



2025 SMAANZ CONFERENCE

Whiria te tāngata

“Weave the people together”

Book of Abstracts

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SMAANZ President Welcome

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 2025 SMAANZ Conference, hosted this year by Auckland University of Technology (AUT) in Auckland. Whether you are a returning member of our community or attending for the first time, we are delighted to have you with us.

SMAANZ has always been a place where ideas are exchanged, collaborations are formed, and our field is collectively strengthened. This year, we are proud to welcome an exceptionally strong cohort of higher degree research students, with over one-third of all delegates comprising postgraduate researchers. Their presence brings fresh perspectives, bold questions, and important energy to the conference. We encourage you to support and engage with our emerging scholars as they present their work and contribute to the conversations shaping the future of sport management.

The refreshed 2025 programme format places a greater emphasis on dialogue and meaningful exchange, offering many more opportunities to connect, reflect, and challenge your thinking. We are also pleased to welcome delegates from across Australasia and around the world, including many joining SMAANZ for the first time. A warm welcome to you. Your contributions enrich our community.

My sincere thanks go to the 2025 Organising Committee for their creativity, professionalism, and dedication in bringing this conference to life. Their efforts have ensured a thoughtful, engaging, and memorable programme. Thank you to all presenters, reviewers, volunteers, and attendees for your ongoing contribution to SMAANZ. I wish you an inspiring, collegial, and enjoyable conference experience.

Professor Heath McDonald
SMAANZ President



AUT Welcome

Kia ora and a warm welcome to the 2025 SMAANZ Conference.

We are delighted to welcome you to Auckland University of Technology (AUT) and to Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland. We hope you have the opportunity during your stay to explore some of the city's many attractions.

This year's Conference is proudly hosted by AUT's Sport Leadership and Management (SLAM) Department. SLAM has a long and valued relationship with the SMAANZ community, and we are honoured to host the Conference for the third time. Being part of the SMAANZ community has enriched our teaching, research, and industry engagement, and we are pleased to reciprocate by bringing you four days of stimulating discussion, connection, and learning. We hope the Conference is both fruitful and enjoyable for all attendees.

Our theme for 2025 is Whiria te tāngata – “weave the people together.” This theme carries deep meaning for the Organising Committee. It reflects the essence of SMAANZ; bringing colleagues together, sharing ideas, and strengthening research collaborations. It also speaks to the integration of research, teaching, and real-world practice that defines our work at AUT, and acknowledges our strong bicultural foundations and commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi in the sport and education landscape of Aotearoa New Zealand.

We are excited to share a refreshed four-day programme with you. This year we are trialling a revised presentation format featuring 10-minute presentations followed by extended discussion time. Our aim is to create richer dialogue, more opportunities for exchange, and deeper engagement with each other's work.

A highlight of the week will be our Industry Panel, ‘Bicultural Approaches to Aotearoa New Zealand Sport’, bringing together respected leaders from across the sector to explore what meaningful bicultural practice looks like, from high performance through to community sport.

True to the friendly and relaxed spirit Kiwis are known for, our social events will offer plenty of opportunity to unwind and connect. Join us on Wednesday evening at Fantail & Turtle, a favourite local spot for our SLAM team, and help us close the Conference on Friday night at Dr Rudi's on the vibrant Auckland Viaduct Harbour, complete with harbour views, superyachts, and the chance to test your bowling skills. Award acknowledgements will take place during the Conference days.

On behalf of the Organising Committee, we wish you an enjoyable, inspiring, and memorable Conference experience.

Ngā mihi nui,

The AUT Sport Leadership & Management (SLAM) Department

About SMAANZ

The Sport Management Association of Australia and New Zealand was founded in November 1995. The principal aim of SMAANZ is to encourage scholarly inquiry into sport management related research and to provide the opportunity to present results from this research. SMAANZ conducts an annual conference to facilitate the presentation of sport management related research. It has established a refereed journal, the Sport Management Review. The conference and journal are the vehicles through which sport management related research will be communicated.

Specifically, the purposes are:

- To encourage scholarly enquiry in sport management
- To provide a forum to present and communicate results of sport management related research
- To enhance the application of management theory to the sports context
- To facilitate the ongoing professional conduct of sport management
- To facilitate dialogue for curriculum design and development within sport management university programs
- To represent the Association in the international sport management community



Research Fellows

The SMAANZ Research Fellowship, launched in 2024, celebrates SMAANZ community members by recognising their sustained track record of quality research publications, active participation and membership with SMAANZ, and contribution to the SMAANZ community.

This Fellowship is considered an award and distinction to acknowledge high-quality and impactful research alongside service to SMAANZ.

Awarded in 2025

Professor Russell Hoye

Professor Pamela Wicker

Awarded in 2024

Professor Alison Doherty

A/Professor Calvin Nite

Professor Dan Funk

Professor David Shilbury

Professor Graham Cuskelly

Professor Nico Schulenkorf

A/Professor Per Svensson

Professor Sally Shaw

Distinguished Service Award

→ Professor Emma Sherry

SMAANZ is pleased to recognise Professor Emma Sherry (RMIT University) as the 2025 recipient of the SMAANZ Distinguished Service Award, acknowledging her outstanding and sustained contribution to SMAANZ and the field of sport management.

Emma's involvement with SMAANZ spans more than two decades, beginning as a student representative and extending through board roles from 2009–2014. During this time, she helped drive the organisation's digital transformation and has played major roles in conference organisation, including Volunteer Manager (2004), Co-Chair (2011, 2015) and Chair (2022). She has also been a long-standing contributor to HDR workshops, webinars, and abstract reviewing, while mentoring 11 PhD graduates who now hold influential roles across the SMAANZ community.

Emma's impact extends well beyond academia. She has held governance roles with VicSport, Tennis Victoria, Melbourne and Olympic Park Trust, Sport Inclusion Australia, and the Australian Sport Innovation Centre of Excellence. Internationally recognised for her research in sport for development and gender equality, she is co-author of the highly cited *Sport for Development: An Integrated Literature Review* (2016) and has co-founded major research groups including the La Trobe Centre for Sport and Social Impact and the Swinburne Sport Innovation Research Group



SMAANZ warmly congratulates Professor Emma Sherry on this well-deserved recognition of her distinguished service.

Award Abstracts



Best Conference Paper Award

Three Decades of Strategic Planning in Australian Sport: Where Did We Start and Where Are We Now?

Dr Joshua McLeod(Deakin University)

Dr Hunter Fujak (Deakin University)

A/Professor Jonathon Robertson (Deakin University)

Research Purpose/Question

This study investigates how the strategic priorities of Australia's national sport organisations (NSOs) have evolved over a 25-year period. We address two key questions: (1) What strategic priorities do Australian NSOs articulate, and how have these changed over time? (2) How has institutional complexity within those priorities evolved?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Strategic plans are the primary public expression of intent for NSOs (Shilbury, 2022). While prior research has assessed their rhetorical and symbolic functions, limited attention has been given to how these documents shift in response to changing institutional pressures. Institutional theory, particularly the concept of institutional complexity, provides a framework for understanding how organisations manage multiple, and sometimes conflicting, expectations. This study extends current literature by systematically examining how sport strategy reflects broader shifts in institutional logics.

Research Methodology

We compiled a novel dataset of 282 strategic plans issued by 83 Australian NSOs from 1998 to 2025. Structural topic modelling (STM), a method suitable for large-scale textual analysis, was applied to identify latent themes within the documents. A time-series analysis traced the prominence of these themes over time. To assess institutional complexity, topics were categorised under four dominant logics and entropy metrics were applied to evaluate the balance between them.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Seventeen distinct strategic priorities were identified, including Elite Performance & Pathways, Participation & Membership, Brand & Commercial, and Collaborative Governance. Over time, increased emphasis was observed on priorities linked to collaborative governance (+14 percentage points) and community inclusion (+11 points), while focus on federation administration declined (-14 points). The share of content aligned with the Performance logic dropped from ~40% to under 25%, whereas the Social and

Commercial logics increased to near-equal levels. An increase in Shannon entropy from 1.85 to 1.99 bits suggests a shift from dominance by a single logic to a more balanced pluralism.

Contributions

This study offers three contributions. First, it introduces a scalable method for tracking the evolution of strategic rhetoric in sport, contributing to the strategic management literature. Second, it empirically demonstrates increasing institutional complexity in sport, advancing the institutional theory literature. Third, it provides practical insights by presenting a typology of sector-wide priorities and identifying trends in their prominence. These findings equip sport managers, policymakers, and funding bodies with a benchmark for evaluating and refining future strategic initiatives

Presentation Abstracts



Listed in alphabetical order

Who Made us Arch-Rivals? Exploring Rivalry Branding in Indian Cricket

Aiswarya Aanand (Deakin University)
Dr Adam Karg (Deakin University)
Dr Jonathan Robertson (Deakin University)

The evolution of Indian cricket from its colonial origins to its current symbol of national identity is of particular interest when studied in the backdrop of the enduring rivalries in Indian cricket. This research aims to investigate the process of rivalry curation and how stakeholders leverage rivalry to achieve strategic goals. It uses the existing Indian cricket rivalries against Pakistan and Australia to explore the ability of these rivalries to act as tools as nation branding. The research addresses three pertinent questions:

- 1) How Indian cricket rivalries are curated by stakeholders like the sponsors, broadcasters, and BCCI?
- 2) In what ways Indian cricket rivalries used as avenues for nation branding by the stakeholders internationally and intra-nationally?
- 3) How does the growing Indian diaspora experience and interpret Indian cricket rivalries when compared to fans residing in India?

The curation of these rivalries has organic dimensions like online and offline fan behaviour, emotional state of players, and commercial dimensions such as promotional campaigns through media framing of broadcasters, marketing material of sponsors embedded in the rivalry narrative involved in the construction, propagation, and commercialization of these rivalries. Nation branding at the international, intra-national, and transnational level draws upon stakeholders' conception of rivalries which may differ according to their lived experiences, spatiality, commercial interests, perceptions of the nation, rival teams, and rival fans.

By exploring the antecedents and characteristics of rivalries (Tyler & Cobbs, 2017; Tyler & Cobbs, 2019), identity construction through sport (Gibbons, 2014), and marketing implications of sport rivalries (Havard & Dalakas, 2017) amongst others, this research looks at how rivalries create symbolic platforms for fans to experience and express varying emotions.

The research team plans to employ a qualitative methodology to uncover rich in-depth insights from the stakeholders. Adoption of content analysis of marketing, sponsorship material, and promotional campaigns will provide data regarding rivalry framing. Semi-structured interviews with stakeholders like sport marketers, broadcasters, sponsors, and

officials from relevant governing councils will be undertaken. A narrative inquiry approach will be attempted through interviews and fan account to contextualise the differences in fan expressions of the Indian diaspora and localised fans. Further refinement of the research themes and question will aid the author to choose an appropriate multi-faceted approach from the methodology basket to capture the how rivalries are generated, experienced and utilised at all levels.

By investigating the multifaceted effect of Indian cricket rivalries, this research hopes to understand how rivalry – overall and within the setting of specific matches and events can be used as avenues of national branding to enable the construction and propagation of a country's aspirations internally and globally.

Shaping Athletic Identity in the Age of Social Media

Nina Adjanin (Northwest Missouri State University)
Gordon Brooks (Ohio University)

Purpose.

This study examines the influence of social media on the athletic identity and self-esteem of student-athletes at the collegiate level. The purpose is to better understand how social media engagement relates to these aspects of mental wellbeing in order to support the academic, athletic, and personal development of student-athletes as they navigate both their sport and future careers.

Methods.

A total of 175 undergraduate and graduate student-athletes from a midwestern US university participated in the study. Participants completed a survey measuring athletic identity using the Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS), self-esteem using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), and social media engagement using the Social Media Engagement Scale (SMES). Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics in Jamovi to assess correlations and trends within the student-athlete population.

Results.

A significant negative correlation was found between social media usage and self-esteem among student-athletes ($r = -0.265$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that increased time spent on social media is associated with lower self-esteem. Additionally, a positive correlation was identified between athletic identity and self-esteem ($r = 0.318$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that a stronger athletic identity may buffer against declines in self-esteem. Student-athletes who reported higher daily social media use (3–4 hours or more) exhibited significantly lower self-esteem scores ($p = 0.037$) compared to those with lower usage.

Conclusion.

Among collegiate student-athletes, higher social media usage is associated with lower self-esteem, while a strong athletic identity appears linked to more positive self-regard. These findings raise important considerations for athletic departments, coaches, and mental health professionals working with student-athletes, as social media continues to be an influential part of student life. Further research is recommended to explore how social media

engagement may affect athletic identity over time and to develop strategies that promote healthy digital habits and mental wellbeing within this population.

The Diplomatic Pitch: Pakistan's Sporting Soft Power Strategy

Hafsa Ali (Auckland University of Technology)
Richard Wright (Auckland University of Technology)
Geoff Dickson (La Trobe University)

Research Purpose

This paper investigates Pakistan's utilization of sport as an instrument of soft power within its broader international relations strategy, examining the socio-cultural and political dimensions of sporting engagement. The central research question explores: To what extent can Pakistan's sporting heritage, particularly cricket, serve as an effective mechanism for enhancing diplomatic relations and improving global perceptions while navigating complex political and security challenges? The research examines cricket's role in India-Pakistan diplomacy, analyzes consequences of security incidents on international sporting events, and evaluates opportunities for expanding Pakistan's sporting influence through cultural exchange.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The analysis draws upon Joseph S. Nye's conceptualization of soft power to understand Pakistan's capacity for international influence through attraction rather than coercion. With Pakistan positioned at 81st globally on the Soft Power Index, significant opportunities exist for improvement (Brand Finance, 2024). The study integrates sport diplomacy scholarship, particularly Murray and Pigman's (2014) findings that sporting events create unique platforms for cross-cultural dialogue transcending political boundaries. The research incorporates analyses of mega-events as strategic soft power instruments, demonstrating how nations leverage sporting competitions to reshape international perceptions and project national values (Grix & Houlihan, 2013; Grix et al., 2015).

Research Methodology

The investigation employs qualitative analysis examining Pakistan's sporting policies, diplomatic initiatives, and international engagements through a soft power analytical lens. The case study methodology incorporates analysis of significant cricket diplomacy interventions during India-Pakistan cricket matches in 1987 and 2005. The study examines the transformative impact of the 2009 terrorist attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team in Lahore and its prolonged effects on Pakistan's sporting ecosystem. Additionally, the research evaluates the Pakistan Super League's emergence as an innovative governance model combining public oversight with private sector engagement.

Findings and Discussion

The analysis reveals Pakistan's substantial but underutilized sporting soft power potential constrained by socio-cultural and systemic challenges. Cricket diplomacy between Pakistan and India showcases sport's capacity to transcend socio-political barriers and facilitate meaningful diplomatic engagement, with cricket matches serving as catalysts for high-level political dialogue during diplomatic deadlock (Bandyopadhyay, 2021). However, the 2009 terrorist attack demonstrates sport-based soft power's fragility, resulting in Pakistan's

isolation from international cricket for nearly a decade. Key socio-cultural impediments include political instability, extensive military involvement in sporting governance, inadequate financial resources, and systemic gender inequities limiting female participation. Conversely, the Pakistan Super League exemplifies successful sport governance innovation, demonstrating how strategic partnerships simultaneously address funding limitations while enhancing national prestige internationally.

Contributions

This research advances sport management scholarship by examining the socio-cultural dimensions of how emerging economies strategically deploy sporting assets for international influence despite substantial institutional constraints. The study provides evidence-based recommendations including strategic diversification beyond cricket, sustainable financing through public-private collaborations, diaspora mobilization for sporting diplomacy, and institutional governance reforms. The findings illustrate that while sporting initiatives cannot independently resolve geopolitical conflicts, they create valuable opportunities for cross-cultural exchange and relationship building that enhance traditional diplomatic approaches, demonstrating the socio-cultural power of sport in Pakistan's regional integration and global reputation management.

Empathic Concern among Sports Spectators: Exploring Individual Differences

Haruka Amano (Waseda University)
Prof Hirotaka Matsuoka (Waseda University)

What is needed to weave people together is empathy. As several sport management studies have shown, empathy toward a philosophy strengthens the bonds between people and organizations and increases commitment and engagement (e.g., Bizen & Tsuji, 2024; Westberg et al., 2020). However, there are individual differences in empathy. Although the concept of empathy per se has been addressed in the field of sport management, its individual differences have not yet been examined. It would be meaningful to understand the tendency of empathy in order to better elaborate on what makes sports spectators different from non-spectators.

The tendency of empathy consists of four dimensions: perspective-taking, personal distress, fantasy, and empathic concern (Davis, 1980). This study focuses on empathic concern, defined as the tendency to have an other-oriented emotional response. It has been shown to be an explanatory variable for less prejudiced social attitudes, altruistic behavior, and prosocial behavior (FeldmanHall et al., 2015; Levin et al. 2016; Pang et al., 2022). Turning to sports spectators and fans, the concept of identification with a favorite team, player, and fan community is premised on empathy for the subject (Cialdini et al., 1976; Trail et al., 2003), prosocial behavior (Murrell & Dietz, 1992; Platow et al., 1999; Yoshida et al., 2014) has been studied in the context of common group identity and social identity. Based on these studies, empathic concern of sports spectators would be different from that of non-spectators. While the identification and motivations of spectators have been extensively explored in previous studies, this concept may offer a novel perspective by shedding light on the underlying psychological mechanism.

This study represents a preliminary step in investigating empathic concern among sports

spectators. A questionnaire survey was conducted to examine the relationship between spectator-related variables and empathic concern. The items included frequency of watching sports, level of sport involvement, having favorite teams or athletes, and sport-related information-seeking behavior, along with 13 items from the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1980) to measure empathic concern. Data were collected from a general population sample in Japan (N = 1,066) in February 2025.

Preliminary analyses revealed that media-based viewing frequency, having a favorite athlete, and seeking sports-related information were each significantly associated with higher levels of empathic concern. In contrast, identification with a favorite team showed no significant association. More details will be presented during the session. These findings provide a foundation for future studies to investigate causal mechanisms and behavioral outcomes (e.g., volunteering, donating, community engagement) of empathy in sport settings.

Age Manipulation in Sports: A Critical Concern for Sport Integrity and Sustainability

Eric Junior Appiah (University of Otago)
Professor Steve Jackson (University of Otago)
Professor Mike Sam (University of Otago)

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The movement to promote and preserve 'sport integrity' or the 'integrity of sport' has become a global concern even amidst what appears to be ambiguity in the application of the concept (Cleret et al., 2015; Gardiner et al., 2017; Hartmann, 2023; Harvey & McNamee, 2019; Kihl, 2023; Manoli et al., 2020; McLaren, 2011; McNamee, 2013b). A wide-ranging cluster of subjects constitute sport integrity in different domains including doping, match fixing, abuse and maltreatment, corruption and various forms of discrimination. These sport integrity concerns are universal but there are new emerging threats that may be more geographically and culturally concentrated.

For example, age manipulation is an emerging threat to sport integrity and sustainability particularly within African, South American and some Asian contexts. The manipulation of age especially in age category sport competitions often involves the reduction or increase of one's birth age through falsification of documents to secure an undue competitive advantage. This undermines the inherent values of sport (fair play, etc.), alters talent identification and sport development processes. Fundamentally, this unethical practice not only undermines competition integrity but also disarrays the sustainability of global sports ecosystems. Thus, true sustainability in sports is not only ecological or economic—it is also ethical and social. Age manipulation in sports appears to directly and/or indirectly impact fair play, equal opportunity, and long-term athlete development.

However, this practice has received relatively scant public and (even much less) scholarly attention. The lack of attention to age manipulation may be linked to the fact that most related research and policy work on sport integrity has, to date, been predominantly driven by western perspectives. Thus, there is a need to understand sport integrity concerns and interventions in other areas of the world, including, Africa, and to do so with a sensitivity to African cultural context and meanings.

Research Purpose and Question

This study examines the contested terrain of age manipulation, as a sport integrity concern, within Ghana. More specifically, drawing from institutional and cultural perspectives, this study examines how the practice of age manipulation is enabled and constrained in the Ghanaian context.

The central research question posed is: What institutions (rules, narratives, and practices) enable or constrain age manipulation in the Ghanaian sport landscape and how are they influenced by and/or how do they influence policy?

Research Methodology

This study adopts an interpretivist qualitative paradigm to explore age manipulation as an under-researched and under-explained sport integrity concern within Ghanaian sport. A multi-method approach consisting of document analysis and semi-structured interviews is used to examine the historical, cultural and institutional context of age manipulation in Ghanaian sports.

Findings

Some preliminary findings from desk study and field work will be highlighted.

Contributions

A sociological inquiry into age manipulation from an institutional and cultural perspective has potential to offer insight into the socio-cultural environment of age cheating in Ghana. Hence, global scholars can therefore engage the study in future cross-cultural analyses on age cheating.

Fifteen Minutes of Fame or Forever? Athlete Virality and the Longevity of Brand Attention

Bradley J. Baker (Temple University)

Nataliya Bredikhina (University of Delaware)

Thilo Kunkel (Temple University)

Research Purpose/Question

This study examines how viral moments affect consumer attention toward athletes after a viral moment has passed. Using Google Trends search volume data, we investigate the magnitude and duration of these effects to address two research questions:

RQ1: How much does a viral moment elevate public attention to an athlete?

RQ2: How quickly does that attention decay?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

This research draws on brand equity theory (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993) and the attention-based view (ABV) of the firm (Ocasio, 1997). Brand equity is foundational in sport marketing and encompasses brand awareness, associations, perceived quality, and loyalty (Aaker, 1991). Brand awareness, the salience of a brand in consumers' minds (Keller, 1993), serves as our focal dimension, with Google search activity providing a measurable proxy. The ABV conceptualizes organizational behavior as a function of how attention is allocated among competing issues (Ocasio, 1997). We extend this logic externally, positing that public attention is a scarce strategic resource distributed dynamically across athlete

brands. Viral moments temporarily reorder public attention, shifting athlete brand trajectories. Brand awareness is often treated as static, and sport scholarship has yet to fully theorize public attention as a dynamic, external resource, limiting understanding of how digital-era visibility fluctuates over time and affects athlete brands. We address these empirical and conceptual gaps by tracing attention trajectories around viral events.

Research Methodology

We selected 10 athletes or sport entities associated with distinct viral moments, including cases of memification, activism, mental health disclosures, and sporting excellence. We analyzed weekly Google Trends data spanning one year before and after each viral moment using interrupted time series analysis via ARIMA modeling. This approach estimates both immediate post-moment bounce and decay trajectory in public attention post-virality.

Results and Discussion

A viral moment could have long-term benefits for an athlete's brand, attracting fans, sponsorship, and media attention. Eight of 10 athletes/entities experienced significant increases in search volume post-virality, with the largest spike observed for Yusuf Dikeç (+71 units), whose performance during the 2024 Olympics became a meme. Conversely, Naomi Osaka, who withdrew from the 2021 French Open for mental health reasons, and Pita Taufatofua, the 2016 Olympics shirtless flagbearer, showed non-significant changes. Most attention trajectories declined over time. For example, McKayla Maroney's attention rose by 10 units post-moment, decaying at -0.22 units/week, suggesting an estimated 46-week return to baseline. Heterogeneous patterns reveal varied persistence in attention: some athletes experienced brief spikes, while others sustained elevated visibility over extended periods.

Contributions

This study advances sport management theory in three ways. First, it introduces a temporal lens to brand awareness, proposing "attention durability" as a key dimension of brand equity. Second, it extends ABV to public attention directed toward athlete brands, framing virality as an external attention shock. Third, it offers a four-stage model of athlete virality: trigger, spike, decay, and reversion or plateau. The model highlights how different types of viral events vary in branding outcomes. By quantifying attention volatility and decay, we enrich understanding of athlete branding in dynamic digital environments.

Just do it: The Role and Regulation of Compelled Speech in Sport

Dr Thomas A. Baker III (University of Georgia)

Sarah Pack J.D. (Dennie Sports Law)

Dr Thomas Aicher (University of Colorado)

Dr Brianna Newland (University of Colorado)

Dr Bob Heere (University of North Texas)

Research Question

The rise in athlete activism has resulted in a stronger sense of the causes they desire to support as well as how they are willing to assume the risks associated with social and political activism. Nevertheless, the teams and leagues that make up our sports industry are

also developing activist, or at least social, identities and are within their rights to do so. Teams, leagues, and other sport or corporate entities are permitted to engage in corporate social activism (CSA) on causes that are important to them. This study questions the legality and appropriateness of compelled speech in the sport context.

Theoretical Background

This study combines traditional legal research with an exploratory case study to examine the underexamined concept of compelled speech in the realm of private sport employers and public universities. Legal theory is examined to understand the potential liability for sport organizations in requiring the participation of their athletes and other employees in the team or league activism. In addition to legal theory, this study pulls from organizational research focused on corporate social responsibility and its activist derivative CSA. Statutory law, case law, corporate policy, and articles from traditional media were used for this examination as means for exploring the concept of compelled speech and its application to professional and collegiate sport in the United States. Additionally, the methods used for understanding the compelled speech were similarly applied to New Zealand, where laws regarding the freedom of speech and the protections against compelled speech are not as robust as in the United States. The study uses the context of private sports leagues to examine the ability of individuals to resist efforts by private employers to compel speech. Furthermore, we extended the scope of our investigation to include examination of compelled speech regulation in the multibillion-dollar industry of collegiate sports in the United States.

Results

Leverage that private sport teams and leagues exert over the speech of athletes stems from contract and is mitigated by athletes through collective or individual negotiations. Conversely, the heightened degree of institutional control that athletic programs exercise over the lives and careers of college students makes them particularly vulnerable to free speech compulsion that, in some cases, could violate the First Amendment. Our research led to the development of suggestions that we formulated based on a thorough survey of the relevant case law and literature on the subject of compelled speech. For both public and private actors, the results led to suggestions for how to balance the interests of the organization against the agency of the athletes.

Contributions

The present study expands extent research on compelled speech into the sport context and therefore is the first of its nature to provide suggestions for sport organizations in balancing their free speech interests with those of their athletes and other employees. Additionally, this study is the first to examine the compelled speech doctrine from both legal and organizational theory perspectives.

The Facilitators and Inhibitors of Technology Adoption and Use in Not-for-profit Sport

Alexander Best (Edith Cowan University)
Dr Ashlee Morgan (Edith Cowan University)
A/Prof Ruth Sibson (Edith Cowan University)

Research Purpose

This study explored the process of technology adoption, and its impacts on operations, within not-for-profit (NFP) sport organisations and clubs. The purpose sought to address a current gap in sport management literature and generate sport-specific knowledge regarding technology adoption processes in NFP sport.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

NFP sport delivers many social and economic benefits (Shilbury et al., 2023) through the mass provision of sport and facilitation of sport development pathways (Misener et al., 2022; Winand et al., 2014). However, questions have been raised on the effectiveness of NFP sport's operations and governance (Ferguson, 2021) and capacity (e.g. Hoeber et al., 2015; Winand & Hoeber, 2017). Technology may assist in improving the operations and governance of NFP sport (Best et al., 2024; Delshab et al., 2022) but such literature is yet to comprehensively address technology's fit and role, and the capacity of NFP sport in this space (Enhold et al., 2021; Lang et al., 2019; Misener et al., 2022). Specific calls for investigations of the impacts of technology on NFP operations have been forwarded by Thompson et al. (2024) and Lis (2023).

Research Methodology

This study utilised Rogers' (2003) Diffusion of Innovations theory as a theoretical lens of technology adoption. A qualitative case study investigation produced 31 semi-structured, qualitative interviews. Purposively selected interviewees provide a representative sample of the Australian NFP sport sector. Ethics approval was granted for this study.

Findings and Discussion

Technology was found to support and improve the operation of sport and non-sport processes which drive NFP sport, these are classified together as 'core service delivery'. The highly specific and complicated governance demands in NFP greatly impact technology adoption and use through the collection and organisation of data, which informs decision-making. Resources are critical to the effective adoption and use of technology, inclusive of financial resources and the people and structures within NFP sport. Whether resources are facilitators or inhibitors of technology adoption and use in NFP sport depends on context, including the culture and attitudes toward technology. For instance, technology supporters facilitate adoption and use, but technology hesitation and the sector's informality are key inhibitors. Unique factors within NFP sport including complex demands (competing interests within the sector) and linkages (intersport and intrasport) throughout NFP sport impact on technology adoption and use.

