club members and are crucial for covering basic expenses. Governmental subsidies, fundraising sponsorship activities, and lotteries (e.g., in Portugal, Austria, Germany, Sweden) are also important revenue sources (Hoekman et al., 2015; Koski, 2012). These income streams are essential for enhancing the financial stability of under division football clubs.

The theory of nonprofit organizations is an academic and conceptual framework that seeks to understand and explain the unique characteristics, behaviors, and motivations of organizations that operate as nonprofits, also known as not-for-profit or voluntary organizations. These organizations have missions and objectives that go beyond profit-making and are primarily focused on addressing social, cultural, educational, charitable, or community-related needs. Key elements of the theory of nonprofit organizations include Mission drive focus, Voluntary nature, public benefit, Governance and accountability, Resource diversification, regulatory and legal framework, community and stakeholder engagement, social capital and trust, hybridity and blurred boundaries, Evaluation and Impact assessment.

2.10 Community involvement and local partnerships

Another fled, in which local clubs may be considered playing a leading role is the established and regular dialogue with its most important stakeholders, organized supporters (Sonntag, 2018, p. 77). The concept of a stakeholder, and the development of the stakeholder model, are attributed to Freeman’s seminal publication: ‘Strategic Management: A stakeholder approach’ (1984). He suggested that the stakeholder is “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives”. Donaldson & Preston (1995) also add that it is important to establish a clear contrast between ‘true stakeholders’ and those that simply influence the organization.

Tiell & Cebula (2020) considers the stakeholders of an organization, everyone with a vested interest; accordingly, in the sports industry, they represent a wide spectrum of the create value for all stakeholders.

3. Methodology

The aim of this study is to understand how lower division football clubs sustain and manage themselves, particularly in the context of significant global change and disruption. To this purpose, it is important to explore the challenges these clubs face in terms of financial stability, operational efficiency, community engagement and long-term viability. To achieve this, a methodological mix was designed (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

The decision was taken to employ a convergent design for the analysis of the data, whereby both quantitative and qualitative data are collected and subsequently subjected to separate analysis. The research design is deliberately flexible, allowing for adaptation as the investigation deepens, reflecting the approach suggested by Bryman (2006), who argues that flexibility is key in mixed methods research for addressing complex research questions. Mixed methods research combines elements of quantitative research, which focuses on numerical data and measurable variables, and qualitative research, which provides in-depth insights into perceptions and experiences, to answer the research question (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This methodological approach ensures that the data collected offers both breadth and depth, aligning with the goal of drawing robust conclusions through the integration of diverse types of data (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

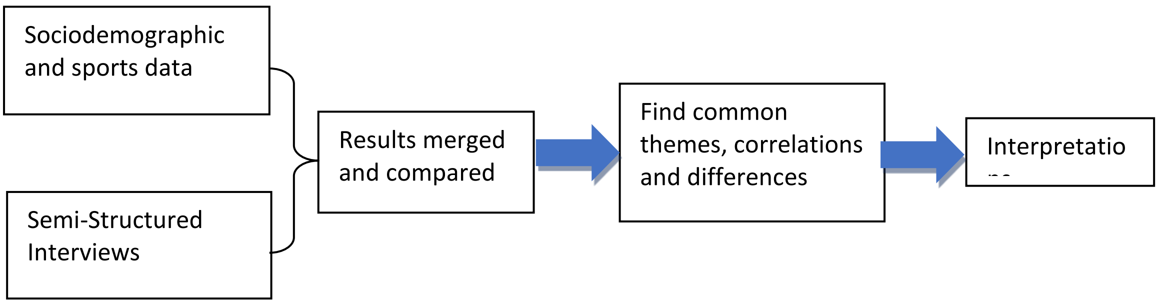


Figure 3.1 General diagram of the convergent design

Source: Adapted from (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

The different methodological approaches were devised with the objective of yielding supplementary insights pertaining to the principal research questions. The empirical analysis is divided into two stages. In the initial phase of the study, quantitative data were collected, including sociodemographic and sports-related information. This data was primarily obtained from secondary sources, such as governmental databases, club reports, the FPF website, and statistical websites, including Pordata and INE. The quantitative approach allows for the identification of patterns, correlations, and trends that could shed light on the financial health and performance of the clubs (Field, 2018). It provides a broad overview of the objective indicators that impact the sustainability of these organizations (Cohen, 1988).

In the second step, qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews with directors from local clubs. This approach provides in-depth insights into the perceptions, experiences, and strategies employed by the clubs to overcome challenges and maintain engagement with their communities. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), qualitative data adds richness and context to quantitative findings by exploring "the why" and "how" behind the trends identified in numerical data. This allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the clubs' sustainability practices and the contextual factors influencing their operational decisions.

Mixed methods research, as noted by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), is particularly useful when a single methodological approach may not fully capture the complexity of the research questions. By combining both quantitative and qualitative data, we are able to triangulate findings, ensuring that the conclusions drawn are robust and reflective of both the objective metrics and subjective experiences of the clubs.

Given the focus of the study, our research questions emerge from observation, rather than being fundamentally deduced from a theoretical framework. Three research questions guide this dissertation:

RQ1: How do the club’s average internal and external revenues help explain sporting and financial success?

RQ2: How do the Club’s main costs help to explain how it manages to succeed and develop?

RQ3: How do government institutions and stakeholders played in shaping the local policy towards football perceptions relate to financial support provided and the number of football clubs or registered players in the region?

Sport organizations have typically been studied at the micro (individual), meso (organizational) and macro (social and cultural) levels (Cunningham & Sagas, 2008). However, it is at the intersections and interconnections of these levels that we hope to find results.

3.1. Qualitative data

To achieve the research goals, a qualitative approach was employed using semi-structured individual interview. This method was chosen for its efficiency in assessing the study variables and to access the experiences, thoughts and feelings of the participants in relation to the subject studied (Kalra et al., 2013). This kind of method is the most suitable for this study because it offers a structured and systematic way to collect quantitative data from a representative sample of the target population. The contacts were identified within the databases of the football federations of the various district-level administrative divisions throughout Portugal and were located in the form of email addresses. Once a database of the numerous emails from football clubs throughout Portugal had been created, the general interview script was sent, accompanied by an explanation of its purpose.

The interview script was outlined with general themes related to the objectives of the research, such as revenues, expenses and funds, so we can have a freer interview. This format allows to explore other aspects mentioned by the participants that may be relevant, this is one of its main advantages (Fylan, 2005) and includes both yes/no questions and open questions. In total, 24 responses were obtained from football clubs, from Algarve, Leiria, Lisboa, Porto, Santarém, Setúbal and Viana do Castelo.

Clubs were duly informed of the questionnaire's objective. Sending written surveys via email does not guarantee representation of every segment of the population. Despite some limitations, written surveys can gather many responses and enhance representation across various regions.

Data collection occurred between April and May 2024. Participants did not receive any compensation for their participation. Before data collection, participants were informed about the general purpose of the study and were made aware that their participation was voluntary and their responses confidential.

To analyze the data collected through qualitative analysis, Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis was employed—a methodology that allows for the identification, analysis, and reporting of patterns/themes within the collected data. It can be applied to a wide range of research questions, enabling the summarization of key aspects of extensive data sets while emphasizing the similarities and differences within the data (Braun and Clarke's, 2006). The authors, Braun and Clarke’s (2006) outlined a six-phase process for conducting this analysis.

The first phase involves reading and re-reading the data to become familiar with its content. Following this, the process of coding begins, where initial codes are noted within the data to identify interesting features or patterns; this step was carried out with the help of MaxQDA software. After the initial coding, the next phase involves examining the codes to identify themes and subthemes, seeking significant patterns that may emerge from the data. The fourth phase focuses on reviewing the themes and subthemes to understand their structure and to determine the possibility of new themes and subthemes emerging. In the penultimate step, the respective themes and subthemes are defined and named to capture the essence of what each represents. Finally, a final analysis of the data is produced, presenting it in a coherent and convincing manner to demonstrate how the themes were identified and developed.

3.2. Quantitative data

Quantitative data collection is based on secondary sources, mainly documentary sources (Saunders et al., 2019). To develop the analysis, we emphasize data processing using Excel to draw conclusions and measure objective correlations between variables (Cohen 1988).

By employing statistical tools, the aim is not only to gather raw data but to discern patterns, correlations, and trends that can be objectively measured. This methodological approach' to provide a robust foundation for drawing meaningful conclusions that contribute to a nuanced understanding of the financial dynamics at play, and also to understand the relations between variables that may impact the sustainability and the development of the local football clubs (Saunders et al, 2019).

The primary objective is to provide an overview of the main characteristics of the data without drawing conclusions about the general population or making inferences. This type of analysis is fundamental for understanding the nature of the data and identifying significant patterns or characteristics.

3.2.1 Pearson Correlation Coefficient

The Pearson Correlation Coefficient (PCC) is a fundamental statistical tool in various fields. Numerous studies have employed this methodology to analyze data, demonstrating its versatility and robustness in research. Its ability to quantify linear relationships is essential for obtaining meaningful information from data.

The objective of utilizing PCC is to ascertain the interrelationship between sociodemographic and sporting indicators. In the analytical process, each of these indicators is regarded as a quantitative variable, enabling the measurement of the strength and direction of the linear relationship between them.

The sociodemographic variables employed in this study were gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, the number of registered football players per 1,000 inhabitants, and total population. The sports variables employed were the number of registered football players per thousand inhabitants, the financial contribution to football, and the number of clubs.

The PCC provides a numerical measure of how strongly two quantitative variables are related and whether the relationship is positive or negative (on a scale from -1 to 1). When ‘r’ is situated between 0 and 1, it indicates the presence of a positive correlation, means that as one variable increases, the other also increases. When ‘r’ is equal to 0, indicates no linear relationship. When ‘r’ is situated between 0 and -1, it indicates a negative correlation, means that as one variable increases, the other decreases. The mathematical formula utilized for the Excel function Pearson (x, y) is expressed by the following equation (1):

$$r = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n}(x_i - \overline{x})(y_i - \overline{y})}{\sqrt{\left[\sum_{i=1}^{n}(x_i - \overline{x})^2\right]\left[\sum_{i=1}^{n}(y_i - \overline{y})^2\right]}} \tag{1}$$

where ‘r’ is the PCC, ‘x’ the values of the first variable (e.g., GDP per capita), and ‘y’ values of the second variable (e.g., number of registered footballers per 1000 inhabitants).

To carry out the analysis, as mentioned above, I began by collecting data on the participants’ socio-demographic characteristics and sporting activities. Once the data had been collected, the next stage was to prepare it for analysis. This involved organizing the information into tables in Excel, with each variable placed in a separate column. Subsequently, the correlation calculation was performed using the Microsoft Excel software, with the Pearson Correlation formula applied to examine the relationships between the variables. This was accomplished through the utilization of the Pearson (x, y) function for each pair of variables.

The interpretation of the results assumes a strong correlation when r values are close to 1 or -1, indicating a strong positive or negative linear relationship between variables. A moderate correlation is indicated by ‘r’ values between 0.5 and 0.7, (positive or negative), suggesting a noticeable but not perfect linear relationship. A weak correlation is indicated by ‘r’ values between 0 and 0.3, meaning there is little to no linear relationship between the variables.

This model makes it possible to identify the relationship between socio-demographic variables and sporting indicators. This approach provided a quantitative view of the dynamics affecting the sustainability of football clubs, helping to understand how economic and social factors influence sports development at a local level. Scatter plots are used to visualize data and the relationship between two variables being analyzed.

4. Results obtained

4.1 Qualitative data analysis

Prior to the presentation of the findings derived from the interviews and statistical tools, exploratory research was conducted with the objective of identifying the principal sources of income and expenditure for local football clubs. The clubs' main sources of revenue are derived from the sale of food and beverages within the stadium, ticket sales, membership fees, sponsorship, advertising and government subsidies.

However, not all clubs have the financial capacity to generate this income. Nonetheless, a significant percentage of clubs have a bar and buffets on their facilities that serves both members and public in general. Ticket sales for matches are another significant source of revenue, as membership fees. However, neither of these sources is particularly substantial in terms of sustainability.

