DOCTORAL THESIS ABSTRACT

Management of sports organizations - a intercultural approach

PhD Candidate: Daniel Lovin

Scientific Coordinators:

Professor Alexandru Căpățînă
„Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați
Professor Denis Bernardeau-Moreau (co-tutelă)
University of Lille

President

Scientific References

Professor Nicoleta Cristache
Professor François Grima
University Paris-Est Créteil Val de Marne
Professor Anne Bartel Radic
University Grenoble Alpés
Professor Angela Eliza Micu
Ovidius University of Constanta

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Summary

The acquisition and development of intercultural skills leads to an increase in the level of cultural intelligence; in this context, it can be said that these intercultural competences are the precursors of cultural intelligence. Even if these two concepts are clearly delimited from a conceptual point of view, they aim at successfully adapting to a new cultural context.

Cultural intelligence is a relatively new concept, and research into this concept is booming. This interest in the concept of cultural intelligence has grown as a result of increasingly frequent encounters between different cultures, caused by globalization and the development of technology. Cultural differences have an undeniable impact on interactions between individuals and on the efficiency of organizations, and over time, several authors have written on cultural differences, adaptation to a new culture, and cultural intelligence.

The theoretical part of the doctoral thesis addresses the current state of research in the field of management of culturally diverse organizations and addresses issues such as: cultural intelligence, training of cultural intelligence skills, specific skills of global managers, adaptation, integration, acculturation, cultural dimensions of Geert Hofstede, current research in francophone intercultural management, the issue of cultural subgroups, the organizational culture of sports associations, ways of managing culturally diversified organizations, the migration of athletes or the issue of racism.

As regards the application part, it comprises four chapters. The third chapter contains a qualitative study that presents how two multicultural women's volleyball teams from different countries operate. To conduct this study, more than 20 interviews were conducted with members of these organizations, and the information thus obtained was processed through Nvivo 12 software, which allows qualitative analysis of data. Thus, the factors influencing the adaptation to a new cultural context were analyzed, the positive and negative feelings that are generated by the adaptation to a new cultural context were analyzed, but a series of tips were also offered to allow the effective adaptation of individuals who they are part of such culturally diversified organizations.

In the fourth chapter, the Country Navigator platform was used, a web platform that has the role of exploring cultural intelligence. With this platform, users can analyze their own cultural profile, self-assess the similarities, differences, opportunities and threats that influence the process of cultural transition. This chapter analyzes the cultural profiles of two components of sports organizations that have gone through the process of adapting to a foreign country.

The fifth chapter aims at quantitative research, which aims to highlight the aspects that influence the adaptation of athletes to a new cultural context, analyzing the consequences of adaptation / maladaptation to a new cultural context. Quantitative research examines how cultural intelligence, personality, and education influence adaptation to a new cultural context, but also the extent to which adaptation to a new cultural context influences self-confidence, team integration, and athletes' market share.

The sixth chapter presents qualitative comparative research that analyzes how several causal configurations influence a certain result. The antecedent conditions used for this research are the four dimensions of cultural intelligence: the metacognitive dimension, the cognitive dimension, the motivational dimension and the behavioural dimension.

Multiculturalism is part of European history. From the earliest times the population of the Globe has been in continuous migration, which has led to various cultural interpositions. The history of Europe has been decisively determined by the encounter with other peoples and cultures, and its identity is and has always been a dynamic and multicultural identity. Although

many powerful states have tried over time to impose their culture, today's society is distinguished by a wealth of cultures that are more and more diverse. Also, the historical factor is particularly important in the process of understanding culture, because history indicates why individuals in a given society behave in a certain way. As far as Europe is concerned, it is largely made up of a set of countries that make up the European Union and whose motto is "unity in diversity", which suggests that Europeans should accept their differences and use them for the common good. A society must not be homogenized. The homogenization of a society is never something beneficial, but it always attracts infertility. It is important for a person to say "I think this way", but if "I think too much this way", it is certain that something will not work, and this aspect leads to exaggeration and fundamentalism, isolation, closing in front of the dialogue and the word spoken by the other. This presupposes a culture of dialogue that involves lifelong learning and is a means of helping us to know other individuals who belong to another culture. In Europe, where the issue of immigration is becoming more pronounced and the unity in diversity of the European Union is being questioned, research on cultural diversity can only be useful. This research aims to provide solutions to those who are part of multicultural teams both sports and non-sports, and in the future the number of these teams will increase, as society invariably moves towards a growing multiculturalism. Sport has been a pioneer in multiculturalism and also a way to promote diversity. On the other hand, sport unites people because it offers individuals everywhere common values and beliefs and can also facilitate integration into a new cultural environment.

Just hearing something rarely leads to a change in behaviour. When we see those in the group to which we belong putting an idea into practice, our behaviour changes, thus creating culture. Culture is a set of dynamic interpersonal relationships, which act in the direction of a common goal. It's not what you are, it's what you do. We tend to think that the notion of culture is a kind of DNA of the group and yet the intimate mechanisms of the functioning of culture remain a mystery difficult to unravel.