Contributions

This study offers theoretical and practical solutions. An emergent framework provides insights to facilitating and inhibiting factors of technology adoption and use in NFP sport. Practical solutions regard purposeful adoption and use of technology to support core service delivery and governance demands, and how to navigate resource considerations, culture and attitude, and complex demands of NFP sport. This study addresses calls for extensive understanding of innovation capacity in NFP sport (Winand & Hoeber, 2017; Winand et al., 2016). Finally, this study suggests technology supports the professionalisation of NFP sport, addressing many questions in this space (e.g. Enhold et al., 2021; Lang et al., 2019; Lis, 2023; Misener et al., 2022; Ringuet-Riot & James, 2013; Thompspon et al., 2024).

Evidencing Impact: A Multi-Level Analysis of Women's Sport Leadership Development Through the NZOC's Wāhine Toa Programme

Tamson Bezuidenhout (Auckland University of Technology)
Dr Melody Johnston (Auckland University of Technology)
Dr Lesley Ferkins (Auckland University of Technology)

Background and Purpose

This research project explores the impact of women's leadership programmes, in particular the New Zealand Olympic Committee's (NZOC) Wāhine Toa Leadership Programme, using a multi-level framework (Burton & Leberman, 2017). The intent is to evidence the impact of this leadership programme from an individual, organisational, and systemic level. Currently, little is known about how to evidence impact in leadership programmes (and specifically sport), with the majority of previous research focused on programme evaluation rather than broader impact (Reed et al., 2021). There is a need for the NZOC to evidence impact as this has implications for resourcing, designing, and delivery of the Wāhine Toa Leadership Development Programme. Also implicated is the NZOC's mission to support female athletes to make a positive transition from performance, and to contribute to the women and sport movement in New Zealand and globally.

In pursuit of this aim, there are three overarching conceptual pillars that form the foundation of this research. These concepts cover (1) multi-level barriers and enablers that influence women's under-representation in sport leadership (Welty Peachy et al., 2015); (2) the distinction between leader-centric leadership philosophies (Eva et al., 2021; Kjellström et al., 2020) and relational leadership approaches (Uhl-Bien, 2006; Uhl-Bien, 2011; Uhl-bien & Ospina, 2012); and (3) how this can influence programme impact (Bowie et al., 2009; Chalmers & Gardiner, 2015). The interlacing of these three pillars lay the groundwork for how multi-level evidence can be conceptualised to demonstrate the impact of the NZOC's Wāhine Toa Leadership Programme.

Method

Underpinned by a constructivist-interpretivist paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) and exploratory case-study approach (Baxter & Jack, 2008) there were two main methods of data collection. First, 41 semi-structured interviews were conducted (online and in-person) with selected research participants including recent programme graduates, alumni, programme designers, advisory group members, the NZOC, and wider sport sector personnel. And secondly, document analysis involved selecting, finding, and synthesising various sources of information such as post-workshop reflections, post-workshop evaluation reports, and any media releases that discusses the Wāhine Toa Programme to identify major themes or categories relating to the research problem (Bowen, 2009). Thematic analysis (TA) (Braun & Clarke, 2018) was used to highlight recurring ideas and perceptions present in the data to synthesis areas relevant to the research questions.

Findings and Contribution

Findings from the study are in early-stage development and will be shared as part of this presentation in December. This study, however, is designed to offer a timely contribution to sport leadership literature and industry practice. As its aim is to evidence programme impact from a potentially untapped resource, and historically marginalised group (i.e., female athletes), not only is it well-poised to contribute to sport leadership programme impact approaches, it will also aid the NZOC in facilitating a sustainable future of leadership

development.

Cricket in Crisis: Examining Crisis Communication During the 2025 IPL Suspension

Dr Deepti Bhargava (Auckland University of Technology)
A/Prof Angelique Nairn (Auckland University of Technology)

In the contemporary sport landscape, crisis response during emergencies has become a critical function of strategic communication. Disruptions caused by geopolitical conflict, natural disasters, or public health threats demand more than procedural responses (Shipway, 2024). They require coordinated, empathetic, and credible messaging from governing bodies, teams, and franchise owners. Emergencies affecting mega events carry socio-political implications, from logistical uncertainty to athlete safety, fan sentiment, and sponsor confidence. In such contexts, effective crisis communication must do more than convey information; it must foster meaning-making, trust, and emotional resonance across diverse audiences (Harker & Coombs, 2022; Manoli & Anagnostou, 2023; Pöppel & Strauss, 2024; Wong & Meng-Lewis, 2024). Reputational stakes are high, and missteps can quickly escalate into public backlash and sustained scrutiny.

In May 2025, the Indian Premier League (IPL) was interrupted amid rising geopolitical tensions between India and Pakistan. A match between Delhi Capitals and Punjab Kings in Dharamshala was cancelled mid-play, prompting immediate responses from stakeholders. This politically sensitive disruption offers a timely case study to explore how sport franchises at mega events manage crises response, where their visibility, involvement, intimacy, interaction, and influence are pivotal (Jiang & Luo, 2017).

Accordingly, this study asks: How did the crisis communication approaches of Delhi Capitals and Punjab Kings differ following their abrupt IPL match cancellation in May 2025?

Guided by Jiang and Luo's (2017) four-dimensional model of sport crisis communication, which defines effective responses through involvement (transparent information-sharing), interaction (dialogue and real-time updates), intimacy (empathy and emotional connection), and influence (networked message amplification), this research analysed official statements, social media posts, and media coverage using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

Findings reveal a sharp contrast in tone, visibility, and emotional engagement. Punjab Kings adopted a holistic, trust-building approach anchored in emotional attunement and public solidarity. Their co-owner played a visible, empathetic leadership role, crafting a narrative of shared experience and national unity. Social media updates were frequent, transparent, and emotionally expressive, reflecting concern for fans, support for affected stakeholders, and alignment with patriotic sentiment. The franchise expanded upon the governing body BCCI's official line, addressing the broader socio-political context and reassuring its stakeholders with messages that felt sincere and grounded in community values.

Delhi Capitals, in contrast, took a procedural and risk-averse stance. Their communications echoed the BCCI's initial "technical failure" narrative without offering independent

elaboration. There was minimal social media engagement and no visible leadership presence. Messaging relied on formal language and occasional praise for national institutions but lacked emotional or dialogic content. The result was a distant, transactional communication style that did not engender significant fan response or visible stakeholder engagement.

This divergence emphasises how franchise identity and leadership visibility shape crisis narratives and public reception. While Punjab Kings' emotionally intelligent response fostered perceived intimacy, transparent connection and credibility, Delhi Capitals' neutrality and low-engagement strategy lacked resonance. The findings reaffirm that effective sport crisis communication, particularly in emergency management contexts, requires timely action, emotional resonance, strategic transparency, and visible leadership engagement.

The Influence of Perceived Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility (ECSR) on Event Support Intentions

Yoshifumi Bizen (Kokugakuin University)
Weisheng Chiu (Hong Kong Metropolitan University)
Yu Huang (National Tsing Hua University)
Hiroaki Ninomiya (Doshisha University)
Akinori Kunimoto (Osaka Sangyo University)

Research Purpose/Question

Environmental initiatives for a sustainable society are gaining global importance. While sports events have adopted measures to reduce environmental impact, how participants perceive these efforts and how such perceptions influence behavior remain unclear. This study investigates the relationship between marathon participants' perceptions of organizers' environmental efforts and their intentions to support the event, utilizing data from Japan and Taiwan. A cross-country comparison also examines the influence of cultural and social backgrounds on environmental awareness and behavior, offering insights for sustainable sports event management.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

This study employs the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory (Stern et al., 1999; Stern, 2000) to investigate how participants' perceptions of environmental initiatives at sports events relate to their behavior. The VBN theory explains how values, beliefs, and norms shape environmental actions. Favorable perceptions of corporate environmental initiatives enhance consumers' emotional satisfaction and promote positive attitudes toward sustainable services through shared environmental values (Khairy et al., 2023). This study focuses on evaluating event organizers' environmental efforts as a form of Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility (ECSR), a key dimension of CSR (Alvarado-Herrera et al., 2017). Research suggests that the emotional value associated with ECSR is shaped by consumers' environmental knowledge (e.g., Laroche et al., 1996) and that cultural and social contexts influence environmental awareness and behavior. Based on this, six hypotheses are proposed to examine the relationships among ECSR perceptions, environmental knowledge, country, and event-supporting intentions.

Research Methodology

This study surveyed marathon participants in Japan and Taiwan with the support of event organizers. After the events, runners received a URL link to an online questionnaire. The survey included 6 items on ECSR perceptions, 3 on environmental knowledge, and 5 on event-supporting intention, all rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree). Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 29.0 and AMOS.

Results/Findings and Discussion

A total of 2,348 responses were collected from the Japanese marathon and 926 from the Taiwanese marathon. After removing outliers and incomplete responses, the final valid samples included 1,407 from Japan (1,080 men, 324 women, 3 unspecified) and 672 from Taiwan (469 men, 203 women). To examine the effects of ECSR perceptions, environmental knowledge, and country on event-supporting intention, three hierarchical regression models were developed, adding interaction terms step by step. All main effects positively influenced event-supporting intention. The inclusion of three two-way interaction terms significantly improved the model, indicating that both environmental knowledge and country moderate the relationship between ECSR perceptions and event-supporting intention. Adding a three-way interaction term (ECSR perceptions × environmental knowledge × country) yielded a marginal result ($F(1, 2071) = 3.645, p = .056$), falling short of statistical significance. Given this, follow-up analyses were conducted separately for Japan and Taiwan, revealing unique patterns in each country.

Contributions

This study makes a significant contribution by applying the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory to the unique context of sports events, demonstrating that participants' perceptions of environmental efforts—shaped by their knowledge and cultural background—influence their event-support intentions.

Actor-Roles in the Sustainable Transformation of Sport Organisations

Lars Brand (University of Bayreuth)
Pascal Stegmann (University of Bern)
Tim Ströbel (University of Bayreuth)

Research Purpose

The sport sector is currently undergoing sustainable transformation, entailing fundamental shifts towards more sustainable modes of production and consumption (Breitbarth et al., 2023; McCullough, 2023). Considering sustainable transformation as complex multi-actor process, research highlights that the sustainable transformation of sport organisations encompasses co-creation processes among multiple internal and external actors (Gerke et al., 2024). However, their roles in the sustainable transformation of sport organisations are yet to be examined.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Sport management research identifies resource-scarcity as key barrier to the sustainable transformation of sport organisations (Cury et al., 2023). To mitigate this barrier, sport organisations should facilitate collaboration among actors, who integrate resources to co-create sustainable value (Gerke et al., 2024). Co-creation efforts of employees across departments (e.g., Pfahl et al., 2015), fans (e.g., Casper et al., 2020), non-profit partners

(e.g., McCullough & Trail, 2023), foundations of sport organisations (e.g., Kolyperas et al., 2016), sponsors (e.g., Schyvinck et al., 2022), sport associations (e.g., Adam et al., 2025), and public actors (e.g., Zeimers et al., 2019) are considered equally vital as those of the focal sport organisation in its sustainable transformation.

Research Methodology

This study examines sport clubs in the German Bundesliga (N=15). Data sources comprise the sport clubs' sustainability reports (Ø=82 pages) and semi-structured interviews (Ø=53 minutes) with industry experts (N=18). Data analysis followed qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2004). To analyse the sustainability reports, NotebookLM, an AI-powered large language model, was leveraged as virtual research assistant. AI-generated content was created through theory-driven prompts, critically evaluated, and cross-referenced with empirical data (Hayes, 2025). All data was then coded following an inductive process.

Findings and Discussion

This study reveals four actor-roles in the sustainable transformation of sport organisations. The gardener cultivates an environment where sustainability efforts can flourish. Specifically, this includes engaging actors to create a network that supports sustainability goals and nurturing relationships with and among actors in that network. The enabler facilitates sustainable transformation, providing the essential conditions (e.g., vision for sustainability), resources (e.g., financial and human), and structures for actors to implement sustainability efforts. The operator executes sustainability efforts. Specifically, this includes engaging in dialogue and collaboration to conceptualise sustainability strategies and initiatives, executing concrete sustainability initiatives, and communicating them. The arbiter challenges and legitimises the sustainability efforts of sport organisations. In particular, this role comprises monitoring and auditing the sustainability efforts and authenticating the sustainability efforts through the actors' expert authority.

Contributions

This study enhances the understanding of the sustainable transformation of sport organisations by revealing four actor-roles in the transformative process (i.e., gardener, enabler, operator, and arbiter). It refines actor-roles partially hinted in sport management research and introduces novel actor-roles in the sustainable transformation of sport organisations. Recognising sustainable transformation as collective effort, sport managers should intentionally create a supportive network of actors with shared sustainability values, consider the sustainability vision of various actors, integrate sustainability in sponsorships to access financial resources, and engage actors as strategic sparring partners, implementers, and communicators while working with experts as arbiters to enhance credibility.

The Role of Local Surfing Communities in Sustainable Surf Tourism

Tiago Brant de Carvakho Falcão (Griffith University)
Professor Kevin Filo (Griffith University)
A/Professor Popi Sotiriadou (Griffith University)

This research examines the role of local surfing communities in sustainable surf tourism (SST) by exploring how surfing stakeholders, including representatives from surfing

institutions, boardrider surf club (BSC) managers, local surfers, and visiting surf tourists perceive SST at the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve (GCWSR), in Queensland, Australia.

Research Purpose/Question

SST aims to balance the economic benefits of surfing destinations with protecting natural resources and local communities' well-being (O'Brien & Ponting, 2013). However, there is limited evidence regarding how stakeholders perceive SST, both collectively and individually, as well as their attitudes and behaviours towards environmental sustainability (Hill & Abbott, 2009). Furthermore, it is unclear how they may contribute to minimising environmental impacts while optimising socio-cultural and economic outcomes (Wheaton et al., 2021). Overall, three studies are proposed to address the research question: How do local surfing communities (i.e., surfing managers, local surfers, and surf tourists) perceive and act towards environmental sustainability in surf tourism?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Efforts to promote sustainability within the surfing community should consider these differing attitudes and aim to cultivate a shared sense of responsibility for protecting the ocean and environment (Ponting & O'Brien, 2015; Usher et al., 2016), while recognising the benefits that surf tourism offers (Manero et al., 2024). To address this, the thesis adopts the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) in the unique context of the GCWSR to triangulate information from key stakeholders about their intentions and behaviours regarding SST.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The findings of this research suggest that while positive attitudes and subjective norms support environmental sustainability in surf tourism, perceived behavioural control remains a key barrier to action. Although surfing managers, local surfers, and visiting surfers are motivated to engage in sustainable practices and experience social pressure to do so, their actual behaviour is limited by economic and industry-related challenges. This aligns with the TPB's theoretical perspective that barriers to perceived behavioural control must be reduced for sustainable behavioural intentions to translate into action. Addressing these barriers, such as improving access to eco-friendly surf equipment and strengthening environmental protections through legislation, can enhance perceived behavioural control and support sustainability among all stakeholders. Notably, the findings also highlight that a stronger psychological connection to the natural environment, reflected in the concept of Inclusion of Nature in Self (INS) (Schultz, 2002), may enhance stakeholders' intrinsic motivation to overcome behavioural barriers and protect the environment. Building this sense of interconnectedness with coastal ecosystems can foster a more enduring commitment to environmental sustainability, even amid persistent external challenges. Therefore, alongside policy interventions, environmental education, and better access to eco-friendly surf equipment, fostering a deeper emotional and cognitive connection with nature through promoting surf culture and effective communication could significantly empower local surfing communities to achieve meaningful environmental sustainability. Keywords: sustainable surf tourism, local surfing communities, theory of planned behaviour, inclusion of nature in self.

Intersectional in design: Incorporating power and intersectionality in research

Ekin Büyükakten (University of Regina)
Dr. Larena Hoeber (University of Regina)

Intersectionality, as a way of understanding complex and socially constructed identities and the oppressions linked to them, has been used in different ways (e.g., as a theoretical framework, a methodology, an analytical tool) since Crenshaw (1989) coined the term. Intersectionality's ability to acknowledge the experiences of people, which have remained unaddressed, has increased its popularity and in time even turned it into a buzzword (Bilge, 2013; Choo & Ferree, 2010; Davis, 2008). In addition, intersectionality scholars expressed concerns about who owns intersectionality (Davis, 2020), "whitening intersectionality" (Bilge, 2013, p. 412), and definitional dilemmas of what intersectionality is (Collins, 2015). Sport management scholars have been integrating intersectionality into their work with the earliest examples appearing almost 20 years ago (Alexander, 2006; King & McDonald, 2007; Shaw & Frisby, 2006). The discussion around how to utilize intersectionality and the conflicts that arise with it has been prominent in the sport management field similar to other fields. Sport management scholars have highlighted the necessary shift to center individuals other than the experiences and perspectives of "...white, cis-gender, binary, nondisabled, not fat, men in sport" (Kriger et al., 2022, p. 304) which could be supported through intersectional approaches. As a novice researcher who reviewed over 140 sport management articles through a scoping review and is operationalizing intersectionality in her dissertation, I have been reflecting on various ways in which intersectionality can and should be used in my work. As a result of these efforts to do so, in this methodological presentation, I aim to explore ways to incorporate power and intersectionality throughout the research design. This presentation intends to address the call for attending to intersectionality's complex nature and move beyond identity-based intersectional work in sport management. Some ways that will be discussed are the importance of revisiting foundational texts, recognizing intersectionality's relationship with power (Choo & Ferree, 2010; Collins & Bilge, 2016; Misra et al., 2021), and thinking about positionality and reflexivity intersectionally (Fresnoza-Flot & Cheung, 2024; Lu & Hodge, 2019; Vadebouncoeur et al., 2021). Foundational texts, starting from Crenshaw's work, allow researchers to remember the importance of intersectionality by showing its development and core principles, and to recognize how power is central to intersectional work. Accepted as one of intersectionality's foundational tenets (Choo & Ferree, 2010; Collins & Bilge, 2016; Misra et al., 2021), power can expose the ways that inequalities are created and transformed (Misra et al., 2021). This also ties to incorporating power within positionality and reflexivity, allowing researchers to question their interpretive authority and knowledge production processes. Through this presentation, I aim to expand on these points while generating discussion to learn from other schola

Leadership Characteristics and Organisational Resilience in Sport

Professor John Cairney (University of Queensland)
Dr. Matthew Bourke (University of Queensland)
Dr. Veronique Richard (University of Queensland)

Research Purpose/Question

This study investigates the psychological characteristics and leadership behaviours that influence organisational resilience. Specifically, it examines how emotional intelligence (EI), leader resilience, and paradoxical leadership behaviours interact to predict organisational resilience in the context of sport organisations. The central research question is: How do emotional intelligence, leader resilience, and paradoxical leadership behaviours contribute to organisational resilience?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Organisational resilience is the capacity to anticipate, respond to, and recover from disruptive events while sustaining core functions (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). Kantur and Iseri-Say (2015) identify three dimensions of resilience: robustness, agility, and integrity. While structural and strategic factors have traditionally dominated resilience research, emerging work highlights the critical role of leadership. Emotional intelligence, defined as the ability to perceive, understand, and regulate emotions (Mayer et al., 2000), is linked to adaptive behaviours and psychological wellbeing (Schneider et al., 2013). Leader resilience, the capacity to recover from adversity, supports adaptability and purpose-driven leadership (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Paradoxical leadership behaviours—balancing competing tensions such as control and autonomy—are increasingly recognised as essential in dynamic settings (Zhang et al., 2021). This study builds a model connecting these constructs to examine their combined influence on organisational resilience, particularly in sport, where volatility and uncertainty are common.

Research Methodology

We tested a hypothesised structural model using survey data collected from 336 leaders in the sport sector, including executives, directors, and managers. Measures included validated scales of emotional intelligence, leader resilience, paradoxical leadership behaviours, and organisational resilience (measured across robustness, agility, and integrity). Structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to examine both direct and indirect relationships among the constructs. Model fit was evaluated using standard indices (CFI, RMSEA, SRMR).

Results/Findings and Discussion

All hypothesised, direct pathways were supported: emotional intelligence was positively associated with leader resilience and paradoxical leadership behaviours; leader resilience was positively associated with both paradoxical leadership and organisational resilience; and paradoxical leadership was positively associated with organisational resilience. Importantly, emotional intelligence also showed significant indirect effects on organisational resilience, mediated by leader resilience and paradoxical leadership. The strongest mediation pathway was through leader resilience, particularly in predicting organisational robustness and integrity. While paradoxical leadership was conceptually important, its direct effects on the three resilience dimensions were weaker and non-significant. These findings support a sequential mediation model in which emotional intelligence fosters leader resilience, which in turn promotes paradoxical leadership behaviours, ultimately contributing to organisational resilience.

Contributions

This study contributes a novel psychological model of leadership and resilience, extending existing frameworks by integrating emotional intelligence, leader resilience, and paradoxical

leadership. It advances the theoretical understanding of how these leader attributes interact to shape organisational adaptability. Practically, the findings highlight the value of developing emotionally intelligent and resilient leaders who can navigate competing demands and uncertainty. For sport organisations—and other high-stakes environments—this leadership model offers actionable insights into building long-term resilience through targeted leadership development programs. Future research should explore these relationships longitudinally and across different sectors to further validate and extend the model.

Move with the Influencers! Applying Social Identity Theory to Explore the Effects of Social Media Influencers on Exercise Participants' Imitative Behavior, Brand Attachment, and Participation Intention

Cheng-Yu Chang (National Taiwan Normal University)
Prof. Dr. Chin-Yi Fang (Fred) (National Taiwan Normal University)

With the rise of social media, social media influencers have become key figures in shaping consumer behavior. Unlike traditional celebrities, social media influencers are often ordinary individuals who build their credibility through sustained content creation and demonstrate a high level of expertise, effectively impacting consumers' purchase and participation intentions. Although many studies have examined how social media influencers (SMIs) influence consumer behavior, few have focused on their impact on individuals' intentions to participate in sports events. While influencer marketing is increasingly used to promote such events, it remains unclear how influencers' expertise and authenticity similarity foster connections with followers and drive imitation behavior, brand attachment, and ultimately participation intention. This study applies Social Identity Theory (Audrezet et al., 2018) to explore how characteristics of SMIs influence consumers' intentions to participate in sports events through imitation behavior and brand attachment.

Based on the Social Identity Theory, individuals develop a sense of self through their connection with specific social groups, emphasizing the importance of group belonging (Audrezet et al., 2018). Through this sense of group affiliation and self-identity, influencers can enhance followers' emotional attachment to brands and motivate action, serving as a crucial bridge between brands and consumers (Carlson & Donovan, 2013). Through the literature review, this paper established six hypotheses to examine how SMI characteristics affect consumers' imitation behavior, brand attachment, and intention to participate in sports events. It also investigates the mediating roles of imitation behavior and brand attachment between SMI characteristics and participation intention.

This paper developed questionnaires including seven constructs and thirty-four items based on relevant literature (Alalwan, 2018; Ki & Kim, 2019; Liljander et al., 2015; Sesar et al., 2022; Thomson et al., 2005; Zniva et al., 2023) and reviewed by three influencer experts who frequently share sports event content on social media to ensure content validity. The on-line questionnaires were distributed through online platforms including Instagram, Facebook, and LINE. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS for descriptive statistics and SmartPLS for reliability and validity testing, path analysis, mediation analysis, and bootstrapping to examine the proposed research model and hypotheses.

The results reveal that SMI characteristics—such as authenticity, trustworthiness, influencer credibility, and follower-SMI congruence—have significant positive effects ($\beta=0.542$) on imitation behavior. In turn, imitation behavior enhances brand attachment ($\beta=0.339$), which ultimately increases participation intention. Mediation analysis further indicates that imitation behavior significantly mediates the relationship ($\beta=0.184$) between influencer characteristics and brand attachment, while brand attachment significantly mediates the link between imitation behavior and participation intention ($\beta=0.197$). Overall, imitation behavior and brand attachment serve as key mediators in the process through which SMIs influence participation intention ($\beta=0.107$).

This study provides practical implications for sports event marketing. Brands are advised to collaborate with authentic and credible influencers, and design campaigns with imitation cues and real experience sharing to enhance fans' motivation and brand attachment. Furthermore, by leveraging brand attachment, marketers can implement identity-based strategies to enhance consumers' participation intentions.

When Exercise Becomes Workplace Nourishment: Exploring the Impact of Corporate Group Exercise Classes on Employee Well-being Based on the S-O-R Model—The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

Hsuan-Yu Chen (National Taiwan Normal University)
Professor Dr. Chin-Yi (Fred) Fang (National Taiwan Normal University)

Research Purpose/Question: This study explores how corporate group exercise classes influence employee well-being through the mediating role of job satisfaction, based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model. It focuses on five dimensions: leadership, resources, organizational capacity and commitment, communication with community members, and relationships with influential individuals. The study also examines whether demographic factors moderate these effects.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review: While workplace health promotion is gaining traction, most existing studies emphasize off-the-job exercise. Limited research has investigated the psychological impacts of on-site group exercise programs and the role of collective capacity within organizational contexts. The S-O-R framework provides a structured lens to analyze how external stimuli (e.g., leadership) affect internal states (job satisfaction) and subsequent responses (well-being).

Research Methodology: Following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines, 18 empirical studies published in the past five years were reviewed. A questionnaire was developed based on literature and expert validation. Data were collected via purposive sampling on social media platforms, with 262 valid responses. SPSS 29.0 and SmartPLS 4.1.1 were used for descriptive analysis, path analysis, bootstrapping (for mediation), and multi-group comparison.

Results and Discussion: Leadership, communication with project members, and relationships with influential individuals significantly enhanced job satisfaction, improving employee well-being. Job satisfaction showed a significant mediating effect. Although path differences by gender were observed, they were not statistically significant, indicating

model stability.

Contributions: This study offers practical insights into optimizing corporate exercise programs by enhancing interpersonal dynamics. It highlights the psychological mechanisms linking group classes to employee well-being and supports the strategic integration of health initiatives in organizational settings.

The Impact of Foreign Player Presence on Domestic Player Efficiency in the UBA

Yu Chieh Chen (National Taiwan Normal University)
Prof Jye Shyan Wang (National Taiwan Normal University)

Research Purpose:

This study explores the impact of foreign players on the individual efficiency rating (EFF) of domestic players in Taiwan's University Basketball Association (UBA). With the increasing proportion of foreign players in university basketball, there is intense debate over whether their participation enhances team performance through knowledge transfer and competitive stimulation, or whether it suppresses local player development by dominating ball possession and tactical roles.

Theoretical Background:

Based on social comparison theory and intra-team competition theory, this research distinguishes between two types of foreign players: foreign teammates and foreign opponents, and examines their differing effects on domestic player performance.

Research Method:

The study uses a dataset of 34,893 player-game observations from UBA Division I men's games between 2016 and 2023. A fixed effects (FE) regression model is estimated using STATA to control for time-invariant player-specific characteristics (such as age, height, weight, and minutes played), allowing for more precise comparisons of the same player's performance across different game contexts.

Results and Discussion:

When foreign players are on the opposing team, domestic players' efficiency ratings significantly decrease by 9.58 points ($p < 0.01$), suggesting that foreign opponents may exert strong defensive or physical pressure that suppresses local performance. More importantly, even when foreign players are teammates, domestic players' efficiency ratings still decline by an average of 3.47 points ($p < 0.05$), possibly reflecting internal tactical competition, role marginalization, or reduced offensive involvement, which diminishes domestic players' on-court contributions. Additionally, control variables such as height, weight, minutes played, and starter status show significant positive effects on efficiency, emphasizing the importance of physical attributes and playing time in determining player performance.

Contribution:

This study provides the first quantitative evidence from the Taiwan's university basketball environment on the impact of foreign player integration on domestic players. The findings challenge the conventional assumption that foreign players automatically improve team

performance and highlight potential trade-offs in development-focused settings. It is recommended that UBA policymakers and coaching staff design balanced strategies for utilizing foreign players to ensure local talent has sufficient opportunities for growth while maintaining overall team competitiveness.