Local sports clubs typically seek regional sponsorships, whereby the sponsor provides financial support for the display of their logos on sports equipment, club facilities or merchandise. Additional revenue is generated by selling advertising space in the stadium or on the pitch. Clubs can also receive financial aid from government bodies such as local councils, district or regional football associations or other sports organizations. To attract the public, clubs organize various events, including sporting and non-sporting activities, festivals, tournaments and other initiatives. These initiatives aim to generate income through ticket sales, sponsorship and other sources.

The financial outlay of local clubs in Portugal is similarly diverse and varied, encompassing operational costs, equipment, transportation, security and logistics, as well as administrative and legal expenses. There are also ongoing expenses that are necessary to ensure the continued functioning of the club, including the payment of salaries (in the case of contracted employees), administrative expenses, maintenance costs for the club, and utility bills.

In addition to the costs mentioned above, clubs must also purchase the necessary sports equipment, including balls, training equipment (cones, waistcoats), uniforms and more. In addition, clubs often bear the financial burden of travelling to away matches, which includes transport costs (such as bus hire and fuel), accommodation (if necessary) and meals.

In addition, the responsibility for ensuring the safety of the sporting event and its participants at home matches entails operational costs in terms of policing, private security services, accident insurance, and more. Furthermore, clubs are subject to a range of administrative and legal expenses, including registration fees for competitions, professional fees for legal and accounting services, and costs associated with registration and documentation.

4.2 Expected Results

4.2.1 Food and beverage facilities

A total of 24 clubs were interviewed for this study. When questioned about the management of the food and beverage facilities, 18 clubs (75%) stated that the bar is managed by the club itself. Two clubs (8.3%) reported that they had knowledge of the existence of a bar, while four clubs (16.7%) stated that the bar is operated by a third-party company under a subcontracting agreement.

A significant majority of clubs elect to assume direct management of the bar, which indicates that these clubs perceive the bar as a significant revenue generator that can be optimized through internal management. The direct management of the bar enables clubs to exercise greater control over its operations, including the pricing of products, the range of products sold, and the quality of the customer experience.

Among the small percentage of clubs that indicated the absence of a bar, the reasons provided were a dearth of financial or human resources to oversee the operation, an unsuitable location or infrastructure, and strategic decisions based on the nature of the public and the club’s activities.

The clubs that indicated that they allocate bar facilities under a subcontracting agreement assumed that this would allow the club to mitigate financial and operational risks. In addition, they ensure a consistent revenue stream through concession fees, regardless of the bar’s performance. This enables the club to focus on its core activities, while entrusting the management of the bar to professionals specializing in food and beverage services.

In such circumstances, subcontracting agreement entails that the club does not exercise control over the profits generated by the bar concessionaire. Each approach presents a distinct set of advantages and disadvantages, which should be subjected to careful consideration by clubs. On the one hand, direct control provides the opportunity for greater profits and control; on the other, outsourcing reduces operational risks and responsibilities.

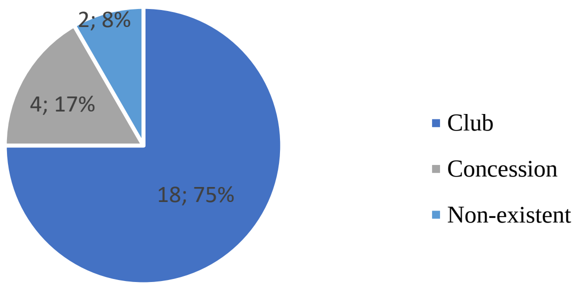


Chart 4.1 Food and beverage facilities

4.2.2 Events and space rentals

Of the clubs surveyed, 7 clubs (29.2%) replied that they organize their own events or rent out their premises, and 17 clubs (70.8%) replied that they do not organize events or rent out their premises. It can therefore be assumed that the minority of clubs use their premises to generate additional income. Organizing events and renting out space includes holding parties, fairs, conferences and making space available for other sporting or social events.

Among the clubs that do not use this income-generating strategy, some cite a lack of suitable infrastructure as a reason. This can be viewed as an indicator of limited resources. Other clubs indicate that they are concentrating on other activities and consider that organizing events or rentals is not a priority. However, they admit that there is sometimes a lack of knowledge about the potential benefits and a lack of interest in exploring this option.

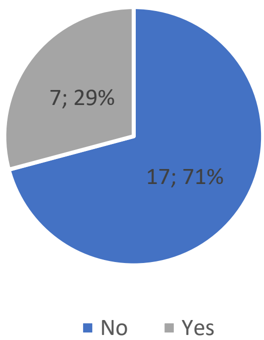


Chart 4.2 Events and space rentals

4.2.3 Payment of fees by academy athletes'

Of the clubs surveyed, 19 clubs (79.2%) responded that they charge fees to youth athletes and 5 clubs (20.8%) responded that they do not charge fees to youth athletes. Most of the clubs interviewed adopt the practice of charging fees to youth athletes meaning some dependency on these financial contributions to sustain their activities. The fees are used to cover various expenses, including the maintenance costs of facilities, salaries of coaches and other staff and acquisition of equipment and training materials. Charging fees also reflects the club' need to ensure a stable and predictable source of income.

The rationale behind the decision of clubs not to charge fees to young players is essentially motivated by the institution's philosophy of inclusion and public utility. This philosophy leads these clubs to prioritize equal access to training for all young players development, regardless of their economic situation. This approach is more common in smaller clubs and is observed in regions where residents have more limited financial resources.

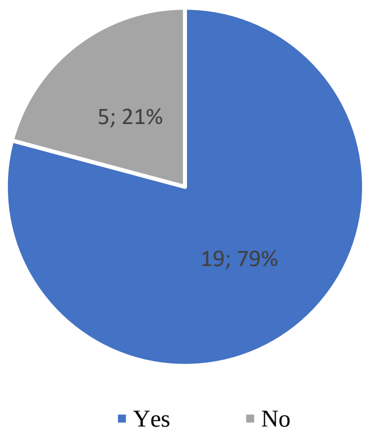


Chart 4.3 Payment of fees by academy players

4.2.4 Ticketing

Of the clubs surveyed, 10 clubs (41.7%) responded that ticket sales are nonexistent, other 10 clubs (41.7%) responded that ticket sales are insignificant and only 4 clubs (16.7%) responded that ticket sales are significant. For a significant portion of clubs, ticket sales are nonexistent indicating that these clubs choose not to charge for games and events to encourage participation and increase community support. In other hand it means that some clubs present lack of Infrastructure to manage ticket sales or have low demand due to the location with low demand for paid tickets, making ticket sales not financially viable. For another significant group of clubs, ticket sales are considered insignificant, showing that even though these clubs sell tickets, the revenue generated is too low to have a relevant impact on the club's finances. Some of the reasons for this include low attendance in games and events, resulting in modest ticket sales, low prices consequently generating insignificant revenue. Only a minority of clubs consider ticket sales a significant source of income. These clubs attract a considerable number of spectators for games and events, have efficient systems for selling and controlling tickets and also have strong community and fan involvement, with people willing to pay to watch games. Each club assesses its specific circumstances and explores strategies to maximize the potential revenue from ticket sales, whether by implementing ticket sales, attracting more spectators, or improving the audience experience.

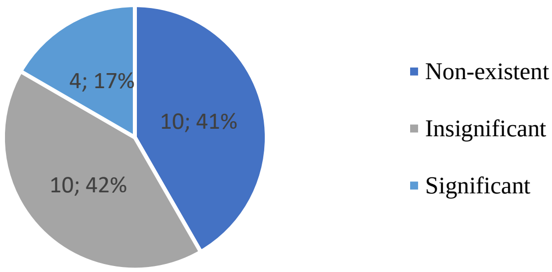


Chart 4.4 Ticket sales - revenue

4.2.5 Membership fees

Of the clubs surveyed, 5 (20.8%) indicated that membership contributions are low but not indispensable, 7 (29.2%) indicated that membership contributions are dispensable, and 12 (50%) indicated that membership contributions are indispensable.

A smaller proportion of clubs, however, recognize that although membership fees are not the main source of income, they nevertheless constitute a modest cash flow and are therefore important. It is not feasible to rule them out entirely, as they are consistent and help cover some operating expenses.

However, a significant number of clubs consider membership fees to be a discretionary source of income, which suggests that these clubs have other alternative sources of funding that allow them to maintain their operations. As a result, membership fees are seen as a valuable supplement rather than a determining factor in financial sustainability.

It can be seen that around half of the clubs surveyed consider membership contributions to be an indispensable source of income, emphasizing their fundamental role in the club's financial stability. This is due to the fact that member contributions are a consistent and predictable source of income on a monthly basis. These clubs demonstrate that they depend significantly on the financial support of their members to maintain their operations and continue to provide services and sports programs to members and the community. Essentially, each club assesses its particular needs and circumstances in order to optimize the use of member contributions and ensure financial sustainability.

It shall be predicted that there will be a large difference in the financial sustainability of lower-division football clubs based on their ability to create diversified streams of revenue, ensure cost controls, and appeal to their local constituencies (Anheier & Toepler, 2023; Salamon & Anheier, 1999).

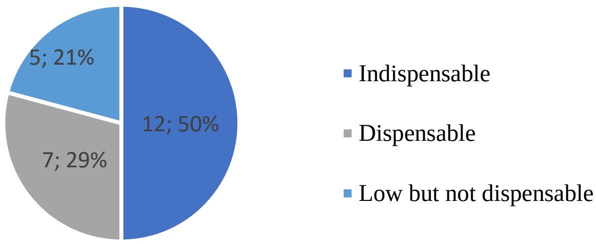


Chart 4.5 Membership fees

4.2.6 Sponsorship

Of the clubs surveyed, 23 clubs (95.8%) indicated that their sponsors are small local companies and only 1 club (4.2 %) has a large company as a sponsor.

On the one hand, on the part of the clubs, this may be an indicator of their lack of visibility beyond the geographical area in which they are located. On the other hand, it may indicate that local companies can gain greater exposure and therefore greater customer loyalty and support, promoting economic growth. By supporting football clubs, businesses are perceived as caring about the well-being of their community. This leads to stronger relationships between the business sector and the residents.

It is notable that only one club reported having a large company as a sponsor, which represents an exception. Having a large company sponsor the club represents a shift in the typical funding model. Large companies, especially if they are national or international, bring in greater financial resources, which can vastly exceed the contributions from smaller local businesses. It also indicates greater visibility and consequent attract investments from other companies.

With regard to sponsorship on sports equipment, among the clubs surveyed, 20 clubs (83.3 per cent) confirmed the presence of sponsorship on their sports equipment and only 4 clubs (16.7 per cent) replied that they do not have sponsorship.

The prevalence of sponsorship on sport equipment was considerable, with 83.3% of clubs receiving this form of support. This means that clubs can access better quality and more advanced sports equipment due to sponsorship, helping to improve the performance of athletes.

The absence of sponsorships in 16.7% of clubs can be attributed to a number of factors, including a lack of interest from local businesses, difficulties in attracting sponsors, or strategic choices made by the club.

With regard to static advertising on the field, 16 clubs (66.7%) indicated that such advertising is present on their field, while 8 clubs (33.3%) stated that no static advertising is in place.

This practice is present in 66.7% of clubs' pitches, offering continuous exposure to sponsors and is of particular importance for clubs experiencing budgetary fluctuations. Conversely, the absence of sponsorship on 33.3% of clubs' pitches can be attributed to infrastructural constraints, a lack of appeal for sponsors and strategic alternatives to avert visual pollution at sports grounds. It can thus be stated that sponsorship constitutes a pivotal element in the financial viability of football clubs, exhibiting considerable variability in terms of both scale and format.

Freeman et al. (2017) and Donaldson & Preston (1995) suggest that the more the clubs embedded into a local context are, meaning having closer links to local stakeholders such as government bodies and sponsors, then the more and bigger support they get both financial and logistic. It may affect their ability to maintain and develop the facilities and, therefore, the long-term survivability of a club. As explained by the Dependence Theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), stakeholders are who can influence local sports policy-making that affects funding and club activity directly.

