

Algerian professional football clubs during the Covid19 pandemic period

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Abstract

Objective: to describe the reality of professional football clubs in Algeria during the Covid 19 pandemic period by taking the opinions of some players. **Methods:** the descriptive method was used; sample of the study included 30 players from the clubs' professional championship (premium division) of the western states of Algerian football; they were chosen in an intended way, and a questionnaire was used to collect data. **Results:** this showed that football clubs of the professional championship in Algeria are in a deteriorating state. **Conclusions:** professional clubs and the National League should find solutions to the problems in sports clubs and provide capabilities and facilities in administrative matters.

Keywords: sports clubs, professional football, Covid 19 pandemic.

Introduction

The experience of professionalism in Algeria is not new, as some think, but the field was opened for professionalism in 1995 under Law No. 95-09. However, the experiment failed, and throughout this period, no sports company appeared in practice, and no club turned from amateur to professional (Official Gazette, 1995). In 2010, the first professional football tournament was launched in Algeria after the issuance of Law No. 10/04 related to physical education and sports (Official Gazette, 2004), which stipulates in its entirety the need to make sport a means of investment and bringing wealth, and the Algerian Football Association at that time set the duration of contracts for all players to be at least three years.

Despite the financial support from the State, this experience did not live up to the required level. After the issuance of laws requiring the conclusion of notarized contracts between managers, coaches, and players, most of the clubs (companies) faced financial hardship, in addition to the lack of sports structures and training and recovery facilities. Considering these problems came another crisis, which is the Covid 19 pandemic, forcing those in charge of international and even local sports to stop activity for a period exceeding seven months (Wojciech & Mateusz, 2021). And that is accompanied by the problems of paying wages with the cessation of income related to the exploitation of stadiums and television broadcasting (Hammerschmidt et al., 2021). This study aims to know the reality of professional football clubs in Algeria during the Covid 19 pandemic period.

Method

Participants

The research sample, which was chosen deliberately, included the players of professional sports clubs for football in the western states of Algeria (clubs: MC Oran, WA Tlemcen, RC Relizane, ASO Chlef). The number of sample members reached 30 players, with mean age = 26 years \pm 3.4, weight= 74.40 kg \pm 7.23, height= 178 cm \pm 6,7, for the football season 2020/2021, without including the members of the pilot study sample.

Instrument

To build the questionnaire (see annex), training references, laws, and legislations of the Algerian Football Championships were used, also doctors and professors specialized in sports training have been consulted. The questionnaire consists of two axes: the first axis is legislative contracts and the administrative staff, while the second axis is training and competitions, and each axis contains 12 items. The items were distributed on Likert type scale (always=5, often=4, sometimes=3, rarely=2, never=1). The pilot study confirmed that the questionnaire is characterized by high reliability and validity, where the reliability coefficient ranges between 0.91 and 0.97.

Statistical analysis

The frequencies, percentages, and chi-square were used in the main study. In addition, alpha-Cronbach was used in the exploratory study and mean in demographic characteristics.

Results

Table 1 and Figure 1 show the results of the players' answers and the degree of difficulties they face regarding legislative contracts and the administrative staff during the Covid 19 pandemic period. To find out the difference between the players' answers, the chi-square test (χ^2) was used; Where the calculated chi-square (Ca. χ^2) value was 21.33 which is greater than the tabular chi-squared (Ca. χ^2 =09.21) at the 0.01 significance level, which indicates the existence of statistically significant differences in favour of the players who find medium difficulties.

Table 1. Frequencies, percentages and chi-square for the first axis (legislative contracts and administrative staff).

Degrees	Levels	Frequencies	Percentages	Expected frequency	Sig	DF	Ta.χ ²	Ca.χ ²
Very big difficulties	63 to 75	00	00	06	0.01	04	9.21	21.33
Big difficulties	62to 51	03	10.00					
Medium difficulties	50 to 39	15	50.00					
Few difficulties	38 to 27	05	16.67					
Very few difficulties	26 to 15	07	23.33					
Axis total		30	%100					

Sig: level of significance; DF: degree of freedom; Ta χ²: tabular chi-square; Ca χ²: Calculated chi-square.

Figure 1. Percentages of the first axis.

