https://doi.org/10.54141/psbd.1386892

PAMUKKALE JOURNAL OF SPORT SCIENCES
ISSN: 1309-0356 dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/psbd

Pamukkale J Sport Sci, 15(1), 1-32, 2024 Research Article

# Organizational Culture, Strategic Management, and Good Sports Governance in Selected Ethiopian Olympic Sports Federations: Does Organizational Size Matter?

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**Keywords**
Ethiopian Sports federations, Good governance, Strategic management, Organizational culture, Organizational size

**Article History**
Received 08 November 2023
Revised 10 January 2024
Accepted 24 January 2024
Available Online 14 March 2024

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## ABSTRACT

This study intended to examine the moderating effect of organizational size on the influences of organizational culture and strategic management on good sports governance. We used a descriptive cross-sectional survey design to collect data through a structured questionnaire from 265 respondents randomly selected from six Ethiopian Olympic sports federations. We analyzed the data using descriptive and structural equation modeling using SPSS 25.0 and AMOS 23.0. The results, in this regard, indicate that strategic management has a significantly positive direct influence on good sports governance. However, the effect of organizational culture on good sports governance was not observed. Further, organizational size negatively and significantly moderates the relationship between organizational culture and good sports governance. However, the moderation effect of organizational size on the relationship between strategic management and good sports governance was not observed. The principal effect analysis from the moderation effect indicates that organizational size has a significantly positive impact on good sports governance. Hence, this study signifies the need for a fit between size and culture and amplifies the need to engage in strategic management for good sports governance practices in Olympic sports federations.



**Citation**: Garmamo, M., Haddera, T., Tola, Z. and Jaleta, M. (2024). Organizational Culture, Strategic Management, and Good Sports Governance in Selected Ethiopian Olympic Sports Federations: Does Organizational Size Matter? *Pamukkale Journal of Sport Sciences, 15*(1), 1-32. https://doi.org/10.54141/psbd.1386892 

## INTRODUCTION

Sports organizations, compelled by main stakeholders' expectations and innovative global sports governance approaches, are expected to apply good governance practices regardless of status. However, scholars (e.g., Burger & Goslin, 2005; Geeraert, 2017; Mirkonjic, 2016) argue that the successful implementation of good sports governance can be affected by various organizational or situational factors that sports organizations and public authorities should further evaluate and understand them in a more "holistic" approach. Similarly, Aguilera et al. (2015) argue that the efficacy of governance practice depends on the characteristics of the larger institutional environment in which businesses operate.

However, despite the arguments above on the determinants of good sports governance and the ways to approach them, there is insufficient empirical research on the determinants of good sports governance, and just a few studies have looked at the factors that explain whether and to what degree sports organizations engage in good governance practices (Mirkonjic, 2019). Some of the few studies and their findings on determinants of good sports governance, for instance, are commitment and personal motivation (micro-level), competencies and responsibilities of the internal body (meso-level), and the role of the state and the umbrella organization (macro-level; Mirkonjic, 2019); structure of the board at the national level, financial capacity, leadership, and capability of the strategic planning process (O'Boyle & Shilbury, 2018); and the extant level of trust, transparent decision-making, trust-building, and leadership (O'Boyle & Shilbury, 2016). In an African context, Mrindoko and Issa (2023) found that openness and accountability, financial transparency and control, human resource competency, and policy execution are key predictors of effective governance for Tanzanian football federations and organizations.

In addition, some of the existing studies engaged in determinants focused on specific dimensions (transparency and corporate social responsibility) of good governance, hence lacking the comprehensiveness needed to fully understand the causes that explain the implementation of multi-faceted good sports governance. For instance, Král and Cuskelly (2017) found structural (membership, staff capacity), attitudinal, and knowledge-based determinants of transparency. Some studies (e.g., Babiak & Wolfe, 2009; Zeimers et al., 2020) found innovation capacity, financial autonomy, knowledge management, and human resources to be determinants of corporate social responsibility. Breitbarth and Rieth (2012) also pinpointed the 3S model, where strategy, structure, and stakeholder were key drivers of societal responsibility integration in German professional football. In an African context, Moyo

et al. (2020) found that inner factors (the organizations' internal objectives, funds, people, and resources), outer factors (external uncontrollable factors, economy, and community awareness), and stakeholder involvement were factors influencing the engagement of South African professional sports organizations in sustainable corporate social responsibility.

Despite the aforementioned studies' limitations in giving a complete picture of determinants of good sports governance (being confined to specific dimensions), they pinpoint what could determine good sport governance in national sports organizations. However, except for these few studies, including those focused on specific dimensions, determinants of good sports governance have not yet been widely studied globally (Mirkonjic, 2019) and have not yet been thoroughly investigated in Africa, where the continent remains stunted by a combination of talent drain, a lack of government investment and policy guidelines, corruption, and gross mismanagement, as Tsuma (2016) argues.

Moreover, despite the framing of sports governance and policies based on the 'sport for all' principle, the lengthened public experience in participating and governing sports, and giving due respect to sports' instrumental role in societal development in our national (Ethiopian) context (Getahun, 2009), nowadays there is a disparity between the rhetoric and the current status of good sports governance, as studies indicate that there are quests for good governance. For instance, athletics sport seems to face a lack of genuineness as youth projects are deprived of any coaching staff, sports facilities, and adequate support for athletes (Wolde & Gaudin, 2017); public wrangles for power, peer pressure, and widespread mismanagement have typified football, leaving many industrious players and the public disillusioned (Gebremariam, 2014).

Besides, the Ethiopian national reform document highlights public concerns about the representation of general councils and electoral processes, which are dominated by government, politicians, and ethnic influences (Ethiopian Sport Commission [ESC], 2020) despite the principle of 'Olympism'. The reform document also pinpoints that the sports sector lacks a strategic plan, and budget insufficiency hinders its implementation even in the presence of a strategic plan. Besides, Garmamo et al. (2024) have found that some selected Ethiopian Olympic sports federations scored below the moderate level in good sports governance, with a severely weak level of implementing transparency, and public communication and solidarity. Hence, these findings signify the need to further scrutinize what influences good sports governance practices in the surveyed sports federations.

However, despite all the drawbacks that call for the investigation of determinants of good sports governance, no such study has been conducted in the context of the Ethiopian

sports federations. More specifically, organizational culture, as it encompasses the set of attitudes that comprise the commitment, respect, proficiency, and ethics of workers, is thought to provide a mental model for viewing the world around and enables organizations to achieve homeostatic adaptations and the subsequent stability. In doing so, it lays fertile ground for good governance practice. Similarly, strategic management offers a framework for directing managerial activities and apportioning better resources to alleviate deficiencies, which can enhance good governance. However, the influences of organizational culture and strategic management on good sports governance and the moderation effect of organizational size on their relationships have not yet been studied. Hence, the purpose of this study was to examine whether organizational culture and strategic management influence good sport governance and organizational size moderates their relationships in selected Ethiopian Olympic sports federations, as the findings of this empirical study will have paramount importance for practitioners to holistically understand the contexts of national sports organizations for full-sized good governance practices.