The anticipated linkage between outside financial backing and the club's performance is in a comparative textual relationship with the findings of Heinemann (1999), on sports clubs' sustainability and the role of outside sponsorships and community involvement in providing valuable inputs to both the sporting and economic performance of the clubs. Lastly, it is hypothesized that the smaller clubs which develop substantial community relationships and partnerships should result in better financial and operational performances.

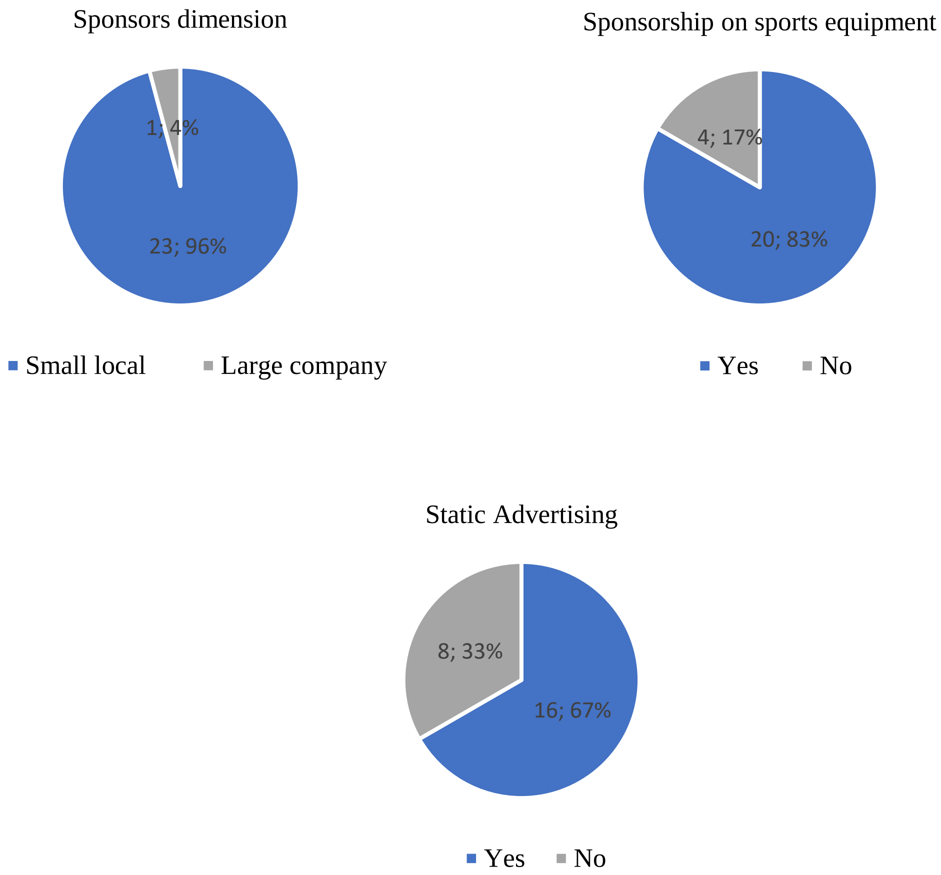


Chart 4.6 Sponsors Dimension, Sponsorship on sports equipment and Static Advertising

4.2.7 Municipal funding

In terms of funding for infrastructure maintenance, the clubs surveyed revealed that 5 clubs (20.8 per cent) indicated that infrastructure is the responsibility of the municipality. A further 13 clubs (54.2 per cent) receive funding for infrastructure maintenance, while six clubs (25 per cent) indicated that they do not receive this type of support.

Most of the clubs' benefit from municipal support for infrastructure maintenance, which is essential for the conservation and improvement of sports facilities. The fact that 20.8% of clubs use municipal infrastructure indicates direct management by local authorities, relieving clubs of maintenance responsibilities. Clubs that do not receive support face additional challenges in maintaining their facilities in good condition, negatively impacting their operations and attractiveness.

Looking now for logistical support 8 clubs (33.3%) indicated they receive logistical support, and 16 clubs (66.7%) do not receive logistical support from the Municipality. Logistical support is less common, with only one-third of clubs receiving this type of assistance including services such as event organization or technical assistance. Two-thirds of clubs do not receive logistical support, implying a greater administrative and operational burden on them and meaning more own expenses in events and assistance.

Giving focus to transportation support only 3 clubs (12.5%) indicated they receive transportation support, and 21 clubs (87.5%) do not receive this type of support. This support is clearly limited, with only 12.5% of clubs benefiting from it. It also indicates that most clubs need to manage their own transportation needs, which is a considerable financial and logistical burden. The lack of transportation support limits participation in competitions and access to external activities, hindering the competitiveness and visibility of the clubs.

Finally, the direct financial support (contracts and subsidies) where 19 clubs (79.2%) confirmed they receive direct financial support, and 5 clubs (20.8%) do not receive direct financial support. Most clubs receive direct financial support, either through contracts or subsidies being crucial for the financial viability of clubs, allowing them to cover operational costs and finance development projects. This type of support is considered very important since it is (normally) a voluminous value that constitutes a good base for the club during the season. The fact that a fifth of clubs do not receive this type of support means these clubs have to resort to other funding sources or deal with more severe budgetary constraints.

Municipal support is a crucial component for many football clubs, particularly in areas such as infrastructure maintenance and direct financial support. The variability in the types and levels of support received reflects the different realities and needs of the clubs. Clubs that receive little or no support should explore other financing options and work to create a more stable and diversified financial base.

The nonprofit entities-like small football clubs-must rely on various sources of income to ensure financial sustainability. Clubs that have a diversified revenue stream, including municipal funding, sponsorship and membership fees, are more likely to demonstrate greater financial strength and emphasize the diversification of resources (Young, 2007)

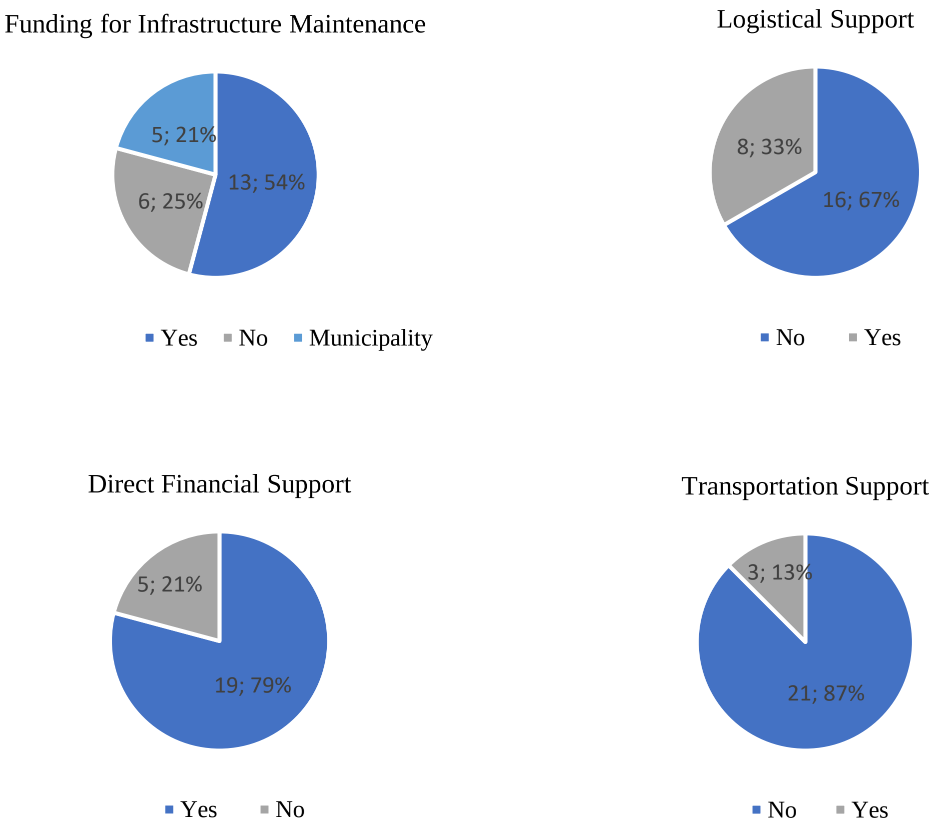


Chart 4.7 Infrastructure maintenance, logistical support, transportation support and direct financial support

4.2.8 District football associations support

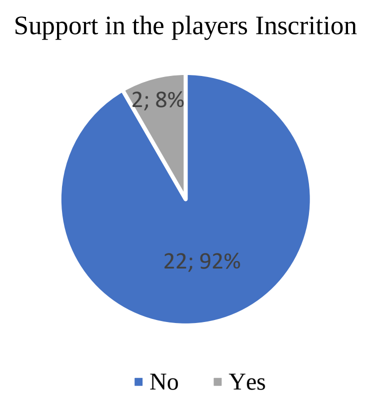
Looking to the support for the players registration where only 2 clubs (8.3%) receive support from the association for player registrations and 22 clubs (91.7%) do not receive this type of support.

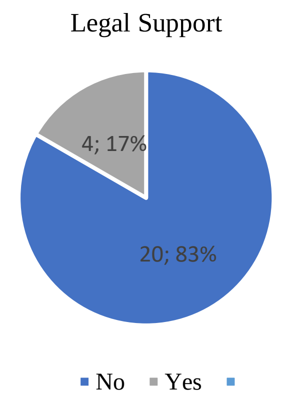
The observation that only a limited number of clubs receive support for player registration suggests a lack of involvement by associations with smaller clubs, which raises questions about the reason for their very existence, as the pyramid structure of European football well expresses. Thus, the lack of financial assistance to clubs means that they have to bear yet another financial burden, particularly onerous for those clubs that have a large number of players in their charge. The lack of specific support was identified by the clubs as a latent concern.

Now focusing on the legal support where only 4 clubs (16.7%) reported receiving legal support and 20 clubs (83.3%) do not receive it. This type of support is provided to a minority of clubs and legal assistance is crucial for addressing legal and contractual issues, the big absence of clubs leaves these organizations vulnerable to legal problems. This gap highlights the need for greater involvement from the associations to protect the interests of the clubs.

In terms of other types of support, 18 clubs (75%) indicated they do not receive any other types of it, 1 club (4.2%) receives support for travel expenses, other club (4.2%) benefits from easier payment terms for obligations, another club (4.2%) receives support in policing services, 2 clubs (8.3%) receive balls for training and competition and only 1 club (4.2%) is supported with sports equipment. Most clubs do not receive other types of support. However, a small percentage do receive help in specific areas like, one club receives support to cover travel costs, which is crucial for participating in competitions and tournaments outside the region. Other club receives an easier payment of obligations that allows them to manage finances better, easing cash flow pressure. Support in policing helps ensure security at sports events, essential for maintaining order and the safety of participants and spectators. The supply of essential materials like balls and sports equipment is significant for the daily and competitive activities of clubs.

The analysis of data regarding the players registration support from District Football Associations reveals limited presence in various critical areas for the development of football clubs. The lack of them shows a need for a review of the associations' support policies. Enhancing the breadth and quality of services provided would not only benefit the clubs directly but could also raise the standard of amateur and semi-professional football in the respective regions.





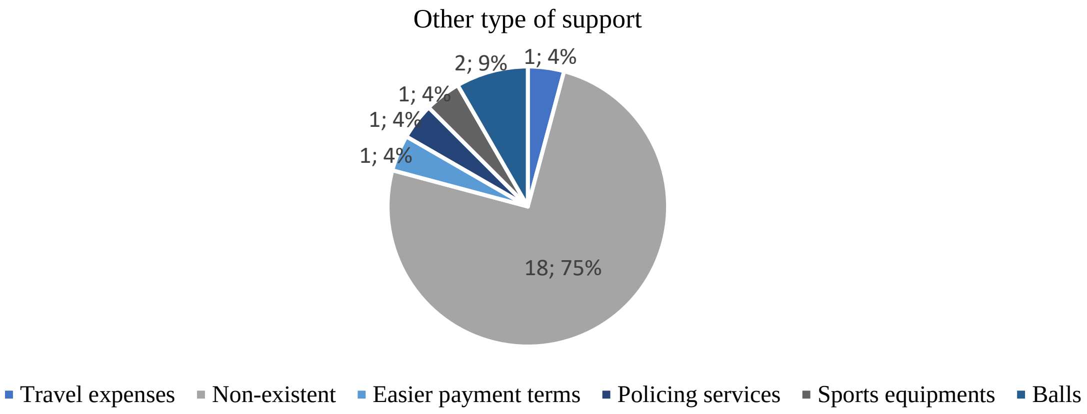


Chart 4.8 Players’ registration support, legal support and other type of support

4.2.9 Players transfers

Of the clubs surveyed, 5 (20.8%) indicated that they engage in player transfers and receive compensation in various forms, some in a financial way for player development, others receipt of a limited amount in transfers, in other case agreements that include a percentage of the value of a future sale of the player and also receipt of sports materials as part of transfer agreements. 19 clubs (79.2%) indicated that they do not conduct player transfers. The practice of transfers, although limited, serves as an additional revenue source for some of the clubs. It generates some income through financial compensation or training rights, which are essential for supporting club activities. Obtaining percentages from future sales represents a significant long-term revenue, encouraging continued investment in player development. Most clubs are not involved in player transfers, which indicates possible lack of robust training programs that produce players attractive to other clubs, operation in local or regional markets with less exposure and fewer transfer opportunities, focus on sporting or social goals rather than a business model oriented towards talent transfers.

