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THE INFLUENCE OF MANAGER'S ACTIVITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS ON STRATEGIC ACTION AND BUSINESS RESULTS WITH MODERATION EFFECTS ON MOTIVATION AND REWARD (EXAMPLE OF SERBIA)

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Abstract: Uncertainty and changeability of the modern market impose a need for strategic, proactive action of the company. The goal of the company is to achieve competitive advantages which require the application of strategic management. Efficiency of strategic action is conditioned by the management activities which are carried out in the company, but also by the characteristics of managers who are in charge of their realization. The authors research the activities and characteristics of managers in business improvement and achieving the best possible competitive position of the company. In that purpose, the original empirical research is conducted in which participated 327 managers of different levels employed in companies in Serbia. The research results were processed using a software program IBM SPSS Statistics 25 and they confirmed the influence of the manager's activities and characteristics on the achievement of more efficient and productive work, through the effective strategic action of the company.

Keywords: managers, strategic management, motivation, reward, competitive advantages, sports management

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Introduction

Adapting to numerous and diverse changes, but also their initiation, creation and timely introduction, with a constant increase in competitiveness and improvement of business performance, is a basic assumption not only for the development of modern companies, but essentially for their survival in today's dynamic market. Alongside conventional business systems, these issues are particularly pronounced within sports organizations and the sports industry, which function in highly dynamic and competitive settings marked by swift shifts in consumer preferences, technological advancements, and global rivalry. Sports clubs, federations, and organizations are increasingly dependent on strategic management to sustain competitive performance, guarantee financial viability, and improve fan engagement. In the realm of sports management, the responsibilities of managers become significantly more intricate, as they must not only strive for business efficiency but also reconcile sporting outcomes, brand equity, and stakeholder expectations. For instance, professional sports clubs are tasked with the simultaneous management of team performance, marketing initiatives, sponsorship partnerships, and fan loyalty, rendering strategic actions and managerial skills essential factors for success. A strategic approach to management indicates the need for the organization's active attitude towards changes, which is characterized by the encouragement of changes by the organization itself, anticipating and ex ante reaction of the organization before the changes themselves occur, organizational climate and atmosphere in which innovation and creativity of employees are stimulated and developed, etc. Strategic management enables organizations to develop dynamic capabilities and adapt to changing environments, which is essential for achieving long-term competitiveness (Teece, 2020). It can be said that the primary task of strategic management as change management is providing a organization's rational and timely answers to the changes of internal and external surroundings which are constantly happening (Premović, 2022a). In sports organizations, fan engagement and stakeholder management represent critical components of strategic success, further emphasizing the importance of effective management practices (Kunkel et al., 2022).

In order for the company to succeed in ensuring the survival, growth and development of the best possible competitive position, it must have successful leaders who are efficiently going to lead the company through numerous changes and different business challenges. To gain the competitive advantages, it is necessary to have an effective strategic action, which is conditioned by the activities that the management carries out in the company, but also by the characteristics of the managers who are in charge of their implementation.

Precisely for these reasons, the main goal of the authors in this paper is to point out the importance of certain variables of activity and characteristics of managers that have a great influence on the variables of strategic action, so that they could be improved and applied in the company's operations. The original empirical research conducted in companies in Serbia and the results obtained should indicate whether there is an influence (and if so, to what extent) between the variables of activity and characteristics of managers and the variables of strategic action.