*Theoretical and Conceptual framework of the study*

*The underlying theories of the study*

Scholars (e.g., Miller-Millesen, 2003; O'Boyle, 2012; Yusoff & Alhaji, 2012) argue that major governance theories proposed to be applied in sports organizations, such as agency theory, stewardship theory, institutional theory, resource dependence theory, network theory, and stakeholder theory, have been used independently in existing sports management literature and hence provide a narrow view of sports governance and require the combination of multiple theories. For instance, Miller-Millesen (2003) suggested three theories: agency theory, resource dependency theory, and institutional theory, which can be applied to non-profit board governance. Yusoff and Alhaji (2012) also argued that an integrated approach is preferable for understanding good corporate governance results. Similarly, O'Boyle (2012) examined the applicability of four corporate governance theories (agency, resource dependency, institutional, and stakeholder theory) in nonprofit sports organizations' governance.

Hence, this study is conducted through the integrated lens of the agency theory, institutional theory, resource dependency theory, and stakeholder theory to assess the determinant relationships between organizational size, organizational culture, and strategic management with good sports governance in sports federations, as the implementation of good sports governance happens when organizations put in place strategies, structures, and

other processes to manage external pressures ( Hoye et al., 2015). Agency theory emphasizes internal monitoring, hierarchical accountability, and alignment of management decisions with board directions (Miller-Millesen, 2003; O'Boyle, 2012; Rhoades et al., 2000). This theory could emphasize, but not limited to, the checks and balances, and transparency and public communication dimensions of good sports governance.

Institutional theory also has a key place in this study as it seeks to explain how sport organizations relate to external organizations for acquiring scarce resources and hence suggests the establishment of clear statutes, bye-laws, rules, and regulations to ensure efficient operation amidst external pressures (Hoye et al., 2009, 2015; O'Boyle, 2012). It upholds (though is not limited to) the importance of democratic processes and checks and balances dimensions of good sports governance. The study also considers resource dependency theory, which suggests that sports organizations are open systems dependent on other organizations for survival. The board's role here is to minimize external pressure, gather essential knowledge, attract resources, and present a positive public image (Hillman et al., 2000; Miller-Millesen, 2003; O'Boyle, 2012). Hence, this theory in the study upholds (though is not limited to) the necessity of transparency and public communication, and democratic processes dimensions or factors of good sports governance. The stakeholder theory also plays a crucial role in understanding corporate responsibility in sports governance (Iordanakis, 2020). It also emphasizes (though not limited to) the importance of democratic processes and solidarity dimensions to develop and maintain trust among stakeholders.

Hence, from these theoretical assumptions, the conceptual model on the influences of organizational culture and strategic management on good sport governance and the moderating role of organizational size in their relationships in the surveyed sports federations is framed (see Figure 1).

*Organizational culture and its influence on good governance*

Organizational culture is a collection of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that enable an organization to perform successfully and produce competitive results, implying attitudes such as participant dedication, work forms, respect, professionalism, and ethics (García et al., 2012); hence, it provides a means by which a sports organization's members interpret how things are done and what happens in daily working life (Hoye et al., 2015).

Previous studies in public organizations indicate that organizational culture affects organizational success variables such as commitment (Neelam et al., 2015; Silverthorne, 2004); effectiveness (Gregory et al., 2009); efficiency (Aktas et al., 2011); performance (Sokro, 2012;

Valmohammadi & Roshanzamir, 2014; Zehir et al., 2011); and total quality management (Baird et al., 2011; Valmohammadi & Roshanzamir, 2014). It also influenced good governance performance (Dwi Ermayanti et al., 2019; Yuliastuti & Tandio, 2020).

Organizational culture, in the context of sport, is also found to have significant impacts on organizational success variables such as organizational effectiveness (Heris, 2014; Ramazaninejad et al., 2018; Seifari & Amoozadeh, 2014; Tojari et al., 2011); organizational performance (Bayle & Robinson, 2007); job satisfaction (Choi et al., 2008; MacIntosh & Doherty, 2010); organizational Innovation (Eskiler et al., 2016); empowerment and organization citizenship behavior (Jeong et al., 2019); knowledge management (Ramazaninejad et al., 2018) etc.

However, empirical studies on good governance overlook the significant impact organizational culture could have on it (Girginov, 2022). In this regard, this author reveals the tendency of most studies to overlook the place of a change in the value system that underpins the organization's culture as a requirement for 'the implementation of any conception of good governance' (Girginov, 2022, p. 86). This indicates that there has not been a thorough investigation of empirical studies on the impact of organizational culture on public governance, and to be more specific, its impact on good sports governance has not yet been thoroughly investigated. Hence, this study hypothesizes the following *hypothesis 1*: Organizational culture significantly and positively influences good sports governance.

*Strategic management and its influence on good governance*

According to the resource dependency theory of good sport governance, if an organization is to be effective and eventually survive and exist for an extended length of time, it must be capable of getting and maintaining essential resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, as cited in O'Boyle, 2012) that can only be accomplished by managing organizational activities strategically.

In this regard, several scholars have emphasized the significance of strategic management in directing organizational activities. For instance, Steiss (2003) argues that strategic management provides a framework by which nonprofit organizations can adapt to the impulses of an unpredictable environment and unreliable future and that "nonprofits that use strategic management can deliver enhanced results and performance" (Miller, 2018). Similarly, Mosley et al. (2012) found that engagement in strategic management efforts allows organizational bodies to deal with funding insecurity. Aboramadan and Borgonovi (2016) also argued that strategic management offers a framework for directing managerial activities,

apportioning better resources, supporting objectives and decisions, and increasing organizational performance.

As far as good sports governance is concerned, scholars (Blanco, 2017; Chelladurai & Zintz, 2015; Yeh & Taylor, 2008) have emphasized that a relatively recent thrust has been made to articulate the need for good governance of national sports governing bodies and to lay down the elements of good governance, as they have been the focus of much attention from both governments and scholars.

In addition, Hoye et al. (2015) pointed out that there are drivers of change in the governance of sports organizations, such as pressure from funding agencies, the threat of litigation against sports organizations, their members, or board members, and the threat of competition in the marketplace. Considering these pressures, Blanco (2017) defined sport governance as "an act of orchestrating, manoeuvering, facilitating, and mobilizing the pool of talents, resources, approaches, and processes in a much broader, fuller, and wider continuum of sports actors, agents, and stakeholders across various sectors of society" (p. 106).