If we want to anticipate how an individual can adapt in a multicultural context, different from the one in which he developed, the personality of the individual must also be taken into account, because in essence, the fundamental objective of studying personality from a psychological perspective, it is the understanding of human existence. So far, psychologists have not agreed on a generally valid definition. Moreover, personality is formed under the influence of biological and social factors. The family environment and the group environment also play an important role, as does the sociocultural environment to which the family or group of relatives belong. Thus, personality can be considered as a set of innate and acquired characteristics. Mostly, when we talk about hereditary characteristics we talk about temperament, and when we refer to those influenced by sociocultural factors, we talk about character. Among the main factors that shape the personality of individuals must be specified: heredity, environment and education. Heredity is transmitted from one generation to another, through the genetic code and through messages specific to the group and the individual. The environment, as a factor of human development, consists of all the external elements with which the individual interacts directly or indirectly during its development. Environmental factors can be grouped into two categories: natural geographical factors (relief, climate, temperature) and social factors (education, family, group of friends, cultural environment.) The level of civilization, the cultural level, the daily patterns of conduct and the cultural consumptions influence the becoming of the individual throughout his life. If we refer to social factors, such as education, it guides the way personality develops, because it detects hereditary characteristics, developing them. Personality is formed as a result of educational action. At the same time, it must be taken into account that many young athletes are involved

in sports, even teenagers who have a personality in training, and this training, as stated so far, is influenced by many factors. When it comes to very young athletes, adapting to a new culture can shape their personality.

Personality traits can help predict adaptation to a new cultural environment. Moreover, these personality traits can be correlated with the dimensions of cultural intelligence. The five major personality categories: conscientiousness, extroversion, emotional stability, openness to experiences and the ability to be pleasant. Moreover, some individuals who exhibit certain personality traits for certain roles and tasks will adapt more effectively to a different cultural situation than other individuals who do not possess these personality traits necessary for the same role.
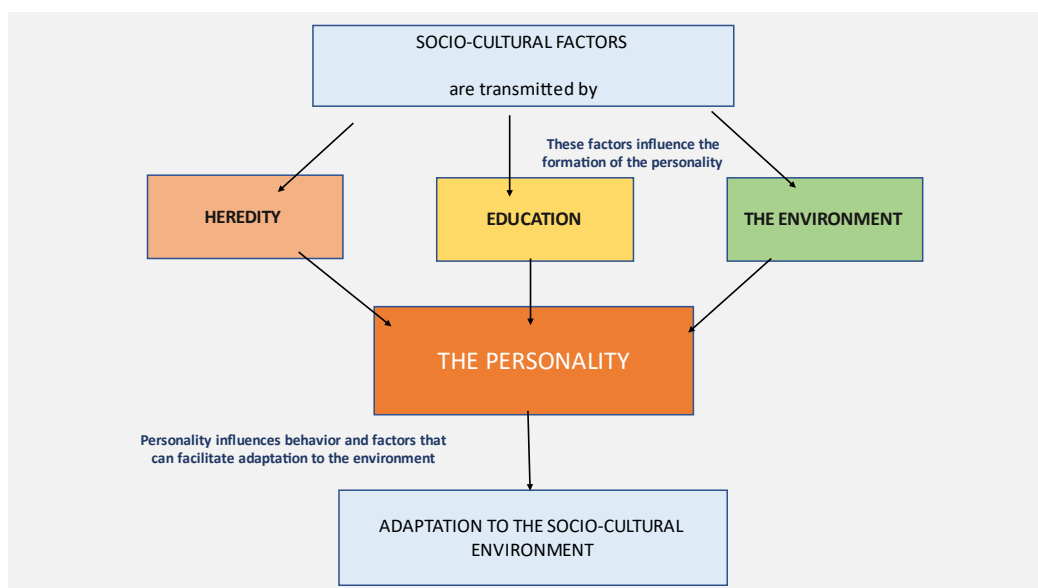

Fig. 1 The impact of personality on cultural adaptation
Source: own contribution

Several factors contribute to the formation of character, of which the most relevant are the sociocultural ones, emphasizing once again that personality has a particularly important role in the process of adapting to a new culture or a culturally diverse team and also emphasizing that personality it is formed under the influence of environmental and cultural factors. Moreover, some of the players consider that personality would be even more important than cultural differences in terms of communication, cooperation and adaptation in a culturally diverse team. The personality of the individual influences his entire activity and guides it in one direction or another. Personality influences behaviours on or off the field. For a manager it is very important to identify the individual personality of the athletes he trains, because this can indicate the elements that can facilitate the adaptation to the sports activity or that can make it difficult.

The world is constantly changing and some aspects that were previously valid today may no longer be valid. Mankind is changing at a rapid pace. Some studies may come with new aspects, others may confirm what has been written previously, but any changes must be constantly monitored. The fundamental quality for survival in a multicultural world is the understanding first of one's cultural values and then of the cultural values of those with whom we must cooperate. We should not all expect to be the same, but we can at least aspire to become more cosmopolitan in our thinking.

In addition to the statistics that cannot be disputed, it is interesting to analyze the point of view of the people who are part of such culturally diversified teams. Working with people is quite difficult and sometimes unpredictable. No matter how hard you try to meet people from different cultures, it's still hard to label them according to certain patterns. You can at best use the experience gained from feelings or reading and adapt it to.