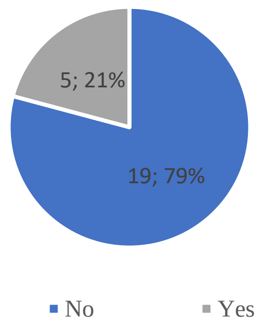


Chart 4.9 Players Transfer

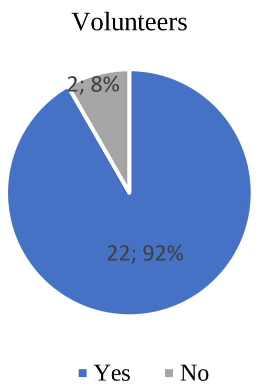
4.2.10 Employment structure

Of the clubs surveyed, 22 (91.7%) indicated that they rely on volunteers to perform functions within the club. Only 2 clubs (8.3%) do not utilize volunteers. With regard to the employment structure, four clubs (16.7%) have paid employees, while 20 clubs (83.3%) do not employ paid staff.

A significant proportion of the club's activities rely on the input of volunteers, who play a vital role in enabling the club to operate with reduced expenditure. The reliance on volunteers is indicative of the financial constraints that prevent the recruitment of paid staff. But it also reflects a solid and generalized culture of community involvement.

The absence of volunteers in a smaller part of the clubs suggests that these clubs operate in a more professional manner or simply cannot attract volunteers due to a lack of resources or community networks. The fact that only 16.7% of clubs employ paid staff, indicates that a small fraction of organizations has the financial capacity to maintain paid employees. These clubs have a more formal organizational structure and offer services and programs that require qualified professionals. The common is not having paid employees, which indicates limited financial resources.

According to Ibsen & Seippel, (2010) and Wicker (2017) the survival of clubs depends on internal resources, including the involvement of volunteers for cost-effective management, among other aspects. This is taken further to the expected results in relation to cost management, where clubs with an effective volunteer program are expected to reduce operating costs so that more is invested in their sports infrastructure.



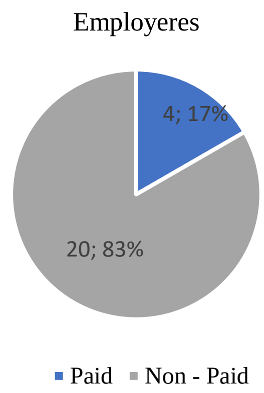


Chart 4.10 Volunteers and employers

4.2.11 Primary costs

In terms of direct expenses, the clubs surveyed revealed that 21 clubs (87.5%) have costs associated with essential goods, while only 3 clubs (12.5%) do not have such costs.

With regard to maintenance costs, 15 clubs (62.5 %) present vehicle maintenance costs, while 9 clubs (37.5 %) have no such costs.

In terms of infrastructure, 16 clubs (66.7%) have incurred costs associated with the maintenance of their infrastructure, while 8 clubs (33.3%) have not.

With regard to football pitches, 13 clubs (54.2%) have costs associated with pitch maintenance, while 11 clubs (45.8%) do not.

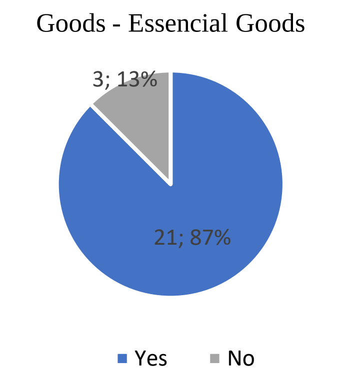
In the section pertaining to the costs associated with sporting equipment, it was revealed that five clubs (20.8%) transfer the financial responsibility for equipment costs to the players, while another five clubs (20.8%) rely on sponsorship to cover these expenses. Seven clubs (29.2%) reported no equipment costs, while an additional seven clubs (29.2%) indicated that they directly bear the financial burden associated with the acquisition of equipment. Lastly 7 clubs (29.2%) have travel costs, and 17 clubs (70.8%) do not have these costs.

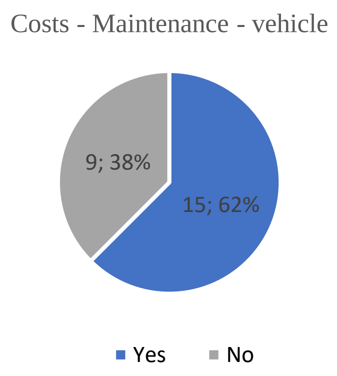
Most sports clubs face significant challenges in covering the costs of essential goods and services, such as water, electricity, and gas. These utilities are critical for the day-to-day functioning of the club, whether for maintaining facilities, running training sessions, or hosting events. In many cases, these costs make up a substantial proportion of the total operational expenditure for clubs.

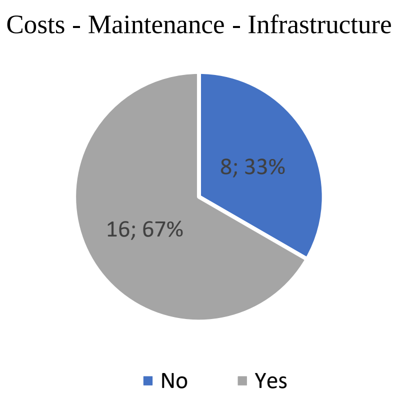
More than half of the clubs surveyed have vehicle maintenance costs. The mobility of athletes and equipment is indeed a critical logistical element for sports clubs, particularly when it comes to traveling for competitions, training, or events. However, many clubs did not report any travel costs, which suggests an alternative approach to managing these logistical needs. Specifically, it highlights the important role played by parents and relatives of the athletes in covering or facilitating travel.

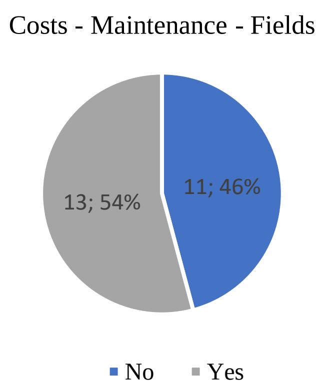
Furthermore, two-thirds of the club's expenditure is allocated to maintaining its infrastructure, which serves to emphasize the importance of guaranteeing the functionality of its facilities. Approximately 50% of the clubs surveyed bear the financial responsibility for maintaining the pitch. In accordance with the regulatory requirements, the playing field must be maintained in a condition that allows for the safe practice, training and competition of sports.

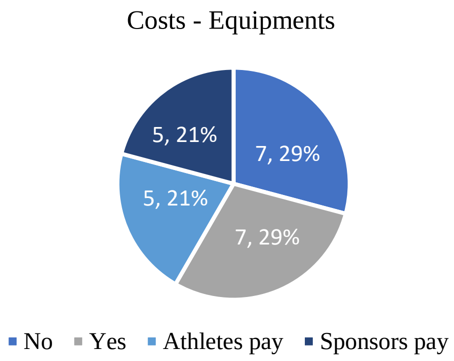
In response to questions relating to team uniforms, the majority of clubs indicated that these costs are distributed between athletes, sponsors and clubs. This indicates a variability in the way these expenses are met. However, this diversity is dependent on the support received from sponsors.











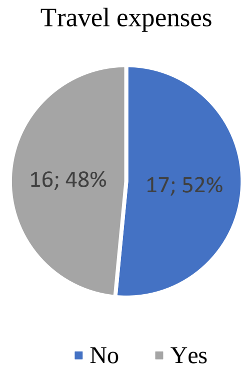


Chart 4.11 Essential goods, maintenance - vehicle, infrastructure and fields, team equipment and costs - travel

4.2.12 Staff resources analysis

In terms of financial outlay, only 3 clubs (12.5%) remunerate senior-level players, while 15 clubs (62.5%) do not provide salaries to such players. Three clubs (12.5%) offer match bonuses as a form of compensation, while a further three clubs (12.5%) provide expense allowances to players. Regarding the staff and coaches, eight clubs (33.3%) have costs associated with them, while 16 clubs (66.7%) do not face these costs. Seventeen clubs (70.8%) have costs associated with player registrations, insurance, and medical examinations, while the remaining seven do not. Regarding the provision of meals for athletes, five clubs (20.8%) are responsible for covering the associated costs, while 19 clubs (79.2%) do not incur such expenses. Furthermore, 17 clubs (70.8%) have costs associated with policing, while 7 clubs (29.2%) do not.

The majority of sports clubs do not remunerate their senior players, which is indicative of the prevalence of amateur players. These clubs usually do not have the financial structure to offer players' salaries, which is reflected in the level of play. Consequently, any player with greater talent will seek a club that provides remuneration. Therefore, most clubs rely heavily on amateur participation and voluntary involvement.

Two thirds of the clubs surveyed do not report any costs for their staff and coaches, indicating a significant reliance on volunteers or the use of intermittent service contracts. This highlights the financial constraints many clubs face and suggests a wider trend of cost-cutting measures where formal labor contracts are avoided. Only a mere third of the clubs surveyed have the financial resources to employ paid staff, which suggests that these clubs operate with a more formal organizational structure and may have a greater management capacity compared to those reliant on volunteers.

A significant proportion of clubs do not provide financial assistance with meal costs for athletes. This suggests that many clubs anticipate that athletes or their families will assume responsibility for these expenses.

Most clubs (70.8%) are responsible for bearing the costs associated with policing, due to the need to guarantee security during events such as matches or extensive training sessions. This is a financial burden resulting from the regulatory requirements relating to sporting events.

The allocation of resources to athlete registration, insurance and medical examinations demonstrated a tangible commitment to the principles of safety, prevention and assistance in accordance with the FPF regulations. These principles are of the utmost importance in protecting the interests of clubs and athletes. However, most clubs operate with minimal staff costs, which means they must resort to external services. This emphasizes the need for meticulous financial management and the search for additional sources of funding to ensure the sustainability of these operations.