Lierature review

In the second half of the 20th century, society as a whole faced numerous challenges that brought with it various social, economic, technical-technological and political changes in all areas and human activities. These changes had their repercussions on business systems and companies, imposing a new business philosophy of organizational behavior and action as an imperative for success (Premović, 2022a). The business and success of a organization depends on many factors. In the conditions of modern globalization and growing competitiveness, the struggle for survival in the market and winning customers is an increasingly difficult and complex mission for every organization (Turčinović, 2021). Globalization has introduced profound changes to the operational strategies of traditional corporations, compelling them to restructure in order to compete as global players (Pavlović et al., 2025). Recent global challenges, such as economic instability and external shocks, have further emphasized the importance of strategic adaptability and resilience of organizations (Wójcik, 2021). The main sources of gaining competitive advantages have changed over time. In this context, the resource-based view emphasizes the importance of internal resources, particularly human capital and managerial competencies, as key sources of sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, Mackey, 2021). Contrary to previous times in which the success of companies and national economies, in general, was measured by the amount of products produced and sold, today world society is turning to the service sector, in which the dominant place is occupied by human resources and the field of intellectual capital, which is at the disposal of one organizational system (company, institution, country) (Premović &Dudić, 2024) A company's performance is heavily influenced by internal factors, such as business strategy, operational efficiency, and ownership structure, and external factors, such as market uncertainty and competition intensity (Handoyoa et al., 2023). Management decisions are based on the analysis of data and information (measurement, analysis, use of tools, techniques and methods). Tools and methods are practical techniques, concepts, skills, means or mechanisms that can be applied to solve specific tasks and problems related to quality management systems (Turčinović et al., 2022). Motivation is a significant factor that influences employees, their job satisfaction and their willingness to improve and apply their knowledge and skills for the benefit of the company as an employer (Premović, 2022).

A strategic approach in change management and human resource management is taking the place of the dominant management paradigm (Premović, 2022a). Strategic management gives a broader perspective to the employees of an organization and they can better understand how their job fits into the entire organizational plan and how it is co-related to other organizational members (Stamevska et al., 2019). It is extremely important because it can provide managers with a systematic and comprehensive means to analyze the organization's internal and external environment, assess strengths and weaknesses, both internally and externally, and identify opportunities through which they can develop and exploit a competitive advantage (Farid, 2022). Strategic management has become an essential part of business in today's dynamic and competitive environment (Susanto et al., 2023). As author emphasis "strategic management increases the organization's ability to act preventively because it promotes interaction between manager's at all vertical, horizontal, and functional levels, and creates a basis for identifying and rationalizing the need for change for all managers and employees in the organization" (Milačić, 2024).

Research methodology

The original empirical research is conducted on the territory of Republic of Serbia by online survey questionnaire. The sample was chosen through a non-probability convenience sampling technique, incorporating managers from various companies across different sizes and sectors within the Republic of Serbia. The survey was disseminated electronically through email and professional networks. In total, 450 questionnaires were sent out, and 327 valid responses were obtained, yielding a response rate of 72.6%, which is deemed satisfactory for this category of research. The company's strategic action was analyzed through the effectiveness of strategic decisions, the quality of the organization's vision and mission, as well as strategic planning and decision-making (Jovanović, 2022). Furthermore, the companies were observed from the aspect of conducting innovative and research activities, the concept of change management and striving to achieve a greater market share. Improving the quality and competitiveness of business is the basis of the analysis of the strategic action and direction of the company. This is consistent with previous research, which highlights that innovation plays a crucial role in improving organizational performance, especially in sports organizations (Winand & Anagnostopoulos, 2020).

The research presented in the paper proves the following hypotheses:

- **Special hypothesis 1 (H_1):** By improving the activities of the management and the company, the efficiency of strategic action is improved.
- **Special hypothesis 2 (H_2):** The characteristics of managers have an impact on the effectiveness of the implementation of strategic decisions and adequate employee motivation and reward.

The research results were processed using a software program IBM SPSS Statistics 25. The method used in data processing is descriptive statistics for analyzing the significance and value of the observed variables. Correlation and regression analysis determined the mutual influence of the analyzed variables and presented the contribution of individual variables. Factor analysis determined the relationship between the observed variables analyzed from the aspect of the importance of business improvement. The research included a sample of 327 managers of different gender, age, level of education and position employed in companies of various size, structure and activities in Serbia (Table 1).