Therefore, it seems imperative to note that strategic management offers a framework for directing managerial activities, apportioning better resources, supporting goals and decisions, and increasing organizational performance (Aboramadan & Borgonovi, 2016), and good sport governance is a system of directing and managing overall organizational activities (Ferkins et al., 2009). This indicates that there seems to be an influence of one factor on another.

On the premises of this relational concept, several studies confirm the significant impact strategic management has on organizational success variables (related to good governance in one way or another) of profit, non-profit, and hybrid organizations. For instance, strategic management has a significant positive impact on organizational performance (Adegbuyi et al., 2015) and on financial and non-financial performance (Aboramadan & Borgonovi, 2016; Sarker & Rahman, 2018). Regarding the link between strategic management and corporate governance, researchers (e.g., Capasso & Dagnino, 2012; Shen & Gentry, 2012) have underlined that most studies on their relationship emphasize the effect of corporate governance on strategic management. Strategic management also impacts corporate governance (Shen & Gentry, 2012).

However, the influence of strategic management on good sports governance has not yet been investigated in sports management. Hence, this study hypothesizes the following *hypothesis 2:* Strategic management significantly and positively influences good sports governance.

*The moderating role of Organizational size*

Scholars of public management have compared large-sized and small-sized firms and found that large organizations are acquainted with advantages that are important for organizational success despite their tendency to have a more complicated governance structure and control (Cornforth & Simpson, 2002; Jaskyte, 2013), whereas small organizations have relatively modest governance structures and centralized control mechanisms, which minimize organizations' communication and coordination expenses, perhaps making nonprofits more efficient (Andrews, 2017; Jung, 2012).

These portrayals of organizational size enable it to be in a position to change the direction and magnitude of the relationships between organizational success variables. For instance, size has significantly moderated the link between strategy and performance (Smith et al., 1989, p. 79). Similarly, Vaccaro et al. (2012) found that organizational size significantly moderated the influence of leadership behavior on management innovation, where "smaller and less complex organizations benefit more from transactional leadership in realizing management innovation, whereas larger organizations need to draw on transformational leaders to compensate for their complexity and allow management innovation to flourish.".

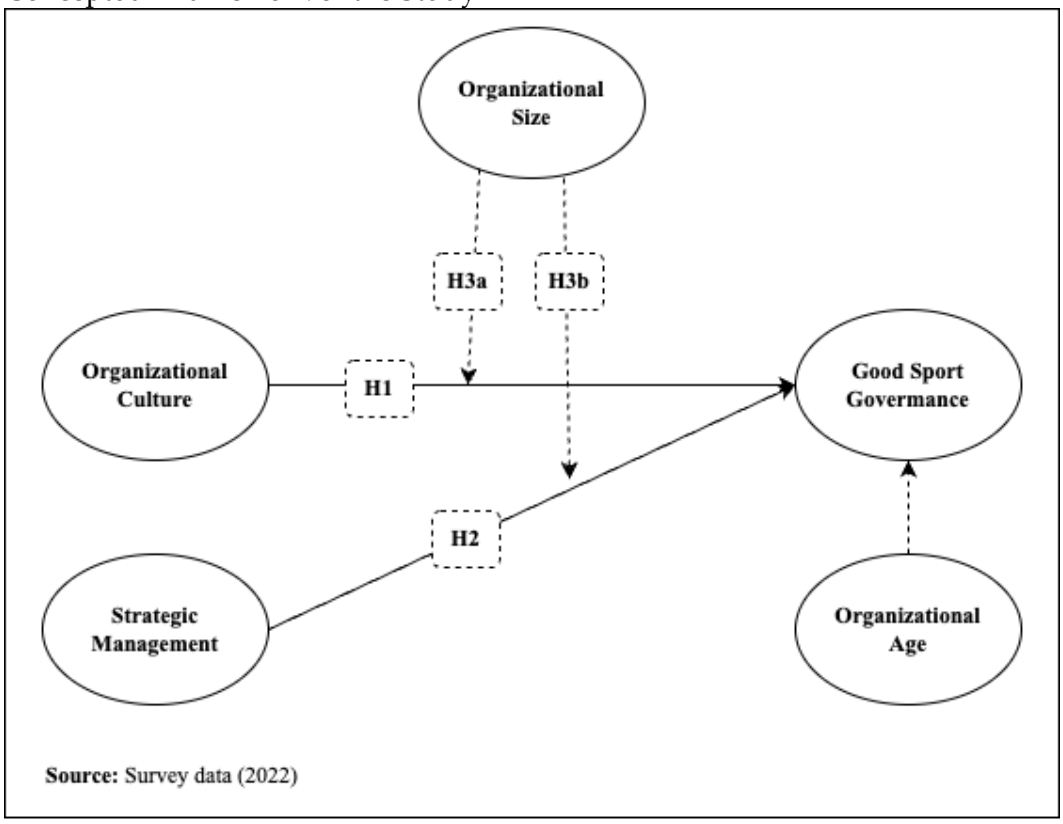
In addition, in a study of determinants of organizational transparency (financial disclosure), large organizations were found to have a positive relationship with financial transparency (Behn et al., 2010). In contrast, Saxton et al. (2012) argued that small organizations were positively related to transparency. These findings are found to be equivocal and may be context dependent, which calls for further scrutiny.

Organizational size, measured by the number of full-time employees, was also found to have a moderating influence on the association between employees' evaluations of the innovative and hierarchical climate and their aspirations for organizational innovation (Jung & Lee, 2016). Recently, Hung and Berrett (2022) also examined the moderating role of organizational size, along with government funding, on the influence of commercialization on nonprofit efficiency. Their findings contrarily indicated that there was no statistically significant interaction between commercialization and organizational size on nonprofit efficiency.

However, to our knowledge, the interaction effects of organizational size and other determinants on good sports governance have not yet been investigated by sports management researchers in our context. Hence, this study hypothesizes the following *hypotheses 3a:* Organizational size significantly moderates the influence of organizational

culture on good sports governance *hypotheses 3b:* Organizational size significantly moderates the influence of strategic management on good sports governance.

**Figure 1**
Conceptual Framework of the Study




## METHODS

*Research Design*

A descriptive cross-sectional survey was used in this study, as a survey design gives a quantitative or numerical depiction of a population's trends or attitudes by analyzing a sample of that group (J.W. Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Specifically, according to Skinner et al. (2015), the cross-sectional survey design was found suitable for this study because it is designed to identify the study population, select a sample, and contact the respondents to obtain the required information from representatives of a given population at one point in time to generalize the results.