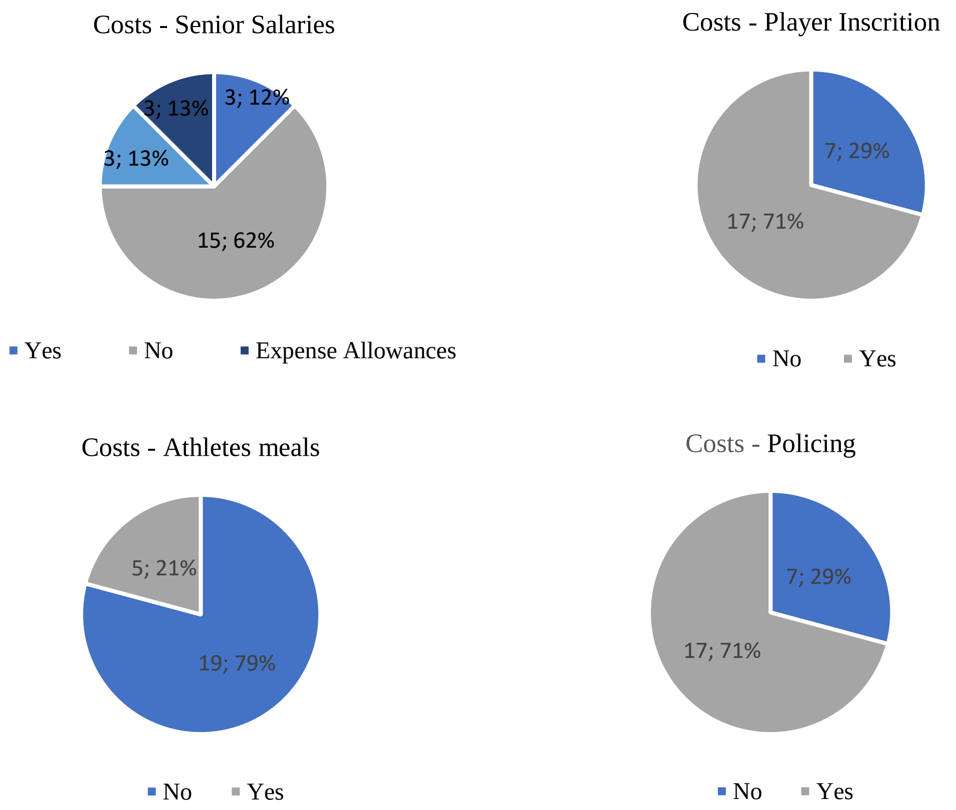


Chart 4.12 Costs - senior salaries, player registration, policing and athletes' meals

4.3 Quantitative data analysis

4.3.1 Correlation between registered football players per thousand inhabitants and GDP per capita

The data analysis reveals that a correlation value of 0.84950002. The interpretation indicates that there is a strong positive correlation between registered football players per thousand inhabitants and GDP per capita. This suggests that as the GDP per capita of a country or region increases, the number of registered football players per thousand inhabitants also tends to increase.

This relationship highlights that in Portugal, over the years, the growth in GDP per capita has been closely associated with a proportional increase in the number of registered football players, indicating a linear relationship between these variables. By observing the Scatter plot (Figure 4.1) there is only one outlier, which in this case is the year 2020, which coincides with the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a strong impact on the country. The data presented refers to the period between 2000 and 2023.

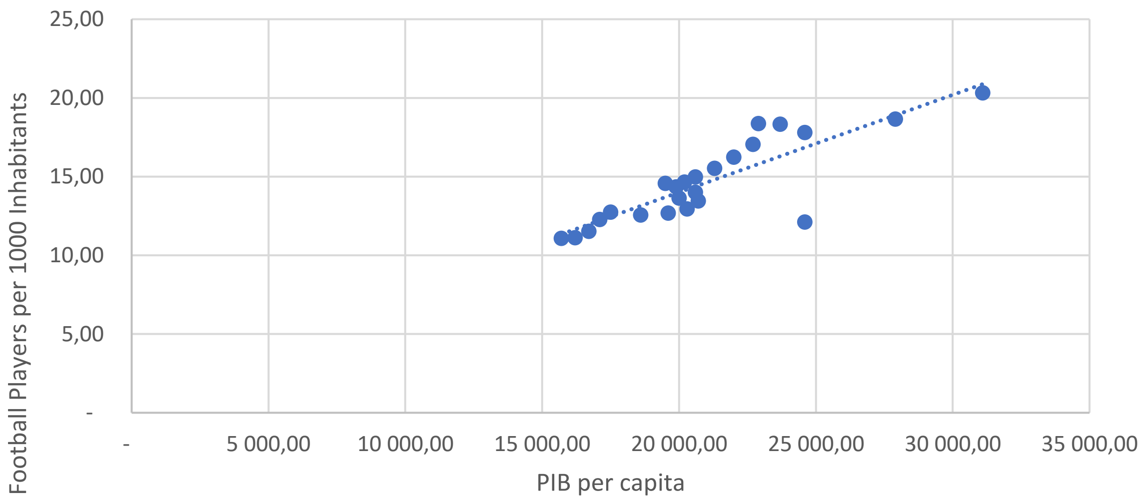


Figure 4.1 Scatter plot: Registered football players per 1000 inhabitants vs GDP per capita (Period of the data: 2000 - 2023)

4.3.2 The correlation between the financial contribution for football and registered football players per 1,000 inhabitants

When referring to “financial contribution for football” I am including fundings received from football associations, councils and Portuguese Federation of Football. The data analysis reveals that a correlation value of (-0.487090925), which indicates a moderate negative correlation. This indicates a general trend in which a higher density of registered footballers per 1000 inhabitants is associated with a lower financial contribution. Furthermore, the points are observed to be dispersed along the line, indicating that although there is a general negative trend, there are significant variations in the data (Figure 4.2). Some points demonstrate a high financial contribution despite a relatively low number of registered football players, while others exhibit a low financial contribution despite a higher number of registered football players. This suggests that the linear relationship between the two variables is not particularly strong. One potential explanation for this relationship is that regions with a higher density of registered football players exhibit greater self-sufficiency, leading to a reduced reliance on external financial contributions.

Alternatively, it could indicate that in areas where there are more football players, the financial resources are spread over a larger number of participants, resulting in a lower per capita financial contribution. In order to ensure the effective management and sustainability of district-level football clubs, it is essential to recognize that an increase in the number of registered football players may not necessarily lead to an equivalent increase in funding. In order to achieve this, management strategies must consider not only an increase in the number of players, but also the efficiency with which the available financial resources are utilized. The data presented refers to the period between 2000 and 2023.

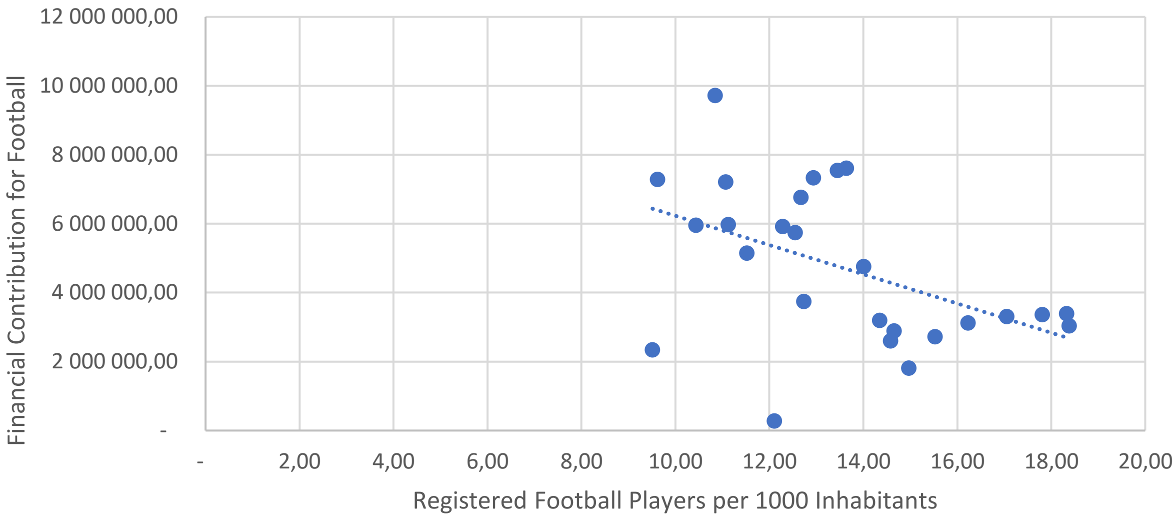


Figure 4.2 Scatter plot: Financial contribution for football vs. registered football players per 1000 inhabitants
(Period of the data: 2000 - 2023)

4.3.3 Correlation between number of clubs and number of registered football players per 1000 inhabitants

The data analysis reveals a correlation value of (-0.219808669). The interpretation reveals a weak negative correlation between the number of clubs and the number of registered football players per 1000 inhabitants. This linear relationship is not strong enough to draw definitive conclusions. The scatter plot (Figure 4.3) shows a slightly negative slope, indicating that an increase in the number of registered football players per 1000 inhabitants does not imply an increase in the number of clubs. In fact, based on the obtained value, there is a slight decrease. The high dispersion of the data suggests that many other factors influence the number of clubs besides the number of registered football players per 1000 inhabitants. The data presented refers to the period between 2000 and 2023.

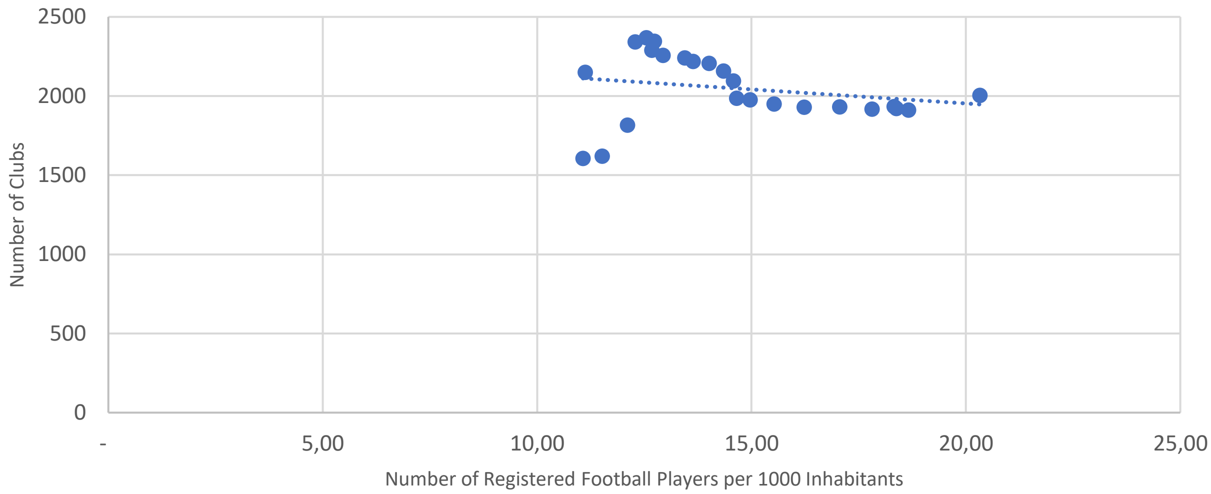


Figure 4.3 Scatter plot: Number of clubs vs. number of registered football players per 1000 inhabitants
(Period of the data: 2000 - 2023)

4.3.4 Correlation between total population and number of clubs

The data analysis reveals a correlation value of 0.650241484, indicating a moderate positive relationship between the total population and the number of football clubs. This result although significant, is not perfect, indicating that factors other than the total population play an important role in the increase in the number of football clubs. The Scatter plot (Figure 4.4) indicates that as the total resident population increases, the number of football clubs also tends to increase. However, the slope is not very steep, suggesting that the increase in the number of clubs is not directly proportional to the increase in population. The dispersion of points around the trend line suggests that while there is a general trend of more clubs with an increasing population, there is considerable variability. The positive correlation indicates that from 2000 to 2023, there has been an increase in the total resident population, and alongside this, the number of existing football clubs has also increased. This is consistent with the logic that a larger population provides a larger base of players and community support, which facilitates the creation and maintenance of clubs. The data presented refers to the period between 2000 and 2023.