Table 1. Structure of the sample - respondents who participated in the research

VARIABLE		f	%
GENDER	Male	189	57,8%
	Female	138	42,2%
AGE	under 35	84	25,7%
	35 to 50	183	56%
	over 50	60	18,3%
YEARS OF SERVICE	less than 15	147	45%
	15 to 30	144	44%
	over 30	36	11%
EDUCATION	High School	41	12,5%
	College diploma	71	21,7%
	University degree	215	65,8%
POSITION IN COMPANY	Operational-Executive Management	189	57,9%
	Middle Management	79	24,1%
	Top Management	59	18,1%

Source: Original research by the authors (Premović et al., 2025)

Analysis of variables used in the research

Respondents evaluated variables showing which activities and characteristics of managers were the most important for their company, but also they evaluated strategic planning, decision-making and directing the organization using strategic action variables. Variables of the company's strategic action are: Effectiveness of strategic decisions, Quality of vision and mission, Strategic planning, Strategic decision-making, Change management, Innovative and research activities, Greater market share, Improvement of business quality, Improving business competitiveness (Table 2).

Variables of strategic action were evaluated using a semantic differential scale where the values range from 1-5, where 1 = very low, 5 = very high. Variables of activities and characteristics of the managers were evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree (Premović et al., 2025)

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of variables of the company's strategic actions

Variable	Label	N	Min	Max	Mean value	Standard deviation
Effectiveness of strategic decisions	SD1	327	1	5	3,53	1,002
Quality of vision and mission	SD2	327	1	5	3,63	1,119
Strategic planning	SD3	327	1	5	3,46	1,047
Strategic decision-making	SD4	327	1	5	3,47	1,093
Change management	SD5	327	1	5	3,34	1,106
Innovative and research activities	SD6	327	1	5	3,31	1,265
Greater market share	SD7	327	1	5	3,58	1,156
Improvement of business quality	SD8	327	1	5	3,63	1,071
Improving business competitiveness	SD9	327	1	5	3,60	1,120

Source: Original research by the authors (Premović et al., 2025)

The Table 2 shows the abbreviations for the mentioned variables of strategic action, which will be used in further research analyses. All the scores of the analyzed variables exceed their mean value of 2.5. This indicates that the respondents are satisfied with the company's strategic performance and performance on the market (Premović et al., 2025). The lowest ratings variables are innovative and research activities and change management which indicate that the analyzed companies do not pay much attention to precisely those segments that are necessary for them to maintain or improve their market position in an unpredictable environment. If modern company wants to survive on the market and improve its position, it must be ready to follow all changes in the environment and adapt to them. It must be ready to invest in research and development, the product of which should be innovative behavior on the market (Premović et al., 2025).

The following table presents descriptive statistics of the variables of management activities. The variables of management activities are: Leadership, Communication, Motivation, Rewarding, Team cooperation, Involvement of employees in decision-making,Training and development of employees (Table 3).

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of management activity variables

Variable	Label	N	Min	Max	Mean value	Standard deviation
Leadership	AM1	327	1	5	3,54	1,215
Communication	AM2	327	1	5	3,76	1,091
Motivation	AM3	327	1	5	3,46	1,245
Rewarding	AM4	327	1	5	3,40	1,311
Team cooperation	AM5	327	1	5	3,78	1,157
Involvement of employees in decision-making	AM6	327	1	5	3,47	1,329
Training and development of employees	AM7	327	1	5	3,59	1,163

Source: Original research by the authors (Premović et al., 2025)

As been seen in the Table 3, all the mentioned variables were rated highly by the respondents, that is, they have a value higher than the average value of 2.5. The best evaluated variables of management activities by the respondents are team cooperation and communication. On the other side, the lowest rated variables of management activities are rewarding and motivation.

The Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics of manager characteristic variables.The variables of the manager's characteristics are: Taking the initiative, Trust and commitment, Risk taking, Conflict resolution, Improvement and advancement of knowledge, Organizational skill, Innovation and flexibility.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of manager characteristic variables

Variable	Label	N	Min	Max	Mean value	Standard deviation
Taking the initiative	KM1	327	1	5	3,45	1,197
Trust and commitment	KM2	327	1	5	3,65	1,156
Risk taking	KM3	327	1	5	3,54	1,260
Conflict resolution	KM4	327	1	5	3,55	1,199
Improvement and advancement of knowledge	KM5	327	1	5	3,61	1,193
Organizational skills	KM6	327	1	5	3,58	1,076
Innovation and flexibility	KM7	327	1	5	3,50	1,228

Source: Original research by the authors (Premović et al., 2025)

According to these results, the variable characteristics of managers are rated with high marks, where it can be seen that all analyzed values have grades that exceed the mean value of 2.5. Trust and commitment, training and improvement of knowledge and limiting abilities are the best rated while the lowest rated variables are initiative taking and risk taking (Premović et al., 2025).

Correlation analysis with the moderating effect of employee motivation and rewarding

Correlation relations between management activity variables and strategic action variables were compared in those companies that actively implement employee motivation strategies and various techniques of adequate reward according to the achieved work results, and those companies that do not practice it. The aforementioned relationships are shown in the following Table 5.

Table 5. Correlation between the variables of management activities and the variables of strategic action with the moderating effect of motivation and rewarding employees

	AM1	AM2	AM3	AM4	AM5	AM6	AM7
SD1	,556**	,625**	,586**	,506**	,380**	419**	,492**
SD2	,725**	,491**	,547**	,583*	,524**	,500**	,580**
SD3	,614**	,718**	,628*	,596**	,498**	,551**	,461**
SD4	,705**	,757**	,559**	,685**	419**	,641**	,474**
SD5	,514**	,653**	,755**	,503**	,499**	,402**	,360**
SD6	553**	,506**	,639**	,561**	,404**	454*	,488**
SD7	,526**	,693**	,539**	,521**	,477**	,527**	,402**
SD8	,681**	,766**	,603**	,565**	,655**	,594**	,534*
SD9	,670**	,698**	,660**	,640**	,581**	,601*	,443**
		267	267	267	267	267	267
SD1	,431**	,301*	,431**	,310*	,356**	389*	,296*
SD2	,382**	,273*	,554**	,321*	,318*	,459**	,240
SD3	443**	,331**	,550**	,399**	,514**	,454**	,503**
SD4	440**	,360**	,574**	,447**	,640**	,506**	,514**
SD5	,604**	,426**	,476**	,496**	,473**	,500**	,295*
SD6	,457**	,321*	467**	,487**	,478**	,456**	,451**
SD7	,393**	,522**	,502**	,301*	,360**	,257*	,430**
SD8	,465**	,584**	,548**	,315	,426**	,432**	,500**
SD9	,289*	,527**	,485**	,273*	,331**	,268*	,501**
		60	60	60	60	60	60

Source: Original research by the authors

** The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

* The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Correlation relations between management activity variables and strategic action variables indicate that there are statistically significant relationships of different intensity and influence between companies that motivate and reward their employees and those companies that do not.

The variables strategic decision-making showed a distinct connection and high correlation with the variables leadership and communication in those companies in which motivation and reward activities of employees are actively carried out. In addition, these two variables of management activities showed a strong correlation with the variables of the quality of vision and mission, strategic planning, but also the improvement of business quality. This indicated that in companies where different strategies for motivating and rewarding employees are implemented, effective communication and success of leaders in leading their employees towards the achievement of the company's goals is achieved through adequate strategic planning and decision-making.

High correlation values and a strong connection were achieved by the motivation variable with the change management variable. Those companies that have a motivated workforce have great potential and the ability to successfully predict and implement changes in their environment, which certainly represents an important factor in the survival, growth and development of companies in unpredictable business conditions.

When it comes to companies that do not encourage their employees to work efficiently through motivation and rewards, a weak correlation can be observed between the leadership variables and the improvement of business competitiveness. As human capital is a key tool in achieving competitiveness in modern business, company leaders who have a workforce that is not motivated and encouraged to work better and more, will not even have the opportunity to encourage changes in such an environment that lead to the progress and development of the organization. In addition, organizations that do not motivate and reward their employees prevent their greater engagement and the achievement of effective communication that contributes to the exchange of knowledge, ideas and opinions. Thus, effective strategic decision-making and planning, as well as the achievement of a quality vision and mission, are prevented. Such an organization does not encourage the innovative and creative potential of its employees and does not develop the company's research activities. This is indicated by the established low correlation between the variable of communication and the variables of effectiveness of strategic decisions, quality of vision and mission, strategic planning and decision-making, and innovative and research activities.