- The world has become more and more culturally diversified and not many people are aware of this aspect, and in the future the world will become even more multicultural. Whether we like it or not, we will interact with people from other cultures; Of all the interviewees, only 2-3 expected to be part of such a culturally diversified team; which means that certain hours of intercultural education would be beneficial to facilitate adaptation;
- Travel can help a lot in interacting with individuals from other cultures, but some people are not aware of this. Moreover, travel can motivate individuals to develop their cultural intelligence;
- People should not be labelled only by the culture they belong to; even Hosftede's scores are average nationwide. Thus, there are people who can be both above that average and below. They must be taken into account to give you an idea of the culture of that country and not to label certain people, because otherwise there is a risk of never knowing them again;
- The personality of individuals is very important; one can have affinities and divergences regardless of the culture from which that person comes; however, cultural differences could be an additional factor of conflict; there are certain personality traits that favor or hinder the adaptation process;
- Education helps in intercultural interactions so that people with a high level of education do better in such multicultural situations;
- Even if it seems obvious, any experience in a culturally diverse organization can help; individuals who have already gone through such an experience are more familiar and adapt more easily. On the other hand, for those who are experiencing such an experience for the first time, it is more difficult to adapt;
- Communication is very important in all aspects of life, especially in a team, whether it is sports or not. Thus, knowledge of a foreign language of international circulation (preferably English) is a mandatory aspect for those who want to work in such a team;
- All individuals need an adaptation time, for some shorter, for others longer;
- Local players have an important role in adapting foreigners, being the ones who should facilitate their adaptation process;
- There is a paradoxical situation. Most Romanian players try to facilitate the adaptation of foreign ones, but they do not always welcome their arrival, Romanian women considering that foreign players are often privileged from certain points of view. This sometimes happens even in other cultural areas where local players sabotage foreigners so that they cannot take their place in the team;
- Some cultures do some things better than other cultures, with some cultures specializing in certain aspects. Some cultures are more creative, others are more rigorous, others are more combative;
- It is more difficult for young players, because on the one hand they have to raise their level to be at the same level as the seniors and then there are the cultural differences that matter, tasks transmitted in English, reactions that they cannot understand. All these aspects upsetting the young players;

- Being part of culturally diversified teams helps personal development;
- Foreigners should understand that it is not easy for local players to speak English in any situation, as it is natural and natural for them to use their native language. Foreigners should try to learn the language and when they want to understand certain aspects, they should ask their colleagues to translate; The way people are and their hospitality influences the adaptation of athletes or individuals to a new culture;
- Locals in the culture in which an expatriate works appreciate his efforts to learn the local language or various aspects of culture;
- Having two foreigners in the team from the same culture can help to adapt them, but on the other hand it can lead to the formation of subgroups;
- There are cultures that are closer and between which the cultural differences are not so obvious, as is the case in the Balkan countries or as is the case between France and the Walloon part of Belgium;
- Strategic planning must also include cultural considerations;

When an organization decides to collaborate with partners in other countries or decides to hire individuals from other cultural areas, it is vital to prevent misunderstandings and conflicts. A culturally intelligent manager will analyze cultural differences as well as the motivations, attitudes and opportunities generated by these differences. The web platform Country Navigator for analyzing cultural intelligence offers many advantages: complex analysis of different cultural styles, better communication with people from other cultures and the development of skills in intercultural interactions.

As far as sports organizations are concerned, it is hard to believe that an athlete can answer such a set of questions before signing a contract with a team from another country. The ideal situation would be for the new club to have the cultural profile of the athlete before he signs an agreement. However, the platform does not give verdicts and highlights the similarities and differences that stakeholders should be aware of. After identifying the athlete's cultural profile, the organization's managers should consider all cultural traits and highlight them for a quick and effective adaptation of athletes.

Cultural differences have existed and will continue to exist. These differences may make it difficult to adapt to a new cultural context, but this does not necessarily mean that very large differences also lead to the impossibility of adaptation. The type of personality, the ability to learn a foreign language, the ability to acquire cultural values or the ability to socialize with locals are factors that can compensate for very large differences.

Each country has certain cultural peculiarities and implicitly a certain cultural profile. This cultural profile is an average and there are also cases of individuals who have a cultural profile more or less different from that of the majority. In these situations, these individuals may be more compatible with other cultures and do not feel very comfortable in the native culture. These individuals make some efforts to adapt to the local culture and come to perceive them as normal.

Another aspect that must be taken into account is the fact that nowadays there are many multicultural teams in which the number of local athletes is very small. In the case of these teams, we can speak of a different cultural profile than the cultural profile of the country that the club represents. In this situation, the cultural profile of the team can be realized in order to better notice the cultural similarities and differences.