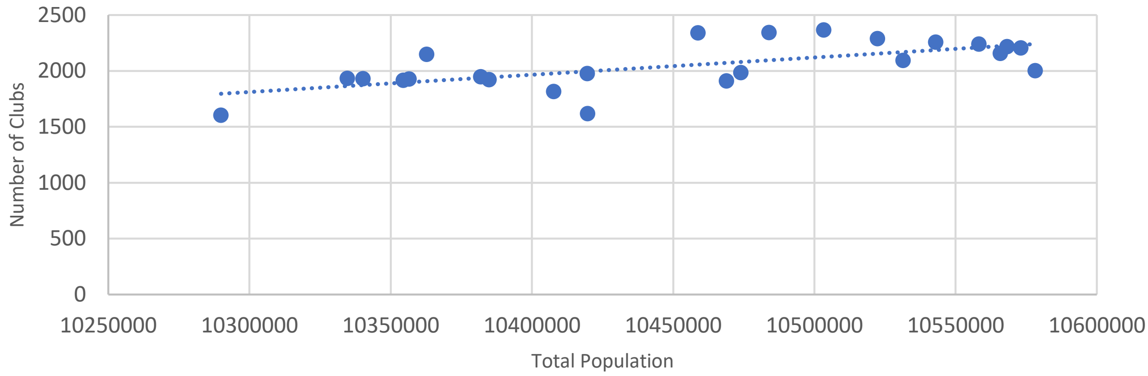


Figure 4.4 Scatter plot: Total population vs. number of clubs
(Period of the data: 2000 - 2023)

4.3.5 Correlation between number of clubs and financial contributions for football

When referring to “financial contribution for football” I am including fundings received from football associations, councils and Portuguese Federation of Football. The data analysis reveals a correlation value of 0.371085613, indicating a weak positive relationship between the number of clubs and financial contributions. This suggests that while there is some connection between these two variables, the influence of financial contributions on the number of clubs is not particularly strong. It may also suggest that support may be influenced by the popularity of some clubs to the detriment of others. The Scatter plot (Figure 4.5) shows a general trend of increased financial support as the number of football clubs rises. There is significant dispersion of points around the trend line, suggesting that funding does not depend solely on the number of existing clubs. Considering that funding from municipalities and the Portuguese Institute for Sports and Youth (IPDJ) varies for all clubs, as it is allocated based on the specific causes and needs of each club, it is normal for some to receive higher amounts and others to receive lower amounts. This contributes to an imbalance in funding among clubs. The data presented refers to the period between 2000 and 2023.

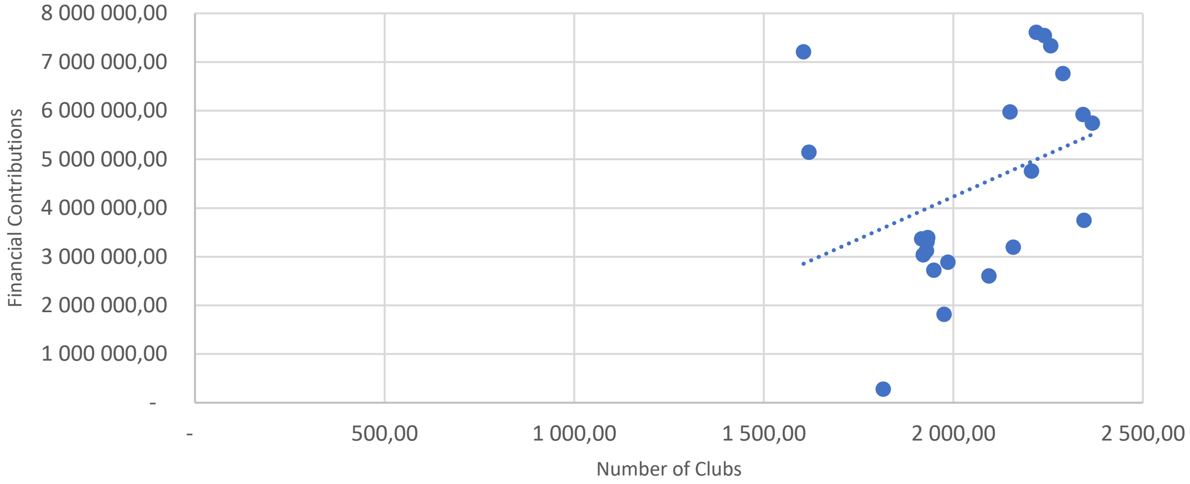


Figure 4.5 Scatter plot: Number of clubs vs financial contributions for football (Period of the data: 2000 - 2023)

5. Discussion

The objective of this research is to ascertain the financial sustainability of lower-division regional football clubs and to identify strategies for addressing the challenges posed by social demands. Accordingly, the objective was to identify the factors that could potentially influence the financial sustainability of clubs, based on data obtained through interviews and socio-demographic and sporting indicators. The results were then merged and subjected to comparative analysis in order to identify common themes, correlations and differences.

The findings identify that financial management is highly related to the ability of clubs to diversify their revenues and contain their costs. Furthermore, government institutions and stakeholders themselves do play a very important role in providing financial support and defining policies which have consequences in terms of the number of clubs and registered players. These findings are supported by the literature, which indicates that revenue diversification, cost efficiency, and institutional support constitute the base for the long-term sustainability of sports organizations, especially those in regional and financially deprived areas (Anheier and Toepler, 2023; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978)

The findings indicated that the clubs that demonstrated both sporting and financial success during the examined period were also the ones that generated the most external sources of income. It can be reasonably deduced that the most successful clubs are those that generate the greatest revenue through sponsorship, the provision of support by local government, and the conclusion of agreements with local companies for the purpose of investing in infrastructure and development programs. It can be reasonably assumed that smaller clubs are more likely to represent areas with lower population density and, consequently, lower economic means. As a result, smaller clubs tend to rely to a greater extent on internal sources of income, such as membership fees and the revenue generated by sporting events. This ultimately limits their ability to compete with clubs that have access to larger resources.

Analyzing socio-demographic and sporting data reveals similar dynamics. Clubs located in regions with greater purchasing power are more likely to attract a greater number of members and local sponsors, which allows them to invest more and improve their sporting performance. This finding establishes a connection between external revenues and sporting success, aligning with previous research as Young (2007) and Powell and Bromley (2020). These authors identified revenue diversification as a crucial factor for the sustainability of nonprofit organizations.

According to the responses provided the interviews, clubs which demonstrated an ability to control their costs exhibited a more controlled expenditure structure. In order to maintain the lowest possible fixed costs, organizations frequently utilize the services of volunteers and forge local partnerships. As a result, they are in a position to invest further in the development of sporting facilities and infrastructure.

The quantitative data confirms the assumption that successful cost management is strongly related to financial and sporting success. Clubs that balance their accounts through frugal resource management have a much greater capacity to invest in top-level facilities and youth development programs. These results are also supported by literature related to club theory (Heinemann, 1999; Siegfried, 2008), in which good management is mentioned as a decisive ingredient for long-term survival.

Government institutions and local players are considered to be partners and supporters, but this has not yet materialized into financial support for clubs or an impact on regional sports policy. The interviews analysis seems to indicate that financial and logistical support from public bodies, such as local authorities, may potentially contribute to a more favorable financial situation for the clubs that receive these favors, which could in turn lead to improved performance in sport.

However, there was extreme variation in this support between regions, influenced by local political priorities and the perceived importance of football in relation to other sporting activities. Analyzing sociodemographic indicators shows that the greater the support for football from local authorities, the greater the number of registered players and the more active the clubs. The level of institutional support available to clubs, particularly those in the lower divisions, can have a significant impact on their ability to survive, given that their internally generated revenues are often insufficient to cover operating costs. These findings appear to support the view that public policies and stakeholders, as noted by Pfeffer & Salancik (1978) and Donaldson & Preston (1995), may play a role in influencing the financial environment of sports organizations.

In a nutshell, the clubs must consider ways of ensuring financial sustainability, which could be achieved through diversified sources of revenue, efficient cost management and support from government institutions and local stakeholders, particularly in the form of sponsorship. The balance among these three pillars enhances a club's capacity to survive and thrive, even in regions with limited resources.

5.1 Theoretical Implication

This dissertation contributes to theory by adapting and applying theoretical frameworks to real-world scenarios: Using the economic theory of non-profit organizations as a basis, Salamon and Anheier (1999), Young (2007) and Anheier and Toepler (2023) illustrate how revenue diversification and financial self-sufficiency have been critical factors for the survival and sustainability of non-profit football clubs. Our findings tend to show that while the bigger clubs can rely on a certain foundation of external revenue streams, such as broadcasting rights, sponsorships, and transfer fees, a lower-division club needs to place its focus on internal revenue streams, such as membership fees, matchday income, and local sponsorships. This supports the view that smaller clubs would face numerous financial problems because of their limited access to external finances; hence, it corresponds to dependence theory by Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978. The results give a detailed understanding of how nonprofit football clubs, especially at the regional level, have to balance revenue generation in a competitive environment.

The theory of organizational capacity of voluntary organizations also contributes to the study by underlining that volunteerism and community involvement are important ingredients in the operational success of such clubs, as developed by Ibsen and Seippel (2010) and Wicker and Hallmann (2013). Most of the researched clubs are dependent on volunteer labor for their day-to-day activities, as evidenced in prior literature about the role and importance of volunteers in non-profit organizations. These supports through volunteers develop greater organizational capacity in clubs and develop financial viability. All the same, it can create some problems in maintaining continuity and consistency in various management functions because volunteers may not be so regularly available. By embedding financial management and community-based support systems, we add depth to the understanding of how nonprofit sports organizations survive with only limited resources.

Third, the Club Theory by Heinemann 1999; Anderson, Shugard & Robert 2004, enriches this research through the study of cost management by smaller football clubs and their adaptation in financial strategies to continue in operation. This study shows that cost management is an important means of surviving a club, particularly in those situations when no or minimal revenues from other external sources are available. Those clubs that were more prudent in terms of cost management, trying to keep their operational expenses as low as possible and using partnerships with local communities, would be able to keep their enterprise financially stable. These results confirm the earlier theories that say small-scale sport enterprises thrive on operational efficiency and financial prudence.

The stakeholder theory of Freeman, 1984; Donaldson & Preston, 1995, contributed to this work by assessing the impact of external stakeholders, such as local governments and regional sports authorities, on the financial sustainability of football clubs. Indeed, the researchers noticed how the support of government bodies, sometimes in the form of direct financial grants and at other times in maintaining the much-needed facilities, is deemed necessary for the very survival of most clubs in the lower divisions.

However, this level of support varies greatly from region to region; this underlines differences in the way government institutions interact with and support local football ecosystems. The complex interaction of the nonprofit sports organizations and their external stakeholders deepens the theoretical understanding of the relationship that prevails between stakeholders in the settings of nonprofit organizations.

5.2 Practical implications

Since most football clubs face financial constraints and difficulties, their managers, policymakers and other stakeholders must develop strategies that can improve their operational efficiency, revenue generation and community involvement.

The dependence on internal revenue sources such as membership fees, local sponsorships, and matchday income underlines the importance of clubs developing other streams of income. In this regard, clubs may consider supplementing their income streams through the organization of community events, the hiring out of facilities, and the development of merchandising initiatives that reflect the local identity.

Such activities facilitate the generation of funds, whilst simultaneously fostering a more intimate relationship between the club and the community. This, in turn, enables clubs to become more sustainable in the long term. Furthermore, clubs that are able to enhance their organizational efficiency, through reduced expenditure and the deployment of volunteer resources, are better positioned to maintain financial stability. It is clear that implementing a standardized management system for club finances will facilitate the effective allocation and management of resources, thus ensuring the efficient running of the organization.

Government institutions and regional sports authorities play a role in supporting the survival of these clubs, as our results show. It follows that the majority of clubs depend on financial support from local authorities in terms of subsidies or maintenance of the infrastructure. Local authorities should indeed design special financial programs to offer consistent support to football clubs in lower divisions, particularly those that significantly contribute to the well-being of the community. These programs can play a vital role in ensuring the survival and growth of smaller clubs, which often face financial difficulties despite their social and cultural importance.

Thirdly, to promote sustainable development, it is crucial that lower-division football clubs actively engage with key stakeholders such as companies, schools, and community organizations. By building these partnerships, clubs can secure sponsorship, can create mutually beneficial schools programs, increase community involvement, and establish a wider support base.

This strategy not only enhances financial sustainability but also reinforces the club's role as a community asset. It can, in fact, incorporate in-kind contributions such as equipment donations, volunteer services and the sharing of expertise. By fostering a culture of community involvement, football clubs can benefit from both practical support and deeper ties with their local environment, reinforcing their role as central social institutions.

Finally, clubs should invest in long-term strategic planning aimed at sustainability and growth. This involves regular, systematic monitoring and evaluation of their financial situation, their impact on the community, and the degree of engagement on behalf of the community. In this regard, taking on a more proactive management and planning role would position clubs to better meet the challenges of the future and seize opportunities for development. Such an approach would leave a lower-division football club better positioned to survive and prosper in an increasingly competitive sporting environment.