*Participants*

From the total of 16 Olympic sports federations, we purposively selected six federations Ethiopian Football Federation (EFF), Ethiopian Athletics Federation (EAF), Ethiopian Basketball Federation (EBF), Ethiopian Volleyball Federation (EVBF), Ethiopian Handball Federation (EHF), and Ethiopian Cycling Federation (ECF) for their being dominant

throughout the country as they have a long history (more than half a century) of establishment with an average age of 66.98 (SD = 8.09), have a number of member clubs, are with the most popular sports events, and have the highest public focus on them.

Then, from the 1213 total population comprising 48 executive boards, 133 paid staff, 420 senior coaches, and 612 senior officials of the sampled Olympic sports federations, we selected 265 respondents based on Soper's (2021) a priori sample size calculator for SEM to determine the minimum sample size and in consideration of 20% attrition rates (for the main thesis) by proportionate stratified random sampling. The stratification was based on the type of stakeholders (executive board members, staff, coaches, and officials) and the gender of the stakeholders of the respective sports federations.

*Procedures*

The study received ethical approval from the institutional review board committee of Addis Ababa University on February 7, 2022, numbered IRBC No. IRB/04/14/22, and adhered to the principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki. Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants received written and oral explanations regarding their participation and the importance of providing accurate information. Then, we conducted a face-to-face survey from February to June 2022, distributing questionnaires to the selected participants. We wrote all the necessary explanations on the data collection tools for the target participants, excluding identifying information, such as their names, to ensure that their identities remained confidential.

*Good sports governance (GSG) (Dependent Variable)*

Good sports governance was assessed using the slightly modified and contextualized version of the Action for Good Governance in International Sports Organizations(AGGIS) sport governance observer tool (Geeraert, 2015). The original 36 indicators were extended to 38, as the four dimensions were kept the same: transparency and public communication (12 items), democratic processes (10 items), checks and balances (7 items), and solidarity (9 items). Besides, the initial five-point Likert scale( not fulfilled at all(1), weak(2), moderate(3), good(4), and state- of- the art(5) was modified in the range from 'not fulfilled at all'(1) to 'fulfilled at all'(5) on the assumption that it should reflect measures of perceived level of implementation of good sports governance with some meaning and value to all stakeholders participating in the study, and found internally consistent in the pilot of this study with alpha values of transparency and public communication (.87), democratic processes (.84), checks and balances (.82) and solidarity (.83).

*Organizational size (Orgsize) (Moderator Variable)*

Three measures (employee number, annual revenue, and number of member organizations) were averaged and taken as the natural log to measure organizational size in accordance with previous empirical studies (Amis & Slack, 1996; Fong et al., 2010; Jung, 2012; Lin & Germain, 2003; Wiersema & Liebeskind, 1995). The number of paid staff and annual revenues of the respective organizations was the average of the two consecutive fiscal years for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

*Organizational culture (OC) (Independent Variable)*

The instrument used to assess the organizational culture (OC) of the surveyed Olympic Sports Federation of Ethiopia was Cameron and Quinn's (2006, 2011) Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument(OCAI), which is based on the Competing Value Framework (CVF) with four dimensions/scales: clan culture, adhocracy culture, market culture, and hierarchical culture, each containing six items so that it has 24 items with a 5-point rating scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree(5). This instrument was found to be internally consistent in the pilot study, with alpha values for clan culture (.81), adhocracy culture (.75), market culture (.83), and hierarchical culture (.74).

*Strategic management (SM) (Independent Variable)*

Strategic management practice was measured using the modified and contextualized version of Aboramadan and Borgonovi's (2016) 5-point Likert scale of 1( not at all) to 5(to a great extent) with four dimensions (environmental scanning/strategy analysis, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and strategy evaluation and monitoring) and 30 items initially used to measure the strategic management practice of non-governmental organizations.

This study modified and contextualized it into a sports management perspective item-wise, keeping the number of items at 30 within four dimensions: strategic analysis (seven items), strategic formulation (eight items), strategic implementation (six items), and strategic evaluation and monitoring (nine items). Hence, the instrument has 30 items on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) and is found internally consistent in the pilot of this study with alpha values for strategic analysis (.88), strategic formulation (.87), strategic implementation (.82), and strategic evaluation and monitoring (.85).

*Organizational age (OrgAge; Control variable)*

Organizational age, measured as the difference between 2022 GC and the year of establishment of the respective sports federations, is regarded as a control variable. Hung and

Berrett (2022), citing Hager (2018), suggest the controlling role of organizational age as "organizational age has a necessary control in nonprofit studies" (p. 9).

Before the data collection, the instruments were checked and approved by the institutional review board committee on February 7, 2022, in a minute numbered IRBC No. IRB/04/14/22. Then, we contacted the sampled Olympic sports federations to get assistance in the recruitment process for the required 265 respondents. The participants were then verbally informed to read and sign informed consent containing voluntary participation and withdrawal rights. Then, we conducted a face-to-face survey from February to June 2022, distributing questionnaires to the selected respondents.

*Data Analysis*

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS 26 and Amos 23.0, and the level of statistical significance was set at $\alpha < .05$. In doing so, descriptive statistics for the background information and study variables were computed. The study variables were also correlated to examine their relationships.

A two-step SEM approach was used, where the measurement model (CFA) was first evaluated to assess internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Here, both exogenous (organizational culture and strategic management) and endogenous (good sport governance) multidimensional superordinate constructs were operationalized as first-order constructs by calculating the mean response of each dimension and treating the dimensions as direct observations (Li et al., 2008). The structural regression model was then used to test the proposed direct hypotheses.

The model fit measures for both the measurement and the structural models were compared against threshold values for determining model fit (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010, p. 76). Besides, hierarchical regression analysis was also executed using SPSS 25 to observe the moderating effects, as scholars (Sabah, 2017: Trivedi, 2020) argue it is a preferable method for testing interaction effects, especially in the case of non-categorical data or for moderation with metric moderator variables.

## RESULTS

*Background information of respondents and the response rate*

We conducted a survey by distributing questionnaires to 265 respondents from February to June 2022, and upon serious follow-ups, collected 238 completed questionnaires with an 89.8% response rate. When we saw respondents in their stakes, officials were nearly

half (50.4%), followed by coaches covering 35.7%. The remaining 2.9% and 10.9% portions were covered by executive committee members and paid staff, respectively.