Exploring different cultures is a complex issue that deserves to be deepened. Identifying the cultural profile as well as compatibility with other cultures is an important step

in adapting to a new culture. Such a profile identifies differences and helps to find aspects that could improve performance in a multicultural group.
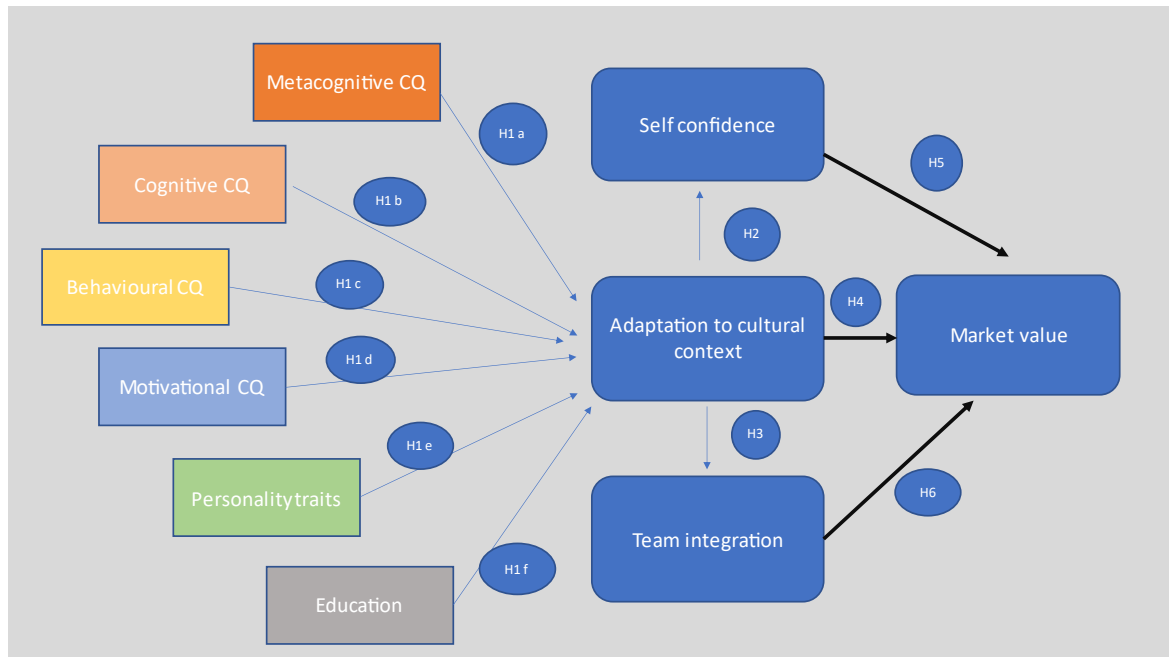

Fig 2. Conceptual model for quantitative study
Source: own contribution

This study is based on a complex conceptual model, represented in Figure 2, which aims to test several hypotheses:

H1a. The metacognitive abilities of athletes' cultural intelligence have a positive impact on their adaptation to a new cultural context;

H1b. The cognitive abilities of athletes' cultural intelligence have a positive impact on their adaptation to a new cultural context;

H1c. The motivational skills of athletes' cultural intelligence have a positive impact on their adaptation to a new cultural context;

H1d. Behavioral skills of athletes' cultural intelligence have a positive impact on their adaptation to a new cultural context;

H1e. Athletes' personality traits have a positive impact on their cultural adaptation to a new cultural context;

H1f. The level of education of athletes has a positive impact on their adaptation to a new cultural context;

H2. Adapting athletes to a new cultural context has a positive impact on self-confidence;

H3. Adapting athletes to a new cultural context has a positive impact on team integration;

H4. Adapting athletes to a new cultural context has a positive impact on their market value;

H5. Athletes' self-confidence has a positive impact on increasing their market value;

H6. The integration of athletes into a multicultural team has a positive impact on its market value.