This study, then, brings to the fore those practical measures that will guarantee financial stability and sustainability for lower-division football clubs. In diversifying revenue streams, improving stakeholder engagement, and hopefully gaining increased and more consistent government support, the clubs will be able to remain at the heart of their communities and work toward a more sustainable future.

5.3 Clubs' vision for the future

The final question posed to the clubs was regarding their perceptions of the future of district football in Portugal. In general, all of the respondents highlighted financial and logistical difficulties as significant challenges for the future. The lack of financial support from municipal councils and sponsors was identified as a persistent concern, as was the impact of rising costs.

Clubs situated in areas of demographic expansion identified a necessity of additional pitches and sporting facilities in order to satisfy the increasing demand. The lack of synthetic training pitches and the poor quality of the existing pitches were identified as significant barriers to the effective functioning of sporting development. The reduction in the number of volunteers, including managerial personnel, has also given rise to significant concern.

The responses vary in terms of optimism and pessimism about the future. Despite the challenges, several clubs emphasize the importance of amateur football as a crucial instrument for social and community cohesion. The importance of the social role of clubs is seen as an essential factor for their continuity and growth. Emphasis should be placed on the need for clubs to focus on community service rather than sporting results.

However, as a coin has two phases, it was also discerned that the respondents evinced optimism. Some clubs articulated hope due to new remodeling projects or the fact that they have young, dedicated leadership. Other respondents take a more pessimistic view, anticipating a decrease in the number of clubs and teams as a result of a lack of support and increased bureaucracy. The necessity for restructuring and enhanced governmental assistance is underscored, accompanied by recommendations for the standardization of regulations and the augmentation of incentives for associative leadership. Concerns about long-term sustainability are evident, with respondents suggesting that amateur football could become an elitist sport, accessible only to those with financial resources.

The analysis demonstrates that the amateur football sector in Portugal is confronted with considerable challenges, yet it has been identified as having the potential to exert a significant social and cultural influence. The sustainability of clubs depends better infrastructure, more money and support, and more volunteers and leaders.

The future of amateur football is uncertain. Clubs need to reassess their policies and support to ensure it continues to play a vital role in communities. This overview can be used to make public policies and management efforts stronger. It will help make sure that amateur football in Portugal is accessible and inclusive for everyone.

6. Conclusion

Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, I have explored both the financial realities and the perceptions of those at the forefront of club management. The convergent approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding revenue generation, cost management, and community engagement in these clubs.

The clubs' financial structures are highly dependent on a limited range of revenue sources, such as bar operations, membership fees, and sponsorship from local businesses. The reliance on these sources, coupled with insufficient financial support from governmental bodies and district football associations, reveals a precarious situation for many of these clubs. This financial fragility is further exacerbated by rising operational costs and the need for constant infrastructure maintenance, which are often inadequately covered by the available funding.

The Pearson correlation analysis underscored the relationships between sociodemographic factors, such as GDP per capita and population size, and the number of registered football players or football clubs. It suggests that while economic prosperity can bolster football participation, the distribution of financial resources is inconsistent, often favoring clubs with better-established networks or greater visibility.

The qualitative insights gathered from club interviews showed that the club managers often emphasized the importance of volunteerism and community involvement, which remain integral to their survival. However, the diminishing pool of volunteers and the increasing bureaucratic demands placed on clubs signal a need for institutional support to ensure their long-term sustainability.

In conclusion, the future of lower-division football clubs in Portugal depends on the diversification of revenue sources, more equitable financial support, and improved infrastructure. For these clubs to continue playing their crucial role in local communities, not just as sports institutions but as hubs of social cohesion, policy makers, sports associations, and local governments must collaborate to offer sustainable solutions. The findings of this dissertation contribute to the broader discourse on sports management, highlighting the unique challenges faced by lower-division football clubs and showing pathways for their continued growth and development.

6.1 Limitations and suggestions for future research

Although this research provides valuable information on the financial situation of regional football clubs and offers practical recommendations for improving their sustainability, it naturally also has limitations inherent to any master's degree research.

One of the main limitations of the study is the relatively small size of the sample of regional clubs in Portugal that took part in the interviews. Some clubs did not have publicly available contact information, which made it difficult to get in touch. In addition, the answers provided lacked the precision required for in-depth analysis. In addition, the lack of transparency in the information provided regarding revenues and costs made it difficult to assess the financial situation.

Another issue was the lack of accessible data on regional clubs, since much of the financial information available relates to clubs in the professional divisions, as required by the Portuguese Football League. As a recommendation for future studies, the inclusion of a more representative sample would allow for a more comprehensive analysis of the factors that influence the sustainability of clubs in various contexts.

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Appendices

Calculations of Pearson Correlation Coefficient between PIB per Capita and Registered Football Players per 1000 InHabitants

Correlation between the PIB per capita and Registered Football Players per 1000 InHabitants

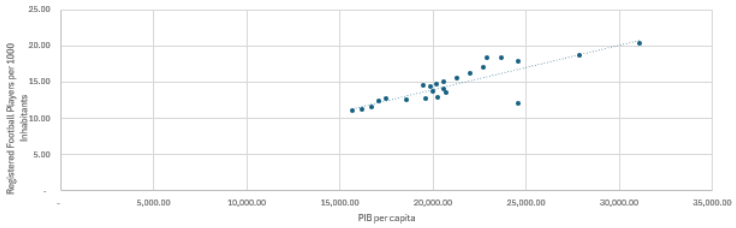
PIB per capita (X)	Registered Football Players per 1000 InHabitants (Y)	Xmean	Ymean	Xi - Xmean	Yi - Ymean	(Xi - Xmean)*(Yi - Ymean)	(Xi - Xmean)^2	(Yi - Ymean)^2
31100	20.32940657	21000	14.62266689	10100	5.70673968	57638.07076	102010000	32.56687777
27900	18.65836701			6900	4.035700123	27846.33085	47610000	16.28687548
24600	12.10698956			3600	-2.515677328	-9056.438382	12960000	6.32863242
22900	18.37918444			1900	3.75651755	7137.383344	3610000	14.1114241
24600	17.8079059			3600	3.18523901	11466.86043	12960000	10.14574755
23700	18.32837218			2700	3.705705294	10005.40429	7290000	13.73225173
22700	17.05482449			1700	2.432157599	4134.667918	2890000	5.915390584
22000	16.23103754			1000	1.608370653	1608.370653	1000000	2.586856157
21300	15.52393709			300	0.901270202	270.3810606	90000	0.812287977
20600	14.96870275			-400	0.346035865	-138.4143461	160000	0.11974082
20200	14.65172158			-800	0.029054695	-23.2437556	640000	0.000844175
19500	14.57828099			-1500	-0.044385897	66.57884617	2250000	0.001970108
19900	14.34548104			-1100	-0.27718585	304.9044349	1210000	0.076831995
20600	14.00781228			-400	-0.614854611	245.9418443	160000	0.378046192
20000	13.63575246			-1000	-0.986914432	986.9144317	1000000	0.974000095
20700	13.44531352			-300	-1.177353366	353.2060097	90000	1.386160948
20300	12.9363052			-700	-1.686361691	1180.453183	490000	2.843815751
19600	12.6740496			-1400	-1.948617291	2728.064207	1960000	3.797109345
18600	12.55173359			-2400	-2.070933296	4970.23991	5760000	4.288764716
17500	12.73490749			-3500	-1.887759396	6607.157887	12250000	3.563635539
17100	12.28350691			-3900	-2.339159981	9122.723927	15210000	5.471669418
16700	11.51701054			-4300	-3.105656354	13354.32232	18490000	9.645101388
16200	11.12477976			-4800	-3.497887126	16789.8582	23040000	12.23521434
15700	11.06862284			-5300	-3.554044051	18836.43347	28090000	12.63122912
					Total	**186436.1715**	**301220000**	**159.9004777**

rson Correlation Coefficient Forn

$$r = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n}(x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\left[\sum_{i=1}^{n}(x_i - \bar{x})^2\right]\left[\sum_{i=1}^{n}(y_i - \bar{y})^2\right]}}$$

r = 186436,1715 / SQRT(301220000*159,9004777)

r	0.84950002



Calculations of Pearson Correlation Coefficient between Financial Contributions in Football and Registered Football Players per 1000 InHabitants

Correlation between the Financial Contribution in Football and Registered Football Players per 1,000 inhabitant

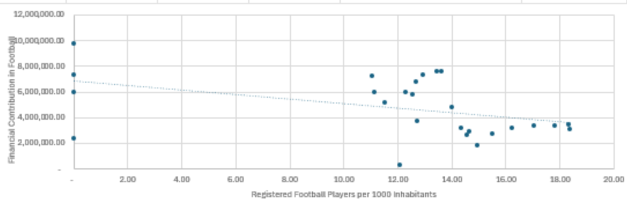
Financial Contribution in Football (X)	Registered Football Players per 1000 InHabitants (Y)	Xmean	Ymean	Xi - Xmean	Yi - Ymean	(Xi - Xmean)*(Yi - Ymean)	(Xi - Xmean)^2	(Yi - Ymean)^2
279222	12.10698956	4431220.273	14.17982872	-4151998.273	-2.072839155	8606424.593	1.72391E+13	4.296662164
3034992	18.37918444			-1396228.273	4.199355722	-5863259.187	1.94945E+12	17.63458848
3367367	17.8079059			-1063853.273	3.628077182	-3859741.784	1.13178E+12	13.16294404
3390739	18.32837218			-1040481.273	4.148543467	-4316481.786	1.0826E+12	17.2104129
3310103	17.05482449			-1121117.273	2.874995771	-3223207.418	1.2569E+12	8.265600686
3121216	16.23103754			-1310004.273	2.051208826	-2687092.326	1.71611E+12	4.207457647
2725000	15.52393709			-1706220.273	1.344108375	-2293344.958	2.91119E+12	1.806627323
1815000	14.96870275			-2616220.273	0.788874038	-2063868.251	6.84461E+12	0.622322248
2889800	14.65172158			-1541420.273	0.471892867	-727385.2323	2.37598E+12	0.222682878
2603000	14.57828099			-1828220.273	0.398452275	-728458.5276	3.34239E+12	0.158764216
3192811	14.34548104			-1238409.273	0.165652323	-205145.3728	1.53366E+12	0.027440692
4761582	14.00781228			330361.7273	-0.172016438	-56827.64752	1.09139E+11	0.029589655
7612590	13.63575246			3181369.727	-0.544076259	-1730907.739	1.01211E+13	0.296018975
7545757	13.44531352			3114536.727	-0.734515193	-2287674.545	9.70034E+12	0.539512568
7331740	12.9363052			2900519.727	-1.243523518	-3606864.494	8.41301E+12	1.546350739
6763941	12.6740496			2332720.727	-1.505779118	-3512562.159	5.44159E+12	2.267370752
5744796	12.55173359			1313575.727	-1.628095123	-2138626.235	1.72548E+12	2.65069373
3744430	12.73490749			-686790.2727	-1.444921224	992357.8412	4.71681E+11	2.087797342
5922900	12.28350691			1491679.727	-1.896321808	-2828704.798	2.22511E+12	3.596036401
5147060	11.51701054			715839.7273	-2.662818181	-1906151.04	5.12427E+11	7.090600665
5973916	11.12477976			1542695.727	-3.055048953	-4713010.966	2.37991E+12	9.333324103
7208884	11.06862284			2777663.727	-3.111205878	-8641883.717	7.71542E+12	9.679602018
					Total	**-47792415.75**	**9.0199E+13**	**106.7324002**

Pearson Correlation Coefficient Formula

$$r = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n}(x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\left[\sum_{i=1}^{n}(x_i - \bar{x})^2\right]\left[\sum_{i=1}^{n}(y_i - \bar{y})^2\right]}}$$

r = -47792415,75 / SQRT((9,0100*10^13)*(106,7324002))

r	-0.487090925



Calculations of Pearson Correlation Coefficient between Number of Clubs and Registered Football Players per 1000 InHabitants

Correlation between the Number of Clubs and Registered Football Players per 1,000 Inhabitants