Outsourcing and Management of Physical Education Classes by Private Sports Companies in Australia

Naoki Chiba (Chukyo University)

Introduction

Macdonald et al. (2008) examined cases in Australia and New Zealand and noted that since the 1990s, 'the field of physical education has been particularly exposed to neoliberalism, considering the ways in which health and citizenship are promoted' (p. 7). In other words, neoliberal policies have been introduced into education, and physical education has been a target of these policies. Williams and Macdonald (2015) conducted semi-structured interviews and participant observation over a one-year period with physical education (PE) teachers, school principals, and external contractors involved in the outsourcing of PE classes at primary and secondary schools in Queensland, Australia. Interviews with principals and PE teachers revealed that the reasons for outsourcing health and physical education and extracurricular activities were explained in terms of educational value, human resources (e.g., experts), physical resources (e.g., facilities), and symbolic resources (e.g., status). PE teachers are not necessarily experts in all sports, and they may outsource instruction to external contractors, especially for swimming and outdoor activities, in order to prioritise safety. However, external contractors explained that they cooperate with outsourcing for educational value, income generation, and publicity and advertising. In Australia, there is a private company called Z Sports that contracts with primary and secondary schools to provide physical education classes and club activity instruction. What led to the outsourcing of PE classes and extracurricular activities to private companies? This study focuses on examples of physical education classes and extracurricular activities in Australian primary and secondary schools that are outsourced to private companies. The purpose of this study was to clarify the business activities and challenges of Z Sports related to outsourcing physical education classes and club activities.

Methodology

Two directors of Z Sports (Mr. A and Mr. B) were interviewed for approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes each in February 2024. Both were male in their 40s. Mr. A became a coach at Z Sports after retiring as a professional athlete. Mr. B worked as a PE teacher at primary and secondary schools before joining Z Sports. In this study, we consider the directors of private companies involved in outsourcing physical education classes and extracurricular activities as experts and conduct expert interviews. Meuser and Nagel (2009) define experts as individuals who not only hold a professional position and possess occupational knowledge but also influence decision-making and the actions of others within their professional field.

Results and Discussion

Z Sports was founded in 1994 by a former PE teacher, began nationwide expansion in 2004, and as of April 2024, has 36 branches in Australia. Z Sports' business activities include preschool programs, physical education instruction, weekend programs, club

activity guidance, and birthday sports programs. The challenges faced by Z Sports include providing sports activities aligned with school curricula and securing highly specialized personnel. Detailed survey results will be showed at the oral presentation.

Air Pollution and Sport in the Media: A Framing Analysis of Taiwanese News Coverage

Prof. Hsueh-wen Chow (National Cheng Kung University)
Wei Cheng Yen (National Cheng Kung University)
Yu-Hsiang Yang (National Cheng Kung University)

Research Purpose and Questions

This study examines how Taiwanese mainstream media have reported on the intersection of air pollution and sporting events from 2013 to 2024. By analyzing both text-based digital news from Liberty Times Net and video news content from SET News and TVBS on YouTube, the research identifies dominant themes, stakeholder perspectives, and patterns of public engagement, with a focus on how media discourse shapes public understanding and policy responses regarding air quality and sports participation.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Grounded in media framing theory, which asserts that news presentation influences public perceptions and behaviors (Entman, 1993), this study builds upon literature showing that environmental health issues are frequently framed in terms of risk, policy, and responsibility (Boykoff & Roberts, 2007). In the context of sports, media narratives can affect both organizational decisions and individual participation, particularly when public health is at stake (Rowe, 2007). Recent research in Taiwan highlights the complex relationship between air pollution, physical activity, and health, with evidence that exercise benefits may be attenuated by exposure to fine particulate matter (PM2.5), a persistent concern despite recent improvements in air quality.

Research Methodology

News articles were collected using automated web scraping and dual-keyword searches related to air pollution and sports, initially yielding thousands of articles from Liberty Times Net. YouTube news videos were sourced using the YouTube API and similar keyword strategies. Large language models assisted in filtering out irrelevant news, followed by manual review by the research team. YouTube videos were transcribed for textual analysis. The final dataset was imported into MaxQDA for qualitative analysis. Quantitative analyses, including Pearson correlation and ANOVA, were conducted on YouTube engagement metrics (views, likes, comments, publication time) to assess public response.

Results and Discussion

A total of 33 digital news articles from Liberty Times Net and 23 YouTube news videos met the inclusion criteria. Thematic analysis identified four principal areas: (1) health impacts on participants, including acute symptoms (e.g., coughing, respiratory distress) and long-term risks (e.g., asthma, chronic lung disease), with concerns about diminished athletic performance; (2) mitigation measures, such as event rescheduling, air quality monitoring, mask usage, and provision of indoor alternatives; (3) diverse stakeholder responses, with athletes, organizers, authorities, environmental groups, and medical professionals

expressing varied concerns and recommendations; and (4) calls to action, including raising awareness, promoting behavior change, and advocating for stronger policies. Quantitative results revealed strong positive correlations among video views, likes, and comments, with a decline in engagement over time, indicating that audience interaction is highest immediately after publication.

Contributions

This mixed-methods study provides a comprehensive account of how air pollution and sports are jointly framed in Taiwanese media, demonstrating the media's pivotal role in mediating risk perception, stakeholder negotiation, and public engagement. The findings offer actionable insights for event organizers, policymakers, and health communicators seeking to balance public health and sports participation amidst ongoing environmental challenges. Although the analysis is based on Taiwanese news, its implications extend globally: air pollution is a transboundary issue, and many sporting events in Taiwan and elsewhere attract significant international participation. As air quality concerns and international sporting events increasingly intersect, this research underscores the urgent need for cross-border collaboration, clear risk communication, and adaptive event management to protect the health of athletes and the public worldwide.

Salary negotiation wins, losses, and lessons: An exploration of novice negotiators' perceptions of interests, using objective criteria, generating options, communication, relationship building, and the best alternative to a negotiated agreement

Dr. Ryan Clutterbuck (Brock University)
Dr. Michael Van Bussel (Brock University)

Research Purpose

The purpose of this research was to explore the experiences of novice negotiators who perceived themselves to be successful or unsuccessful following a salary negotiation. Specifically, we were interested to learn whether self-described successful negotiators were more creative than their less successful counterparts in terms of deal design (Lax & Sebenius, 2006), and knowledge of negotiation theory (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 2011).

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Sport management textbooks distinguish between integrative and distributive negotiation (MacIntosh & Burton, 2024), in which integrative negotiators utilize value-creation strategies (i.e., expanding the pie) to maximize possible gains for both sides, while distributive (i.e., zero-sum or fixed-pie) negotiators focus on claiming as much value as they can based on their power and persuasive communication skills.

However, there is a dearth of dedicated sport management research on the topic of negotiation and on negotiators (see e.g., Grappendorf et al., 2024; Grappendorf et al., 2021). Extant related research has uncovered the importance of mentors (Grappendorf et al., 2024) and the salience of expected adherence to gender roles during salary negotiations with female sport management faculty (Grappendorf et al., 2021).

Thus, this study aims to contribute to the sport management academy, by examining sport management students in their negotiation education journey through the use of relevant case studies (Spalter & Kolb, 2004).

Research Method

This study solicited feedback from first-year sport management students (n=139) who engaged in a negotiation role play exercise titled A Salary Negotiation (Spalter & Kolb, 2004), which simulates an employee negotiating for a salary increase.

Upon completion of the role-play exercise, students were instructed to complete a short MS Forms survey that included closed and open-ended questions. Students were asked whether they believed they won or lost the negotiation, provided feedback to their counterpart, and reflected on what they would do differently in a subsequent negotiation.

Results

Preliminary results suggest there are differences between successful negotiators and unsuccessful negotiators in terms of deal design (Lax & Sebenius, 2006) and in terms of their knowledge and utilization of negotiation theory (Fisher et al., 2011). For instance, in the open-ended question responses, self-identified unsuccessful negotiators noted their counterparts' effective preparation in advance of the negotiation role-play.

Self-identified successful negotiators also described their own effective preparation in advance of the simulation, and shared their awareness of, and ability to effectively counteract their counterparts' aggressive first-offers (i.e., anchoring effect).

This SMAANZ presentation will address further differences between successful and unsuccessful negotiators based on their use of objective criteria, persuasive communication, and focus on interests over positions.

Contribution

As contribution, this research adds new perspectives and insights relevant to the broader discussion on salary negotiations in sport management. Sport management scholars who are interested in negotiation theory and practitioners or students who might one day advocate for themselves in a salary negotiation will benefit from this research.

Athlete contract negotiation wins, losses, and lessons: Novice negotiators' reflections on overcoming the desire to win at all costs, demonstrating appreciation, cultivating a sense of affiliation, and respecting the other side's autonomy

Dr. Ryan Clutterbuck (Brock University)
Dr. Michael Van Bussel (Brock University)

Research Purpose

The purpose of this research was to explore the perceived importance of and substantive impacts from emotional aspects present in heated negotiations (Shapiro, 2020).

Specifically, we were interested to uncover whether and how novice negotiators (i.e., undergraduate sport management students) demonstrate an appreciation for the other side's interests, status, and positions, cultivate a sense of affiliation with the other side, and respect the autonomy (i.e., the ability to walk away) of their counterparts.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

In *Organizational Behaviour in Sport Organizations*, MacIntosh and Burton (2024) differentiate between distributive negotiations and integrative negotiations. Whereas distributive negotiators seek to claim as much value from the fixed pie as they can,

integrative negotiators work to expand the pie so that all sides benefit.

Yet, the processes of negotiation are rarely so clear cut and can be influenced by factors outside and beyond the rational interests, wants and needs of either side of a deal (Grappendorf et al., 2021). Consider, for example, Juan Soto's recent decision to leave reigning American League champions New York Yankees for their rival New York Mets, despite reportedly having near identical offers from both clubs. Soto's case illustrates the importance of factors beyond the bottom line.

Thus, following Shapiro (2020) and Malhotra et al. (2008), participants were asked to reflect on the importance of and impacts from their use (or non-use) of negotiation tactics, including demonstrated appreciation, affiliation, and autonomy.

Research Method

This study solicited feedback from first-year sport management students (n=139) who participated in a negotiation role play exercise titled Theotis Wiley (Erhard & Bordone, 2019). The role play exercise simulates a shoe endorsement negotiation between a rising NBA star and an athletic shoe company.

Upon completion of the role-play exercise, students were instructed to complete a short MS Forms survey with closed and open-ended questions. For example, students were asked to reflect on whether and how they conveyed their appreciation for their negotiating counterpart, and whether they won or lost the negotiation.

Results

Preliminary results indicate there are meaningful qualitative (with respect to process) and quantitative (with respect to outcomes) differences between successful negotiators and unsuccessful negotiators. For example, unsuccessful negotiators were more likely to say audience presence and time pressures impacted them. While more successful negotiators indicated appreciation and affiliation were most influential.

This SMAANZ presentation will address further qualitative (i.e., use of creative contingent contracts to create value for both sides) and quantitative (i.e., perceived importance of negotiation theory (Fisher et al., 2011) relative to outcome) differences between more successful and less successful negotiators.

Contribution

Despite popular interest and media attention on athlete contract negotiations, there remains a dearth of sport management research on negotiations and on negotiators (Grappendorf et al., 2021; 2024). Thus, as contribution, this research seeks to inspire interest and further studies within our field, while deepening understanding of the emotional and psychological factors that impact on deals and dealmakers.

Comparative Analysis of Rivalries in the Australian Football League: Applying the Know Rivalry Empirical Approach

Dr. Joe Cobbs (Northern Kentucky University)
Dr. B. David Tyler (University of Massachusetts Amherst)

Research Purpose/Question

The purpose of this study is to empirically investigate the intensity and reciprocity of rivalries in the Australian Football League (AFL) and the ingredients associated with fans' perceptions of these rivalries as a foundation for assessing the generalizability of rivalry theories, such as realistic and symbolic threat (Stephan et al., 2002), and to aid practitioners in constructing authentic rivalry narratives and appropriate event management policies.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Based on theories of social identity and integrated threat, rivalry is defined as “conflict with a highly salient outgroup that poses acute threat and enhancement to ingroup identity and/or esteem” (Tyler & Cobbs, 2017, p. 2). Rivalry is associated with productive social outcomes but also detrimental effects in that previous research indicates that rivalry enhances demand for sporting events, and therefore revenue, but it also enhances the likelihood of violence or inappropriate fan behavior (Havard et al., 2013; Tainsky & Jasiolec, 2014). Consequently, sport and team administrators are inclined to promote rivalry to increase revenue, yet doing so may exacerbate perceptions of threat that ignite negative outcomes if not appropriately moderated (Bee et al., 2021). Such threat may also be exacerbated by a sense of status imbalance manifest in unreciprocated rivalry (Kilduff et al., 2016).

Research Methodology

To accomplish our purpose, we applied the methodological approach of the Know Rivalry Project to the AFL (Tyler & Cobbs, 2017). More specifically, we utilized online message boards associated with each of the 18 AFL teams to survey 674 fans. The survey provides each respondent with 100 ‘rivalry points’ to distribute to her/his favorite team’s opponents—all 100 points can be allocated to a single opponent or divided among up to ten different opponents. To produce measures of rivalry intensity and reciprocity (i.e., unbalanced), we take an average of the points allocated by a team’s fans to a particular opponent and add (or subtract, for unbalance) that score to the average points reciprocated from the opponent’s fans to that team (maximum aggregate intensity score = 200; maximum unreciprocated score = 100). Following their allocation of rivalry points to opponents, respondents rated the importance of 10 common ingredients to rivalry on a 7-point Likert scale for their favorite team’s top rival.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Results indicate that Adelaide versus Port Adelaide is the most intense rivalry with an aggregate rivalry score of 158.1. The second most intense rivalry is the Western Bulldogs versus the Greater Western Sydney Giants (128.2 points), which is the only interstate rivalry in the top ten. Of the top 10 most intense rivalries in our sample, six involve intrastate competitions in Victoria. Meanwhile, the most unbalanced rivalry in the AFL occurs between North Melbourne, whose fans allocated 50.4 points to Essendon, whose fans only reciprocate with 2.8 points.

Contributions

Rivalries, when examined from fans' perspectives, demonstrate unique profiles of intensity and ingredients. A complete analysis of our data, including charts, will be presented with implications to theory development and applications for league administrators, media partners, and sponsors.

Divergence in sponsor relationship continuity: The case of Formula One teams

Dr. Joe Cobbs (Northern Kentucky University)
Dr. Jonathan Jensen (Texas A&M University)
Dr. B. David Tyler (University of Massachusetts Amherst)

Research Purpose/Question

Do sponsored properties (i.e., teams) within a common sport exhibit a similar sponsor relationship pattern based on generalizable theories of sponsorship-linked marketing; or alternatively, do teams cultivate distinct sponsor relationship profiles despite their homogeneous competitive environment? This study applies theories of congruence, clutter, shared geography, and the performance cycle to sponsor continuity for the purpose of exploring potential team-specific boundary conditions to theory and inform sponsor decisions.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Sport organizations with an international appeal have become increasingly valuable marketing platforms for global brands (Cobbs, 2011; Jensen & Cornwell, 2017). These relationships take the form of a sponsorship exchange, whereby a corporate brand contributes resources to a popular activity or organization (e.g., sport property) in exchange for an exploitable commercial association (Meenaghan, 1983). Such contributions can account for upwards of 70% of a sport property's operating budget (Cobbs et al., 2022), thereby influencing the survival of sport organizations (Cobbs et al., 2017). Hence, the duration and stability of these exchange relationships are top concerns for sport managers, who realize their capacity for sponsorship acquisition and management is limited due to transaction costs (McFadyen & Cannella, 2004; Sam et al., 2005; Siegfried, 2023). Decision-makers representing both sponsoring brands and sponsored properties need management insights at a dyadic, relationship level (Farrelly & Quester, 2005). Yet most theories of sponsorship-linked marketing—such as congruence, clutter, shared geography and the performance cycle—are commonly developed at a broad, sport(s) level of analysis that is somewhat removed from the contractual relationship level where boundary conditions may be present (e.g., Cornwell et al., 2005; Bouchet et al., 2017; Jensen et al., 2024; Jensen et al., 2023; Walraven et al., 2016).

Research Methodology

To compare sponsor relationship profiles, we construct team-specific, longitudinal models of 1,193 sponsorships spanning six decades of F1 teams and their sponsoring brands. Employing the event history methodology, where the probability of sponsorship dissolution is the dependent variable, we differentially explain continuity in sponsorship exchange relationships based on how factors derived from the literature apply to each team model.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Results demonstrate several team-based boundary conditions to theory application, whereby brand congruence to F1 is influential in Ferrari's sponsor relationships, and brand clutter is harmful to sponsorship continuity with Ferrari, Red Bull, and Williams. Meanwhile, brand equity enhances continuity for McLaren, Red Bull, and Williams, and recent team performance is especially influential to sponsors of McLaren and Mercedes. Contrary to other contexts, shared nationality and customer orientation (B2B/B2C) are nonsignificant, although Mercedes' sponsors are influenced by a domestic Grand Prix. Moreover, brands originating from outside Europe find exchange with certain teams more sustainable.

Contributions

This study illustrates how theories are subject to boundary conditions in application by explicating how sponsor-team relationships in a common context evolve differently but yet share some generalizability. Through this more nuanced understanding of sponsorship exchange as a dyadic partnership, subsequent dissolution and B2B relationship fading may be mitigated by recognition of unique, team-based sponsorship patterns to theory application (Olkkonen & Tuominen, 2008).

The Executing of the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup Legacy in Aotearoa New Zealand: Implementing a Legacy Plan

Eleanor Crabill (University of Otago)

Research Purpose/Questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate the execution of legacy from the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup (FWWC) concerning women's football development in Aotearoa New Zealand (NZ). The 2023 FWWC was the first FWWC to include a legacy requirement for host nations, and the idea of a lasting legacy of the 2023 FWWC was promoted, claiming the event would create opportunities for women and girls in football for years after the event. I address the following research questions: How has the hosting of the 2023 FWWC, as a women's sporting mega event (SME), impacted women's football development through legacy initiatives in Aotearoa NZ? What evidence has emerged confirming some of the effects of legacy and impact post-2023 FWWC?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

This research is underpinned by mythologies (Barthes, 1973) to explore how the legacy execution is executed through storytelling and under sociocultural, particularly patriarchal assumptions. This research also draws from 'the great sport myth' (GSM) coined by Coakley (2015). The GSM is utilised by organisations to increase positive public relations and produce an uncritical, pure narrative. Previous research has examined the importance of SME legacies and its impact on hosting nations (Leopkey & Parent, 2012). Research has also looked at the relationship between hosting elite sporting events and host-nation participation in sport post-event (Misener et al., 2015). However, there is a lack of research investigating the long-term impacts of women's SMEs and whether FWWC specific legacies can be implemented and sustained.

Research Methodology

The study utilises semi-structured interviews with 16 professionals from the sport sector across Aotearoa NZ. This method allows for flexibility and depth, enabling participants to share their individual experiences implementing legacy initiatives. Participants were selected based on their roles within sport organisations involved in, or directly influencing, the 2023 FWWC legacy. Interviews were conducted in person, audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and are currently being analysed. The research aims to capture both strategic and operational insights into the legacy's development, execution, and perceived success.

Results/Findings and Discussion

This research is still in progress; data collection is complete and data analysis is underway

at the time of abstract submission. Full results will be presented at the conference. Initial findings illustrate the importance of structuring women's sport programming as different to men's sport and storytelling as an important factor to crafting legacy. The findings of this study will indicate how legacy was carried out in Aotearoa NZ and whether a women's SME legacy plan can be sustained positively for the years after an event is hosted.

Contributions

This study aims to contribute to the understanding of how a women's SME legacy is executed with a specific focus on the first implementation of a FWWC legacy plan. This research can provide key insights into women's specific legacy, and inform future research looking at future women's SME legacy plans as well as the development of women's sport programming.

A Review of Interviewing in Sport Management

Elizabeth Delia (University of Massachusetts Amherst)
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Keegan Dalal (University of Massachusetts Amherst)
Jake Quinton (University of Massachusetts Amherst)
Nicole Melton (University of Massachusetts Amherst)

Research Purpose

We live in a culture of interviewing, where formal conversations are part of everyday life (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Interviews are a cornerstone of qualitative research in sport management (Shaw & Hoeber, 2016). Recognizing the range of interviewing techniques available to researchers, the purpose of this review is to understand the state of interviewing research in sport management. Research questions included: What are the standards of reporting related to interview method details? How have interviewing practices evolved over the past 25 years?

Literature Review

Interviews allow researchers to unravel narratives that deepen understanding. Despite their perceived simplicity and familiarity, interviewing is a skill that requires practice (Tracy, 2013). Rather than merely sharing experiences, emphasis on the collaborative nature of interviewing highlights the potential for co-constructed knowledge (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Smith & Sparkes, 2016). Still, despite the benefits of interviewing, the method can be time-intensive and pose ethical issues related to anonymity and confidentiality. Interviews accommodate a range of epistemological and paradigmatic views (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). Similarly, despite the prevalence of case study design, interviews can be used with several methodologies. As such, it is not surprising that interviewing is the dominant qualitative method in sport management research (Shaw & Hoeber, 2016). In addition to paradigmatic and methodological considerations, interview research can differ by various criteria, including level of structuredness, format (in-person vs. virtual), sample size, interview length, analysis, and criteria for establishing rigor. Decisions on these criteria may be informed by the researcher's purpose, paradigm, methodology, timeline, and/or budget.

Method

To understand the state of interviewing research in sport management, we conducted a review within three flagship sport management journals: European Sport Management Quarterly (ESMQ), Journal of Sport Management (JSM), and Sport Management Review (SMR). The review period was 25 years (2000-2024), and the analysis includes 597 articles (187 in ESMQ, 211 in JSM, 199 in SMR). For each article, data were collected on a range of characteristics of the study, including those mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

Results

Considering standards of reporting, authors consistently disclose methodological details such as interviewee type, additional data collection methods, sample size, interview length, and analysis approach. However, information on epistemology is rarely reported (4%), and while research paradigm is reported more often (17%), it remains relatively uncommon, typically appearing in studies with non-positivist orientations. Methodology is frequently omitted (42%), though when disclosed, case study is the most reported approach (36%). Semi-structured interviews are by far the most prevalent format. Among studies that report them, the average sample size is 22 participants, and the average interview length is 57 minutes. Initial analysis suggests that neither sample size nor interview length has changed significantly over time.

Contributions

A detailed quantitative and qualitative analysis of the articles is underway. Our analysis will provide insights on reporting standards and key trends on interviewing in sport management research over the past 25 years, allowing us to offer discussion and direction for the use of interviewing among sport management scholars in the years to come.

The role of local governments in preventing abuse in children's sport

Dr Erik Denison (Monash University)

Prof Richard Pringle (Monash University)

Brennan Bastovanszky (Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation)

This research investigates the role that cities and municipalities (local governments) can play in changing the organisational factors that enable harmful behaviours in community sport settings.

An International Olympic Committee consensus statement (Tuakli-Wosornu et al., 2024) estimates that 44–86% of children experience interpersonal violence in sport, including psychological, physical, and sexual abuse. These behaviours are supported by well-documented organisational risk factors, such as entrenched power hierarchies, normalised bullying and discrimination, chronic underfunding, and overreliance on volunteers (Clerincx et al., 2025; Hay & Kehoe, 2023; Roberts et al., 2020).

Sport management scholars have drawn on Ahmed's (2012) concept of the "brick wall" (p. 174) to explain how sport institutions often appear to take action by introducing new policies and making public commitments, yet they struggle to shift the underlying factors that enable harmful behaviours (Spaaij et al., 2018; Storr, 2021). A key reason for this is that national and regional sport governing bodies, as well as state and federal government agencies, possess "few levers of control" (Hay & Kehoe, 2023, p. 497) to influence how sport is

delivered to children.

In contrast, local governments have powerful levers to drive change through their control of access to public sport facilities (Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, 2017). Local councils also often provide direct funding to sport clubs. However, little research has examined how this local government power can be used to reduce violence and abuse in community sport. This study seeks to address this gap.

This paper outlines the methods and preliminary findings from an action research project with the City of Vancouver. Like many large cities, Vancouver faces increasing demand for a limited number of fields, rinks, gymnasiums, and other facilities. When a decision was made to revise its allocation policies, city leaders chose to embed safe sport as a core criterion.

Researchers collaborated with city sport administrators and elected officials (including the third author) to identify mechanisms that could support behaviour change through the facility allocation process. The city developed a new approach that gives priority access to sport organisations that can demonstrate meaningful action to foster inclusive and safe environments. This model is currently being piloted until the end of 2025, when final data will be collected.

This paper presents an overview of the Vancouver Safe and Inclusive Sport Model and shares insights from the design and early implementation stages, drawing on researcher notes and interview data collected from elected officials, administrators, and leaders of major sport user groups.

A key concern for city officials was the potential for backlash from large sports which have historical dominance over facilities. However, interviews with sport leaders revealed broad support for the changes. For example, regional rugby and ice hockey leaders saw the city's approach as a useful tool that they can use to force change to entrenched negative cultures at some of their clubs.

The paper concludes by identifying research gaps that must be addressed to understand how local governments, globally, could be mobilised to address harmful behaviours in community sport.

Climate change impacts on community sport: Manager perspectives and adaptation

Greg Dingle (La Trobe University)
Professor Lauren Rickards (La Trobe University)
Professor Marco Amati (RMIT University)
Ruby Hubbard (RMIT University)
Mónica Suárez (RMIT University)
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Research Purpose and Questions: The aim of this study was to examine manager perceptions of climate change impacts, and adaptation, at organizations delivering

community-level sport. Existing research gives little guidance to managers or policymakers about sport's climate risks or adaptation possibilities especially for community sport, the most vulnerable sector to climate change. This paper responds to this gap.

The research questions were: (RQ1) What climate change impacts have been experienced by organizations delivering community sport? (RQ2) What climate change adaptation is associated with these climate change impacts? (RQ3) What factors enable this climate change adaptation? (RQ4) What factors limit climate change adaptation?

Literature Review: Climate change, defined as a change in atmospheric climate persisting for decades or longer (IPCC, 2024), results in climate change impacts; the consequences of extreme weather (e.g., extreme rainfall, flooding, heat) on people and systems (IPCC, 2018a).

The accepted response is adaptation (CCA), the process of adjusting to "actual or expected" climate impacts (IPCC, 2018b, p. 542). Those who do such adaptation have been defined as CCA actors (Berrang-Ford et al., 2021) (e.g., individuals, households, managers). In sport, various roles are potential CCA actors (e.g., athletes, managers, board directors) across both not-for-profit and for-profit organizations. In community sport, the most likely CCA actors are frontline managers in state associations, local clubs and local government.

The dominant modes of CCA are: (1) incremental (i.e., small changes to current practices sustaining existing systems) (Termeer et al., 2017); and (2) transformational (i.e., systemic, fundamental change to a system's norms, values, power structures, institutional arrangements).

Research examining CCA in sport, however, remains limited. Orr et al's (2022) systematic review reported few CCA studies in sport. Only two sport-specific studies (i.e., Gollagher et al., 2023; Mallen et al., 2023) have considered the concept of transformational adaptation. Little theorization is evident. CCA in sport is understudied.

Methodology: Using qualitative methods, data was collected through six in-depth interviews and five focus groups with managers at 29 state and local-level organizations delivering community sport. Themes were developed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

Results and Discussion: The data from interviews and focus groups highlighted community sport's vulnerability to climate change. Four impacts were identified: sport infrastructure, sport participation, financial, and participant safety. Factors limiting adaptation were more prevalent than factors enabling adaptation. Only limited incremental climate change adaptation was evident. Three adaptation-enablers were identified: resources, organizational, and infrastructure and design. Three adaptation barriers were identified: resources, institutional, and infrastructural.

The findings add to the evidence base of climate change impacts on sport and adaptation. For these managers, climate impacts were ongoing problems for community sport. They consolidate calls for the integration of climate change into the research, teaching and practice of sport management. The analytical framework integrates climate change concepts, impact domains and adaptation responses and so extends existing attempts to theorize the sport-climate nexus. Supporting frontline community sport managers to move beyond incremental adaptation to becoming transformative CCA actors is recommended for policymakers, researchers and practitioners.