As there can be multicultural teams that have a significant percentage of local players, there are also multicultural teams that do not have a large number of local players. For example, in January 2021, there are Romanian football teams such as CFR Cluj which has a percentage of 45% foreign players or FC Botoșani which has a percentage of 48% foreign players. As for the French football teams, there are teams such as Olympique Lyon where the percentage of foreign players is 72%, Paris Saint Germain where the percentage of foreign players is 68% or OSC Lille which has a percentage of foreign players of 57% (source: Transfermarkt). Although it seems a paradox, often in these teams the locals have to integrate into the particularities of such a multicultural group. In such teams, the country in which they play is not so relevant, but rather the adaptation to culture. local integration and integration into such a culturally diverse group. In such teams with very few local players, it is obvious that the role of national culture is very low. Thus, a distinction can be made between a micro climate of adaptation and a macro climate of adaptation of the athlete in a foreign country. The factors that influence his adaptation are those that influence him the most because he spends most of his time under their influence: teammates, coaches, managers, doctors, masseurs, physiotherapists, storekeepers, administrative staff, physical training methods, tactics , analysis of opponents, methods of communication, organizational culture. These are the factors that influence the integration within the team and under the influence of which the athlete (depending on the level of performance at which he evolves) spends the most time. Beyond the micro-climate of adaptation is the macro-climate, which is a series of factors that in turn influence cultural adaptation, but influence very little to no integration within the team. One of the factors at the border is the supporters who influence the adaptation and integration of athletes. The behavior of the fans can make them integrate more easily into the team. Factors that are part of the macro adaptation climate would be: political, economic, social, legislative, sociological, climatic factors, religion, infrastructure and logistics or locals.
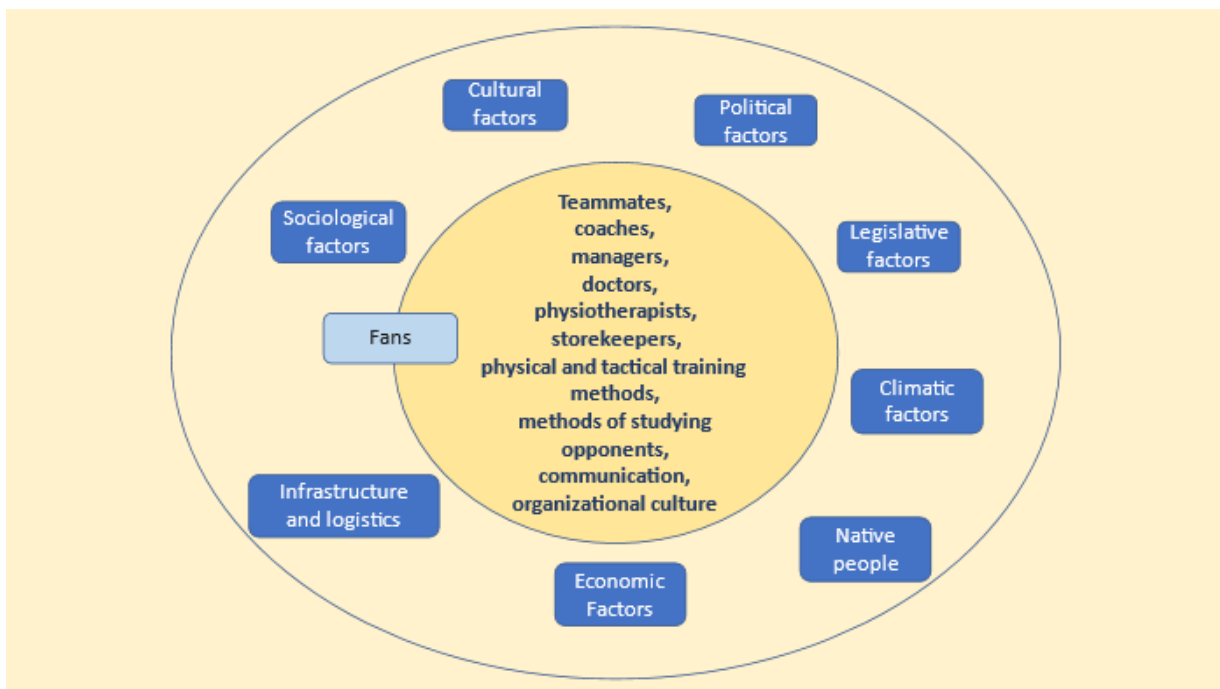

Fig.3 Micro-climate and macro-climate of integration and adaptation of athletes within multicultural organizations
Source: own contribution

Culture and cultural adaptation play an important role in all organizations, including sports organizations. The development of cultural intelligence skills, as well as the self-confidence generated by adapting to a new cultural context are two extremely important factors that influence the performance and market value of athletes in multicultural organizations. The performance of athletes and their market share depend on many factors, and adapting to a cultural context and integrating into the team are two of them. Athletes must adapt both to the organizational culture of the team and to the cultural environment, the geographical area in which the team operates. Thus, managers and coaches must take into account these particularly important aspects. Moreover, cultural intelligence is a skill that can be developed throughout life.
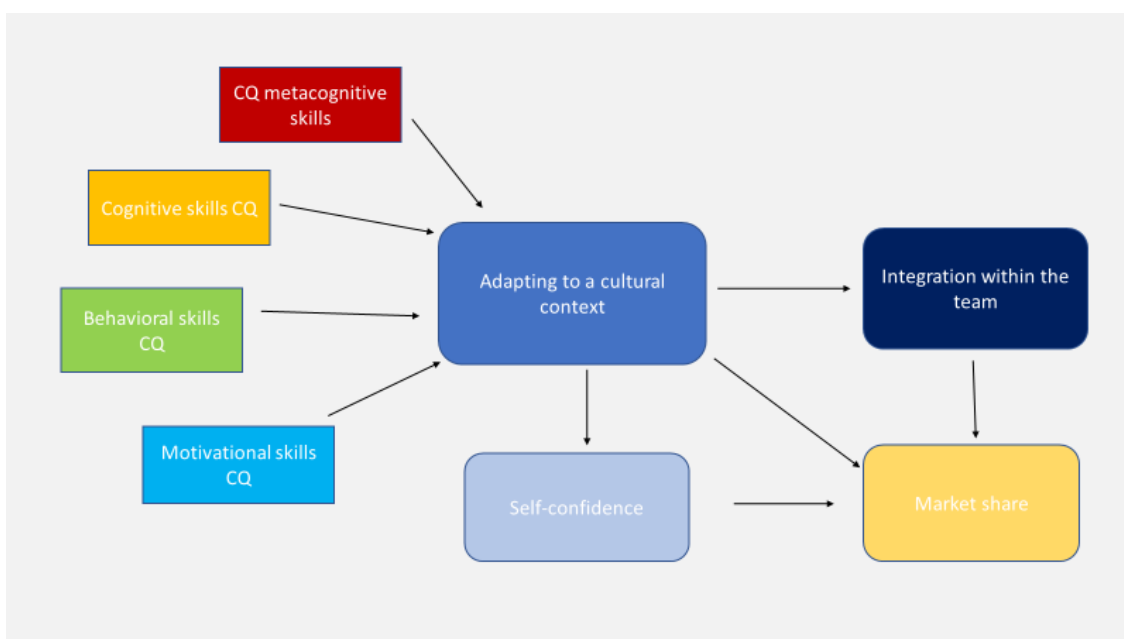