Regarding the sex and age composition of the respondents, the vast majority (87.4%) were males, and the remaining 12.6% were females. The age category above 30 comprised the large majority (83.6%). When the academic level of the study participants and years of work experience were examined, holders of BA/BSc degrees and MA/MSc degrees together had the highest share (68.5%) of the respondents. Nearly half of the respondents (52.1%) were found to have a work experience of 1-10, and 37.4% lie in the experience category of 11-20 which together form 89.5%.

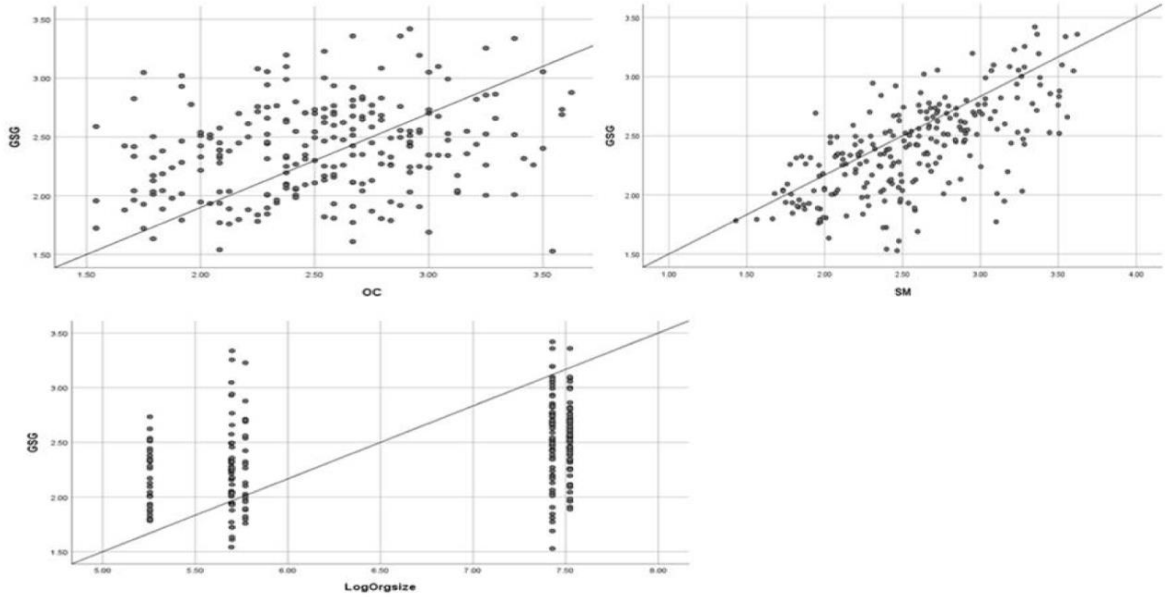
*Linearity, normality, outliers, and multicollinearity*

Linearity was checked graphically by the scatter plots that the independent variables (organizational culture and strategic management) and moderator variable (organizational size) were found to have linear relationships with the dependent variable good sports governance as the scatter plots reveal (see fig. 2.).

Besides, the assumption of normality was checked for all variables by using graphical analysis (the histogram), and a normal curve retained the bell-shaped curve, which is characteristic of all normal distributions (Hair et al., 2014; Ntoumanis, 2001; Randolph & Meyers, 2013). Statistically, the values for skewness were found in the range of .082 to 1.92. The values for kurtosis ranged from -3.256 to .613, indicating that there is no extreme non-normality as they are found in the region of skewness less than 3 and kurtosis less than 8 for the level of significance (Kline, 2011, 2016). Multivariate outliers were also checked by Mahalanobi's $D^2$ measure, where the ratio of $D^2$ to the degree of freedom ($D^2/df$) was computed and judged, as observations with values exceeding 2.5 could be designated as possible outliers (Hair et al., 2014, pp. 64–65). Hence, no outliers were detected in this data, as the highest $MD^2$ is 35.74 with a degree of freedom of 51.

Moreover, we checked the multicollinearity assumption by using the tolerance value and VIF (variance inflation factor) for their cut-off points of >.10 and <10, respectively (Hair et al., 2014; Kline, 2016 ). As the values of these parameters were all at the acceptable levels: tolerance (.86, .79, .66, & .78), and VIF (1.17, 1.25, 1.52, &1.28), they indicate that no threat of multicollinearity can easily lead to unstable regression coefficients. Hence, further multivariate analyses were conducted.

***Figure 2***
Scatter Plots for the Linear Relationships Between the Study Variables




*Note.* OC: Organizational culture; SM: Strategic management; LogOrgsize: Natural log of organizational size; GSG: Good sports governance

*Common method bias*

As this study used only a questionnaire as an instrument to collect the data, it becomes imperative to confirm the absence of standard method bias error. Hence, Harman's single-factor test was conducted by using SPSS. The factor analysis was performed without any rotation, and all items were loaded on only one factor. The results revealed that a single factor accounted for 22.59% of the variance, which is far less than 50%, indicating no threat of standard method bias (Kock, 2021; Harman, 1976, cited in Trivedi, 2020).

*Descriptives and correlations of the study variables*

As a preliminary step in testing the study hypotheses, the study variables' means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients were examined and found significantly correlated except the relationships of organizational age with organizational culture and strategic management (see Table 1).

**Table 1**
Descriptives and Correlations of the Study Variables

| The study variables | | M(SD) | Correlations | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **1** | **OC** | 2.53(.48) | 1 | | | | |
| **2** | **SM** | 2.56(.48) | .33** | 1 | | | |
| **3** | **GSG** | 2.40(.38) | .26** | .66** | 1 | | |
| **4** | **LogOrgsize[1]** | 6.65(.94) | .28** | .38** | .38** | 1 | |
| **5** | **OrgAge** | 66.98(8.09) | .07 | .11 | .14* | .46** | 1 |

*Note.* **: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), [1]Natural logarithms

*Validity and reliability of the study constructs*

The multidimensional constructs in the study were statistically checked for their reliability and validity (see Table 2). In this regard, internal consistency-reliability was ensured by generating Cronbach's alpha values for the fulfillment of the suggested cut-off value of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2014; Kline, 2011). The measurement model (CFA) for a satisfactory level of validity and reliability (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) was also computed. The model fit measures were compared against threshold values for determining model fit (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010, p. 76), and the outputs indicate that the Normed Chi-square ( $\chi 2$ (106.49)/df(51) = 2.08, RMSEA =.07, CFI = 0.95, TLI = 0.94, SRMR = .043, and p-value <.001 which, according to the suggested characteristics of different fit indices (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010), demonstrate the goodness of fit that the construct validity of the measurement model was established. The factor loadings, average variance extracted, and composite reliability of the constructs were computed (see Table 2).