Weaving Threads in Coaching: A Mixed-Method Study on Emergent Coaching Competencies in Collegiate Sport

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Dr Philip Kang (Augusta University)
Dr Marlene A. Dixon (Texas A&M University)
Dr Minjung Kim (Texas A&M University)

Research Purpose

Coaching roles continue to evolve beyond traditional athletic training to encompass responsibilities such as recruiting, administration, and mentorship (Welty Peachey et al., 2015). In contemporary sport organizations, coaches are increasingly expected to integrate cultural, technological, and interpersonal skills to enhance athlete well-being, team cohesion, and athletic performance (Doh et al., 2025). However, limited research has examined how different competencies appear in coaching job expectations and daily practice. This study addresses this gap by exploring the core responsibilities of coaches and how various competencies are both required and embedded within coaching roles. The purpose of this study is to (a) identify distinct domains of coaching responsibilities through an analysis of job description texts in collegiate sports (Study 1) and (b) explore how these competencies are interpreted, developed, and applied by coaches in practice through their narratives (Study 2).

Literature Review

Related to coaching effectiveness, sport management scholars have mainly focused on how different leadership styles influence athletes, coach-athlete relationships, and teams (Welty Peachey et al., 2015). Given the importance of individual growth for coaching competencies, it has been recently emphasized that effective coaches need to be adaptive, inclusive, and tech-savvy leaders (Doh et al., 2025). Mindset theory (Dweck, 2006) explains how growth-oriented coaches remain open to innovation and change. Multi-loci intelligence theory (Sternberg & Detterman, 1986) supports the notion that different but related intelligences can be cultivated as distinct, developable competencies. This study seeks to integrate coaching effectiveness frameworks with emerging socio-digital and cultural dynamics in collegiate sport settings.

Research Methodology & Findings

This study adopts a two-phase mixed-methods design. Study 1 uses Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) topic modeling to analyze 1,113 job-task statements from 83 full-time coaching job postings in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Word2Vec and UMAP further examine how interpersonal and adaptive demands-related keywords cluster around collected job-task statements. The LDA results revealed four distinct topics related to athletic program planning, compliance operations, practice facilitation, and recruitment and academic promotion. Word2Vec and UMAP results indicate distinct keyword clusters related to interpersonal sensitivity, cross-cultural awareness, and technological fluency, which highlights the multifaceted nature of coaching competencies. Study 2 employs semi-structured interviews guided by narrative inquiry methodology (Creswell & Poth, 2018) with NCAA coaches. The interview protocol leverages the thematic findings from Study 1 to further investigate experiential and relational dimensions of coaching competencies. Data collection for Study 2 is currently ongoing.

Expected Contributions

This research provides a timely perspective on the critical competencies required in modern coaching contexts. Theoretically, this study advances the understanding of contemporary coaching effectiveness by empirically identifying emergent competencies and exploring their integration into collegiate coaching roles. It extends the literature in sport coaching and organizational behavior by addressing the interplay of cultural inclusivity, digital proficiency, and emotional adaptability. Practically, the findings can guide athletic departments and hiring institutions in creating comprehensive coaching development programs and recruitment frameworks. Aligning institutional expectations with actual coaching demands can foster inclusive, adaptive, and future-oriented coaching professionals.

Transformational Leadership Paving the Way for Carbon Positive Vintage motorsports

Harald Dolles (Molde University College)

Mark R. Dibben (The Schumacher Institute)

Cristina Neesham Brescan (Newcastle University Business School)

AIM OF ABSTRACT - RESEARCH QUESTION

One area of world class motorsports in which the entrepreneurial, pioneering spirit of the creation and extraction of value can still be seen is in vintage motorsports. However, as concerns about environmental sustainability grow, the compatibility of vintage car motorsports with ecological responsibility has become a pressing issue for all actors involved (Dibben, 2023). Our case study based research explores the intersection of vintage car motorsports and environmental sustainability by putting forward the research question as to what transformational role entrepreneurs in supporting industries play to reduce carbon footprints and to promote eco-conscious practices.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Our research proposes a novel framework based upon a critical analysis of the leadership and sustainability literatures. In relation to sustainability theory, we refer to concepts of ecological sustainability as developed in Raworth's doughnut model (2017) and in Lenton et al's (2022) theory of global sustainability. Regarding leadership theory, the transformative digital leadership compass developed by Schiuma et al. (2021) has been amended to outline the critical competencies distinguishing a transformative leader capable of driving ecological sustainable transformation. The amended transformational leadership compass has the following six essential leadership competencies: Pragmatic (what is the sustainability transformation for?), Mentor (making sustainability transformation everyone's job), Catalyst (how is the leader energising people to act sustainably?), Communicator (communicating the essence of sustainability transformation), Facilitator (how does the leader generate growth spaces of sustainability knowledge?), and Wealth Creation Enabler (what are the wealth – monetary and environmental – creation goals of the sustainability transformation?).

METHODOLOGY

Our research uses participant observation as a legitimate method of engaging in sport management research (Dibben & Dolles, 2013). It does this by presenting and discussing a four-year participant observation case study of the world's leading restorer of the original W.O. Bentley motorcars from the 1920s, primarily for racing and rallying, in order to unpack

the way in which the owner of the company shares his passion for vintage cars, realizing that corporate innovation towards ecological sustainability is important not only for him and the future of his business but for all stakeholders.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS/CONCLUSIONS

Each dimension of the amended transformational sustainable leadership compass could be verified from our research memos, corporate data and notes summarizing the various talks taken over a period of 4 years. It can be considered as the main advantage of our longitudinal case study that, by using a grounded-theory approach, the meaning of the data gathered evolved over time and could be confirmed by several observations. The owner of the company purposefully connects passionate and pragmatic elements to ecological transformative factors to create and apply new knowledge to the industry. Through his best practices the company intends to be a leading influencer in the historic and vintage vehicle restoration industry with regards to environmental sustainability. This objective also extends to use the influence of the business as a change agent by supporting and promoting, via media and communication platforms, venues and companies demonstrating best practice in carbon neutral vintage motoring and motorsports.

Transformational Digital Leaders in Sport – A Longitudinal Case Study of the NBA

Harald Dolles (Molde University College)
James Santomier, Jr. (Sacred Heart University)

Aim of Abstract – Research Question

Transformational digital leaders articulate a vision of how digitalization will shape their industries and guide organizational transformation. Mastering digital change is critical for organizations competing in a rapidly evolving global marketplace. This longitudinal case study puts forward the research question how the U.S. National Basketball Association (NBA) integrated digital technologies into its business strategy and model to increase revenue and establish itself as a global brand.

Theoretical Background

Drawing on existing literature, we highlight the importance of transformational digital leadership in driving and managing organizational digitalization. Traditional transformational leaders inspire through a shared vision and team alignment. Digital leaders must also anticipate how digitalization will reshape their industry, unlock growth, and restructure operations. As Westerman et al. (2014) suggest, digital transformation typically spans three dimensions: customer experience, operational processes, and business models. Each requires additional organizational change, including customer engagement, workforce enablement, and digital restructuring—ranging from modifying existing operations to creating new digital ventures and global platforms.

Methodology

Using a longitudinal case study design aligns with Gerring's (2004) argument that case studies serve theory development rather than just statistical generalization. Our 30-year examination of the NBA draws on diverse data sources, including interviews, observations, websites, academic publications, white papers, and industry reports. We conducted qualitative critical content analysis to identify leadership decisions and strategic actions

across our analytical framework

Discussion and Contributions

The NBA's digital transformation was shaped by the leadership of Commissioners David Stern (1984–2014) and Adam Silver (2014–present). Both exemplify transformational digital leadership, driving innovation beyond transactional goals. As early as 2000, Silver—then COO of NBA Entertainment—stated that he and Stern envisioned the NBA as an internet company, leveraging its content, brand partnerships, global appeal, and community engagement as strategic assets (Sutton, 2000). Their vision translated into proactive digital integration and long-term strategy. For example, the NBA's early adoption of digital marketing reflected an understanding of the growing importance of relationship marketing and digital communication, now core elements of the league's business model. This study contributes to the literature on sport digitalization and leadership by demonstrating how visionary executives enabled the NBA to navigate technological shifts and become a leading digital sport brand. It offers insights for sport organizations aiming to develop digital strategies that align with broader business goals and market opportunities.

Measuring Employees' Perceptions of ESG Implementation in Sport Enterprises: Scale Development and Multi-Group Analysis of ESG's Impact on Corporate Performance, Employee Well-being, and Green Behaviour

Professor Dr Chin-Yi Fang (Fred) (National Taiwan Normal University)

Research Purpose/Question

This study aims to develop and validate a multi-dimensional scale to measure employees' perceptions of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance in sport enterprises. It further investigates the relationships between perceived ESG performance and employee satisfaction, well-being, green behavior, and overall corporate performance. The goal is to provide a reliable and applicable tool to guide sustainable management and human resource strategies in sport organizations.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

This research is grounded in stakeholder theory (Oh et al., 2024) and social exchange theory (SET; Wong & Kim, 2023). Stakeholder theory posits that firms should address the interests of diverse stakeholders—including employees—by engaging in transparent and responsible practices such as ESG. ESG initiatives enhance organizational legitimacy and long-term value. SET suggests that employees perceive ESG engagement as organizational support, which fosters a reciprocal response in the form of increased satisfaction, green behavior, and performance. ESG practices may thus serve as signals of organizational commitment, prompting positive psychological and behavioral outcomes among employees.

Research Methodology

The study was conducted in two phases. Study 1 involved scale development through literature review and a modified Delphi method, engaging 10 academic and industry experts. The resulting items demonstrated moderate consensus ($QD = 0.375-1.0$) and high importance ratings (Median = 4–5), supporting content validity. Study 2 piloted the scale with 50 employees from sport enterprises and centers, leading to refinement by removing

two items. The final survey was distributed to 109 participants (76 from sport enterprises; 33 from sport centers) via snowball sampling. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) assessed the measurement model's fit. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to test hypothesized relationships, with multi-group analysis (MGA) used to assess potential moderating effects by organizational type.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Results using SmartPLS indicated strong reliability and discriminant validity of the scale. Perceived ESG performance had significant positive effects on employee satisfaction, green behavior, and corporate performance, but not directly on employee well-being. Mediation analysis showed that satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between ESG performance and employee well-being. MGA results confirmed model stability across groups. In both sport enterprises and sport centers, ESG performance significantly predicted satisfaction, green behavior, and performance. However, only among sport center employees did ESG performance significantly affect well-being through satisfaction, highlighting organizational type as a potential moderator.

Contributions

This study offers several contributions. First, it presents a validated ESG perception scale tailored to the sport industry. Second, it reveals that perceived ESG performance promotes employee satisfaction and pro-environmental behavior, ultimately enhancing organizational performance. Third, it identifies satisfaction as a key mediator in the ESG–well-being link, particularly in sport centers. These findings advance theoretical understanding of ESG's internal mechanisms and provide practical insights for embedding sustainability into sport enterprise management and human resource practices.

Holistic Athlete Wellbeing in Return to Play from Injury: Insights from Australia's High-Performance System

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Steve Swanson (Deakin University)
Jonathan Robertson (Deakin University)
Lisa Olive (Deakin University)
Severine Lamon (Deakin University)
Katie Rowe (Deakin University)
Matthew Dunn (The University of Newcastle)
Tim Piatkowski (Griffith University)

Research Purpose/Question:

Athlete wellbeing has become a strategic focus of several sport systems globally, including Australia. In high-performance sport, athlete performance health encompasses a state of optimal physical, mental, and social wellbeing related to an athlete's sporting success. Enabling athletes to achieve peak performance while maintaining high levels of health is a contextually complex task (Drew et al., 2023). A large percentage of high-performance athletes experience some form of injury, illness, or critical incident that sidelines them from competition at some point in their career (Moore et al., 2022). Such setbacks can be devastating and contain a host of wellbeing implications on athletes' lives. For example, on their work/income, identity, family, education, mental and physical health (Dacus et al.,

2023; Olive et al., 2021). Consistent with Australia's High Performance 2032+ Sport 'Win Well' Strategy, this study explored the holistic wellbeing approach in the return to play (RTP) process and how high-performance support staff consider "the physical, mental, emotional, and cultural wellbeing of our athletes" (Australian Sport Commission, 2022, p. 10) throughout the RTP process. Consequently, the primary research question was: What strategies are most effective for supporting holistic athlete well-being during the return-to-play journey?

Background and Literature Review:

Previous reviews of athlete wellbeing (e.g., Macdougall et al., 2015) however, have not considered collaborative, holistic efforts as part of the RTP process. Wellbeing has a long history within the Australian high-performance sport system. Over the past five years, there has been substantial growth and emphasis on wellbeing management in Australian high-performance sport, culminating in the Win Well Pledge, which identified wellbeing as 'the foundation for sustainable success' (Australia's High Performance Strategy, 2023, p. 10).

Research Methodology:

Using a qualitative research design, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with 10 performance coaches, 8 performance psychologists, 12 Athlete Wellbeing & Engagement managers, and 8 physiotherapists from across the Australian high-performance system. Each interview was conducted via Zoom, transcribed verbatim and anonymised prior to being stored. The data were inductively analysed in line with the widely utilized methods of Gioia (2021) to determine themes throughout the analysis. These methods allow for improved rigour, transparency, and trustworthiness in qualitative analysis (Tracy, 2010).

Results/Findings and Discussion:

Findings highlighted the heightened importance of collaboration across all RTP high-performance roles during RTP situations. In addition, reflections and perceptions were captured regarding the roles of team members throughout the RTP process, with an increased emphasis on proficient case management. Further, barriers experienced during the RTP process from all perspectives were highlighted, with current reflections noting a lack of consideration towards all wellbeing areas holistically throughout the RTP process.

Contributions:

This project adds value by articulating integrated holistic wellbeing practices and processes (i.e., RTP considerations and recommendations) for performance support practitioners as they collectively facilitate athletes' effective return to peak performance.

Valuing Mātauranga Māori in Reviewing a Decade of Sport Leadership Scholarship

Lesley Ferkins (Auckland University of Technology)
Steve Swanson (Deakin University)
Jake (James) Simms (Lincoln Memorial University)
Laura Burton (University of Connecticut)
Jon Welty Peachey (Gordon College)

Research Purpose and Theoretical Background

This review emerges from an ongoing curiosity about leadership and the dynamic, culturally

rich domain of sport as a compelling context for scholarly inquiry. Our purpose is to synergise an analysis of on- and off-the-field sport leadership research to stimulate sport leadership research directions. In doing so, we recognise that leadership is not a culturally neutral concept; instead, it is shaped by diverse worldviews, including Indigenous epistemologies that continue to challenge and enrich dominant leadership paradigms (Spiller et al., 2021). We reviewed sport leadership literature published between 2014 and 2024, building on prior reviews (Welty Peachey et al., 2015) by uniquely including both performance-based ('on-the-field') and organisational/systemic ('off-the-field') studies. In this synthesis, we advocate for a more holistic understanding of sport leadership - one that includes not only on-field and off-field - but also acknowledges more than western-based cultural foundations. We acknowledge the importance of valuing Indigeneity and Indigenous ways of knowing in how leadership is understood, enacted, and studied within sport contexts (Hapeta et al., 2019).

Research Methodology and Findings

Applying the six-phase systematic review method by Durach et al. (2017), we examined differences and synergies in methodologies, theoretical frameworks, topics, and study populations across both domains. While the two strands of research have often followed separate paths [e.g., there were more on-the-field articles (n= 212) than off-the-field (n= 141); on-the-field has been dominated by quantitative methods, off-the-field balanced between qualitative and quantitative methods], our findings reveal areas of convergence and common ground (e.g., on- and off-the-field turn toward a beyond leader-centric view of leadership). These connections invite the possibility of greater inclusivity in theorising leadership, and, in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, a resonance with biculturalism (Durie, 1998; Spoonley, 2015).

Discussion and Contributions

As with biculturalism, the review presents a dual-pathway framework that surfaces key themes from each research domain and proposes a conceptual model of sport leadership that moves toward greater inclusiveness, reflexivity, and relevance for contemporary sport leadership challenges—within and beyond the field of sport management. In honouring Aotearoa New Zealand's Indigenous peoples, the presentation will also demonstrate the richness and relevance of Indigenous knowledge by working with a Mātauranga Māori metaphor: the waka hourua (double-hulled canoe).

The waka hourua symbolises two interconnected bodies of knowledge—on-field and off-field sport leadership—navigating in tandem across often uncertain seas (Spiller et al., 2015). Each hull represents a distinct knowledge domain, while the lashings between them reflect what could be shared values, collaboration, and intentional alignment. In Māori tradition, these ocean-going vessels are not just modes of transport—they are embodiments of collective leadership, intergenerational wisdom, and purposeful wayfinding (Spiller et al., 2015). In this spirit, we frame our synthesis as a journey of discovery and rebalancing, whereby synergies from the dual pathway framework provide promising sport leadership research pathways, guided by both empirical insight and cultural depth.

To participate, you must podium: Examining the logics of performance selection criteria in New Zealand Olympic sport organisations

Adrian France (La Trobe University)
Prof Geoff Dickson (La Trobe University)
Dr Esin Ozdil (La Trobe University)

Research Purpose:

To be eligible for Olympic competition, athletes are required to meet the qualification standards established by the relevant International Federation (IF) in addition to those set by their National Olympic Committee (NOC) and the relevant National Sport Organization (NSO). In many countries, the NOC-NSO criteria is more stringent than the IF criteria. As a result, athletes who are the highest performing individuals in their country - and who exceed the IF's qualification benchmarks - will not be selected. The purpose of this study is to examine the competing institutional logics underpinning the policy of the NOC and NSOs to impose higher performance thresholds than those set by the IF.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review:

This study employs institutional logics to examine the competing demands that influence organizational decision-making within elite sport contexts. Institutional logics provide a framework for understanding how legitimacy is constructed, emphasizing the role of socially embedded beliefs and values in shaping the practices of individuals and organizations. In sport organizations, the presence of multiple - and at times conflicting - institutional logics is both common and inevitable. There are two prominent logics in sport organisations: high performance and inclusive participation. The high-performance logic prioritises international competitiveness and medals as measures of effectiveness and prestige. In contrast, the participation logic emphasises inclusivity, equity, and pathways to success.

Research Methodology:

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with organisation members involved with athlete selection within New Zealand's high-performance Olympic network. Interviewees included coaches, high-performance managers, selectors, selection committee members, and chief executive officers across five of the podium National Sport Organisations (NSOs), nine of the aspirational NSOs, and the National Olympic Committee (NOC). Thematic analysis was used to identify recurrent patterns and contradictions of performance criteria rationale.

Findings:

Our findings suggest the performance logic underpins the performance selection criteria. The key rationales for selection criteria include a) providing the greatest 'bang for the buck', b) motivating and preparing the athlete for performance, c) protecting the athlete from harm and disappointment, and d) managing the institutional demands of reputation risk from the Olympic committee, government funding, and the public. The NSO performance criteria for the Olympic nomination is largely directed by the NOC. Podium NSOs follow the dominant high-performance logic, while aspirational NSOs also emphasise values such as opportunity, equality, inclusion, and fairness in their approach to Olympic selection.

Contributions:

This study provides the rationales of NSOs imposing minimum performance standards while also contributing to the understanding of NSOs navigating the conflicting institutional

logics between performance and participation. This study illustrates the individual legitimizing rationales of a performance logic, justifying performance criteria in elite sport. Understanding performance criteria in elite sport provides valuable insights into other performance contexts (e.g., academic achievement), where standards and criteria are used to rationalize expectations, motivate behavior, and uphold reputational accountability.

Antecedents of value co-creation behavior in fitness centers: A case study of 24-hour gym members

Narumi Fujioka (Hosei University)

Rei Yamashita (Toyo University)

Research Purpose

Service marketing literature has emphasized the importance of the customer's role during service provision (Lusch & Vargo, 2014; Inoue et al., Trans. 2016). Particularly in service contexts where customers and frontline employees have high contact, such as fitness centers (FC), consumer's input significantly affects the quality of service outcomes (Bitner et al., 1997; Kim & Byon, 2018). Although previous research has suggested that value co-creation behavior (VCCB) of FC members positively influences their loyalty to FC (Chiu et al., 2019; Behnam et al., 2021), the antecedents of members' VCCB remain unclear. Therefore, this study aims to examine antecedents influencing VCCB among FC members.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Based on Yi and Gong (2013), VCCB is defined as customer behavior involving participation in the entire service-value chain to co-create value with the firm as active collaborators in relational exchanges. Since value co-creation requires joint efforts with customers and service providers (Roy et al., 2020), antecedents of VCCB are categorized into customer- and employee-related factors (Kim & Jang, 2023). Polyakova and Mirza (2016) proposed that customer motivations, resources, and capabilities, alongside those of the FC, are prerequisites for service co-creation. This study examines relationships between VCCB and customer-related factors, including motivation, FC usage experience, and training self-efficacy, as well as FC-related factors such as training session registration and employee interaction quality. Drawing on social-cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977), Alves and Wagner Mainardes (2017) demonstrated that individual consumer resources, such as perceived self-efficacy, are significant to VCCB. Moreover, social behavior is influenced by perceived costs and benefits (Homans, 1961; Hashimoto, Trans. 1978), and individuals tend to reciprocate benefits received through interaction (Blau, 1964; Aiba et al., Trans. 1974). Interactions between FC members and employees may foster VCCB as a form of reciprocity.

Research Methodology

Beginning in June 2025, data collection is underway targeting new members of 24-hour gyms in Japan. We will analyze the responses from the survey that is administered two months later at enrollment. We employed 29 VCCB items (Yi & Gong, 2013), comprising two factors: customer participation behavior and customer citizenship behavior. Customer-related factors included 15 motivation items (Rocha & Gratao, 2018), FC usage experience, and four training self-efficacy items (Lubans et al., 2010). FC-related factors include training session registration and 12 employee interaction quality items (Glaveli et al., 2023). The

scales were translated from English to Japanese by the corresponding author, reviewed by a bilingual co-author, and refined to fit the FC context. Multiple regression analysis with VCCB as the dependent variable and customer- and club-related factors as independent variables is scheduled.

Results, Discussion, and Contributions

The survey is ongoing, and we will present detailed results at the conference. This study will identify factors influencing FC members' VCCB and contribute insights into strategies for enhancing VCCB in FCs.

Driving Full Speed with the Handbrake On: What Needs to Change in Sport Ecology Research to Be More Impactful

Anna Gerke (Audencia Business School)

Research Purpose/Question

Sport management literature has increasingly recognized the natural environment through the emergence of sport ecology — a subdiscipline that examines the two-way relationship between sport and nature (McCullough et al., 2020). Despite its growth, the field remains limited. It lacks a holistic, systems-level approach to environmental issues (Ergene et al., 2021) and tends to adopt an observational rather than participatory stance. This paper aims to explore the reasons behind these limitations and suggest ways to overcome them using insights from earth science and management education.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The impact of sport ecology research is limited for three main reasons. Firstly, research in this field is predominantly influenced by North American perspectives, with 62% of data originating from this region. Combined with European research, Western countries contribute to 82% of sport ecology studies (Cury et al., 2022). This is problematic as environmental issues are global and different countries' socio-cultural, economic, and regulatory contexts shape their environmental priorities and solutions related to sport. Environmental issues belong to grand challenges, which are by nature complex, uncertain and influenced by fundamental beliefs and values (Ferraro et al., 2015).

Second, empirical sport ecology research focuses on specific contexts that concern only a limited number of individuals and organizations. The most intensively studied sport settings are collegiate sports, professional sports, sport events, and sport facilities. There is a lack of research on sport gear manufacturing, community sport, sport governing bodies, and sport for development initiatives, which are significant contributors to environmental degradation (Gerke et al., 2024).

Thirdly, sport ecology research lacks breadth and depth in empirical studies and proposed solutions. Most studies focus on climate change, and a broader approach to interconnected environmental challenges is needed to prevent trade-offs and rebound effects. The planetary boundaries framework can guide a comprehensive research agenda and action plan for sport management scholars and practitioners (Richardson et al., 2023; Rockström et al., 2009; Steffen et al., 2015). To deepen sport ecology, scholars must improve their environmental literacy, including climate literacy, to better understand environmental

degradation, empower counteractions, and stimulate emotional engagement and commitment (Clifford & Travis, 2018).

Contributions

Since 2010, research on sport and the natural environment has been growing in both sport management and broader management journals (Cury et al., 2022). However, the dispersed production of knowledge limits its impact. This paper explains the reasons for these limitations and suggests pathways for solutions for both research and practice.

Navigating Disruptive Technologies – The Uptake of Artificial Intelligence in French Sports Organisations

Anna Gerke

Research Purpose/Question

The aim of this explorative research is to investigate how sport organisations navigate the arrival of disruptive technologies and how they manage organisational change induced by technology. The rapid emergence and widespread availability of artificial intelligence (AI) technology have precipitated an exogenous transformation in organisations across a broad spectrum of tasks, practices, and activities. Therefore, we address the following question: 1) How has AI influenced sports organisations; 2) in what ways have these organisations implemented and adapted to this emerging technology?; and 3) how should sport organisations manage and implement AI technology in their organisations? (Loureiro et al., 2021)

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Currently, there is limited research investigating the impact and influence of AI on organisations, its implementation processes, and the contributions it offers (Lee et al., 2023). Recent research identified a range of latent topics related to AI in business studies (Loureiro et al., 2021). Lee et al. (2023) propose a framework for understanding AI implementation in organisations, formulating four guiding research questions focused on antecedents, challenges, guidelines, and consequences of AI in organisational settings. While information systems and general management research have covered ground in this area (Lee et al., 2023; Loureiro et al., 2021), sport management research on AI technology and its impact for sport organisations is still in an embryonic state. Research on AI in the sports context remains currently limited to evaluating sports performance, optimising training and coaching, and exploring AI technology in various sport consumer settings (Gerke et al., 2025).

Research Methodology

As very little is known about the research subject, we employ an explorative qualitative research design. We have carefully formulated research questions that we discuss with various representative organisations concerned by the phenomenon under study (Patten & Newhart, 2018). More specifically, we have collected data through unstructured interviews with 28 different types of sport organisations from France. These interviews were guided by one overarching question, which was tailored into individual interview guides specifically prepared for each organisation. Each interview was conducted by an insider, specifically an employee of the organisation, who had undergone a two-day training session. This

approach facilitated a high level of trust and engagement from the interviewees but also carried the risk of interviewer bias and response desirability. In our interpretative analysis, we remained vigilant for any indications of these potential limitations and implemented rigorous safeguarding measures, including self-correcting techniques and internal consistency checks (Morse et al., 2002).

Findings and Discussion

Data analysis is currently under way, and we expect to present results during SMAANZ conference in Auckland in December 2025.

Contributions

With this research, we expect to provide a roadmap for research on AI in sport organisations. Following the footsteps of colleagues from general management and information systems research, we intend to develop a conceptual framework for future research in this area which will provide guidance for scholars and practitioners impacted and interested by the role of AI on sport organisations.

Changing the Playbook: Disrupting Institutional Logics in the NCAA

Alexandra Gibson (University of Newcastle)
Professor James Skinner (University of Newcastle)
Professor Aaron Smith (University of Canberra)

Research Purpose/Question

This presentation introduces a study investigating how institutional actors have strategically influenced and disrupted the dominant logics underpinning the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), which governs collegiate sport in the United States, between 2002 and 2025. The research questions are: (1) How have institutional actors influenced and disrupted the NCAA's institutional logics, and (2) what role has institutional work played in shaping this transformation? Institutional logics refer to the historically rooted systems of values, assumptions, and practices that shape what actions are seen as legitimate and meaningful within an organisational field (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999). In alignment with the SMAANZ 2025 theme 'Whiria te Tāngata—Weave the People Together', this project explores how the collective actions of diverse stakeholders have disrupted the institutional landscape of collegiate sport in the United States.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The study draws on the institutional logics perspective (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008) and institutional work theory (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006) to understand how actors in a sport organisation can disrupt its dominant logic and cause it to evolve. While prior research has focused on field-level disruptions or symbolic protest (Nite & Edwards, 2019; Robertson et al., 2022), few studies have examined how sustained, actor-driven institutional work produces long-term transformation (Lounsbury et al., 2021; Nite & Washington, 2024). This study addresses that gap by analysing how a range of actors, including athletes, advocacy organisations, media, and government bodies, have engaged in institutional creation, maintenance, and disruption work over two decades to reshape the NCAA's institutional logics.