Fig. 4. Systematization of research results
Source: own contribution

Nowadays, the world is more intercultural than ever and many sports organizations have become a global business. Managers, staff, staff and players need to take cultural differences into account and put intercultural skills into practice. Currently, athletes have the opportunity to play abroad, in a country where the culture is different from the culture in which they were raised. Regardless of the country, region, club or sports level, the culture in the general sense and the organizational culture of that club will influence the adaptation of athletes and managers and implicitly their efficiency on the field. It is beneficial for managers and players to understand that cultural differences affect the efficiency of the organization. Managers and football players need to put into practice their intercultural skills, metacognitive skills, cognitive skills and their motivation to behave appropriately in the new cultural environment.

The QCA method highlights aspects of particular importance for intercultural management applied in sports organizations. First, it should be noted that the present study confirms that the four causal conditions (metacognitive dimension, cognitive dimension, motivational dimension and behavioral dimension of cultural intelligence) influence the outcome, namely players' self-perception of adaptation to a new cultural context. Basically, this study highlights the role of all four dimensions of cultural intelligence in adapting to a new cultural context, but unlike previous studies, it was conducted on a sample of foreign athletes

evolving in France and Romania. Moreover, the vast majority of responding athletes have a rich multicultural experience, which adds value to this study. Secondly, another particularly important aspect to be mentioned is the fact that analyzing the solutions proposed by the fsQCA software, it is noted that motivation plays a particularly important role in the adaptation process. Thus, decision-makers who select international athletes should pay more attention to this issue and seek to recruit athletes with a high level of motivation. As far as athletes are concerned, they should analyze their level of motivation and always be motivated to overcome the obstacles of adapting to a new cultural context.

In the near future, not only Romanian or other football players, but even other individuals who want to adapt abroad in a new cultural context, must take into account cultural differences and put into practice their intercultural skills, to be effective at work. Cultural differences do not only appear in environments such as industrial, but in such situations the lack of adaptation is more visible. Lately, the issue of cultural maladaptation of athletes has begun to be brought to light more and more. Sport has become a business and decision makers involved in the phenomenon are trying to make a profit by any means. In sports, there are many more elements that influence the performance of athletes, and many individuals involved in the phenomenon think that cultural differences are not so important and thus do not give more importance. If in the industrial sector, performance is affected by cultural differences, it is clear that this can also happen in sports. There are many situations in which athletes or managers have succeeded successfully in a cultural context, but the high has failed miserably.

This doctoral thesis presents both a theoretical and an applied framework based on previous studies conducted by other researchers in the field and which refer to the use of cultural intelligence skills for a more efficient management of culturally diverse sports organizations.

Multiculturalism is a new era of globalization, and cultural diversity is inevitable, but this diversity can add value to companies. In the future, there will be an ever closer relationship between globalization, cultural diversity, operational management and stakeholder relationship management.

All individuals are different, but despite all the differences we are human beings who should never stop learning from each other. Thus, cultural diversity should be seen as an opportunity and not as a disadvantage.

Sport can divide or unite individuals. Over time, many interethnic conflicts have erupted or re-ignited as a result of sporting confrontations. However, there have been and continue to be many times when the parties involved in the phenomenon put rivalries aside and make a good image of multiculturalism, intercultural coexistence or to promote the fight against racism. Sport can be a call for acceptance, it can highlight the positive aspects of multiculturalism and it can inspire society to follow its example.

The vast majority of managerial activities in the sports sector are influenced by the phenomenon of interculturality, and the measure of efficiency depends on the cultural features in which they operate, so sports organizations can not eliminate the effects of cultural contexts in which they operate. Sports organizations involved in a globally competitive environment need managers who excel in cultural diversity and adapt to complex market changes. The managers of some sports teams can be an example for other global leaders, regardless of the field of activity. So far, some researchers have even compared the work of a coach of a multicultural team with the work of a CEO of a multinational company. The managers of some sports organizations manage very talented individuals who are aware of their value and impact on the efficiency of the organization, but also on society.

Sport is characterized by fierce competitiveness. Sports organizations are increasingly forced to transpose managerial practices found in companies and to adopt the operational and structural characteristics of commercial enterprises. The pressure to meet economic goals and

the competition exerted by sports organizations has encouraged sports managers to consider tools and concepts applied in business such as organizational culture. Unlike other fields of activity, sport has certain peculiarities. Most of the time in sports, a single organization can achieve its goal of winning the competition, and situations in which several teams achieve their goal are rare. All teams, regardless of sports and regardless of the level of resources available, try to win every match and every competition. No self-respecting team enters the field with the thought of losing. Thus, over time there have been examples of organizations that with minimal resources have managed to overtake in rankings and competitions organizations with much more valuable resources.

The value of the studies presented in this doctoral thesis is represented by the fact that the information obtained can be used both by global managers and by athletes or other stakeholders to understand the mechanisms that lead to increasing the efficiency of athletes in a new cultural context. This doctoral thesis aims to open the horizons of new research that can be developed in a postdoctoral training course, but also for future scientific articles.