**Table 2**
A Reliability and Validity Measure of the Study Constructs

| Indicators | | Constructs | Λ | A | AVE | CR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Hierarchy Culture** | <--- | OC | .58*** | | | |
| **Market Culture** | <--- | OC | .75*** | | | |
| **Adhocracy Culture** | <--- | OC | .91*** | | | |
| **Clan Culture** | <--- | OC | .68*** | .82 | 0.54 | 0.82 |
| **Strategic evaluation and monitoring** | <--- | SM | .76*** | | | |
| **Strategic implementation** | <--- | SM | .85*** | | | |
| **Strategic formulation** | <--- | SM | .82*** | | | |
| **Strategic analysis** | <--- | SM | .76*** | .87 | 0.63 | 0.88 |
| **Transparency and public communication** | <--- | GSG | .45*** | | | |
| **Democratic processes** | <--- | GSG | .79*** | | | |
| **Checks and Balances** | <--- | GSG | .53*** | | | |
| **Solidarity** | <--- | GSG | .69*** | .70 | 0.40 | 0.71 |

*Note.* ***: p < 0.001; OC: Organizational Culture; SM: Strategic Management; GSG: Good Sports Governance

In this regard, the factor loadings of each parceled indicator of the constructs in CFA were found to be significant, ranging from .45 (transparency and public communication in good sports governance) to .91 (adhocracy culture in organizational culture), hence indicating the initial level of convergent validity is fulfilled. Here, it seems important to note that 0.4 factor loading is the recommended threshold (having practical significance) for sample sizes 200 and above (Hair et al., 2014).

The average variance extracted approximately ranges between.4 (good sport governance) and.63 (strategic management), meaning that all except the construct good sports governance (limitation of this study) meet the recommended level of .5 and above (Hair et al., 2014). However, as argued by some previous studies (e.g., Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Lam, 2012), the average variance extracted may be a more conservative estimate of the validity of the measurement model; hence, one can conclude the convergent validity based on composite reliability. The composite reliabilities of the constructs in the model were well above the recommended level. 70 (Hair et al., 2014). So, we concluded that the convergent validity of good sports governance is adequate based on composite reliability (.71).

*Hypotheses of direct paths*

To address hypotheses 1 and 2 and the effect of the control variable, we developed a hypothesized structural model that specified three direct paths and appeared to have an acceptable fit, i.e., the Normed Chi-square ($\chi 2$ (132.15)/df(60) = 2.20, RMSEA =.07, CFI = 0.94, TLI = 0.92, SRMR =.047, and p-value <.001, which, according to the suggested characteristics of different fit indices (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010), demonstrate the goodness of fit of the structural model. In the direct paths of the model (see Table 3), the path coefficient from organizational culture to good sport governance was found to be statistically non-significant ($\beta$=.05, t-value =.48, p >.05), thus does not indicate support for hypothesis 1. Whereas, the path coefficient from strategic management to good sports governance was found statistically significant ($\beta$=.78, t-value =5.85, p <.001), thus indicating support for hypothesis 2 as a unit increment in strategic management can explain 0.78 increments in good sports governance.

**Table 3**
Direct Path Analysis Summary

| Hypotheses | Path | | | Standardized estimates | t-value | Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **H1** | GSG | <--- | OC | .05 | .48 | Not supported |
| **H2** | GSG | <--- | SM | .78*** | 5.85 | Supported |
| **Control variable** | GSG | <--- | ZorgAge | .06 | .99 | Not supported |

*Note.* ***: p < 0.001; OC: Organizational Culture; SM: Strategic Management; GSG: Good Sports Governance

*Hypotheses of Moderation*

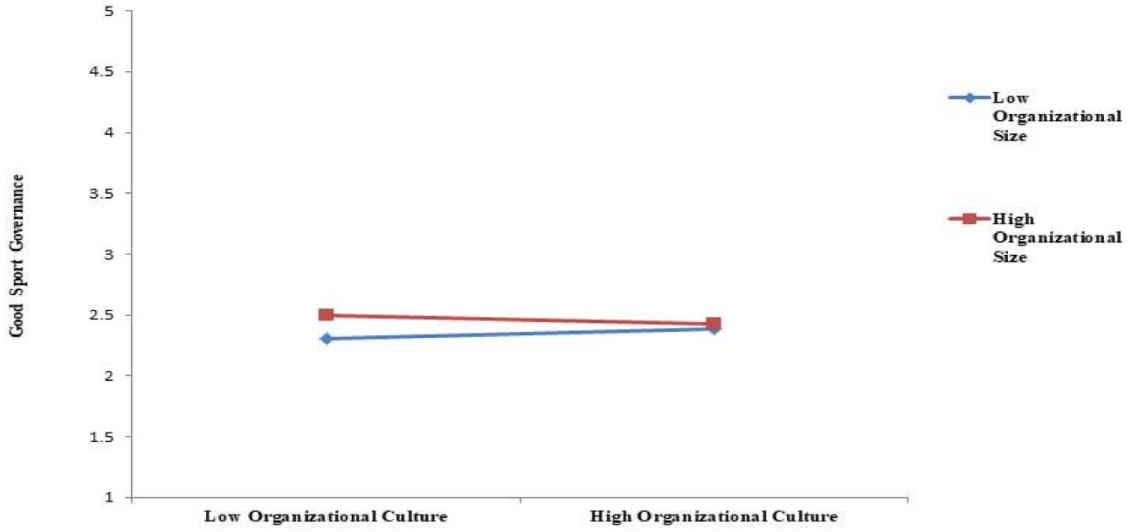
Before carrying out metric moderation by using hierarchical regression analysis, we averaged the dimensions of the constructs to create a single composite index. Then, all variables except the dependent variable were z-standardized to reduce potential multicollinearity issues (Dawson, 2014; Uedufy, April 3, 2023). The interaction variables (z-

standardized IVs*z-standardized MV) were computed to analyze the hypotheses of the interaction effects (Dawson, 2014; Uedufy, April 3, 2023).

A three-step hierarchical regression analysis using SPSS 25 was conducted to test the moderation effects of organizational size on the influences of organizational culture and strategic management on good sports governance (see Table 4). First, the effects of independent, moderator, and control variables were observed. In the second step, the interaction term obtained by multiplying organizational size and strategic management was added to the model, and its effect was observed. Finally, the interaction term obtained by multiplying organizational size and organizational culture was added to the model, and its effect was observed.