Research Methodology

The research employs a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design, analysing a 23-year longitudinal dataset of U.S. newspaper articles documenting NCAA reform and public debate (2002–2025). Qualitative thematic analysis is integrated with computational techniques, specifically dynamic topic modelling (DTM) and named entity recognition (NER), to trace the evolution of institutional logics and identify the forms of institutional work undertaken by key stakeholders. This innovative design demonstrates how computational approaches can advance sport-governance research by enabling scholars to analyse large-scale textual datasets, longitudinally map recurring themes, and identify actors and patterns of action (Hannigan et al., 2018; Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2024).

Contributions

The presentation will offer three key takeaways that deepen theoretical understanding of institutional disruption in sport organisations. First, it illuminates how institutional logics within the NCAA have been disrupted and reconfigured over two decades, offering insights into how actors drive change within high-profile sport organisations. Second, it provides a conceptual framework for understanding how institutional actors can strategically influence logic disruption and organisational transformation. Third, it showcases how natural language processing (NLP) methods can be applied to large-scale datasets to detect institutional shifts, thereby equipping scholars and practitioners with tools to anticipate and interpret change in complex sporting environments. In doing so, the research reflects Whiria te Tāngata, revealing how institutional transformation in sport is woven through agency, resistance, and collective action.

Investigating Management by Values: A Partnership with a Canadian National Sport Organization

Dr. Erika Gray (Bishop's University)
Dr. Eric MacIntosh (University of Ottawa)

Research Purpose/Question

Non-profit sport organizations often develop a strategic plan that outlines their mission, vision, and values. Implementing the values within day-day decision making is critical for connection between the organization and its members, and to build a strong organizational culture (Kerwin et al., 2014). However, many sport organizations have leadership-dependent values, and therefore, face challenges when implementing the values (Lachance et al., 2024). To implement values, Management by Values (MBV) can be used (Dolan & Garcia, 2002).

Through qualitative research we have partnered with a Canadian National Sport Organization (NSO) who aspires to use an MBV approach to drive their decision-making and optimize organizational functioning. This NSO seeks to evaluate their approach to MBV with our assistance throughout a yearlong competition cycle. To investigate this purpose, the research question that will guide this study is: How does an NSO approach MBV during their competition cycle?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Bell-Laroche et al. (2014) adopted a values-based perspective to study values within

Canadian NSO's cultures. They proposed the 4-I Values Framework (4-I VF) to help assess values-based management. The 4-I VF is a continuum of four stages to demonstrate intentionality behind utilizing values in management practices; ranging from values being dormant to being strategically leveraged (Bell-Laroche et al., 2014).

Lachance and colleagues (2024) studied national and provincial sport organizations to find that there were inconsistencies in how values of the organizations were reflected within their strategic plans. As a result, they found that the organizations were at stage two of the 4-I VF, where values are leadership dependent. Gray (2025) complemented this work, investigating Canadian NSOs' approaches to be equitable, diverse, and inclusive from an MBV perspective. Through interviews with full-time paid staff and board members, it was found that NSOs were between stages two and three of the 4-I VF; where the values are leadership dependent but embedded within policies. Indicating a compliance-based sport system in Canada, and additional help needed for NSOs to manage by values. However, all involved in achieving the organization's mission/vision/values (e.g., full-time employees, board, and committee members) need to buy into the values-based approach for it to be successful (Bell-Laroche et al., 2014).

Research Methodology and Contributions

Ethics approval has been received to conduct semi-structured interviews (Patton, 2014) with the NSO's full-time employees and board and committee members. The 4-I VF will be utilized to understand the organization's MBV approach during a yearlong competition cycle. The interviews will be conducted to gain an understanding of, and challenge/or counter (MacIntosh & Doherty, 2008) the espoused values of participants and the NSO. As well, elements of MBV and how the current values drive decision making will be assessed. Gray (2025) pointed to the benefit of partnering with an organization to assess their MBV approach. Therefore, this partnership with an NSO will fill this research gap to enhance the 4-I VF and provide a practical example of MBV in an NSO. Contributions will be made to the MBV literature to enhance organizational functioning within sport organizations.

Racial Discrimination, Leisure Constraints, and National Football Team Viewing Intentions: Dual Pathways in Chinese Malaysian Young Adults

Dr. Jeongbeom Hahm (Monash University Malaysia)
Dr. Khong Teng Keen (Universiti Malaya)

Research Purpose/Question

This research investigates how perceived racial discrimination influences national football team viewing intentions among Chinese Malaysian young adults, examining leisure constraints as mediating mechanisms.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

In Malaysia's multiethnic context, Chinese minorities face institutional discrimination while navigating expectations of national loyalty, creating psychological tensions around social identity threat (Branscombe et al., 1999). These identity threats significantly influence consumption decisions, as individuals use purchasing behaviors to navigate complex group membership dynamics. These experiences generate complex consumer responses that differ markedly between majority and minority groups. While majority consumers can freely avoid minority-associated products, minority consumers face systemic barriers when

accessing mainstream cultural products and may develop ambivalent feelings toward dominant group culture despite desires for social acceptance (Lacy, 2004; White & Argo, 2009).

National team sports consumption creates particularly complex dynamics, as supporting the national team demonstrates patriotic loyalty while potentially supporting institutions that systematically disadvantage minority communities (Armstrong, 2008). These tensions can manifest as leisure constraints—psychological and structural barriers that inhibit participation despite potential interest (Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Kim & Trail, 2010). Discrimination experiences can create both internal constraints (diminished belonging, conflicted loyalties) and external constraints (institutional barriers, social exclusion).

Research Methodology

An online survey (N=374) examined Chinese Malaysian young adults using structural equation modeling to test mediation effects. This demographic represents a key group navigating identity formation amid Malaysia's racial history (Ting et al., 2024). The study measured perceived racial discrimination capturing direct and subtle forms of prejudice (Guyl et al., 2001; Lewis et al., 2012), leisure constraints categorized as internal and external barriers (Kim & Trail, 2010), and Malaysian national football team viewing intentions, examining how leisure constraints mediate the discrimination-viewing relationship.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The analysis revealed paradoxical dual pathways creating profound consumer ambivalence. Discrimination experiences generated two competing forces: a direct positive association with viewing intentions ($\beta = 0.46$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting compensatory consumption behavior where minorities intensify national belonging expressions through sports consumption; and negative indirect effects through heightened leisure constraints (cumulative effect ≈ -0.55), where discrimination creates psychological barriers inhibiting consumption.

These opposing forces essentially canceled each other out, resulting in a non-significant total relationship ($\beta = -0.09$, $p = 0.139$). This offsetting pattern illuminates why ethnic minorities may simultaneously desire to demonstrate national belonging while unconsciously developing barriers that prevent actual consumption—creating an attitude-behavior gap where conscious intentions coexist with unconscious behavioral inhibitions.

Contributions

This research extends leisure constraints theory by demonstrating how discrimination translates into consumption barriers in national sports contexts. The identification of competing psychological mechanisms provides new insights into contradictory consumption patterns among ethnic minorities.

From a sport management perspective, findings reveal the inadequacy of traditional patriotic appeals when engaging ethnic minorities. Strategies should focus on constraint elimination (reducing time, cost, accessibility barriers) while maintaining psychological inclusion. This understanding suggests successful inclusive sport consumption requires addressing both practical accessibility and identity-based belonging concerns.

Individual and organisational determinants of volunteering in a voluntary sports club

Kirstin Hallmann (German Sport University Cologne)
Svenja Feiler (German Sport University Cologne)
Christoph Breuer (German Sport University Cologne)

Research purpose

This study aims to apply multi-level modelling to identify which individual and organisational determinants determine volunteering in a VSC.

Theoretical background and literature review

Volunteering is at the heart of community sports. Voluntary sports clubs (VSCs) are run by volunteers. Volunteering can be explained holistically using a multi-level framework (Wicker & Hallmann, 2013). It suggests that volunteering is not only explained by individual factors such as age, gender, education, identification, and social interaction, but also by organisational characteristics related to the organisation's capacities, including the number of members, paid staff, cooperations, or owned and/or used facilities (Wicker & Hallmann, 2013) or community characteristics (Wicker, 2017). Despite this theoretical foundation, limited empirical research applied multi-level modelling (e.g., Balish et al., 2018; Breuer et al., 2022; Hallmann et al., 2018; Schlesinger & Nagel, 2018; Swierzy et al., 2019; Swierzy et al., 2018).

Research Methodology

Data on VSCs (October-December 2020; n=20,179) and their members (June-August 2021; n=8,298 members from 1,329 clubs) were collected through online surveys. A multi-level logistic regression model with the dependent variable volunteering (no/yes) was estimated. Independent variables included 1) individual factors such as income, working time, education, gender, age, migration background; six variables measuring club identification; a set of variables for social indicators; and years of membership and 2) organisational characteristics related to HR, financial, planning & development, network & relationship, and infrastructure & resources capacities (Hall et al., 2003).

Results and Discussion

The result for the intercept-only model suggested that estimating individual and organisational variables simultaneously is appropriate, using the intraclass correlation (ICC=.391), which is higher than the .05 threshold (Hox, 2002). For the full model, the likelihood ratio test supported estimating a random slope model with membership years varying between clubs. The results ($\chi^2=343.41$; $p\leq.001$) indicated that club identification items, satisfaction with the democratic participation possibilities of the members, and years of membership were significantly positively correlated. In contrast, age was significantly negatively correlated with volunteering at the individual level. At the organisational level, the existence of a person to facilitate (further) education, education of its volunteers, which is a core value of VSCs, was significantly positively correlated with volunteering, while democratic participation possibilities were significantly negatively correlated with volunteering. Both McKelvey & Zavoina R^2 (40.62% vs. 45.82%) and McFadden's R^2 (18.98% vs. 24.02%) suggest a higher value for the random slope model than for the random-intercept only model. Statistically, the results confirmed the theoretical conceptualisation of a multi-level framework to explain volunteering and highlighted the importance of integrating the organisational level. Previous studies also identified various individual and organisational level variables as correlates of volunteering in VSCs

(Schlesinger & Nagel, 2018; Swierzy et al., 2018) or for events (Hallmann et al., 2018).

Contributions

At the organisational level, the HR capacity items were positively related to volunteering. This implies that VSCs should focus on becoming more professional in providing adequate training for their volunteers and ensure that the education and training of volunteers are embedded as a core value in the organisational culture.

How emotions moderate framing toward racism in Australian media

Lochlin Hamer (Deakin University)
Dr Jonathan Robertson (Deakin University)
Dr Jordan Bakhsh (Deakin University)

“How societal issues are framed matters” (Klein & Amis, 2021, p. 1324). How these frames evolve over time defines how we as a society are evolving. As these initial two sentences suggest, my research aims to build on that of Klein & Amis (2021) – who investigated how the framing of the European migration crisis changed based on a passive catalyst (i.e. an image published in news media). They found that media’s framing toward a social issue changed after publication – both in terms of labelling (i.e. refugee/migrant) and emotional intensity. My research significantly builds on Klein & Amis’ (2021) research in two key ways. First, I investigate a dynamic catalyst [i.e. platform activism, a phenomenon where an employee uses their employer organisation as a platform to send a message concerning a particular social issue (Rheinhardt et al., 2023)]. Second, I investigate framing changes over more than 30 years – giving an opportunity to capture temporal, longitudinal data that covers multiple events and transcends the idiosyncratic-event view. Ultimately, this aims to capture how emotional responses to platform activism have (re)framed racism over time.

To do so, I investigate the extent to which Australian Football League (AFL) athletes have influenced the framing of racism in Australia through on-field activist moments from 1990-2025. AFL is a culturally significant, indigenous sport that is only played professionally in Australia – a country that has had a troubled history with race relations. This is hallmarked by legislated racial discrimination. The most notable example of this is the White Australia Policy (National Museum of Australia, 2025), which was instituted from Australia’s Federation in 1901. It was officially abolished by the Racial Discrimination Act in 1975. The AFL, also having reiterative run-ins with racism, is therefore an ideal empirical setting.

Methodologically, I adapt Klein & Amis’ (2021) framework to consider how the framing of platform activism influences emotional responses to racism. Categories of emotions include anger, compassion, defensiveness, discomfort, disgust, fear, motivation, shame, and solidarity. These emotions will be coded based on their level of intensity, using a scale of 1-3 (1 being low intensity, 2 being medium intensity, and 3 being high intensity). Data will be collected from two prominent Australian newspapers (The Age and Herald Sun) that often represent opposite sides of the political spectrum. Only articles published between March and September from 1990-2025 will be collected. The stipulated month range coincides with the AFL’s standard season schedule. The stipulated year range aligns with the AFL’s lifespan as a national, professional sporting organisation. Data collection is currently in progress.

Preliminary results will be shared at the conference. Our anticipated findings will elicit how platform activism instigates a dichotomous response. In some cases, Australian media demonstrates progress in acceptance of First Nation's peoples and the challenges they face. In other cases, our media reflects a culture of silencing and ostracising. Ultimately, this speaks to an important conversation concerning unity.

Governing Sport Mega-Events in the Global South: Bureaucracy and Politics at the Santiago 2023 Pan American Games

Diego Moreno Harismendy (Otago University)

Research Purpose/Question

Focusing on the work of bureaucrats from the Ministry of Sport (MINDEP) and the National Institute of Sport (IND), this study examines how street-level bureaucrats (SLBs) and mid-level bureaucrats (MLBs) navigated the administrative imperatives introduced with the 2023 Pan American Games. Two key questions guide the analysis: (1) How, and to what extent, did the Games shape the work of bureaucrats? (2) How do the roles and experiences of SLBs and MLBs compare in delivering the Games?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

In Latin America, hosting sport mega-events has become an expression of "politics by other means," where politicians and policymakers emphasize the benefits and legacies of such events (Bravo et al., 2016). Yet, limited research has examined the work of those bureaucrats who, operating in the shadows of government, must transform "first-world" political narratives into tangible outcomes.

Understanding the role of street-level bureaucrats (SLBs) is significant, as they play a pivotal role in shaping public policy due to the discretion (Scott, 1997; Musheno & Maynard-Moody, 2015) and autonomy they exercise, shaped by both personal characteristics and organizational conditions (Cohen & Golan-Nadir, 2020; Johansson, 2012). Similarly, mid-level bureaucrats (MLBs), those who produce documents, maintain policy, and provide services to political authorities (Page & Jenkins, 2005)—have a substantial influence on the policy agenda, given their connections and access to top political officials (Cavalcante et al., 2018).

In a region like Latin America, where public institutions are often shaped by change, fragmentation, and frequent politicisation (Ramos Larraburu, 2019; see Moreno et al., 2024), examining the work of bureaucrats contributes to understanding how broader mega-event policy decisions are made and implemented in the Global South.

Research Methodology

This qualitative study examined the work of street-level bureaucrats (SLBs) through 30 semi-structured interviews with officials from MINDEP and IND, selected via purposive and snowball sampling. Data were analyzed using MAXQDA software and Braun and Clarke's (2022) reflexive thematic analysis, combining deductive and inductive coding.

Findings

Preliminary findings suggest that while SLBs were displaced by the Games Organizing Committee and their work was reduced to facilitating specific and largely legitimating tasks, MLBs experienced an increased workload and had to manage institutional and procedural limitations. However, there is a shared narrative among bureaucrats that the Games, and sport mega-events in general, serve as effective tools for achieving short-term objectives, such as demonstrating organisational capacity.

Hence, Chile's growing ambition to host international sporting events, such as the 2023 Pan American Games, reflects a broader effort to strengthen its administrative capacity and project the image of a capable and experienced nation. In doing so, it uses sport as a platform to 'punch above its weight' and assert itself as an emerging power in the Global South.

Calling out capitalism: An analysis of diversity, equity, and inclusion messaging through provincial sport organizations' websites.

Laura Harris (Brock University)
Dr. Shannon Kerwin (Brock University)
Dr. Dawn E. Trussell (Brock University)

Research Question/Purpose:

The purpose of this research is to examine diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) messaging through provincial sport organization websites. Specifically, we aim to analyze the ways in which commodified use of DEI messaging can reproduce systems of inequity. The research questions guiding this study include: 1) What is sport organization messaging in relation to diversity, equity, and inclusion?; 2) How does sport organization messaging around diversity, equity, and inclusion messaging align with Sport Canada's mission of sport for all programming?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review:

Given increasing social and political forces influencing sport organizations to engage in DEI initiatives, it is important to critically investigate these initiatives (e.g., Chen, 2022; Melton & MacCharles, 2021). While previous research has focused on the language and implementation of DEI-related sport policies (Peers et al., 2023; Spaaij et al., 2016), our work focused on other mediums of communication regarding DEI initiatives (i.e. external-facing websites). Relatedly, our work was also informed by scholars who posit that the current capitalist system is inherently in opposition to both the development and communication of authentic DEI messages and practices in sport governing bodies (Chen, 2022; Gammelsæter & Anagnostopoulos, 2024).

To investigate how DEI messaging by sport organizations may be interpreted as counternarrative to the sport for all mission outlined within the larger sport system (i.e., Sport Canada agenda) we used signaling theory (Connelly et al., 2011). Signaling theory allows us to examine how DEI messages are sent, as well as perceived by the sport consumer (receiver) of the message (Connelly et al., 2011).

Research Methodology:

Our team employed Jancsary et al.'s (2016) multimodal critical discourse analysis, where a

'mode' was defined as anything that can be used to create and disseminate meaning; a signal, on the websites of three provincial sport organizations (PSOs) of one sport located across Canada (Kress, 2010). We began by conducting a manifest analysis of each website where explicit qualities of words, photos, and videos specific to DEI were analyzed. Once completed, we engaged in Jancsary's (2016) five-step latent discourse analysis of the same website content, in which we critically evaluated how the PSOs situate themselves amid Sport Canada's agenda and broader social issues, and how power is employed, challenged, or hidden throughout the differing modes of communication.

Findings:

Three themes were developed that demonstrate: 1) Inconsistent and unclear DEI messaging inhibits equitable potential, 2) Performative programming furthers the marginalization of equity-denied groups while enhancing capitalistic gain, and 3) Exploitation of the Canadian Sport for Life framework leads to a disproportionate focus on high performance at the detriment of inclusive community programming.

Contributions:

This study will offer insights into the (re)production and persistence of inequities through the commodification of DEI messaging as long as Canada's sport system is aligned with a broader neoliberal capitalist culture (Chen, 2022; Gammelsæter & Anagnostopoulos, 2024; Hovden, 2015). This research will also provide sport leaders and policy makers with an in-depth understanding of how website messaging is received and can be better delivered towards positive social change

Establishing Core Competencies in Sport Management Education

Megan Hekkema (Federation University)
Dr Meghan Casey (Federation University)
A/Prof Deborah Pascoe (Federation University)

Research Purpose/Question:

This study aimed to identify core competencies required by sport managers across employment contexts to inform the development of relevant curricula and training.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review:

Identifying key competencies is essential for aligning sport management education with workforce demands (Hekkema, 2023). To produce employable graduates, it is essential to align curricula and competencies with industry needs (Jackson et al., 2023). Despite this, few studies have examined core competencies across employment levels and contexts.

Research Methodology:

Individuals aged over 18 years and employed full-time or part-time in the sport management industry were invited to complete an online Qualtrics survey. Global recruitment was encouraged through LinkedIn, with emails also to organisations in Australia and New Zealand. Coaches and teachers were specifically excluded from the study. The survey consisted of demographic questions and the 29 competency statements from the Sport Management Competency Survey (SMCS), a valid and reliable tool for evaluating sport management competencies (Hekkema, 2023). Participants rated each competency on

a 4-point scale against their current employment level and the competencies perceived relevant to a graduate sport management position.

Tests of normality were conducted and descriptive statistics calculated using SPSS. Paired t-tests were conducted to compare competency ratings for sport management graduate-entry roles versus higher-level positions (coordinator, middle or senior manager). Mean scores were examined to understand which competencies were perceived as most important at graduate-entry versus higher-level positions.

Results/Findings and Discussion:

Demographics of the 38 respondents revealed 94.7% were employed full-time, with equal representation of senior and middle managers (36.8% each) and 21.1% as coordinators. Most participants were from Australia (71.1%), followed by New Zealand (15.8%), with 57.9% in the nonprofit sector. The gender split was 60.5% male and 39.5% female, and 84.2% held a university degree or higher.

Of the 29 competencies, statistically significant differences were observed across 19 ($p < 0.05$). The strongest perceived relevant competencies for graduate-entry level positions included the ability to utilise teamwork ($M=3.63 \pm 0.54$), effectively use technology ($M=3.50 \pm 0.69$), and foster communication ($M=3.42 \pm 0.76$). Additionally, engaging in ongoing professional development ($M=3.42 \pm 0.72$) and applying principles of diversity and inclusion both on and off the field ($M=3.34 \pm 0.78$) are seen as crucial. Graduates are also expected to possess effective planning skills ($M=3.29 \pm 0.80$). For higher-level positions the competencies shift slightly in emphasis. Teamwork ($M=3.84 \pm 0.37$) and communication ($M=3.82 \pm 0.39$) remain essential, alongside effective planning skills ($M=3.82 \pm 0.39$). However, higher-level positions also require strong leadership ($M=3.76 \pm 0.43$) and management skills ($M=3.68 \pm 0.57$), as well as a proficiency in utilising technology ($M=3.61 \pm 0.64$).

Contributions:

This research provides an understanding of the essential competencies required in different levels of employment in sport management. Results can inform curriculum development and enhance teaching practices for undergraduate and graduate education. By aligning educational programs with industry needs, we ensure that emerging professionals acquire the necessary competencies to thrive in a rapidly evolving field. These findings will inform the development of the Sport Management Competency Assessment Tool (SMCAT), designed to evaluate and benchmark competencies across educational and professional contexts.

Business model innovation in professional football: the role of digitalisation

David M. Herold (Queensland University of Technology)
Christoph Buck (University of Applied Sciences Augsburg)
Sarah Jane Kelly (Queensland University of Technology)
Nico Schlenker (University of Technology Sydney)
Erwin Fieft (Queensland University of Technology)
Kevin C. Desouza (Queensland University of Technology)

Research Purpose/Question

Studies show that digitalisation plays an increasingly important role in professional football organisation's business models (Herold et al., 2024; Watanabe et al., 2021). However, to date it remains largely unclear a) how digitalisation is specifically utilised in sport organisations, and b) to what extent digitalisation contributes to business model innovation for greater value capture. This leads us to the following research question: How is digitalisation driving business model innovations in professional sport clubs?

Theoretical Background

Digitalisation provides football organisations with various opportunities for creating a competitive advantage (Merten et al., 2024). However, academic research in this space remains underdeveloped and as a response, this study will look at business models innovation in professional sport from an institutional perspective. Specifically, we assess to what extent certain values, represented by institutional logics, exist in two English Premier League (EPL) teams and their business models.

Research Methodology

Our qualitative dual case study research focuses on two teams from the EPL – Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspurs – and investigates to what extent the digitalization logic is integrated in the two organisations. Specifically, we use secondary data to examine how the digitalisation logic is applied among three sport business models dimensions: i) Operations, ii) Marketing & communication, and iii) Finance & ownership (see Buck & Ifland, 2023).

Results/Contribution:

Our study remains work in progress. While final results are not yet available, we argue that business models and their associated innovations are characterised by three logics: the profession logic, the market logic and, as an emerging and increasingly important logic, the digitalisation logic. In this context, early findings indicate different approaches and different levels of integration to digitalization within the case study organisations and thus different opportunities and contributions to business model innovation and revenue streams.

Generation Z Perceptions of Psychological Safety in Intergenerational Sport Organizations

Jasmine Hill (University of Florida)

Christos Anagnostopoulos (Hamad Bin Khalifa University)

Research Purpose

Generational experiences shape our identities and responses across all life aspects, including the workplace (Kupperschmidt, 2000). For example, because Generation Z was raised in higher-income households, they lack work experience, leading to skewed workplace perceptions (Schroth, 2019). These generational differences can cause tensions, negatively impacting job satisfaction and productivity (Kupperschmidt, 2000). In the sport industry, where intergenerational teamwork is essential, fostering psychological safety is vital. Psychological safety enhances outcomes by promoting communication, creativity, and knowledge sharing (Newman et al., 2017). However, there is limited understanding of how generational characteristics affect psychological safety and how coworkers contribute to a safe environment (Edmondson & Bransby, 2023). This study explores: 1) How does

Generation Z's upbringing influence their perceptions of psychological safety? 2) How do technology and communication preferences across generations influence the development and maintenance of psychological safety in intergenerational sport teams? 3) What practical strategies can be employed to develop and maintain psychological safety within intergenerational sport teams?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Psychological safety is the shared belief that individuals can engage in interpersonal risk-taking without fear of retribution (Edmondson, 1999). It leads to positive outcomes in communication, work attitudes, knowledge sharing, and innovation (Newman et al., 2017). Traditionally, psychological safety has been examined in the context of managerial behaviors and environmental factors impact employees' perception of safety. This study utilized generational cohort theory (Strauss & Howe, 1991), which posits that individuals born during the same period experience the same significant formative events, shaping their values, beliefs, and attitudes (Jones et al., 2018). As Generation Z enters the workforce, they are influenced by factors such as helicopter parenting, which affected their social development, making it challenging to navigate obstacles (Schroth, 2019). Understanding these differences is crucial to addressing workplace gaps and creating a supportive, productive environment in sport.

Research Methodology

The population includes 13 sport employees from NCAA Division I institutions. Participants were recruited through convenience and snowball sampling by sending a Qualtrics survey link to their email. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012), with the trustworthiness of the results enhanced through reflexivity and member checking (Guba, 1981).

Results/Findings and Discussion

Four themes emerged: second nature, strategic approach, face-to-face communication, and building relationships. The findings suggest that Generation Z approaches psychological safety differently. Having grown up in a world that values diversity and with systems in place to support them, they generally feel comfortable. Older generations took a more strategic approach to psychological safety, evaluating several factors before considering it to be safe. Face-to-face conversations help maintain a safe space for intergenerational teams, reducing anxiety for the younger generation and allowing older individuals to better read the situation.

Contributions

This study extends the psychological safety literature by using a generational cohort perspective and enhances our understanding of coworkers' roles in creating a safe environment. Practically, participants indicated that leaders should encourage relationship-building among teams to foster intergenerational work environments through informal conversations, frequent meetings, and team-building activities.

Facilitators as System Builders or Socializers? A CRT-Informed Logic Model of Youth Sport Development

Dr. Jonathan Hood (St. Francis Xavier University)

Research Purpose/Question

This study investigates how sport-based youth development (SBYD) program facilitators' lived or learned experiences shape their developmental intentions, intervention strategies, and perceived outcomes in programs designed for side-lined. "Side-lined" is a term used to describe under-resourced youth whose financial challenges have been known to result in poor mental health, school dropout, and engagement with the criminal justice system leading to a lower likelihood of earning well-paid employment, thus reproducing poverty and further marginalization (Assink et al., 2015)

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Participation in SBYD programs have been found to lead to positive outcomes among side-lined youth such as crime prevention, life skill attainment, character development, and other non-sporting social goals (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2019). To this effect, sport-based youth development strategies have been applied to the side-lined youth population without scrutinizing their unintended implications (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2019). Some SBYD research frequently explores program content and outcomes; however, little attention has been paid to the facilitators themselves—particularly how their social positioning influences the developmental logics embedded in their practice.

Methodology

Informed by Critical Race Theory (CRT) and grounded in a Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) methodology, this study frames facilitators not as neutral deliverers of content, but as active agents shaped by social systems of power and oppression. CRT provides the lens to center race, lived experience, and structural inequity (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), while CBPR ensures that community voices are embedded in all stages of the research process. This theoretical combination allows for a deeper examination of how facilitators either resist or replicate dominant logics of socialization and control (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011) in youth programming.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine facilitators from three Canadian SBYD programs. Participants were categorized as having either lived experience (e.g., former participants or individuals with direct experience of systemic marginalization) or learned experience (facilitators with academic credentials but no lived proximity to the youth served). Youth co-researchers were actively engaged in collaborative coding and thematic analysis, ensuring that community interpretations shaped the resulting findings and model development.