The variables effectiveness of strategic decisions and the quality of vision and mission show a small correlation with the variables reward, team cooperation and training and development of employees. The low correlation of the establishment is also between the variables of greater market share and improvement of business competitiveness with the variables of reward, teamwork and involvement of emplo-yees in decision-making. These relationships once again confirm that companies build their success on the market and the acquisition of a better competitive position through effective strategic direction and action, which they cannot achieve without the human factor. Companies must invest in human capital, train and improve it. In addition, the success of the company can be built on human resources that are motivated, involved in the decision-making process and oriented towards team cooperation, and adequately valued and rewarded for their invested effort and work.

A low correlation value was established between the variables of training and employee development and the variables of change management. This relationship once again confirms the importance of training and development of employees, as an important factor and bearer of changes in the company's operations. The success of leaders in effectively implementing changes largely depends on the ability of employees to understand and understand what the change represents for them, and certainly that adequate information and acquired knowledge will help them in this.

The above relationships (Table 5) indicate that there are variations in the established correlations between companies that manage employee motivation and rewards and those that do not. The aforementioned claims proved the special hypothesis H_2. This indicated that the variables of management activities show statistically significant relationships with the variables of strategic action with the moderating effect of motivation and rewarding employees.

Factor analysis

All the analyzed variables of activities and characteristics of managers and strategic actions can be classified under one, which is that they are factors that contribute to the improvement of the company's operations. From that aspect, a factor analysis was performed. The data presented in the research results are suitable for factor analysis, given that there is a large interdependence of factors. The high interdependence of the factors is confirmed by the correlation ratios that exceed 0.3. The value of the KMO indicator is 0.950, which exceeds the recommended value of 0.6, while Bartlett's test of sphericity reached statistical significance, which all indicates the factorability of the correlation matrix.

Table 6. Explanation of total variance

Components	Initial value			Extraction of Sum of Squares of Loads			Rotation of Sum of Squares of Loads
	Total	% variance	cumulative %	Total	% variance	cumulative %	Total
1	15,766	68,548	68,548	15,766	68,548	68,548	15,766
2	1,511	6,568	75,116	1,511	6,568	75,116	1,511
3	,737	3,203	78,319				
4	,643	2,797	81,116				
5	,613	2,664	83,780				
6	,495	2,153	85,933				
7	,392	1,706	87,640				
8	,379	1,649	89,288				
9	,324	1,407	90,695				
10	,273	1,186	91,881				
11	,250	1,086	92,967				
12	,216	,937	93,904				
13	,209	,907	94,811				
14	,192	,836	95,648				
15	,168	,732	96,380				
16	,150	,654	97,034				
17	,145	,628	97,662				
18	,134	,581	98,243				
19	,103	,450	98,693				
20	,088	,381	99,073				
21	,078	,339	99,412				
22	,074	,320	99,732				
23	,062	,268	100,000				

Source: original research by the authors

a. When the components are correlated, the sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain the total variance.

Principal components analysis revealed the presence of two components with characteristic values over 1, which explain a total of 75,1% of the variability. In order to interpret those two components more easily, an Oblimin rotation was performed, which included iterations. Based on the Oblimin rotation, a rotated solution was obtained, which separated two components. The presented results of this rotation indicate that those two components have a large number of factor weights, where almost all analyzed factors show significant weights, greater than 0.5, to only one of the components (Table 6).

The first component explains 68,54% of the variance and the variables that best describe it and have factor weights above one are trust and commitment and conflict resolution. The second component explains 6,56% of the variance, while the variable that best describes the effectiveness of strategic decisions.