Hence, the regression results on one side, as there is a significant $R^2$ change (0.9%) in the third model ($\Delta R^2$=.009, $F$ (1,231) = 4.03, p<.05), indicates that organizational size significantly moderates the influence of organizational culture on good sport governance (β = -.10, t-Value = -2.01, P = .046, CI [-.078,-.001]). Thus, we accept hypothesis 3a. On the other hand, no significant moderation effect of organizational size was found in the relationship between strategic management and good sports governance. Thus, we rejected hypothesis 3b. The simple slope analysis was conducted to better understand the nature of this moderation effect (see Figure3).

**Figure 3**
The Simple Slope Analysis of the Interaction Effect of Organizational Size and Organizational Culture on Good Sports Governance




Here, the line is steeper for low organizational size, which indicates that, at a low level of organizational size, the impact of culture on good sports governance is a little bit stronger

than at a high level of organizational size. Hence, as the level of organizational size increases, the strength of the relationship between organizational culture and good sports governance decreases.

We also checked the size of the moderation effect. The variance explained with the inclusion of the significant moderation effect is 46.6%, whereas the variance explained without inclusion was 45.7%, hence an increase of 0.9% in variance explained on the dependent variable, good sports governance. This shows that the effect size is very small (.016). According to Cohen (1998) proposition, 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 constitute moderation's small, medium, and large effect sizes, respectively. This shows that the moderating effect of organizational size does not contribute significantly to explaining good sports governance (has low practical significance).

**Table 4**
Hierarchical Regression Analysis Summary

| Models | Regression Variables | | B | T | CI | $R^2$ | $R^2$ Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Exogenous Variable | Endogenous Variable | | | | | |
| **Model 1** | Zscore(OC) | GSG | .014 | .266 | -.035,-.045 | | . |
| | Zscore(SM) | GSG | .599*** | 11.079 | .192,-.275 | | |
| | Zscore(LogOrgsize) | GSG | .150* | 2.519 | .013,-.104 | | |
| | Zscore(OrgAge) | GSG | .002 | .040 | -.041,-.043 | .457 | 457 |
| **Model 2** | Zscore(OC) | GSG | .014 | .263 | -.035,-046 | | |
| | Zscore(SM) | GSG | .599*** | 11.014 | .192,-.275 | | |
| | Zscore(LogOrgsize) | GSG | .150* | 2.508 | .013,-.105 | | |
| | Zscore(OrgAge) | GSG | .002 | .042 | -.041,-043 | | |
| | ZSM * ZlogOrgsize | GSG | .002 | .042 | -.040,-.041 | .457 | .000 |
| **Model 3** | Zscore(OC) | GSG | .003 | .049 | -.039,-.041 | | |
| | Zscore(SM) | GSG | .607*** | 11.200 | .195,-.278 | | |
| | Zscore(LogOrgsize) | GSG | .144* | 2.418 | .010,-.102 | | |
| | Zscore(OrgAge) | GSG | -.002 | -.038 | -.043,-.041 | | |
| | ZSM * ZlogOrgsize | GSG | .022 | .450 | -.032,-.050 | .466 | .009 |
| | ZOC * ZlogOrgsize | GSG | -.100* | -2.007 | -.078,-.001 | | |

*Note.* ***: P<.001, *: P<.05, β: Standardized beta coefficient, $R^2$: The variance explained, Zscore (OC): Standardized organizational culture, Zscore (SM): Standardized strategic management, Zscore (LogOrgsize): Standardized log centered organizational size, Zscore(OrgAge): standardized organizational age, t: Critical Ratio, CI: Confidence Interval

In addition to the moderation effect, we curiously examined the main effect of organizational size on good sports governance. Here, we compared the regression coefficients of organizational size in two models (model 1: a main effects-only model and model 3: a model

with interaction effect; See Table 4) as argued by Lorah (2020) to interpret the main effect as a conditional or average effect (p. 42). Hence, it was found that organizational size has a positive and significant direct impact on good sports governance with nearly equivalent regression coefficients in two models ($\beta$=.15, t-value = 2.52, $p<.05$ and $\beta$=.14, t-value = 2.42, $p<.05$). The findings here suggest that organizational size on average has a positive and significant influence on good sport governance, as a unit increment in organizational size can explain 0.14 increments in good sport governance.

## DISCUSSION

This study examines the influences of organizational culture and strategic management on good sports governance and the moderation effect of organizational size in their relationships in the setting of Ethiopian Olympic Sports Federations. In this regard, this study's findings revealed that organizational culture's direct influence on good sports governance was non-significant. This finding is contrary to the findings of previous studies (e.g, Amali et al., 2018; Daneshmandnia, 2019; Jansen et al., 2013; Zhong et al., 2012) where organizational culture was found to have a decisive influence on information technology governance and the findings in which organizational culture was found to influence good governance performance (Dwi Ermayanti et al., 2019; Yuliastuti & Tandio, 2020), hence seeks further scrutiny in the same context.

The findings, however, indicated that strategic management has a significant and positive direct effect on good sports governance. This finding is in congruence with that of Shen and Gentry (2012), who posited the influence of strategic management on good corporate governance. Besides, the finding corroborates that of Breitbarth and Rieth's (2012) 3S model, where strategy, along with structure and stakeholders, is regarded as a critical driver of corporate social responsibility integration. Moreover, the finding corroborated the qualitative finding of O'Boyle and Shilbury (2018), who identified 'potential for strategic planning' as a determinant of good sports governance along with other factors. Hence, this finding reminds us that strategic management (innovative management) that focuses on changes and amendments to be made in the sports organization and within its interactions with the environment in which it operates (Gajda et al., 2016), should diligently fine-tune the orchestration of all activities, resources, and processes systematically, involving all sports actors to achieve organizational goals.

Moreover, in the moderation analysis, organizational size was found to have a significant and negative moderation effect on the relationship between organizational culture and good sports governance, where the increment in the level of organizational size results in a decrease in the strength of the relationship between organizational culture and good sports governance. This finding is in congruence with the finding of Lin et al. (2012), where organizational size negatively moderates the influence of disclosure of human capital information on firm performance. Andrews's (2017) finding also strengthens this as there is a negative relationship between organization size and organizational social capital: structural (connections among actors), relational (trust among actors), and cognitive (shared goals and values among actors) aspects. This finding suggests that the increased organizational size decreases the connections among sports actors, which in turn results in loosening trust, values, and beliefs among the actors in the organizations; hence, it signals the maintenance of a strong regulatory culture for good governance practices in large-sized sports organizations.