Results/Findings

A comparative logic model was developed, highlighting two distinct facilitator pathways. Those with learned experience adopted approaches focused on psychosocial support, life skills training, and behavior change—reflecting a socialization-based logic. In contrast, facilitators with lived experience emphasized empowerment, critical consciousness, and collective action—aligning with a systemic empowerment logic. The logic model visualizes these diverging intentions, resources, activities, and outcomes, demonstrating how facilitator worldviews produce distinct program designs and youth impacts.

Implications for Sport Management

This study contributes a novel conceptual tool (logic model) for understanding how facilitators' positionality influences program philosophy and impact in youth sport settings. It challenges the assumed neutrality of youth sport educators and calls on sport managers, policymakers, and educators to re-examine recruitment, training, and program development through a CRT-informed lens. By centering lived experience and anti-oppressive practice, this research pushes the field toward more socially accountable forms of leadership and inclusive program design in sport-based youth development.

The Hoodprint: A CBPR Framework for Equitable Youth Engagement in Sport-Based Research

Jonathan Hood (St. Francis Xavier University)

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Community-based participatory research (CBPR) is increasingly recognized as a methodologically and ethically robust approach to sport management research, particularly within sport-for-development (SFD) contexts. By promoting shared ownership, capacity-building, and reciprocal learning, CBPR offers a pathway for decolonizing research practices. However, despite its promise, few practical frameworks offer sport researchers step-by-step guidance for engaging marginalized youth and their communities as equitable research partners. Recently, the Sport for Development (SFD) field has been challenged to embrace inclusive and empowering methodologies such as CBPR when trying to understand the experiences of side-lined youth in (SBYD) programs (Spaaij et al. 2018).

Research Purpose/Question

The purpose of this paper was to integrate the community engagement strategies we found effective into a model structured after Isreal et al.'s (2005) five-phased model for facilitating CBPR.

This presentation introduces The Hoodprint, a six-phase CBPR model co-developed with Black youth in Canada who experience structural marginalization—referred to in this study as “side-lined” youth.

Research Methodology

The Hoodprint was developed through a doctoral project investigating developmental outcomes of a sport-based youth development (SBYD) programs. The project engaged six youth participants as co-researchers, positioning them not merely as data sources but as epistemic partners involved in the research process. Using a narrative inquiry methodology and creative nonfiction as a representational tool, the team co-constructed knowledge grounded in both lived experience and scholarly inquiry.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The Hoodprint includes six interconnected phases: (1) Partnership Formation, (2) Formal Training, (3) Research Planning, (4) Data Analysis and Reflexivity, (5) Application and Dissemination, and (6) Partnership Evaluation. Each phase is designed to foster trust, build youth research capacity, and operationalize ethical power-sharing. This framework

addresses gaps in CBPR literature by emphasizing overlooked stages such as formal training and evaluation of the research relationship itself. For instance, youth co-researchers participated in reflexive sessions assessing the principal investigator's practices, reversing traditional researcher-participant hierarchies.

Theoretically, The Hoodprint builds on Spaaij et al.'s (2018) model of participation, power-sharing, and reflexivity in SFD by providing applied strategies for embedding those values throughout the research lifecycle. Drawing from Israel et al. (2005), Jacquez et al. (2013), and more recent adaptations (e.g., Mandoh et al., 2021), The Hoodprint situates youth not as recipients of research but as co-producers of knowledge and social change. Findings illustrate how youth-led inquiry resulted in deeper insights into program impacts, more nuanced understandings of identity and development, and heightened youth confidence and civic agency. Data sources—including creative narratives, transcripts, and evaluation forms—underscore the importance of early relationship-building and ongoing mentorship in sustaining meaningful youth involvement.

Contributions

This presentation contributes to the growing literature on critical sport management and equitable methodologies. It offers sport researchers and practitioners a flexible, scalable model for CBPR that centers the voices of youth most affected by sport programming yet least represented in its study. The Hoodprint is particularly relevant for researchers working in equity-deserving communities, youth sport programs, and education-adjacent sport contexts.

Leadership at the Interface: CEO Capability in Evolving Sport Governance

Julie Hood (Auckland University of Technology)
Prof Lesley Ferkins (Auckland University of Technology)
Dr Tracy Molloy (Auckland University of Technology)

Theoretical Background and Positioning

The increasing professionalisation and commercialisation of sport has amplified the complexity of governance within sport organisations, often characterised by tensions between traditional volunteerism and modern professional management. This evolution—described as a transition from the 'kitchen table to the executive office'—raises critical questions about leadership and accountability in nonprofit sport (Herman & Tulipana, 1985; Kikulis et al., 1992; Ferkins, 2007). Simultaneously, shifts away from hierarchical leadership towards more shared and collective models (Denis & Sergi, 2012; Uhl-Bien & McKelvey, 2007) offer both challenges and opportunities for those navigating the governance-management interface.

Research Purpose/Question

At the heart of this dynamic sits the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who must translate board outcomes into operational strategy while also contributing to shaping and sustaining effective governance (Sport NZ, 2021). Although the CEO's operational responsibilities are well-recognised (Renz et al., 2024), there is a growing expectation that they actively contribute to governance processes—a dual role that is underexplored in both theory and practice (Cole, 2019). This conceptual paper addresses that gap, asking: How can CEOs of

sport organisations develop their governance capability?

Presentation Approach and Contribution

Drawing on governance literature and leadership theory—including principal-agent, stakeholder, and stewardship perspectives, as well as frameworks on human capital and collective leadership (Ferkins & Shilbury, 2020; Ferkins et al., 2024; Roberts et al, 2025; Renz et al, 2024) —this presentation lays the foundation for a proposed research agenda. It maps the theoretical terrain underpinning CEO capability development in the context of nonprofit sport and proposes new directions for understanding how CEOs can elevate their governance contributions. In doing so, this work contributes to evolving sport management discourse by framing CEO capability as a lever for board effectiveness, organisational, and sector performance.

The Carbon Emission Introduced into the Travel Cost Model to Estimate the Recreational Benefits of Marathon Runners

Chin Huang Huang (National Taiwan University of Sport)

Cheng Shih Lin (National Quemoy University)

Chun-Chu Yeh (Chienkuo Technology University)

Research Purpose

This study investigates how the inclusion of carbon emission introduced in Taiwan's climate policy and affects the estimation of recreational benefits from the perspective of participants in marathon events. Specifically, it explores whether carbon pricing, when internalized into travel costs, influences runners' willingness to participate, or to be an independent variable in demand model, and the valuation of their monetary recreational benefits. The central research question is: How does carbon emission affect the travel cost and recreational benefit of marathon runners in Taiwan?

Literature Review

As carbon pricing becomes increasingly prevalent worldwide (World Bank, 2023). The carbon footprint of tourism and recreational activities has drawn growing attention. In the context of recreational sport, Wicker (2018) found that while participants frequently travel for day trips and sport-related vacations, where travel was perceived as a high-cost necessity. Although environmental awareness was shown to reduce carbon footprints in some individual sport contexts (Wicker, 2019), previous research has largely overlooked the integration of carbon emissions into the monetary valuation of recreational benefits, particularly for marathon runners. This study is among the first to incorporate carbon emissions into the travel cost model to estimate the recreational benefits associated with marathon participation.

Research Methodology

The Travel Cost Method (TCM) estimates recreational benefits by using actual expenditures of visitors to derive a demand curve (Freeman, 1993). This study adopts a modified TCM framework that incorporates carbon pricing into the travel cost structure. The data are drawn from Huang et al. (2018), which include various transportation modes such as bicycle, motorcycle, private car, bus, train, and high-speed rail. Carbon footprints were calculated based on travel distances and modes of transportation. The original survey by

Huang et al. (2018) was conducted during the Tianzhong Marathon in Taiwan in 2016.

Results

The empirical analysis employed Poisson regression models to estimate the consumer surplus of marathon participants. The first is the original TCM, which excludes carbon emissions. The second model incorporates carbon emissions into the travel cost variable. The third model treats carbon emissions as an independent explanatory variable. The estimated consumer surplus for the original model is NT\$6,233. When carbon emissions are internalized into the travel cost, the consumer surplus increases slightly to NT\$6,293. In the third model, where carbon emissions are treated as a separate variable, the consumer surplus is NT\$6,295. These results suggest that including carbon emissions in the analysis yields a modest increase of approximately NT\$60 in estimated recreational benefits. The mean value of carbon emission variable is NT\$ 4.08, and the total travel cost is NT\$ 2,145, which is a negligible portion of total travel costs.

Contributions

The models increase in consumer surplus after including carbon emissions indicates that current carbon pricing does not deter participation in marathon events. While the symbolic value of internalizing environmental costs is clear, its practical impact on individual recreational decisions remains limited under the existing pricing scheme. Future policy designs may consider increasing carbon fees or offering green incentives to better align behavior with sustainability goals.

A Study on the Effects of Environmental Perception and Carbon Emissions on Public Intentions to Participate in Road Running

Yu-Ju Hus (National Taiwan University of Sport)
Linh Rin (National Taiwan University of Sport)
Chin Huang Huang (National Taiwan University of Sport)

Research Purpose and Questions

In response to global sustainability trends, sports organizations can no longer ignore climate change. While running provides many health benefits, large-scale races cause significant environmental burdens through transportation, consumption, and logistics. Most participants focus on health and social interaction, often overlooking the event's environmental impact. Both runners and organizers generally lack sufficient awareness, and sustainable actions remain limited. Therefore, this study aims to explore the impact of environmental perception and carbon emissions on road race participants' behavioral intentions and further analyze how environmental sustainability influences running events.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Amid the global trend of sustainable development, the environmental impacts of sports events have gained increasing attention, especially carbon emissions from transportation and consumption in large-scale marathons. Environmental perception significantly influences sports behavior; runners who recognize sustainability measures tend to show higher support and participation intentions (Trendafilova et al., 2014). It also effectively reduces carbon emissions in individual sports but has no significant effect on team or nature-based sports (Wicker, 2019). Differences in carbon emissions mainly arise from

transportation choices, with international travel producing notably higher emissions (Grofelnik et al., 2023). Marathons are considered outdoor sports with significant carbon footprints due to frequent cross-regional travel and high logistical demands. Dolf and Teehan (2015) found that athlete and spectator transportation accounts for over 87% of total emissions, primarily from air travel and private cars. Therefore, marathons are highly relevant to carbon emission concerns, and participant behavior plays a critical role in promoting sustainability. This study adopts the Theory of Planned Behavior framework to explore how environmental perception and carbon emissions affect runners' behavioral intentions, aiming to develop a sustainable marathon behavior model for practical application.

Research Method

This study adopts a quantitative research method and collects data through questionnaires to explore the impact of environmental perception and carbon emissions on runners' behavioral intentions. The research targets participants in the 2025 Tianzhong Marathon in Taiwan. The questionnaire covers scales related to environmental perception, carbon emissions, attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and behavioral intention. The expected valid sample size exceeds 375. Descriptive statistics will be used to analyze the runners' demographic information, exploratory factor analysis to examine their environmental perception and carbon emissions, and SEM to analyze the relationships among environmental perception, carbon emissions, TPB constructs, and behavioral intentions.

Research Results

Preliminary results indicate that runners' environmental perception and carbon emissions significantly and positively affect their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Additionally, environmental perception and carbon emissions significantly and positively influence runners' behavioral intentions, thereby enhancing their willingness to participate.

Research Contributions

Research on the environmental behavioral intentions of marathon runners in Taiwan is still in its early stages. Past studies mostly focused on health, consumer behavior, or event experience, with limited attention to environmental factors. This study focuses on carbon emissions and environmental perception, aiming to explore how these affect runners' sustainable choices. The findings can help event organizers develop low-carbon strategies, optimize transportation, strengthen on-site information, and design appealing green certifications and marketing approaches to encourage long-term support for sustainable marathons.

Governance and policy solutions addressing the adversarial legal relationship between NCAA member institution and intercollegiate athlete

Alicia Jessop (Pepperdine University)

Research Purpose/Question

Following judicial approval of the settlement in *In re: College Athlete NIL Litigation*, commonly referred to as the *House v. NCAA* case, the relationship between National

Collegiate Athletic Association (“NCAA”) member institution and intercollegiate athlete has substantially changed (Murphy, 2025). Notably, for the first time in the NCAA’s 120-year history, its member institutions may directly pay intercollegiate athletes by entering into contracts to share revenue with them and license their name, image and likeness (“NIL”). This study will examine the policy changes necessary to best protect college athletes’ interests while upholding the NCAA’s mission amidst this paradigm shift in the relationship between university and intercollegiate athlete.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The settlement in the House case concluded three lawsuits filed against the NCAA by current and former college athletes. Collectively, the three lawsuits alleged that the NCAA violated United States antitrust law by: (1) preventing NCAA athletes from financially benefiting from their NIL; (2) limiting the education-related benefits NCAA athletes could receive; and (3) prohibiting NCAA member institutions from directly paying NCAA athletes (House v. NCAA, 2020; Hubbard v. NCAA, 2023; Carter v. NCAA, 2023). U.S. antitrust law makes illegal, “[e]very contract, combination in the form of trust or otherwise, or conspiracy, in restraint of trade or commerce among the several States. . .” (15 U.S.C.S. § 1, 2023).

Rather than facing trial in the cases, the NCAA relinquished its historic amateurism principle, whereby colleges were strictly prohibited from compensating NCAA athletes beyond a scholarship, to allow schools to directly pay college athletes. Schools can now directly pay college athletes from a pool of 22% of the average annual revenue of the four highest-revenue generating NCAA conferences. In 2025, this amounts to a pool of \$20.5 million for each school (McCann, 2025).

Where once NCAA members could merely offer scholarships, now they engage in high-stakes negotiations with college athletes for significant financial compensation. In said negotiations, NCAA member institutions and college athletes are in squarely adversarial legal positions. However, the adversarial positions may not be apparent to college athletes, since often a coach with whom they have a trusted relationship leads the negotiation. Because American law makes clear that universities don’t owe students a fiduciary duty, other frameworks must be considered to ensure college athletes’ proper protection in this era of college sports (Squeri v. Mount Ida College, 2020).

Research Methodology

This new relationship paradigm poses important governance and policy questions on how to best protect college athletes while upholding the NCAA’s organizational mission. To address these questions, American contract law, agency law and labor law will be applied to identify relevant policy options to best protect NCAA athletes. Thereafter, the Sport Management policy evaluation framework developed by Jedlicka, Harris & Houlihan (2022) will be applied to identify a relevant policy that not only protects college athletes’ interests, but upholds the NCAA’s mission. Given that over 25,000 NCAA athletes are from countries other than the United States (NCAA, n.d.), this study is relevant to a global audience.

Three digital collaboration tools suited to the 'new normal' of the post-pandemic sport management classroom

Dr Greg Joachim (University of Technology Sydney)
Dr Lewis Whales (University of Technology Sydney)

Introduction and presentation purpose

As sport [management] academics around the world (see, e.g., chapters 15-18 in Rayner and Webb 2022) continue to tease out the most useful lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic even as we attempt to map the 'new normal' for sport management education in the wake of the disruptions caused by that pandemic, [a]synchronous digital collaboration has emerged as a uniquely important consideration (Peters et al. 2022). As a contribution to the 'sport management teaching and pedagogy' category of the 2025 SMAANZ Conference, and in line with the conference theme of Whiria te Tāngata, we will introduce and present use cases for three digital collaboration platforms (Mentimeter, Miro, and MindMeister) that can be employed to weave students together in the sport management classroom.

Background and overview

The first tool, Mentimeter (2025), is an 'audience engagement platform' that offers educators [a]synchronous features including dynamic word clouds, live polling, and quizzes. Mentimeter has proven useful in online, face-to-face, and hybrid classroom settings as a means of enhancing student participation, interaction, engagement, attention, and collaborative learning (Pichardo et al. 2021). Next, Miro (2025) is a 'visual [digital] workspace for innovation' that allows groups to [a]synchronously collaborate on visualisations (e.g., customer journey maps, flowcharts, or diagrams). While Miro can be usefully thought of as a digital whiteboard, and thus a digital replacement for an existing [analog] technology, educators have found it a useful way to better engage students in all settings (see, e.g., Allah 2023 and Chan et al. 2024). Finally, MindMeister (2025) is a digital mind mapping tool that 'makes it easy to brainstorm, organise your thoughts, and collaborate with others'. MindMeister has generated enhanced learning outcomes when used in tandem with other classroom activities (Hursen 2021).

Discussion and contribution

All three tools have been usefully employed in [sport] management classroom settings at a large (33,000+ undergraduates) University of Technology in Australia. Though they were initially employed in response to the sudden shift to online learning following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, all three tools have continued to be useful as learning has shifted back to (primarily) face-to-face settings. To help establish 'best practice' for using these tools in the sport management classroom, we will outline how each is employed in pursuit of both subject learning outcomes and student satisfaction. While the functionality of each tool will be outlined, we will focus on specific activities which each tool is uniquely capable of facilitating (e.g., how to use Mentimeter to engage students in a 'pitch' contest; Miro to create personas; MindMeister to spur discussion). Our reflections, as well as student feedback, will highlight success stories and pitfalls to be avoided. As [sport management] educators seek to establish a 'new normal' following the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the integration of digital tools into [traditional] classroom settings must be handled with critical care. Consequently, we will also discuss known and emerging challenges of using digital collaboration tools in the classroom, including the need to balance the growing need for digital engagement with consideration of

student wellbeing (Dacre, 2024).

“It’s a Grey Area”: Understanding Integrity in Community Sport Clubs

Mel Johnston (Auckland University of Technology)
Michael Naylor (Loughborough University)
Tracy Molloy (Auckland University of Technology)
Amy Walker (Auckland University of Technology)
Linden Moore (Northumbria University)
Sport Integrity Commission

Research Purpose

The purpose of the research was to explore how community sport clubs understand, manage, and respond to integrity issues, with a focus on club culture and complaints escalation processes.

Theoretical Background

In the broader sport sector, community clubs form part of the local integrity system (Huberts & Six, 2012). Instruments and ethical practices contribute to an integrity culture within a sport organisation (Kihl, 2023), but the extent to which these exist, and their nature are not well understood. Even an exploration of how community sport leaders define integrity is missing from this emerging body of literature. Of further interest is whether the underpinning approach adopted by community sport organisations can be characterised as either compliance (e.g., integrity committee) or values based (promotion). Ordway et al., (2022) is one example of a study that has been undertaken through the lens of this dichotomy, but a deeper exploration including accounts from community sport leaders themselves is needed.

Research Methodology

Data were generated through 13 semi-structured interviews conducted between October and December 2024 with club representatives from 14 different sports across 9 regions in New Zealand. Participants were recruited from respondents of the 2024 National Sport Club Survey, which included a thematic focus on sport integrity. Interviews were conducted online via Microsoft Teams and lasted between 45 and 75 minutes. Questions focused on club culture, values, integrity-related risks, and the processes used to manage and escalate complaints or concerns. All interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019). This approach allowed for inductive coding and interpretation of patterns across the dataset, with attention to the varied ways integrity is understood and operationalised in volunteer-led, community sport settings.

Findings and Discussion

Many interviewees found “sport integrity” difficult to define, often describing it as a “grey area.” Some linked it to safety and fairness; others identified risks such as financial misconduct, conflicts of interest, safeguarding, discrimination, and poor sideline behaviour. Clubs mostly relied on informal mechanisms—like discussion and committee-led decision-making—backed by codes of conduct. Escalation typically involved regional or national bodies, though confidence in these pathways varied. Some clubs shared resources or support across codes. While some had values-based cultures that supported integrity,

others said culture “just happens.” Few clubs used Mātauranga Māori or other cultural approaches, even when serving largely Pasifika or Māori communities. Paid staff were viewed as better placed to lead integrity efforts; volunteer-led clubs often lacked capacity.

There is no consistent understanding of sport integrity at club level, and its relevance needs clearer articulation. Clubs are generally willing to manage issues but need more accessible support, particularly around escalation. Values and codes exist but are not always applied. The limited use of cultural frameworks is a missed opportunity. Looking ahead, sector-wide guidance, practical tools, and culturally relevant frameworks are needed to help clubs embed integrity in everyday practice.

The Authenticity Paradox: How Professional Athletes Navigate Cultural Identity in Global Sport Marketing Campaigns

Dr Jae Won Kang (The International College of Management Sydney)
Darren Coughlan (The International College of Management Sydney)

Research Purpose/Question

Professional athletes serve as cultural ambassadors in global sport marketing, leveraging their identities to connect with diverse audiences. This creates an authenticity paradox where athletes must balance genuine self-representation with commercial expectations. This study examines how athletes navigate their cultural identities in global marketing, investigating strategies to maintain authenticity while meeting cross-cultural brand partnership demands. The research explores how athletes reconcile this authenticity paradox when representing their cultural identity in marketing campaigns.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

This research draws from athlete brand authenticity and identity commodification theories in sport. Athlete brand authenticity comprises consistency, continuity, credibility, and symbolic value—essential for building audience trust (Agnihotri et al., 2024). Research shows authenticity's importance in athlete branding, as consumers seek brands aligned with their values (Bredikhina, 2024). Authenticity enhances brand equity and strengthens athlete-fan connections (Safeer & Liu, 2022).

The authenticity paradox emerges when athletes must perform cultural identity for commercial gain, creating conflicts about authentic representation (Bredikhina, 2024; MDPI, 2023). Social media amplifies these tensions as athletes curate public personas while maintaining authenticity (Bredikhina, 2024). Athletes must balance authentic storytelling with sponsor expectations (Sportfive, 2024), while adapting their cultural identities across different markets (Hasaan, 2021).

Research Methodology

This study uses qualitative research to explore professional athletes' cultural identity experiences in global marketing. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with elite athletes across football, basketball, and tennis. Athletes were selected based on international marketing involvement and social media branding. Thematic analysis identified patterns in how athletes manage authenticity and cultural expectations (Bredikhina, 2024; Hassan, 2022).

Results/Findings and Discussion

Professional athletes employ strategies to navigate the authenticity paradox through selective self-disclosure, cultural adaptation, and boundary management between identities. Athletes feel pressure to perform cultural authenticity for brands, creating conflicts about revealing their true selves in marketing campaigns (Bredikhina, 2024; Hassan, 2022). Participants emphasized maintaining credibility with audiences, as authenticity drives brand success (Hasaan, 2021). Passion, autonomy, and relational orientation facilitate authentic self-presentation, with athletes expressing cultural identity aligned to personal values reporting greater well-being (Hassan, 2022). However, commercial pressures require athletes to adapt their cultural narratives for diverse audiences (Bredikhina, 2024; Sportfive, 2024).

Contributions

This research contributes to literature on athlete brand authenticity by providing insights into how athletes navigate the authenticity paradox in global marketing campaigns. The findings extend theoretical frameworks by highlighting the role of passion, autonomy, and relational orientation in authentic self-presentation (Hassan, 2022). The study offers recommendations for athletes, marketers, and organizations seeking authentic brand partnerships that respect cultural identity while achieving commercial objectives. This research advances understanding of the authenticity paradox and its implications for sport marketing.

Digital Bridges: How AI-Powered Translation Technology Enhances Cross-Cultural Fan Engagement in Global Sport Broadcasting

Dr Jae Won Kang (The International College of Management Sydney)
Darren Coughlan (The International College of Management Sydney)

Research Purpose/Question

Rapid globalisation of sport has created opportunities for international fan engagement, yet linguistic barriers limit cross-cultural connections between sport organisations and global audiences. This research examines how AI-powered translation technology enhances cross-cultural fan engagement in global sport broadcasting. The study investigates AI-driven real-time translation and content localisation's impact on fan participation and engagement across diverse sport audiences. The research asks: How does AI translation technology improve cross-cultural fan engagement and foster inclusive digital sport communities?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) examines how perceived usefulness and ease of use affect fan adoption of AI translation in sport contexts (Davis, 1989)¹². Cultural Proximity Theory explains how linguistic similarities shape diaspora audiences' media preferences, while Uses and Gratifications Theory shows how AI translation meets fan needs. The Strategic Sport Communication Model frames AI translation within mediated sport communication (Pedersen, Miloch, & Laucella, 2024).

AI-powered translation technology revolutionises sport broadcasting through real-time commentary translation. Eurovision Sport's partnership with CAMB.AI demonstrates AI

voice cloning at events like the 2024 World Athletics U20 Championships (Eurovision Sport, 2024)⁴. The global AI in sports market is projected to reach USD 60.78 billion by 2034 (Precedence Research, 2025). Sport transcends linguistic barriers while requiring cultural sensitivity (Chen et al., 2024).

Research Methodology

This study employs mixed methods combining quantitative analysis of fan engagement with qualitative examination of cross-cultural user experiences. The research uses case studies of AI translation across sport broadcasting contexts, including major leagues and international events. Data collection involves engagement analytics from broadcasting platforms, measuring viewing duration, social media interaction, and content sharing across audiences. Qualitative data is gathered through interviews with media professionals, technology providers, and fan groups to understand AI translation adoption. The Technology Acceptance Model guides survey development (Davis, 1989), while thematic analysis identifies patterns in cross-cultural engagement experiences.

Results/Findings and Discussion

AI-powered translation technology increases fan engagement across cultural boundaries, particularly for underserved linguistic communities. The sports fan engagement market is projected to grow from USD 6.7 billion in 2024 to USD 8.1 billion in 2025 (STQRY, 2025). Multilingual commentary and real-time translation expand global reach through AI voice cloning (CAMB.AI, 2025). Benefits include flexibility and inclusivity for fans across geographical and linguistic barriers. Challenges include cultural nuance preservation. AI translation quality correlates with multilingual content engagement, supporting TAM predictions (Mohammad, 2024).

Contributions

This research extends the Strategic Sport Communication Model by incorporating AI-mediated cross-cultural engagement pathways. The findings provide recommendations for sport organisations implementing AI translation to enhance fan engagement across cultures. The study shows how AI technologies can democratise global sport access and build inclusive digital communities. For the industry, this research offers insights into using AI translation as a competitive advantage in global markets while maintaining cultural competency. The work establishes groundwork for studying long-term impacts of AI-mediated sport communication on fan identity and community formation.

‘Push’ and ‘Pull’ Factors Influencing Women Soccer Player Migration

Sarah Karlik (Swinburne University)
Professor Amanda Benson (Swinburne University)
Professor Emma Sherry (RMIT)
Professor Ruth Jeanes (Monash University)
Dr. Kasey Symons (Deakin University)

Research Purpose/Questions:

The objective of this the study was to investigate the lived experiences of international women soccer players. There were three research questions (RQ):

RQ 1: What are the decision-making processes of international women soccer players to

live and play soccer in another country?

RQ 2: How do institutions (e.g., employing club, Football Victoria) support international women soccer players?

RQ 3: What are the lived experiences of international women soccer players?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review:

The theoretical underpinning was a combination of World Systems Theory, Push-Pull Theory, and the Gendered Geographies of Power Framework as seen through a feminist lens. Push-Pull Theory explains the factors that influence an individual's decision to migrate and the process of migration. World Systems Theory explains how global inequalities are perpetuated by the dominance of core countries which limit the development of periphery countries. The Gendered Geographies of Power Framework is an approach to consider the gendered power dynamics that shape migration experiences of women soccer players. The pursuit of playing soccer in another country for remuneration and other non-financial benefits is referred to as "Sport Labor Migration" (SLM) (Agergaard et al., 2023). Women Soccer Migration (WSM) is now a widespread and growing phenomenon increasing the number of international women who strive to improve their economic standing and career opportunities to advance as soccer players (FIFA, 2025; Carter, 2014). The migration patterns of women soccer players are complex, often involving cultural, social, geographical, historical, political, and economic factors (Booth & Liston, 2014). The motivations, 'push' and 'pull' factors, and experiences of international women soccer players are different to that of the men soccer players (Engel 2014; Nawyn 2010; Glick Schiller & Fouron, 2001).

Research Methodology:

This study took an ethnographic approach to provide a comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences of international women soccer players. The data was collected for analysis through 1) semi-structured interviews, and 2) observing a pre-established WhatsApp group, "The Player's Network". Qualitative approaches in previous studies examining SLM are well-documented, particularly in men soccer players (Kirk & Weaver, 2019; Love & Kim, 2011; Magee & Sugden, 2002) and more recently women soccer players (Darby et al., 2024; Tieslar, 2016; Botelho & Agergaard, 2011). Qualitative methods enable a nuanced analysis of the experiences of soccer players.