The first chapter presents general considerations on cultural intelligence and multicultural management. Topics presented in this chapter include: the concept of cultural intelligence, the influence of personality types on cultural intelligence, the skills of leaders who can perform effectively globally, the cultural dimensions of Geert Hofstede, current research in intercultural management in the French-speaking world, the link between social regulation and intercultural management or the role of the historical factor in the formation of cultural features.

The second chapter reflects the current state of research on the management of sports organizations in a multicultural context. Among the topics addressed are: mobility and acculturation in sports, the role of culture in sports management, the culture of sports organizations, the migration of international footballers or causes for the maladaptation of athletes abroad.

The third chapter focuses on the qualitative study on the impact of cultural differences on the activities of sports organizations, the case study being conducted on two women's volleyball teams, from Romania and Belgium. Personal contributions consist in the fact that the information obtained from the interviews, analyzed through the Nvivo software, were included in specific clusters and interpreted from the perspective of interculturality. The analysis of the answers allowed the identification of the most frequently used words but also of the most frequently discussed topics by the respondents. The most common 5 words used by respondents were: player, culture, team, different, foreign. On the other hand, the most common topics brought up are adaptation, communication, conflict, culture, education, personality, tourism and travel and advice. In addition, the software also allowed the analysis of the feelings generated by the adaptation to a new cultural context.

The fourth chapter presents the role of an online platform of cultural intelligence on the analysis of the cultural profiles of some athletes who have faced the need to adapt to different intercultural situations. In addition, this chapter offers a number of ways to improve cultural intelligence, but also tips for better adaptation of expats. This chapter emphasizes the importance of identifying the cultural profile but also of cultural compatibility, which is an important step in adapting to a new culture.

The fifth chapter is a quantitative study on the adaptation of athletes to specific cultural contexts, the research conducted in this regard proposing a comparative approach to the perceptions of athletes in Romania and France on aspects influenced by interculturality. The information collected for this study was processed using SPPS software. The results of this research indicate that the dimensions of cultural intelligence (metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioral) influence adaptation to a new cultural context. Moreover, adapting to a new cultural context influences self-confidence and integration within the team, and the latter, integration within the team and self-confidence influence the market value of athletes. While in the qualitative chapter respondents very frequently highlight the importance of

personality and education in the process of adaptation and integration, the results of the quantitative study indicate that there is no link between personality traits and level of education, on the one hand, and cultural adaptation, on the other hand.

The sixth chapter illustrates a configuration study on the antecedent conditions that affect the adaptation to a specific cultural context using the fsQCA method. This study complements the qualitative study and represents an original contribution as the dimensions of cultural intelligence have not been integrated so far in qualitative-comparative research in the field of sports organization management. The study presents how four antecedent conditions - the dimensions of cultural intelligence: metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and the size influence the specified result - the self-perception of athletes regarding their adaptation to a team abroad. The results of the study by the fsQCA method confirm the results of the quantitative study, as the vast majority of cases confirm the influence of these dimensions of cultural intelligence on adaptation to a new cultural context.

Figure 5 summarizes the essential ideas of the doctoral thesis that addresses the issue of management of multicultural sports organizations. This figure can be divided into three main sections: the initial environment (or the cultural environment of the individual who wants to adapt), aspects that directly or indirectly influence the cultural intelligence of the individual and the acculturating environment.

First of all, the issue of multicultural management is becoming more and more important as the society has become more and more globalized. Thus, in the context of globalization, more and more different individuals have to work together and form a team, and this aspect is increasingly visible in sports.

Secondly, every society and every organization needs rules to operate in an optimal environment. These regulations must be proposed by a legitimate decision-making body, which gives confidence to those under the influence of these regulations. In an increasingly globalized society there are both international and national regulations, and these can positively or negatively influence the activity of multicultural sports organizations. For example, there are national regulations that require a minimum number of local players or prohibit the access of players who have not played for their national team. On the other hand, there are regulations that facilitate the faster obtaining of a citizenship or regulations that prohibit sports confrontations between certain countries that have had historical conflicts.