Table 7. Factor analysis of observed variables strategic action, management activities and manager characteristics

Variables	Components	
	1	2
Trust and commitment	1,020	
Conflict resolution	1,008	
Risk taking	,918	
Rewarding	,855	
Involvement of employees in decision-making	,836	
Taking the initiative	,827	
Conflict resolution	,771	
Motivation	,722	
Improvement and advancement of knowledge	,654	
Leadership	,604	
Innovation and flexibility	,602	,364
Team cooperation	,599	
Training and development of employees	,487	
Effectiveness of strategic decisions		,921
Change management		,920
Innovative and research activities		,863
Greater market share		,836
Improving business competitiveness		,825
Improving the quality of business		,814
Strategic planning		,804
Quality of vision and mission		,755
Strategic decision-making		,754
Communication	,399	,525

Source: original research by the authors

Note: Kaiser+Mayer-Olkin (KMO) statistic = 0.950, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity= 9370.611, df=253, p=0.000

The results of the factor analysis indicate that the first component gathered factors related to the activities and characteristics of managers. The second component gathered factors related to strategic action. Variables that are present in both component 1 and component 2 are innovation and flexibility and communications (Table 7).

By being present in both components, they showed their importance and contribution as factors of a successful manager and the establishment of a favorable organizational climate. In addition, they have proven to be factors that play a key role in defining and implementing the organization's strategic actions. Between components 1 and 2 there is a high correlation r = 0.756, which shows the essential connection between the mentioned factors. This indicates the great influence that the activities and characteristics of managers have on the strategic operation of the organization, above all on its effective implementation. The effectiveness of strategic action contributes to the improvement of the organization's operations, which affects the achievement of better results. This creates the conditions for gaining a greater competitive advantage and improving the organization's market position.

Discussion of results

The results obtained can likewise be understood within the framework of sports organizations, where strategic initiatives and managerial skills are essential for attaining success in both athletic and commercial domains. In contemporary sports structures, the efficacy of leadership, communication, and the motivation of personnel (which encompasses athletes and support staff) has a direct impact on performance results, the reputation of the organization, and its sustainability over the long term.

The assessment of the value of the analyzed variables of strategic action shows that in the analyzed companies there is a willingness of the management to invest in the effectiveness of strategic action, direction and thinking. What businesses, on the other hand, lack is greater incentive in the area of innovative and research activities. In addition, it is necessary for companies to adequately adopt the concept of change management and continuously implement it in their operations. The future course of action and survival of the company on the market will largely depend on the way of creation and the degree of adaptation to changes in the market. These results indicate that managerial practices do not only influence internal organizational efficiency, but also play a crucial role in shaping long-term strategic positioning and adaptability in highly competitive environments such as the sports industry.

The role of motivating and rewarding employees showed that there are statistically significant relationships of varying intensity between the variables of management activities and the variables of strategic action. The results obtained align with earlier research in strategic management and sports management, underscoring the significance of leadership, communication, and employee motivation as crucial factors influencing organizational performance. Comparable conclusions were drawn by Susanto et al. (2023) and Farid (2022), who noted that effective strategic management plays a vital role in enhancing organizational efficiency and competitiveness.

In the realm of sports organizations, these results are further corroborated by Milačić (2024), who stressed the necessity of strategic planning and management for attaining successful results within sports systems. The above relations prove the special hypothesis 2. Namely, it was confirmed that the variables of management activity and the variable of strategic action show statistically significant relations with the variables of strategic action of the organization with the moderating effect of motivation and rewarding of employees.

Companies that motivate their employees, adequately reward them and achieve effective communication achieve greater success in strategic planning and decision-making and defining the quality of the vision and mission. These findings are particularly relevant for sports organizations, where motivation and reward systems are essential for enhancing athlete performance, team cohesion, and organizational effectiveness. For instance, successful sports clubs often implement performance-based reward systems and motivational strategies to improve both individual and team results, which ultimately contributes to competitive advantage in leagues and tournaments. In addition, such companies achieve efficiency in implementing changes and create conditions for gaining a competitive advantage. On the contrary, those companies that do not invest enough effort to motivate their employees to work better, do not encourage efficiency in strategic decision-making and presentation of the company's vision and mission, do not have the conditions to achieve greater market share and gain a competitive advantage. All this further complicates the possibility of effective implementation of changes due to the lack of motivation of the workforce and insufficient awareness of what the change will bring.