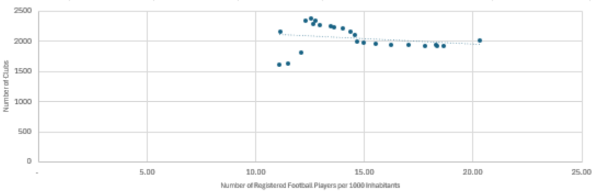
Number of Clubs (X)	Registered Football Players per 1000 InHabitants (Y)	Xmean	Ymean	Xi - Xmean	Yi - Ymean	(Xi - Xmean)*(Yi - Ymean)	(Xi - Xmean)^2	(Yi - Ymean)^2
2003	20.32940657	2048.458333	14.62266689	-45.45833333	5.70673968	-259.4188746	2066.460069	32.56687777
1912	18.65836701			-136.4583333	4.035700123	-550.7049126	18620.87674	16.28687548
1815	12.10698956			-233.4583333	-2.515677328	587.3058363	54502.7934	6.32863242
1921	18.37918444			-127.4583333	3.75651755	-478.799466	16245.62674	14.1114241
1917	17.8079059			-131.4583333	3.18523901	-418.7262115	17281.2934	10.14574755
1933	18.32837218			-115.4583333	3.705705294	-427.8545571	13330.62674	13.73225173
1931	17.05482449			-117.4583333	2.432157599	-285.6771779	13796.46007	5.915390584
1929	16.23103754			-119.4583333	1.608370653	-192.1332776	14270.2934	2.586856157
1949	15.52393709			-99.45833333	0.901270202	-89.63883217	9891.960069	0.812287977
1976	14.96870275			-72.45833333	0.346035865	-25.07318208	5250.210069	0.11974082
1986	14.65172158			-62.45833333	0.029054695	-1.814707794	3901.043403	0.000844175
2094	14.57828099			45.54166667	-0.044385897	-2.021407746	2074.043403	0.001970108
2158	14.34548104			109.5416667	-0.27718585	-30.36339998	11999.37674	0.076831995
2206	14.00781228			157.5416667	-0.614854611	-96.86522012	24819.37674	0.378046192
2219	13.63575246			170.5416667	-0.986914432	-168.310032	29084.46007	0.974000095
2240	13.44531352			191.5416667	-1.177353366	-225.5122259	36688.21007	1.386160948
2257	12.9363052			208.5416667	-1.686361691	-351.6766776	43489.62674	2.843815751
2289	12.6740496			240.5416667	-1.948617291	-468.7236508	57860.2934	3.797109345
2367	12.55173359			318.5416667	-2.070933296	-659.6785436	101468.7934	4.288764716
2345	12.73490749			296.5416667	-1.887759396	-559.7993177	87936.96007	3.563635539
2342	12.28350691			293.5416667	-2.339159981	-686.6409195	86166.71007	5.471669418
1619	11.51701054			-429.4583333	-3.105656354	1333.750002	184434.4601	9.645101388
2150	11.12477976			101.5416667	-3.497887126	-355.1812885	10310.71007	12.23521434
1605	11.06862284			-443.4583333	-3.554044051	1576.070452	196655.2934	12.63122912
					Total	**-2837.487593**	**1042145.958**	**159.9004777**

Pearson Correlation Coefficient Formula

$$r = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n}(x_i-\overline{x})(y_i-\overline{y})}{\sqrt{\left[\sum_{i=1}^{n}(x_i-\overline{x})^2\right]\left[\sum_{i=1}^{n}(y_i-\overline{y})^2\right]}}$$

r = -2837,487593 / SQRT(1042145,958*159,9004777)

r	-0.219808669



Calculations of Pearson Correlation Coefficient between Number of Clubs and Total Population of Portugal

Correlation between the Number of Clubs and Total Population of Portugal

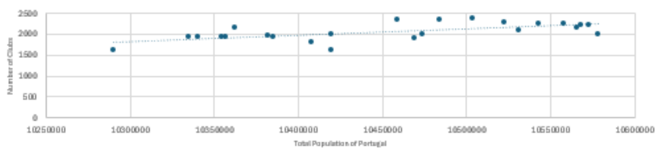
Number of Clubs (X)	Total Population of Portugal (Y)	Xmean	Ymean	Xi - Xmean	Yi - Ymean	(Xi - Xmean)*(Yi - Ymean)	(Xi - Xmean)^2	(Yi - Ymean)^2
2003	10578174	2048.458333	10453376.92	-45.45833333	124797.0833	-5673067.413	2066.460069	15574312009
1912	10468869			-136.4583333	15492.08333	-2114023.872	18620.87674	240004646
1815	10407707			-233.4583333	-45669.91667	10662022.63	54502.7934	2085741288
1921	10384846			-127.4583333	-68530.91667	8734836.42	16245.62674	4696486539
1917	10354446			-131.4583333	-98930.91667	13005293.42	17281.2934	9787326273
1933	10334633			-115.4583333	-118743.9167	13709974.71	13330.62674	14100117745
1931	10340124			-117.4583333	-113252.9167	13302498.84	13796.46007	12826223134
1929	10356516			-119.4583333	-96860.91667	11570843.67	14270.2934	9382037178
1949	10381838			-99.45833333	-71538.91667	7115141.42	9891.960069	5117816598
1976	10419607			-72.45833333	-33769.91667	2446911.878	5250.210069	1140407272
1986	10473991			-62.45833333	20614.08333	-1287521.288	3901.043403	424940431.7
2094	10531420			45.54166667	78043.08333	3554212.087	2074.043403	6090722856
2158	10565836			109.5416667	112459.0833	12318955.42	11999.37674	12647045424
2206	10573100			157.5416667	119723.0833	18861374.09	24819.37674	14333616683
2219	10568247			170.5416667	114870.0833	19590135.46	29084.46007	13195136045
2240	10558177			191.5416667	104800.0833	20073582.63	36688.21007	10983057467
2257	10542964			208.5416667	89587.08333	18682639.67	43489.62674	8025845500
2289	10522288			240.5416667	68911.08333	16575986.84	57860.2934	4748737406
2367	10503330			318.5416667	49953.08333	15912138.42	101468.7934	2495310535
2345	10483861			296.5416667	30484.08333	9039800.878	87936.96007	929279336.7
2342	10458821			293.5416667	5444.083333	1598065.295	86166.71007	29638043.34
1619	10419631			-429.4583333	-33745.91667	14492465.13	184434.4601	1138786892
2150	10362722			101.5416667	-90654.91667	-9205251.33	10310.71007	8218313916
1605	10289898			-443.4583333	-163478.9167	72496087.92	196655.2934	26725356195
					Total	**285463102.9**	**1042145.958**	**1.84936E+11**

son Correlation Coefficient For

$$r = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n}(x_i-\overline{x})(y_i-\overline{y})}{\sqrt{\left[\sum_{i=1}^{n}(x_i-\overline{x})^2\right]\left[\sum_{i=1}^{n}(y_i-\overline{y})^2\right]}}$$

r = 285463102,9 / SQRT(1042145,958*(1,84936*10^11))

r	0.650241484



Calculations of Pearson Correlation Coefficient between Financial Contributions in Football and Number of Clubs

Correlation between the Financial Contribution in Football and Number of Clubs

Financial Contribution in Football (X)	Number of Clubs (Y)	Xmean	Ymean	Xi - Xmean	Yi - Ymean	(Xi - Xmean)*(Yi - Ymean)	(Xi - Xmean)^2	(Yi - Ymean)^2
279222	1815	4431220.273	2056.727273	-4151998.273	-241.7272727	1003651219	1.72391E+13	58432.07438
3034992	1921			-1396228.273	-135.7272727	189506255.6	1.94945E+12	18421.89256
3367367	1917			-1063853.273	-139.7272727	148649316.4	1.13178E+12	19523.71074
3390739	1933			-1040481.273	-123.7272727	128735910.2	1.0826E+12	15308.43802
3310103	1931			-1121117.273	-125.7272727	140955017.1	1.2569E+12	15807.34711
3121216	1929			-1310004.273	-127.7272727	167323273	1.71611E+12	16314.2562
2725000	1949			-1706220.273	-107.7272727	183806456.7	2.91119E+12	11605.16529
1815000	1976			-2616220.273	-80.72727273	211200327.5	6.84461E+12	6516.892562
2889800	1986			-1541420.273	-70.72727273	109020452	2.37598E+12	5002.347107
2603000	2094			-1828220.273	37.27272727	-68142755.62	3.34239E+12	1389.256198
3192811	2158			-1238409.273	101.2727273	-125417084.5	1.53366E+12	10256.16529
4761582	2206			330361.7273	149.2727273	49313996.02	1.09139E+11	22282.34711
7612590	2219			3181369.727	162.2727273	516249542.1	1.01211E+13	26332.43802
7545757	2240			3114536.727	183.2727273	570809640.2	9.70034E+12	33588.89256
7331740	2257			2900519.727	200.2727273	580894996.3	8.41301E+12	40109.16529
6763941	2289			2332720.727	232.2727273	541827405.3	5.44159E+12	53950.61983
5744796	2367			1313575.727	310.2727273	407566723.4	1.72548E+12	96269.16529
3744430	2345			-686790.2727	288.2727273	-197982905	4.71681E+11	83101.16529
5922900	2342			1491679.727	285.2727273	425535544	2.22511E+12	81380.52893
5147060	1619			715839.7273	-437.7272727	-313342571.5	5.12427E+11	191605.1653
5973916	2150			1542695.727	93.27272727	143891437.8	2.37991E+12	8699.801653
7208884	1605			2777663.727	-451.7272727	-1254746460	7.71542E+12	204057.5289
					Total	**3559305736**	**9.0199E+13**	**1019954.364**

Pearson Correlation Coefficient Fornula

$$r = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n}(x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\left[\sum_{i=1}^{n}(x_i - \bar{x})^2\right]\left[\sum_{i=1}^{n}(y_i - \bar{y})^2\right]}}$$

r = 3559305736 / SQRT((9,0100*10^13)*(1019954,364))

r	0.371085613

Guião Entrevista

Diretor(a) ou coordenador(a) a quem me dirijo:

Chamo-me Tomás Cunha e estou a fazer um Mestrado no ISCTE em Gestão. O foco do meu trabalho de dissertação é: O modelo de sustentabilidade dos clubes de futebol dos escalões inferiores (Campeonato de Portugal - 4ª divisão).
Sempre tive grande admiração pelo clube e pelo trabalho desenvolvido em prol do desporto e da região.
Neste sentido, gostaria de pedir a sua ajuda, respondendo a alguns tópicos que elenco ou outros que lhe parecem pertinentes. Estou certo de que irá facilitar muito o meu estudo.

<u>Sustentabilidade financeira do Clube</u>
Quais são as fontes de rendimento do clube?

Bar
Os bares são explorados pelo clube ou fazem concessão de exploração a outra(s) empresa(s)?

Jogadores de formação
Pagamento mensal dos atletas de formação

Bilhética/cotização
A bilhética dos jogos é fundamental para as finanças do clube ou é um valor insignificante?
As receitas provenientes da cotização dos Sócios, é indispensável?

Patrocinadores/sponsors
São pequenas empresas ligadas à região?
São organizações com algum interesse no futebol?
Equipamentos desportivos?
Publicidade estática no estádio/campo?
Patrocínio nas deslocações?
Outro…

Financiamento da Camara Municipal/Município

Manutenção das Infraestruturas?

Apoio logístico?

Apoio financeiro direto?

Outro…

Associação de Futebol de Setúbal

-Qual o apoio/financiamento (se é que existe)?

- Outros tipos de apoio?

- Apoio jurídico?

Transferências de jogadores

É usual a Transferências de jogadores, que incluam contrapartidas financeiras?

A título de curiosidade, já houve algum jogador transferido que tenha dado rendimentos consideráveis ao Clube?

Funcionários/voluntários

A composição das pessoas que trabalham em prol do clube são na sua maioria voluntários ou funcionários da instituição?

Custos

Quais os principais custos do clube?

- Bens essenciais como água, eletricidade…?

- Os jogadores séniores ou de escalões inferiores recebem salário?

- Manutenções?

- Equipamentos?

Em termos de logística e custos como funciona o policiamento e segurança dos jogos?

Com quantos atletas inscritos/federados conta o Clube?

Como vê o futuro do futebol amador em Portugal, e do Clube em particular?

Muito obrigado pela sua disponibilidade.

Cumprimentos,