On the other hand, the findings of the moderation analyses indicated a non-significant moderation effect of organizational size on the influence of strategic management on good sports governance. This finding is consistent with that of Hung and Berrett (2022), who found a non-significant moderation effect of organizational size on the relationship between commercialization and nonprofit efficiency. However, this finding contradicts many empirical studies on the moderating role of organizational size in the relationships between organizational success variables in public organizations. For instance, it contradicts the findings of Smith et al. (1989), where size moderates the influence of strategy on performance, and Jung and Lee (2016), where organizational size (measured by the number of full-time employees) was found to have a moderating effect on the association between employees' evaluation of the innovative and hierarchical climate and their aspiration for organizational innovation. Hence, this finding suggests the importance of strategic management, regardless of the size of the sports organizations, i.e., both small and large sports federations should diligently engage in strategic management for the successful implementation of good sports governance and then their future existence while keeping pace with the rapidly changing sports environment.

In addition to the findings of hypothesized relationships, it was found that organizational size has a positive and significant direct impact on good sports governance. This finding is congruent with empirical studies on the impact of size on change and continuity in the governance of nonprofit organizations (Cornforth & Simpson, 2002), the influence of size on governance conformance and performance (Rentshcler & Radbourne,

2009), the positive association between size and the adoption of good governance policies (Lee, 2016), and the impact of size (number of staff and annual revenues) on good governance scores of some summer olympic sports federations (ASOIF, 2020, p. 9).

As organizational size in this study is operationalized through the combination of the number of paid staff, annual revenues, and number of member organizations, the direct impact it has on good governance specifically reminds us of the issues of the professionalization of human resources in most federations to be focused (EVBF, EBF, ECF, and EHF) and enhancing the total annual revenues (financial capacity) in almost all surveyed sports federations. In summary, the professionalization of sports organizations and the total annual revenues (financial capacity) are associated with organizational capacity (Hall, 2003, as cited in Willem & Scheerder, 2017). Hence, the very low level of professionalization and weak financial capacity in most of the surveyed Olympic sports federations indicate a low level of organizational capacity that hinders the implementation of good sports governance.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study shed light on the untested relationship between organizational size, organizational culture, strategic management, and good sport governance in Ethiopian Olympic sports federations.

In this regard, first, this study suggests that organizational size, in addition to having a moderator role in the relationship between organizational culture and good ports governance, has a direct and positively significant influence on good sports sport governance. This dual role of organizational size signifies the critical importance of it in the implementation of good governance in the national sports federations, hence strengthening the call for attention to be given to upgrading most surveyed federations to the level of functional specialization and enhancement of financial capacity by diversifying annual revenues.

Besides, despite its very low practical significance, the negative and significant moderation effect of organizational size in the influence of organizational culture on good sports governance (the higher the organizational size, the lower the strength of the relationship) cautions sports organizations to tailor values, beliefs, core assumptions, and opinions to the size of their organizations in order to implement good sports governance practices as scholars ( e.g., Defalla & Choong, 2022; Zeng & Luo, 2013) argue that large-sized organizations need to maintain regulatory solid culture to be efficient.

Second, this study revealed the non-significant direct effect of organizational culture on good sports governance in the surveyed Olympic sports federations.

Third, this study provides empirical evidence of the significant direct impact strategic management has on good sports governance. As good sports governance is all about mobilizing the pool of talents, resources (human, financial, material, time, etc.), approaches, and processes in the broader continuum (from internal to external) of sports actors, agents, and stakeholders across various sectors (Blanco, 2017, p. 106), this impact signifies the need to frame and guide all the pool of talents, resources, approaches, and processes of the sports federations in collectively agreed path with clear destination based on properly scanned sports environment (for opportunities & threats, potential stakeholders, competitors), and accompanied by a dedicated implementation of these activities and frequent monitoring and evaluation of the achievements (Hoye et al., 2015).

*Management Implications*

The current study provides a number of theoretical and practical implications for sports managers and practitioners. The findings carry theoretical implications for the literature on good sports governance, as the scope of this study is extended from merely examining its implementation to examining contextual mechanisms that influence the degree of implementation in national sports federations. This study significantly modeled the relationships between organizational size, organizational culture, strategic management, and good sports governance.

Practically speaking, this study (a) implies policy issues as it significantly indicates the importance of strategic management to govern sports organizations or to maneuver all activities, resources, and processes systematically, involving all sports actors to achieve organizational goals. (b) Signifies the two-fold importance of organizational size (moderation effect in the relationship between organizational culture and good sport governance, and the main effect it has) in implementing good sport governance and (c) pinpoints the need for a fit between size and culture for good sport governance practices in Olympic sports federations.

*Limitations*

Like any other scientific effort, this study has limitations. First, the operationalization of multidimensional superordinate constructs (organizational culture, strategic management, and good sports governance) as first-order constructs by calculating the mean response of each dimension and treating the dimensions as direct observations (Li et al., 2008, p. 53) might shadow the findings, as this approach confounds random measurement error with dimension specificity and disregards the relationship between each dimension and its measures

(Edwards, 2001; Koufteros et al., 2009). Hence, future studies may further utilize higher-order modeling (Koufteros et al., 2009).

Second, national sports governing bodies have stakeholders internally and externally, which obviously can benefit or be benefited by the organizations. However, this study is limited only to internal stakeholders (executive members, paid staff, senior coaches, and senior officials) to gather data that may limit the comprehensiveness of the perceived state of the study variables. Hence, future studies should better include representatives of external stakeholders.

Third, the data for this study were gathered via a cross-sectional survey, so associations between variables are insufficient to establish causal relationships. Future longitudinal analyses would be helpful to study causation.

Fourth, a future study would better consider the influence of organizational culture on good sports governance and the moderation effect of organizational size in the relationships between strategic management and good sports governance in a similar context.

Finally, as this study is quantitative in methodology, it tends to provide a partial view as it fails to incorporate qualitative, in-depth perceptions of stakeholders to validate the findings of one strand with the other. Hence, future studies should better engage in a mixed-methods study, as the concepts of good governance and contextual determinants such as organizational culture and strategic management are social constructs that hold a debatable (and elusive) position in their definition and measurement.

**Acknowledgements**

We are grateful to the chief executive officers and department directors of the surveyed sports federations, who significantly contributed to facilitating the data collection processes. Deep gratitude also goes to the survey participants from all six sampled Olympic sports federations.

**Authors' contribution**

The first author contributed to the conception and design, data collection, analysis and interpretation, and original draft writing of the manuscript; the second author contributed to reviewing the conception and design, interpretation of the data, and critical review, editing, and approval of the manuscript; the third author contributed to reviewing the conception and design, interpretation of the data, and critical review, editing, and approval of the manuscript; and the fourth author contributed to reviewing the conception and design, interpretation of the data, and critical review, editing, and approval of the manuscript.

**Declaration of conflict interest**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

**Ethics Statement**

The study received ethical approval from the institutional review board committee of Addis Ababa University on February 7, 2022, numbered IRBC No. IRB/04/14/22.

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