Results/Findings:

The proposed presentation will discuss the results/findings responding to RQ1: decision-making processes of international women soccer players. This study offers a unique contribution to the research related to WSM by examining the specific motivations, 'push' and 'pull' factors that influence international women soccer player's decision-making processes to live in and play soccer in another country (Booth & Liston, 2014; Botelho & Agergaard, 2011; Agergaard & Botelho, 2010). In this study, the theoretical model of 'push and pull factors in women's soccer migration' (Botelho & Skogvang, 2014) was applied to examine the macro, micro, and gender related factors which influenced the decision-making processes of international women soccer players.

Company Sport Club Involvement as a Pathway to Cultural Intelligence and Organizational Commitment: A Cross-Cultural Study

Dr. Minjung Kim (College Station)
Paul Yuseung Doh (College Station)
Chanwook Do (College Station)
Dr. Brent D. Oja (Louisiana State University)
Dr. Jasmine Hill (University of Florida)

Research Purpose

Organizations offer sport participation opportunities that promote both employee well-being and organizational outcomes (Brinkley et al., 2017). Among company sport types, company sport clubs are internally organized and participation-focused (Kim et al., 2024). However, little is known about employees' involvement in company sport clubs and their impact across different cultural contexts. This study aims to examine the relationships among service quality, organizational support, company sport club involvement, cultural intelligence (CQ), and organizational commitment. It also explores cross-cultural differences between Eastern culture (i.e., Korea) and Western culture (i.e., the United States; U.S.), considering how company sport clubs are structured and operated.

Literature Review

Service quality and organizational support are key factors in promoting sport involvement (Ko & Pastore, 2005). Accordingly, outcome quality and organizational support will positively influence employees' company sport club involvement (H1 and H2). As financial support can enhance employee motivation (Lau & Roopnarain, 2014), it is hypothesized to moderate the relationship between organizational support and sport club involvement (H3). Company sport involvement yields benefits beyond physical health, and it is expected to strengthen employees' CQ (H4) and organizational commitment (H5). Organizational support is also associated with greater organizational commitment (Panaccio & Vandenberghe, 2009; H6). Given that Korean companies are mandated to implement subsidy policies, the interaction effect of financial support on company sport club involvement is expected to be stronger among Korean participants (H7). In contrast, because U.S. companies often have more ethnically diverse workforces, the relationship between company sport club involvement and CQ is expected to be stronger among U.S. participants (H8).

Method & Findings

The study targeted employees who regularly participate in company sport clubs in Korea and the U.S. An online survey link was distributed via Qualtrics, yielding a total of 647 responses. After data screening, a measurement model was evaluated, and the hypothesized paths and moderating effects were examined using structural equation modeling. The model indicated an acceptable model fit (χ^2 1638.49, df = 656, p < .001, CFI = .94, TLI = .94, RMSEA = .05). All hypothesized paths were positively significant at the level of .01. Group comparison results revealed significant differences between Korean and U.S. participants ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 154.86, p < .001), further supporting H7 ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 5.97, p < .05) and H8 ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 68.98, p < .001).

Discussion & Contributions

These findings suggest that outcome quality, perceived organizational support, and the interaction involving financial support play key roles in enhancing company sport club involvement, which ultimately influences employees' CQ and organizational commitment.

Due to differences in financial support and work environments, levels of involvement and organizational attitudes varied between Korean and U.S. employees. This study provides empirical evidence to the conceptual model put forth by Kim et al. (2024), demonstrating that sport can be utilized to improve human resource outcomes. Practically, the findings provide guidance for human resource departments in developing internal strategies that promote employee participation in company sport clubs, thereby fostering a culturally diverse workplace and organizational commitment.

Weaving People, Technology, and Culture: Exploring Socio-Technical Dimensions of Sport Media Innovation

Sanghyeon Kim (Deakin University)

Adam Karg (Deakin University)

Tim Breitbarth (Swinburne University of Technology)

Katherine Raw (Deakin University)

[Research Purpose/Question]

As sport and media organisations adopt emerging media technologies to enhance live production, reduce operational costs, and engage audiences in more interactive ways, the boundaries of sport management are being reshaped not only through technological innovation but also through embedded social values and organisational practices. This presentation asks: How do sociocultural environments shape the organisational adoption of media technologies in live sport? The aim is to examine media technology adoption through a socio-technical perspective, with particular attention to the social and cultural dynamics surrounding innovation processes.

[Theoretical Background and Literature Review]

This study is guided by the Technological–Organisational–Environmental (TOE) framework (Tornatzky & Fleischer, 1990), a widely used model for understanding organisational technology adoption. While the TOE framework accounts for a range of contextual factors, there has been limited engagement with the sociocultural aspects of the Environmental dimension, especially in sport contexts where cultural values, identities, and norms are central to innovation processes. Building on critical perspectives in media and technology studies, this presentation draws on Winston’s (1998) argument that technological change is conditioned by prevailing social structures and necessities, rather than driven solely by technical affordances or economic efficiency.

[Research Methodology]

The research is based on 20 semi-structured interviews with professionals working across sport, media, and technology sectors in Australia and South Korea. Participants included managerial and operational staff involved in the adoption, implementation, or evaluation of media technologies for live sport production. Interview transcripts were analysed thematically, guided by the TOE framework, with particular attention paid to environmental factors and the emergence of sociocultural themes across national and organisational contexts.

[Findings and Discussion]

Although interviewees did not explicitly refer to gender or environmental sustainability as

core decision-making criteria, subtle patterns emerged. Most participants were men working in men's sport, and only one participant in each country was directly involved in women's sport. Female representation across the sample was limited, pointing to broader issues around gendered access to innovation and decision-making roles in sport technology environments.

In terms of sustainability, several participants noted cost-related benefits of remote production, particularly reductions in travel and equipment transport. While not framed as ESG concerns, these comments suggest latent sustainability implications embedded in economic rationales. These findings highlight the need to reconsider how social values and organisational cultures implicitly shape technological innovation.

[Contributions]

This presentation contributes to sport management scholarship by extending the TOE framework to more explicitly engage with sociocultural and value-laden dimensions of media technology adoption. Rather than presenting definitive claims, the study opens a conceptual space for future interdisciplinary inquiry into how gender norms, media cultures, and sustainability considerations influence innovation in sport. The argument resonates with the 2025 SMAANZ conference theme "Whiria te Tāngata" by weaving together people, technologies, and cultures, and calls for more inclusive, critical, and contextually attuned approaches to sport innovation research and practice.

Gender and Sports Volunteering: External Margin and Internal Margin

Dr/Prof Megumi Kojima (Ritsumeikan University)

The transition-extension framework in continuity theory has been applied across various domains, including community welfare, gerontology, and tourism (Atchley, 1987, 1989, 1993, 1999; Chan, Wan, and Lee, 2024). In the field of sports, Cuskelly and O'Brien (2013) explored how athletic participation transitions into sports-related volunteering. While sports have the potential to attract volunteers from among their players, the overall structure and dynamics of sports volunteering remain underexplored—especially in terms of gender differences. Gender segregation persists in sports volunteering, with men more likely to serve as coaches and women more likely to take on support roles akin to maternal duties (Eime, Charity, Foley, et al., 2021; Messner & Bozada-Deas, 2009; Wemlinger & Berlan, 2016). Research has also shown that female volunteers score higher on Values and Understanding motivations (Kim, Zhang, & Connaughton, 2010). These patterns indicate the need to investigate gender disparities in sports volunteering through the lens of continuity theory.

This study draws on the SSF National Sports-Life Survey, a repeated cross-sectional dataset conducted by the Sasakawa Sports Foundation in Japan in 2016, 2018, 2020, 2022, and 2024. The survey used a self-administered web-based questionnaire provided by Nippon Research Center Ltd., targeting individuals aged 18 and older across genders, with approximately 3,000 respondents per wave. The most recent waves were used, which include both sports participation and sports volunteering items.

A binary logistic regression model was employed, using heteroscedasticity-robust standard errors. The dependent variable indicates whether respondents participated in sports

volunteering in the past year (1 = yes, 0 = no). The key independent variable is whether the respondent engaged in one or more of 49 sports officially recognized by the National Federation. The analyses were conducted using STATA/SE 17.1.

Preliminary findings support the hypothesis derived from continuity theory: individuals who participated in sports are more likely to volunteer in sports-related activities. Gender differences were also evident. Specifically, women showed a stronger marginal effect—meaning that the positive relationship between playing sports and volunteering was more pronounced for women than for men. Women were more likely to volunteer if they had participated in sports. Furthermore, the nature of volunteering differed by gender: men were more involved in coaching and teaching, while women more often engaged in operational and logistical support.

This study offers both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it extends the application of continuity theory to the field of sports volunteering. Practically, the findings offer insights for policies aimed at sustaining and expanding the volunteer base in sports, with special attention to gender-sensitive strategies. Detailed results will be presented in the session.

Awe in sporting event and proactive work behavior: A spillover model

Che-Chun Kuo (National Taiwan University of Sport)
Ying-Lien Ni (National Chiayi University)
Wen-Hsin Chang (National Taipei University of Technology)
Shih-Chi Hsu (Central Police University)
Lung Hung Chen (National Taiwan Sport University)

Awe recently has been proved to facilitate not just self-orientated but other-orientated actions, exploring whether and how awe in the context of sports can have such a positive spillover effect to individual extra-role behaviors across various life aspects are especially profound. Using experience sampling method, a 4-weekly diary investigation was conducted among 91 employees (who were also football fans) in various industries. The results of multilevel analysis revealed that awe in sporting events positively predicted weekly meaning-making. Moreover, weekly meaning-making positively predicted proactive behavior in the work context. the beneficial effect of awe in sporting events on proactive work behavior was mediated by weekly meaning-making. Overall, the present study provides insights to the recovery literature in organizational and sport management by unpack the directive and mechanism in terms of the spillover effect from sports fan role to work role.

National Teams as Role Models for Values: A Function of Similarity or Achievement?

Dr Lara Lesch (Bielefeld University)
Prof Pamela Wicker (Bielefeld University)
Prof Christoph Breuer (German Sport University Cologne)

Research Purpose/Question

Elite athletes showcase their high level of sporting skills but also their ability to convey sport-related values (e.g., adherence to rules, fair play; Melin, 2014). Thus, elite athletes are considered role models for sport-related values, also highlighted as a central component of the UEFA EURO 2024's social sustainability (BMI, 2023; BMI & DOSB, 2021). The aim of this study is to examine factors that are associated with residents' perceptions of a national team for conveying sport-related values. The main research question is: How do perceived similarity and sporting achievements shape the role model function of the German men's national football team at the UEFA EURO 2024?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977) states that individuals acquire knowledge about accepted behaviors by observing higher-status people. Observed people can have a role model function when they (1) share similarities with the observer and (2) have outstanding achievements in an area that is of the observer's interest (Ludvigsen et al., 2023). Based on previous literature (e.g., Reid, 2017; Stålstrøm et al., 2023; Potwarka & Wicker, 2021) we hypothesize that inhabitants who share similarities to the German team have a stronger perception of the team as a role model for sport-related values. Another set of hypotheses refers to the sporting achievements of the team.

Research Methodology

The analysis is based on representative survey data of the German population, collected before and after the event. Regression models were estimated with the ex-post (n=10,935) and horizontal panel data (n=7,486) and the population's perception of the German team's role model function for 10 sport-related values (e.g., fair play, respect, tolerance, competition), collapsed into a mean index. Independent variables are added for perceived similarity (gender, age, sport and football participation, feelings of connectedness to the city and the team) and sporting achievements (number of players on the team from the same city, scored goals by these players, satisfaction with the team's sporting performance).

Results/Findings and Discussion

The role model index is positively associated with residents' sport participation and their feelings of connectedness to the city and the team. Likewise, positive changes in the role model function are related to an increase in sport participation, and stronger feelings of connectedness after the event. The gender effect in favor of women is in line with studies suggesting that women prefer opposite-sex role models in sport (Wicker & Frick, 2016). For sporting achievements, a higher satisfaction with the team's performance at the event is positively related to the role model function in all models, while objective sporting achievements (e.g., scored goals) seem to be less important. The role model function of the team is lower for residents with a migration background.

Contributions

This study contributes to the body of research by systematically examining factors that shape the perceptions of sport teams as a role model for sport-related values. Sport policy makers can use these findings for highlighting in bid documents how the role model function can contribute to the social sustainability of an event.

Is no Action a Signal? Gender DEI Values and Actions in Sport Governing Bodies

Dr Lara Lesch (Bielefeld University)
Dr Erik L. Lachance (Brock University)
Assoc Prof Shannon Kerwin (Brock University)

Research Purpose/Question

Gender diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are often-mentioned organizational values of sport governing bodies (SGBs). However, studies suggest that SGBs communicate gender DEI-related values in policy documents to meet stakeholder expectations (Evans & Pfister, 2021), while the values remain disconnected from concrete actions (Hoerber, 2007). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the signals that SGBs send from gender DEI-related values and actions in policy documents. The posed research question is: What are the gender DEI-related values and actions signaled in SGBs' policy documents?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

According to signaling theory, organizations communicate information to stakeholders to signal their general attitudes and commitment to organizational values and to contribute to a positive public image. A particular type of signal is intent, indicating future actions (Connelly et al., 2011).

SGBs have started to incorporate gender DEI-related statements into policy documents. Such documents aim to reinforce concrete actions (Turconi et al., 2022), for example, increasing women's representation in leadership positions (e.g., Lesch et al., 2024). Nevertheless, previous research indicates that gender DEI-related values are not put into practice (Spaaij et al., 2020). To ensure policy success, gender DEI policies should refer to signals of intent, reflecting how the policies are actually implemented with concrete actions (Engeli & Mazur, 2018). So far, it is unclear what gender DEI-related values and actions are included in SGBs' policy documents and whether or not values are connected to actions as signals of intent.

Research Methodology

Adopting an interpretivist paradigm, the study provides an analysis of the signals associated with SGBs' gender DEI-related policy documents. In June 2023, policy documents that reference gender DEI were collected from websites of 930 German national and state SGBs, resulting in 143 documents. Using a reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022), the documents were analyzed deductively and inductively.

Results/Findings and Discussion

In total, 43.28% of national SGBs and only 13.2% of state SGBs signal gender DEI with the presence of a policy statement. SGBs signal that gender DEI is a superordinate organizational value and task that serves as the ethical base for all actions with the SGBs, with statements such as the SGB "is neutral with regard to race, denomination, religion, origin, and gender". Concrete values related to gender DEI included, for example, the promotion of neutrality, impartiality, equal participation, and the elimination of discrimination. However, concrete signals of intent are barely sent by the implementation of concrete actions. An exception is the commitment to gender-appropriate and gender-sensitive language, reflecting a signal of intent with regard to gender inclusion.

Contributions

This study contributes to the body of literature by identifying the disconnect between signals of gender DEI as an organizational value and concrete actions as signals of intent. The study highlights the importance of going beyond the simple presence of gender DEI-related policies for understanding SGBs' ongoing lack of progress in this area. The study has practical relevance as it helps sport policy managers to reflect on their signaling practices.

A Conceptual Model of Destination Image, Involvement, and Behavioral Intention in Trekking Tourism

Nguyen Thi Thuy Linh (National Taiwan University of Sport)

Yu-Ju Hus (National Taiwan University of Sport)

Professor Chin Huang Huang, (National Taiwan University of Sport)

Research Purpose

This study aims to (1) systematize and synthesize existing knowledge while identifying underexplored academic gaps in trekking tourism, and (2) propose a conceptual model that explores the relationships among three core constructs: destination image, tourist involvement, and behavioral intention. The model is designed to provide a theoretical foundation for future empirical research, while also supporting the development of sustainable trekking experiences by offering more profound insights into the factors that influence the behavioral decisions of trekking tourism.

Theoretical Background

Trekking tourism is a nature-based adventure activity in remote areas, combining physical challenge with cultural and environmental immersion. It offers both health benefits and local economic value, yet remains theoretically underexplored (Dryglas & Diana, 2014; Rojo-Ramos et al., 2020; Shang & Luo, 2022).

This study draws on core concepts from psychology and tourism. In particular, destination image is regarded as a central construct that reflects an individual's overall perception of a location (Afshardoost & Eshaghi, 2020; Beerli & Martín, 2004), thereby serving as a key explanatory factor for tourist behavior (Gibson et al., 2008). Tourist involvement reflects the degree of personal attachment and relevance that individuals associate with tourism activities (Kyle et al., 2004). The level of involvement is often linked to personal identity, core values, and social connections. Behavioral intention is regarded as a central dependent variable used to predict tourist behavior (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Bigné et al., 2001; Petrick, 2004). The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) provides a robust theoretical foundation for explaining such behaviors within the context of this study.

Methodology

This study adopts a theory-building approach through an integrative literature review.

Findings and Discussion

The proposed model suggests that: (1) destination image in trekking tourism is formed through three components: cognitive, affective, and conative evaluations; (2) involvement consists of five key dimensions: attraction, centrality to lifestyle, social bonding, identity affirmation, and identity expression. Notably, (3) the model emphasizes a bidirectional relationship between destination image and involvement. That is, when tourists have a

positive image of a destination, it can increase their level of involvement, and this heightened involvement can subsequently strengthen and reshape their perception of the destination. Finally, (4) destination image and involvement directly influence behavioral intention, as expressed through intentions to revisit, recommend, or take sustainable actions.

Contributions

This study significantly contributes to theoretical development and practical application in trekking tourism. Academically, this study introduces a conceptual model that integrates three essential constructs: destination image, tourist involvement, and behavioral intention. Through a comprehensive literature review, it bridges the gap between theory and practice by establishing a behavioral model for tourists engaged in trekking tourism. In practical terms, the model provides a foundation for stakeholders to design strategies that promote sustainable tourism, rooted in meaningful experiences and community engagement. The study also recommends future empirical research to validate and extend the proposed model across diverse cultural contexts and trekking routes, in alignment with the sustainable development agenda outlined by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Developing Cultural Intelligence through Experiential Learning: Preparing Students for the Global Sport Industry

Dr. Alexia Lopes (Syracuse University)
Ben Pincus (Seton Hall University)

Research Purpose/Question

This study investigates how experiential learning (EL) can be leveraged to develop cultural intelligence (CQ) in sport management students, equipping them with the competencies needed to succeed in the global sport industry. The research explores how international EL programs contribute to students' CQ development and career readiness.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

As sport becomes increasingly globalized, professionals must navigate diverse cultural, economic, and political contexts (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007; Maguire, 1999). Cultural intelligence (CQ), the ability to function effectively in culturally diverse settings (Earley & Ang, 2003), has emerged as a critical skill. Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) (Kolb, 1984) provides a framework for developing CQ through immersive, reflective, and action-oriented learning. Prior research suggests that EL activities, when designed with cultural immersion and structured reflection, enhance both CQ and employability (Wang & Goh, 2020; Miller et al., 2022).

Research Methodology

This qualitative study employed semi-structured interviews with educators leading international sport management programs. Thematic analysis was conducted and the coding was rooted on the cultural intelligence framework, inductive coding was then used to identify additional themes (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Corbin & Strauss, 2014).

Results/Findings and Discussion

Findings will be discussed at the conference.

Contributions

This study contributes to teaching-related scholarship by offering a replicable model and structure for embedding CQ development into sport management curricula through experiential learning. It provides practical insights for educators designing international programs and highlights the pedagogical value of EL in fostering globally competent graduates. The findings are particularly relevant for institutions seeking to align sport education with the demands of the global sport industry.

We believe SMAANZ is the ideal venue for this presentation, as it brings together academics and industry professionals from around the world, creating a rich environment for dialogue on how to better prepare students for the global sport industry.

What is WIL? Exploring the purposeful plait in Sport Management

Dr Patricia Lucas (Auckland University of Technology)
Yvonne Wood (Auckland University of Technology)

Purpose

This presentation explores Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) not simply as a workplace activity or placement, but as a discipline in its own right. We discuss how purposeful curriculum design and scaffolded WIL learning experiences enable students to build professional identity and transition confidently into the sport industry. Using the metaphor of weaving and plaiting, we offer a practical and conceptual framework for embedding WIL across a program, not just in isolated moments. We explore: What constitutes WIL within a course, and can educators intentionally design for it across the student journey?

Theoretical Background

While WIL has often been framed as an external “experience” added onto academic learning, WIL scholarship encourages a shift toward viewing it as an integrated and evolving discipline (Patrick et al., 2009; Billett, 2015). Effective WIL is characterised by clear purpose, structured reflection, assessment, and authentic engagement with industry. To support definitional clarity, Rowe et al. (2022) propose a typology that distinguishes WIL from related experiential activities based on integration, authenticity, and stakeholder involvement. Their work underscores the importance of critical scrutiny around what is counted, and what should be counted, as WIL.

We draw on the conference theme highlighting Indigenous principles of weaving, particularly the Māori concept Whiria te tāngata - to plait the people. In this framing, the threads of WIL - student learning, educator guidance, and industry engagement - must be purposefully intertwined. A plait is strong only when its strands are woven with intent and tension; similarly, WIL is most impactful when its elements are deliberately entwined into curriculum.

WIL in practice

This presentation examines current typologies of WIL, particularly the distinction between placement and non-placement models, and the diversity of activities now recognised under the WIL umbrella (Rowe et al., 2022; Wood et al., 2020). Using a visual Venn diagram of

WIL modalities, we explore how industry engagement can occur through placements, projects, simulations, and co-curricular initiatives, each with varying degrees of authenticity and industry interaction. This typology prompts reflection on how WIL is defined and scaffolded across the curriculum, rather than confined to a single course or capstone.

Discussion

We posit many sport programs feature industry facing components, but not all are explicitly framed as WIL. The purposeful plait metaphor provides a compelling tool for educators to reflect on alignment, authenticity, and the presence of all three WIL strands within their programs. Winchester-Seeto et al., (2021) argue no single WIL model suits all disciplines or learning contexts. Rather, WIL must be responsive to institutional, cultural, and industry settings. This reinforces the need for adaptable, intentional design rather than a fixed definition of WIL.

Conclusion

In an evolving work and education landscape, recognising the diverse forms of WIL is essential for meaningful curriculum design. As typologies continue to develop, they help educators move beyond narrow definitions and instead focus on the purpose, structure, and authenticity of the learning experience. Framing WIL as a discipline, rather than a set of isolated pedagogical practices, encourages more intentional, context-responsive program design. The purposeful plait offers a culturally grounded metaphor to guide our student WIL experiences.

Creating a Safe Sport Culture: A Management by Values Approach

Dr. Eric MacIntosh (University of Ottawa)
Dr. Shannon Kerwin (Brock University)
Talia Ritondo (University of Ottawa)

Research Purpose/Questions

Amidst calls to shift the culture of sport, research needs to document and interrogate organizational efforts to embed safe sport principles into their organization (e.g., Tuakli-Wosornu et al., 2024). The purpose of this action research study was to explore how one Canadian high-performance National Sport Organization (NSO) integrates and enacts safe sport values within its organization. This study examines the challenges and contextual factors that influence the NSO and its members' (e.g., Provincial Sport Organizations) adoption of safe sport principles over two years.

How are values managed to help the organization move towards a safer sport culture?
What challenges do leaders face in integrating safe sport values?

Theoretical Background

This study considers a management by values (MBV) framework from Bell Laroche et al. (2014), who proposed that value adoption sits within a four-stage continuum. In stage one, values are dormant or inactive. Stage two notes that values are leader dependent (i.e., intuitive). Stage three sees values as being embedded in organizational processes and policies (i.e., institutional), and stage four purports that values are leveraged, communicated, and embedded in strategy (i.e., inspirational). MBV is a leadership

approach that leverages values within the wider organizational culture for the organization's benefit (Kerwin et al., 2014).

Methodology

This study adopts an action research approach. This approach is well-suited to the context as the study aims to generate understanding of how organizations deal with change through a collaborative approach grounded in participatory and democratic principles. Coghlan and Brannick (2014) contend that action research is helpful to solve problems organizations encounter, as people experiencing the issue can create ways to help solve challenges.

The research team collaborated with members of the organization (i.e., created two advisory groups) to assist in the design and collection of data (e.g., qualitative surveys, semi-structured interviews). In the second year of the study, collection, analysis, and construction of facilitation material centred around (re)defining the organizational values to create actionable/measurable items that bring the values to life in a safe sport frame.

Findings

The findings demonstrate that values (e.g., excellence, integrity, courage) were at the intuitive level of MBV, where unmanaged values were not leveraged to create safer sport environments. To move toward an institutional (stage 3) level of MBV, facilitation activities were co-created that identify, measure, and represent values, and address system-level challenges related to putting safe sport values into action.

Discussion/Contributions

The shift to safe sport is not without several challenges (e.g., policy changes, funding considerations, leadership turnover) as contextual conditions keep changing for the organization, stalling progress.

The presentation will detail strategies to help move the organization to the inspiration phase of MBV and a safer sport culture. This research contributes to safe sport literature by demonstrating how individuals within sport organizations can operationalize values (MBV) with safe sport at the forefront of management considerations.

The cost of governance: An analysis of financial efficiency in Australian national sport organisations

Dr Joshua McLeod
Professor Adam Karg
Dr Hunter Fujak
Professor David Shilbury AM
Professor Russell Hoye

This study investigates the financial costs and efficiency of governance structures used by national sport organisations in Australia. Specifically, it focuses on comparing federated, unitary, and hybrid models, with the aim of generating robust, sector-wide evidence to

support future structural decisions.

Previous research has examined the features of federated and unitary models of sport governance, documenting their structural characteristics, strengths, and limitations (O'Boyle & Shilbury, 2017). Issues such as adversarial relationships between stakeholders, duplication of administrative functions, and fragmented decision-making processes are particularly associated with federated systems (Shilbury & Ferkins, 2015). While these challenges are widely acknowledged in the sport governance literature (McLeod et al., 2022), there has been no empirical attempt to systematically measure their financial consequences. As such, the efficiency implications of different governance structures remain poorly understood. This project addresses that gap by directly linking governance design to financial data and insights, offering a more grounded basis for assessing efficiency and informing structural reform.

The research follows a three-stage design. First, financial statements and governance documents from a broad sample of recognised sports are collected and analysed to establish broad cost insights. The second stage involves a national survey targeting leaders of NSOs and SSOs, capturing more detailed data on organisational structure, operational spending, and perceptions of efficiency and alignment. The third stage features case studies of nine selected sports, chosen to reflect diversity in governance type and organisational scale. These case studies combine financial analysis with interviews to explore how governance structures influence both cost and operational effectiveness in practice. Preliminary findings from the project will be presented at the conference.

This will be the first study to systematically assess how governance structures shape the cost and efficiency of delivering sport in Australia. By providing detailed financial comparisons, the project will support more strategic and efficient use of resources across the sector. Its findings have the potential to inform long-term governance reform, reduce duplication, and enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of sport delivery systems. Ultimately, this research can help ensure that a greater proportion of available funding is directed to core participation, athlete development, and community engagement rather than administrative overhead. In doing so, the project provides not only a practical framework for reform, but also a critical empirical foundation to advance sport governance research.

Does Environmental Self-Efficacy Moderate Behavioral Change Through Nature-Based Marathon Participation? A Longitudinal Analysis Using Latent Growth Modeling

Dr Kazunori Maeda (Kochi University of Technology)

Dr Rei Yamashita (Toyo University)

Dr Kosuke Takata, (Waseda University)

Research Purpose/Question

The purpose of this study was to examine whether environmental self-efficacy is associated with changes in pro-environmental behavior among participants of a nature-based marathon event. Applying Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory, the study addressed two research questions: (1) Does participation in a nature-based marathon event increase pro-environmental behavior from before to after the event? (2) If so, is the change in pro-

environmental behavior explained by environmental self-efficacy?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Self-efficacy is a key determinant of behavioral change (Bandura, 1997). In environmental research, environmental self-efficacy—defined as the belief in one’s ability to engage in environmentally responsible behavior—has been shown to be related to pro-environmental behavior (Lauren et al., 2016; Tabernero & Hernández, 2011; Tabernero et al., 2015). Meanwhile, participation in nature-based sports fosters an emotional connection to nature, which indirectly promotes pro-environmental behavior (Brymer & Gray, 2007). However, whether environmental self-efficacy is linked to behavioral change in such immersive natural settings remains an open empirical question. Thus, this study examined longitudinal changes in pro-environmental behavior among participants in a nature-based marathon event in Japan. Specifically, this study investigated whether pre-event environmental self-efficacy is associated with behavioral changes over time.