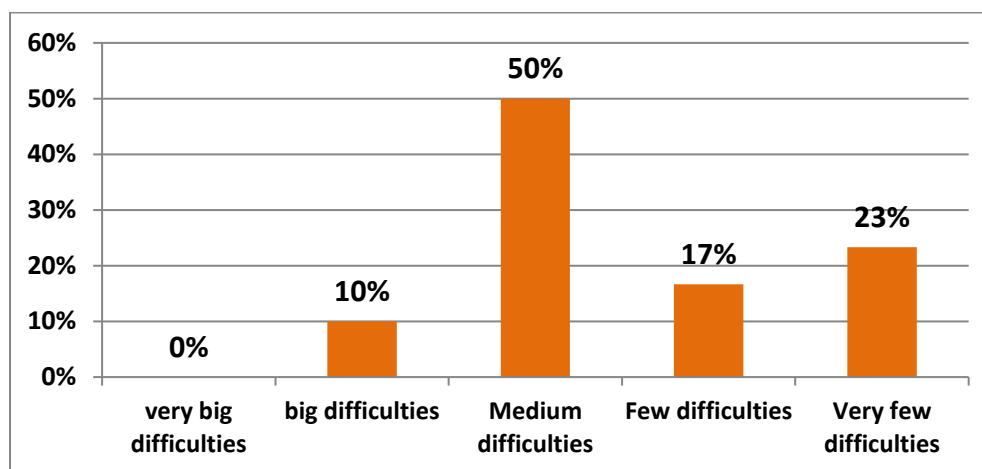
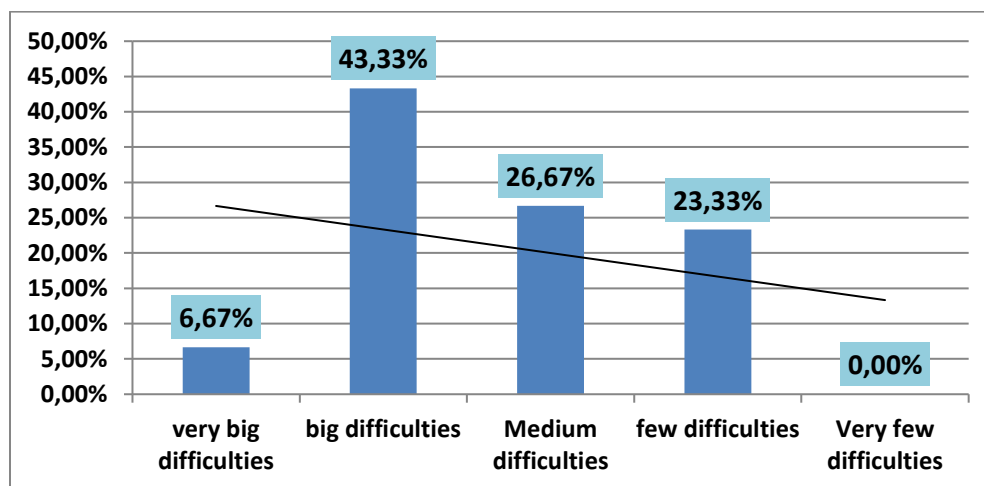


Table 2 and Figure 2 show the results of the players' answers and the degree of difficulties that players of professional football clubs face in Algeria regarding training and competitions during the Covid 19 pandemic period. To find out the difference between the players' answers, the chi-square test (χ^2) was used; Where the calculated chi-square (Ca. χ^2) value was 17.67 which is greater than the tabular chi-squared (Ca. $\chi^2 = 9.21$) at the 0.01 significance level, which indicates the existence of statistically significant differences in favour of the players who find big difficulties.

Table 2. Represents the frequencies, percentages, and chi-square for the second axis (training and competitions).

Degrees	Levels	Frequencies	Percentages	Expected frequency	Sig	DF	Ta.χ2	Ca.χ2
Very big difficulties	63 to 75	02	06.67	06	0.01	04	9.21	17.67
Big difficulties	62to 51	13	43.33					
Medium difficulties	50 to 39	08	26.67					
Few difficulties	38 to 27	07	23.33					
Very few difficulties	26 to 15	00	00					
Axis total		30	%100					

Figure 2. Percentages of the second axis.