The general hypothesis of this paper is also confirmed by the stated claims, established relationships and proven hypotheses. The results of the research confirm that increasing the efficiency of strategic action, and thus achieving better work results, can be ensured by improving the organizational climate of the organization and the role of managers with their ability, creativity and motivation. Thus, the objectives of the research presented in the paper have been fulfilled, and the set hypotheses have been proven.

However, this research has several limitations that should be considered. First, the study is based on data collected from companies operating in Serbia, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other countries and industries, including global sports systems. Second, the use of a survey method may involve subjective bias of respondents. Third, the cross-sectional nature of the study does not allow for the analysis of changes over time. Future research should include longitudinal studies and more diverse samples in order to provide deeper insights.

Conclusion

The results of the original empirical research confirmed the influence of the manager's activities and characteristics on the achievement of more efficient and productive work, through the effective strategic action of the company. Correlation analysis established the existence of statistically significant relationships between activity variables and characteristics of managers and variables of strategic action. A significant connection was shown by the communication variable with the variables improving the quality and competitiveness of business, and the innovation and flexibility variable with the variables quality of vision and mission and strategic planning and decision-making.

A two-component solution was obtained by factor analysis, where the first factor brought together activity variables and manager characteristics, and the second factor included strategic action variables, and a high correlation was established between these two factors.

The stated relationships and established statistical relationships confirmed the special hypothesis 1. This hypothesis confirms that improving the management activities and organizational climate the organization improves the efficiency of strategic action. Variable characteristics of managers and variable strategic action show statistically significant relationships, which confirm the influence of characteristics of managers on the effectiveness of implementation of strategic decisions and adequate direction of the organization. Special hypothesis 2 is proved by these relations and assertions.

The aforementioned research identified characteristic management activities that have a great contribution in improving the efficiency of business and strategic actions of the organization. The research determined that the variables of activity and the characteristics of managers show a statistically significant connection with the variables of strategic action, which confirmed the set hypotheses and achieved the goal of the research. In order for a organization to successfully face changes in the market, managers must be ready to lead their employees through changes, to be able to take the initiative, but also responsibility in case of failure. Innovative and flexible business becomes an imperative of modern market conditions, and therefore this characteristic is very important for successful managers. The organization can achieve successful business, through a favorable organizational climate and by improving the abilities and skills of managers, and through the strategic actions of the organization.

Managers of companies from the territory of Serbia should base the improvement of business and competitiveness precisely on the improvement of activities and characteristics of managers, which this research determined to be crucial.

Moreover, the insufficient investment in innovation and change management, as highlighted in this study, can pose a considerable constraint for sports organizations. In the context of digital transformation, sports entities are required to embrace innovative strategies such as data analytics, digital fan engagement, and sophisticated performance tracking systems to maintain their competitiveness in the global sports sector. The findings of this study are relevant to sports organizations, as enhancing managerial practices and strategic initiatives can greatly improve both organizational effectiveness and competitive standing in the sports sector.

Imlications: The results of this research have important theoretical and practical implications. From a theoretical perspective, the study contributes to the literature by confirming the strong relationship between managerial activities, manager characteristics, and strategic action, particularly in dynamic sectors such as the sports industry. From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that managers should focus on improving communication, motivation, and reward systems, as well as fostering innovation and flexibility, in order to enhance organizational performance and achieve sustainable competitive advantage.

Conflict of interests:

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Conceptualization - J.P., S.J.; Investigation - S.J., J.P.; Theoretical framerwork - J.P., S.D.; Datacuration - J.P., S.J.; Resources - S.J., J.P.; Writing original draft - S.J., J.P.; Writing - review & editing - S.D., J.P., S.J.

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