Any individual who wants to adapt to a new cultural context comes from an environment that we called the initial environment. This individual, influenced by a triggering factor, decides to accept the idea of relocating to another cultural area, for a number of reasons that can be diverse: intrinsic motivation, the challenge given by this new environment, the opportunity of an international contract or others. After the onset of this trigger, the individual uses all the cultural heritage, cultural intelligence skills (metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioural skills), education and self-education he had, heredity, personality types and abilities of communication. Moreover, among the factors that influence an individual's cultural intelligence are: the historical past of the area from which the individual was formed, traditions, customs or family. Some of these factors can influence the ability to adapt positively, others negatively.
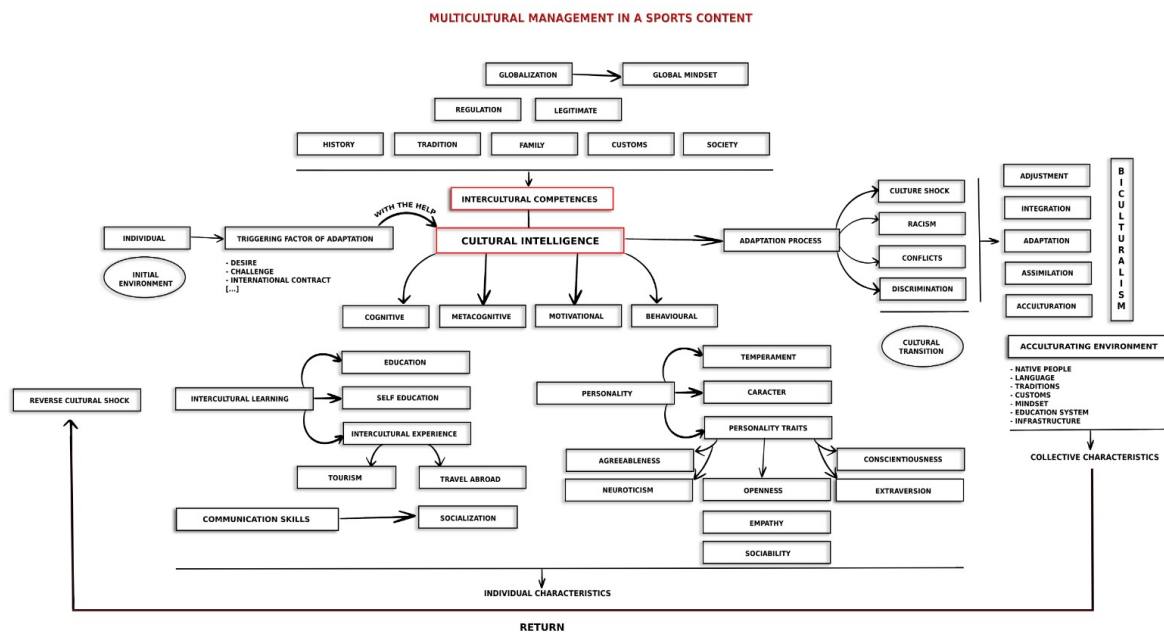
Fig. 5 Synthesizing the essential ideas in the paper
Source: own contribution

Our literature and research indicate that the tendency to be curious is a particularly important aspect for those who want to adapt to a new cultural context. However, many Romanian children are raised as children with the expression "the curious die quickly", so they lose their curiosity, and over time this will negatively influence the adaptation to a new culture. Using all this baggage consciously or unconsciously, the individual tries to adapt to a new cultural context.

In the process of adaptation, the athlete faces a process of cultural transition between the initial environment and the acculturating environment (the one in which the individual wants to adapt). In this transition process, the athlete goes through a culture shock and certain conflicts (internal and sometimes even external), and in addition to these in some situations he may face racism or discrimination.

The acculturating environment consists of a series of collective characteristics, among which are: the way of being of the locals, the way of thinking, the habits, the education system, and to these can be added the infrastructure.

After this process of adaptation and cultural transition, the athlete can integrate, can adapt, can be assimilated, can be acculturated, can become bicultural or can fail in the attempt to adapt. These terms are used in the literature to illustrate some small but noticeable differences between the different phases of the degree of adaptation. Integration aims at a first stage, which is the adaptation with the immediate environment to a new cultural environment, such as the work climate. Adaptation aims to move to a higher level and involves adaptation including the cultural environment specific to the area. Assimilation and acculturation involve the loss of initial cultural characteristics and the assimilation of new ones. Acculturalization is at a higher level of assimilation and basically involves identification with new cultural values, but also the recognition by the acculturating environment of belonging to the new culture. As for biculturalism, it assumes that an individual belongs to two cultures at the same time. In today's globalized society, there are more and more such situations of individuals who have dual citizenship and fall into this category.

After this process of cultural adaptation, when the athlete returns to the country of origin, he will have a reverse culture shock. The intensity of this shock will depend on how

much the expatriate kept in touch with everything related to the culture of origin, but also on other factors, among which the social factor plays a particularly important role.

Managerial implications

The results of the research carried out in this doctoral thesis contribute both at a theoretical level because it deepens research topics already studied previously, but also at a practical level, as it offers certain solutions that can be used in the management of culturally diversified sports organizations.

Personal contributions, which support global leaders who want more effective management of the culturally diverse organizations they lead, regardless of field of activity, can be summarized as follows:
• increased attention to the relationship with customers and stakeholders in a globalized world;
• increased attention to the management of talented human resources;
• to delegate tasks to local employees in order to facilitate the adaptation of foreigners, especially since in the case of a multinational company the situations in which individuals sabotage their colleagues in order not to take their place in the team are rarer;
• communicate quickly in languages of international circulation; in sports the reaction must be very fast and the message must be decoded very quickly by the receiver;
• monitor closely both internal and external opponents; at the beginning of the season all the teams analyze their opponents with whom they fight to reach the objectives;
• learn from the mistakes of sports organizations that the most valuable candidates are not always the most suitable for an organization and that they should take into account many elements. However, even with a rigorous analysis there are situations in which mistakes are still made;
• to avoid the formation of cultural subgroups by promoting a common interest, by the interest and acceptance towards the cultural values of the other team members, but also by using a common language of communication;
• individuals must be taken as such and cultural values must be respected by all team members;
• recruiting team-minded, sociable and open-minded individuals can be a successful strategy.

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