Discussion

This study aims to know the reality of professional football clubs in Algeria during the Covid 19 pandemic period. Through the football players' answers to the questions directed to them, it was found that there are difficulties in the legislative contracts and the administrative staff, as well as in the training and competition times. Among the main reasons for these difficulties and problems is the lack of qualified human cadres and adapted laws that manage crises, and a lack of sports centres and facilities that allow training and competition properly with respect for the necessary health protocols.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic included all economic, social, health, education, and sports sectors; Where sports clubs, gyms, swimming pools, and football fields were closed, and all tournaments were suspended (Conceição et al., 2020; Haleem et al., 2020), it also created psychological problems for athletes and all those working in the field of sports, including administrators, coaches, etc. (Sun et al., 2021; Uroh & Adewunmi, 2021). Douryang et al. (2021)

indicated that despite the return to the stadiums, football in many African countries is still hampered by many barriers, such as the lack of training facilities and competition, and the weakness of the administrative staff in the face of the current crisis. Many federations, associations, and football teams have found difficulties in managing the critical period of the Covid-19 pandemic (Gouveia & Pereira, 2021).

Despite the availability of sports facilities, hotels, and qualified staff, many sports federations did not dare to decide to resume the tournaments (Schumacher et al., 2021). On the other hand, some researchers presented studies intending to resume football leagues and championships with tight management, new laws, and a very strict health protocol, whether in training or competitions (Meyer et al., 2021; Solntsev, 2021).

Conclusion

Players of professional football clubs in Algeria have found difficulties with legislative aspects and administrative staff, and during training and competitions during the Covid-19 pandemic period. It is necessary during a period of critical crisis that the administrative staff cooperate with the players and provide them with facilities. Players must also adapt to the current situation and cooperate with the technical staff to make training sessions and good competitions successful. On the other hand, it requires the responsible and concerned authorities to provide the necessary facilities and train the administrative staff to manage crises and critical situations.

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Annex: The reality of Algerian professional football club's questionnaire.

Axis 1: Legislative contracts and administrative staff						
N°	Items	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1	The club applies the regulations in the terms of reference in the areas of player recruitment and transfer.					
2	The club applies the provisions specified by the federation when hiring professional players.					
3	The club can comply with the provisions governing doping control.					
4	The club implements the basic law of the player specified by the National Football Association and presents it to the players for review					
5	Organizing professional regulations and laws that contribute to the development of management in respected football clubs					
6	The legal texts regulating professionalism are working in highly efficient administrative work for the sports club.					
7	The club has a minimum number of professional players as defined in the regulations of the National Football Association relating to the professional system.					
8	The club applies the legal and regulatory provisions stipulated in the conditions book, especially in the field of foreign workers.					
9	Seeing professional laws in other countries helps in administrative management considering sports professionalism					
10	The club applies the provisions specified by the federation when hiring professional players.					
11	The club has a structural organization in line with the legal texts regulating professionalism that allows it to exercise and effectively and efficiently conduct its activities.					
12	There is actual control over the application of professional laws at the club level					
Axis 2: Training and competitions						
N°	Items	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1	Your professional gym has the qualified components according to the conditions stipulated in the conditions book.					
2	The club has coaches holding certificates stipulated in the conditions book, especially for the senior first team.					
3	Coaches undergo training courses to acquire knowledge and special competencies in the field of training.					
4	The club adopts procedures and standards for technical and security approval of sports facilities open to the public, as well as the methods of their implementation.					
5	Professionalism prepares employees to use modern technology in administrative work.					
6	The managers undergo a process of restructuring and training to renew and acquire knowledge in the field of sports management.					
7	There is a clear strategy for the club to create its own sports facilities.					
8	The club has persons in charge of technical supervision and authorized by the Tax Administration, Social Security and Pensions.					
9	The club is obligated to set up a receptionist for supporters and monitor security inside the sports facility.					
10	The club underwrites mandatory insurance contracts for sports facilities receiving the public.					
11	The formation of human resources helps in the success and management of the club's management					
12	Professionalism requires holding training courses to develop the efficiency of employees					