Research Methods

A three-wave longitudinal survey was conducted among participants of the Shimanto River Sakura Marathon in Kochi Prefecture, Japan—a nature-rich event held during cherry blossom season along the Shimanto River, which is often referred to as “the last clear stream in Japan.” Data were collected at Time 1 (pre-event), Time 2 (2–3 weeks post-event), and Time 3 (4–5 weeks post-event). Environmental self-efficacy was measured at Time 1 using a four-item scale (Lauren et al., 2016; $\alpha = .87$), and pro-environmental behavior was measured across all waves using a three-item scale (Wu et al., 2020; $\alpha = .69-.77$). Latent growth modeling was employed to assess change in pro-environmental behavior over time and examine whether Time 1 environmental self-efficacy was associated with the slope of change in pro-environmental behavior.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The latent growth modeling indicated a significant increase in pro-environmental behavior across all time points. More importantly, conditional latent growth modeling revealed a negative relationship between initial environmental self-efficacy and the rate of change in pro-environmental behavior ($\beta = -.497$, $p < .05$). This suggested that individuals with lower initial environmental self-efficacy showed greater improvements in pro-environmental behavior following the event. These findings provide partial support for Bandura’s theory by highlighting the potential for transformative experiences in nature-based sport events to promote behavioral change, particularly among those with initially low environmental self-efficacy.

Contributions

This study contributes to both environmental psychology and sport management research by showing that participation in a nature-based marathon event can foster meaningful improvements in pro-environmental behavior. This extends self-efficacy theory to the domain of nature-based sport events and demonstrates that such events would function as experiential interventions. From a practical standpoint, nature-based marathon events may serve as a platform for promoting sustainability awareness and behavior change among diverse participants, extending beyond traditional environmental outreach.

Sport-for-development and peace (SDP) as a career? Future directions for researching careers in the SDP field

Mitchell McSweeney (University of Minnesota)
J. Michael Martinez (Louisiana State University)
Landy Lu (University of Minnesota)
Erjia Guan (University of Minnesota)

Research Purpose/Question

The field of sport for development and peace (SDP) has experienced increased institutionalization and professionalization (Giulianotti et al., 2015), including opportunities for professional training, education, and jobs (McSweeney et al., 2021). However, there remains limited analysis of how, if at all, careers exist in SDP, and what they may look like. The purpose of this presentation is to provide a research agenda for the study of careers in SDP. While some studies have analyzed aspects that relate to careers in SDP (e.g., employee engagement) (Svensson et al., 2021), there remains calls from both scholars within sport management and organizational studies more broadly for deeper consideration of how careers are shaped and challenged by both work and non-work factors (Macintosh & Burton, 2024; Poikela et al., 2024).

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Several studies have examined the intrinsic, extrinsic, and altruistic motivations (e.g., serving others, sport experiences) that influence individuals to work within the SDP field (Svensson et al., 2021; Welty Peachey et al., 2018). In addition, other studies have highlighted a lack of formal training and/or the need to enhance professional skills of practitioners (Shin et al., 2020; Whitley et al., 2019), which affect individual's career journeys in SDP. While these studies provide a foundation to understand different aspects of people's careers in SDP, in this paper, we present multiple career-focused theoretical frameworks and apply them to the SDP context to further understand careers as dynamic and shaped by social contexts. First, we discuss responsible careers, which are "careers in which people seek to have an impact on societal challenges such as environmental sustainability and social justice through their employment and role choices, strategic approaches to work, and other actions" (Tams & Marshall, 2011, p. 110). Second, we outline sustainable careers, which focuses on individual agency and meaningfulness, such as an individual changing jobs while still deeming their 'career' sustainable based on their own personal development and subjective evaluation (Van der Heijden & De Vos, 2015). Third, we apply social-symbolic work to the SDP context, whereby careers occur at the level of the self and are socially constructed in relation to organizational and institutional contexts (Lawrence & Phillips, 2019).

Contributions

This conceptual exploration offers several contributions. First, we provide multiple research questions to be considered for examining careers in SDP to provoke future scholarship and theoretical advancements. Second, we respond to calls by SDP scholars (e.g., Welty Peachey et al., 2018) to better account for the motivations, meaningfulness, and challenges that individuals pursuing a career in the field may experience, by using existing literature and the above theoretical frameworks to analyze the different ways career journeys may play out within SDP. Third, we contextualize our conceptual analysis with important factors of the SDP field and broader career trends, such as the power dynamics at play (e.g., who defines an SDP career?) and the gig economy, to offer practical recommendations for SDP

organizations and the field to address key challenges and provide career pathways to better support individuals' success.

Transformative-Servant Leadership Theory

Melissa Meier (iBehavioral, Inc)

Transformational Leadership (TL) and Servant Leadership (SL) have shaped leadership theory and practice for decades. Both models have been critiqued for their limited capacity to fully address the complex dynamic of systemic inequities, unconscious biases, and the increasingly complex decision-making demands in diverse organizational environments. This working paper introduces Transformative Servant Leadership (TSL), as a novel integrative theory that combines the strategic vision and innovation of TL with the ethical, stakeholder-centered principles of SL. However, TSL advances leadership thinking by integrating strategic ethics, innovation leadership, resource equity, and bias mitigation, operationalized through the VIRTUE framework. TSL is specifically designed for dual vision- and service-driven sectors of business such as the public sector, cooperative enterprises, athletic administrations, non-profits, healthcare, and education. This paper presents the theoretical foundations of TSL, explores its applied relevance, and proposes future research directions to evaluate its efficacy in advancing sustainable, optimal, and inclusive outcomes.

Disrupting the Status Quo: Exploring co-participation models in community sport

Katie Misener (University of Waterloo)
Dawn Trussell (Brock University)
Mark Eys, PhD (Wilfrid Laurier University)
Laura Harris (Brock University)
Zak Walsh (Wilfrid Laurier University)
Erin Schmidt (University of Waterloo)

Research Purpose/Question

The concept of co-participation offers a potential new model for community sport programs to re-envision parent behavior by drawing them into sport and physical activity simultaneous with their children (Hunter Smith & Côté, 2024). Co-participation represents an approach that requires innovation related to program design, infrastructure, organizational mission, sport culture, and parent behavior (Misener, 2020). However, there is limited empirical understanding of how this model can be managed by local clubs to facilitate transformation and encourage broader participation within families. The purpose of the research is to understand potential opportunities within community sport organizations for the co-participation of parents and children. Specifically, we explore how co-participation models can disrupt traditional community sport practices through alternative management solutions, structures, and resources.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The current study draws on an institutional work perspective, a tenet of institutional theory, which explores the actions taken by actors to create, maintain, and disrupt institutions (Lawrence et al., 2009). Attention to the institution of youth sport has shown how mechanisms of institutional maintenance (e.g., traditions) can be powerful and ultimately resist change, constrain resources, and reduce the potential for new features of sport to emerge (Nite & Edwards, 2021). Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) noted that institutional analysis must include concrete descriptions of processes and actors engaged in activities intended to disrupt the maintenance of institutional norms. By challenging the long-held assumptions and norms of the youth sport setting, and reconfiguring relationships between actors (e.g., parents, children, sport providers), it may be possible to effect large-scale, revolutionary change (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). Our research draws on the literature on institutional disruption to understand the processes by which a co-participation model can disrupt existing institutional practices in community sport where parents are often left on the “sidelines” watching their children participate leading to parent inactivity or negative sideline behaviour (Misener, 2020; Harwood & Knight, 2015). This change may lead to stronger commitment and retention of families and volunteers, membership growth, and increased club revenue.

Research Method

Semi-structured interviews have been conducted with 15 parents of youth athletes in community sport programs and 15 leaders (e.g., president, technical director) of community sport organizations in four high participation sports in Ontario (Canada). Data analysis is currently underway using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) to determine key themes related to factors influencing co-participation including program design, sport culture, expectations of parents, barriers, and possible strategies for sustainable co-participation models.

Findings and Contributions

Preliminary analyses indicate that there are significant untapped opportunities and desire to engage parents in co-participation, with specific considerations for program design elements (e.g., location, coaching strategies, program structure, pricing). Strategies for participant engagement and re-visioned infrastructure (e.g., facility design) are also indicated. The presentation will offer insights into whether and how co-participation can disrupt traditional approaches, reconfigure relationships, and outline strategies for sustainable co-participation. This research will provide community clubs and policy makers with an in-depth understanding of how co-participation can be delivered and managed for community transformation.

Bicultural Allyship in Sport Leadership & Management Education: A Collaborative Autoethnography

Tracy Molloy (Auckland University of Technology)
Richard Wright (Auckland University of Technology)

Kia whakatōmuri te haere whakamua

‘I walk backwards into the future with my eyes fixed on my past’

Research Purpose

The above whakataukī (proverb), reflects a Māori understanding of time as an interconnected flow in which the past, present, and future are woven together (Rameka, 2016). Life is seen as an ongoing journey where time is fluid and without boundaries, existing as both past and present. As such, the past plays a vital role in shaping who people are today and who they will become, as each person carries their history forward into the future. This indigenous, non-western, understanding of time connects closely to the principles of collaborative autoethnography, where researchers draw on their personal experiences to create shared meaning and insight. Just as the Māori view of time recognises the ongoing relationship between past, present, and future, in this collaborative autoethnography we value reflection on our past experiences to inform present understanding and future action in relation to bicultural allyship in the sport management classroom (Clevenger et al., 2025; Wheaton & Olive, 2024).

Methodology

Crafting a piece of collaborative autoethnography (Blalock & Akehi, 2018; Lapadat, 2017) is cyclical and collective, with each author bringing their histories and identities into dialogue with others. This story shares an unfolding and unfinished journey of self-discovery and socio-cultural enrichment experienced by two tertiary-level educators teaching ethical practices to a cohort of sport leadership and management students in Aotearoa New Zealand. Through wānanga (discussion), pūrākau (storytelling), reflection, and critical self-examination, we found ourselves navigating the complex terrain between intention and action, theory and lived experience. Along the way, whilst paddling the same waka, we have been able to co-create a living narrative that we believe captures the continuity of experience and the interdependence of people, culture, and time.

Findings

Our story highlights the allyship breakthroughs and barriers encountered in and outside of the classroom, the fear of failing that keeps you awake at night, the courage to listen deeply to the voices in your head, the challenge of confronting privilege (personal and professional), and the reward of relational trust (both on and off campus). It traces how our personal growth has been intertwined with professional transformation, influencing how we teach, how we learn, how we connect with others, including our students, our colleagues and our whanau. This presentation shares the influences, the inspirations, the insight, the impact and the implications attached to the individual experiences of one tangata Tiriti wahine (5th generation) and one tauwiwi tane (1st generation), both of whom are genuinely committed to honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi through authentic action and allyship. It is a story of becoming, of being, and of believing in a means to contribute to a more just and bicultural future within Aotearoa's sport education landscape.

Contribution

The process, documented within a piece of collaborative and evocative autoethnography, reveals how bicultural allyship is not a destination but an ongoing practice: one shaped by humility, discomfort, learning, and care. To build the change makers of tomorrow, we first had to re-forge the tools of our trade... from the past, in the present, for the future.

Enablers and Barriers of Potential Volunteers in Community Sport Clubs

Md Safeyn Sadaat Mridul (Flinders University)
Dr. Ashokkumar Manoharan (Flinders University)
Professor Adela McMurray (Flinders University)

Research Purpose/Question

Community sport clubs in Australia continue to experience volunteer shortages in the post-COVID environment, as traditional volunteer bases shrink and younger generations demonstrate less consistent engagement. While existing volunteers have been the focus of prior research, there is limited understanding of individuals who have never volunteered but are open to doing so. This study explores the enablers and barriers faced by potential volunteers in community sport clubs. The guiding research question is: What factors enable or hinder potential volunteers' engagement with community sport clubs and how do these vary across generational cohorts?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Volunteerism in community sport has historically been underpinned by notions of altruism and civic duty (Cuskelly et al., 2006). However, emerging studies reveal that generational shifts are influencing volunteer motivations, with younger people seeking personal benefits such as skill development, social impact, and career advancement (MacLean & Hamm, 2010; Nichols & Ralston, 2011). Generational theory provides a framework for understanding how values and expectations differ among Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, and Baby Boomers (Hustinx et al., 2010). Although this lens has been applied to current volunteers, the potential volunteer population individuals yet to participate but interested in volunteering, remains largely unexplored in sport contexts. Identifying what enables or discourages their participation is essential for sustainable volunteer recruitment.

Research Methodology

This qualitative study employed semi-structured interviews with 26 individuals from three generational cohort who had not previously volunteered in community sport but expressed an interest in doing so. Data collection took place between February 2024 to July 2024, with interviews conducted online through Microsoft Teams. Thematic analysis was undertaken using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step process, supported by NVivo software. Coding captured a wide range of factors related to motivations, constraints, social influence, and volunteer preferences.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The analysis revealed ten overarching themes. Key enablers included altruism, desire for personal development, and perceived skill acquisition. Motivational drivers such as social impact, recognition, and employment-related benefits were especially important for Gen Z and Millennials. Supportive club environments featuring flexible arrangements, clear expectations, and adequate training were identified as critical to facilitating engagement. On the other hand, barriers included time constraints, lack of volunteering opportunities, language difficulties, and limited awareness of how to get involved. Unclear club policies and minimal outreach were also deterrents. Generational differences emerged in preferred communication channels and social influences. While some participants were encouraged by family or friends, others reported no such influence. Although many expressed willingness to recommend volunteering, hesitations stemmed from perceptions of exclusivity and unwelcoming club cultures.

Contributions

This study provides new insights into the enabling and inhibiting factors that shape the intentions of potential sport volunteers. It extends the current literature by focusing on a previously underrepresented group and unpacking how generational identities shape their perspectives. The findings offer practical guidance for sport club administrators to redesign volunteer recruitment strategies that are inclusive, flexible, and tailored to diverse motivations and life stages. By addressing both enablers and barriers, the study supports a more strategic and generationally responsive approach to volunteer engagement.

“You’re Stupid and White:” Racism, Sexism, White Male Privilege, and the Impact of the Case of Sam Kerr in English Crown Court

Professor John Nauright (Louisiana State University)
Dr Aish Ravi (Monash University)

Sam Kerr is not only one of Australia’s most outstanding athletes, but one of the most prolific strikers in the history of football regardless of gender. As the only woman to win the Golden Boot as the top scorer in professional leagues across three continents (Australia’s W-League, the US National Women’s Soccer League, and England’s Women’s Super League), Kerr has won numerous awards. She captained the Matildas to a historic fourth-place finish at the 2023 FIFA Women’s World Cup, despite an injury that limited her participation. She has also led Chelsea FC to multiple league and cup titles, further cementing her place among the greats.

Kerr’s significance extends far beyond athletic accolades. As a bi-racial, openly lesbian athlete engaged to USA soccer star Kristie Mewis, Kerr sits at a complex intersection of race, gender, sexuality, and global celebrity. Her social media presence reaches millions, and she has become a symbolic figure in sport. But this visibility also exposes her to disproportionate scrutiny particularly when she steps outside the tightly policed boundaries of what is deemed “acceptable” behaviour for women in sport.

This was starkly evident in 2023 when Kerr and Mewis were taken to a London police station following an incident involving their Uber driver. A bizarre series of events ended with Kerr being charged with racially vilifying a white male police officer for calling him “stupid and white.” Though she was acquitted by a jury in early 2025, the media frenzy and online vitriol that followed were relentless, with some calling for her removal as captain of the national team.

We explore how intersectionality - the overlapping and compounding systems of discrimination based on gender, race, and sexuality shapes the public and institutional responses to high-profile athletes like Kerr. In doing so, we examine the vastly different standards applied to male athletes, even when accused or convicted of serious misconduct, are frequently given the opportunity for redemption and continue to be celebrated by the media and public.

This gendered and racialized double standard becomes especially clear when considering the Australian sporting archetype of the “larrikin” typically reserved for white, heterosexual

men. Female athletes, particularly those who are queer or racially diverse, are rarely granted the same leeway. Kerr's case demonstrates the cost of stepping outside this narrow mold, as well as the deeper social anxieties that emerge when women in sport gain significant power, visibility, and cultural influence.

We argue that Kerr's public vilification and the attempts to diminish her legacy are part of a broader cultural backlash, a resistance to the rapid growth and mainstreaming of women's professional sport that threatens established hierarchies. Her story is not simply about one athlete's trial; it is a lens into the persistent inequities of representation, accountability, and media framing in Australian sport. It reveals the urgent need for more intersectional approaches to both scholarship and public discourse in order to challenge these disparities and create more just and inclusive futures for women in sport and in leadership roles.

Building psychologically safe sportscape: Examining the signaling effects of sport teams' spectator conduct messages on fan perceptions

Waku Ogiso (Toyo University)
Rei Yamashita (Toyo University)

Research Purpose/Question

Professional sport teams are not only entertainers but also stewards responsible for managing the spaces in which spectators gather. This includes ensuring spectators' psychological safety along with their physical safety. During high-stakes matches, intergroup tensions among rival fans can undermine perceived safety (Ostrowsky, 2018). In response, sport teams can issue conduct messages promoting respectful behavior, but the impact of these messages on fans' perceptions remains unclear. This study investigates how such conduct messages, as tools of situational management, influence fans' psychological responses.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

While previous literature has examined conflict among rival fans (Berendt & Uhrich, 2016; Wann et al., 2001), little attention has been paid to the managerial ability of sport teams to promote fans' psychological safety in high-stakes settings. Drawing on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and theory of social power (Raven, 1992), this study conceptualizes the team as a legitimate authority in the sportscape context. These theories suggest that fans may accept conduct messages not due to personal agreement but to identification with the team or recognition of its legitimate role in managing the sportscape.

Research Methodology

To test these hypotheses, we conducted a 2 (Message: Treated vs. Control) × 2 (Target group: Ingroup vs. Outgroup) vignette experiment via an online survey (N = 536). Participants who identified themselves as fans of specific professional sport teams were recruited and were randomly assigned to one of four conditions. Each participant read a scenario in which either a fellow or rival fan was nearby during a match. In the treated condition, the scenario was preceded by a team-issued conduct message promoting respectful and safe behavior. Primary outcomes included emotional warmth toward the target (feeling thermometer) and perceived psychological safety within the sportscape (Wang et al., 2024). Covariates such as team identification (Mael & Ashforth, 1992),

perceived rivalry (Berendt & Uhrich, 2016), social desirability (Hays et al., 1989), and demographics were statistically controlled.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Consistent with social identity theory, the results showed that participants in control conditions evaluated fellow fans more favorably than rival fans, confirming ingroup bias ($t(526) = 3.39, p < 0.001$). However, the conduct message did not significantly alter these interpersonal evaluations in the treated ($\beta = -0.02, [CI: -0.06 \text{ to } 0.02]$) and control conditions ($\beta = 0.03, [CI: -0.02 \text{ to } 0.07]$). Rather, the message significantly improved psychological safety perceptions, but only when participants encountered an outgroup target ($\beta = 0.35, [CI: 0.11 \text{ to } 0.61]$). This suggests that the message functioned more as a signal of the team's effort to govern the sportscape than a persuasive appeal. Fans may not change how they feel about rivals, but may nonetheless feel safer knowing that the team is actively managing the environment.

Contributions

These findings highlight the indirect yet meaningful role of team-issued messaging in enhancing sportscape experiences. By signaling the presence of institutional control and reinforcing shared norms, conduct messages may promote a psychologically safe environment without escalating intergroup tension.

Bricolage in Action Sport: Sport Climbing Volunteers Support Athlete Preparation for the Olympic Games

KE Powell (Deakin University)

Research Purpose

The 2020 Tokyo Olympics brought three new action sports into the Olympic Games, sport climbing, skateboarding, and surfing. This article analyses Australian sport climbing volunteers' use of strategic bricolage within a path dependent institutional funding system. The article argues that while this use of strategic bricolage provided immediate athlete support for Olympic trials, doing so demonstrates the changing nature of an action sport moving into organisational path dependence

Theoretical Background

Many high-performance sporting organisations do not generate sufficient revenue to exist outside the path-dependant Commonwealth funding system. Situated within organisational theory, path dependency is an aspect of resource dependency theory. (Aldrich and Pfeffer (1976) and Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), applied to climbing Bateuv and Robinson (2018)). In sport literature, resource dependency theory considers, as one aspect, interdependent institutional systems where organisations are responsive to frameworks providing resources. (Kennelly and Toohey, 2016; Lucidarme, Babiak, Willem, 2018). In Australia's high-performance sport funding, a sport must demonstrate that its athletes have medalled or have medal potential at the Olympic Games, Paralympic Games or Commonwealth Games to gain significant institutional funding. (Green and Collins, 2008; Green and Houlihan, 2005).

Findings and Discussion

Upon announcement of entry to the 2020 Olympic Games, sport climbing was included within Australia's regulatory framework of high-performance sport. Many smaller sports, including sport climbing, were unfunded as institutional funding is path-dependant with metrics based on prior athlete performance to determine medal potential. When Covid restricted training opportunities, sport climbing volunteers stepped in to support athletes preparing for Olympic trials. Using findings from a virologist, a small group of highly knowledgeable volunteers developed and implemented novel safety protocols to access training facilities. The state sporting organisation adapted the 'return-to-work' safety protocols and

Champions or Cheats? How YouTube Shaped the Olympic Boxing Gender Controversy

Tyreal Yizhou Qian (Louisiana State University)

Weizhe Li (Louisiana State University)

Chenglong Xu (Shanghai University of Sport)

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Social media platforms, particularly YouTube, have become crucial arenas where contemporary controversies unfold. This study examines narrative construction surrounding the gender eligibility controversy involving Olympic boxers Imane Khelif and Yu-Ting Lin at the Paris Olympics. As these athletes competed, intense debates emerged regarding fairness, identity, and gender verification in sports. While traditional media framing has been extensively studied, a notable research gap exists concerning how digital platforms like YouTube specifically influence public discourse on sensitive gender issues in sports (Billings & Eastman, 2003; Boykoff, 2024).

Research Purpose/Question

Our study addresses this gap by exploring two interrelated research questions (RQs): (a) What dominant frames characterize YouTube videos surrounding Khelif and Lin's gender controversy? (b) How do user-generated comments reinforce, challenge, or complicate these dominant narrative frames? By integrating insights from framing theory and digital communication scholarship, we seek to unpack the interactive dynamics between content creators and audience participants in shaping public narratives around gender eligibility in sports (Billings & Eastman, 2003; Entman, 2007).

Research Methodology

To address the RQs, we draw from a comprehensive dataset of YouTube videos (n=2,804) and associated metadata collected from one month before until one month after the Paris Olympics. The accompanying comments (n=759,451) provide valuable insights into audience reactions, allowing us to examine how user discourse interacts with video framing throughout this significant event timeline. Methodologically, we employ computational natural language processing (NLP) techniques. Topic modeling identifies prominent narrative frames across videos, while sentiment analysis assesses emotional intensity and polarization in both video transcripts and user comments (Grootendorst, 2022). We also utilize word embeddings to quantify central concepts within the controversy (Charlesworth et al., 2023). To provide more in-depth interpretive context, we complement these

quantitative approaches with large language model (LLM)-assisted qualitative content analysis on representative videos and comments (Zhao et al., 2025).
Results/Findings and Discussion

The results reveal stark narrative polarization within the YouTube ecosystem regarding Imane Khelif and Yu-Ting Lin. Videos primarily frame these athletes either as symbols of athletic excellence or as threats to fairness in women's sports. User comments demonstrate an active dialogue where audiences both reinforce and challenge these established narratives, often moving beyond simple binary portrayals. Engagement metrics show significant spikes in narrative intensity and audience participation during key Olympic events, demonstrating how real-time developments shape digital discourse.

Contributions

Our study advances framing theory by illustrating how digital platforms influence public perceptions through the active participation of content creators and dynamic interactions among audiences. Methodologically, the integration of computational NLP methods with LLM-facilitated qualitative analysis reveals an innovative pathway for examining the multilayered nature of contemporary digital discourse. The empirical insights illuminate critical considerations for sports communication strategies and public engagement with gender-related controversies in mediated environments. By tracking narrative evolution throughout the Olympic timeline, we provide a nuanced understanding of how momentary events catalyze enduring frame transformations that significantly influence public perception of complex social issues in sports.

Exploring Framework Analysis (FA) as tool for developing a legal framework for esports betting

Prof. Thadi Joji Rao (O P Jindal University)

Problem Statement

Placing sports bets is not just about who wins and who loses. The rising tide of legal betting could result in problems for athletic administrators, affecting the public perception of their teams. Moreover, it is accompanied by skyrocketing unaccounted profits for the organizers as well as participants making it a vulnerable illegal financing medium. Countries across the world are attempting to formulate laws for drawing its legal boundary. But inclusions and exclusions to this legal framework is inadequately researched upon.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Research in sports have extensively used both qualitative and quantitative research methods for its various investigative needs. Data driven quantitative methods have been used to understand the relations between various sporting constructs and even predict performances and results. Qualitative methods have been applied to understand the psychological aspects of the stake holders and more specifically case study research methodology has been widely used to investigate the various operational and management phenomena of sports. Whereas Framework Analysis remains an unexplored research tool despite its high relevance to framework or policy development.

Research Purpose

The current study applies a novel tool of framework analysis to develop a legal framework for esports betting. The current study explores both the sides i.e. pros and cons of E sports betting and attempts to develop a unified framework for its legal acceptance among all the stakeholders.

Research Methodology

Framework Analysis (FA), a qualitative research methodology systematically developed by Ritchie and Spencer (1994), was phrased as a response to the perceived requirement in the social science research community for a structured way to scrutinize complex and often policy-driven data. Its big asset is possibly its adapting ability for the quantitative enhancement of vast qualitative databases, which has made it interdisciplinary in application. FA is a very structured method with a set of steps starting with the familiarization of the data and proceeding through the elaboration of themes, indexing, charting, and interpreting. This method's structured approach thus tends to enhance reliability and replicability of findings, the most important aspect often found wanting in other qualitative methodologies, while the matrix organization system mingles past data, thus fostering comparison and pattern recognition across the dataset, mostly proving true during policy-evolution cases and service-improvement scenarios.

Results/Findings

The study finds that esports have its own drawbacks such as addictive behaviour for players and fans, game integrity, gambling adverts, financial exposure and image at risk. At the very same moment of time, it may also provide new opportunities for sports franchises to connect to fans and expand their merchandising. In order to reap the best of the both the legal framework has proposed the best fit of interests of the players, team management, regulatory body, sponsoring organisations and fans.

Contribution

The proposed legal framework for Esports will continue to have a vital influence on the direction of sports in the coming times. Professionals who help athletes achieve their potential and bring exciting events to audiences can find many opportunities for growth within the proposed framework.

Evaluating the New Way Sport Fund: Accessibility and Impact

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Dr Ashlyn Hardie (Clemson University)

A/Prof Per Svensson (Louisiana State University)

Olga Khokhryakova (Louisiana State University)

Purpose

This study examines the New Way Sport Fund (NWSF), a novel funding mechanism designed to support small organisations within the Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) sector. Our research aims to evaluate NWSF, via two research questions: (1) how does the design and delivery processes of NWSF enable or constrain inclusivity and accessibility for applicants; and (2) to what extent does NWSF grant structure and process contribute to organisational impact, including outcomes for beneficiaries, organisational capacity, and sustainability?

Literature

Historically, SDP funding systems have generated problems, with inter-organisational partnerships often being skewed by power imbalances between resource-rich funders and under-resourced implementing organisations (Straume & Hasselgård, 2014). These neocolonial disparities are often reinforced by Global North-South divides (Welty Peachey et al., 2018), creating challenges with SDP autonomy and sustainability, thus inadvertently limiting program impacts or even causing negative outcomes (Darnell, 2019). Scholars have called for more inclusive and transparent funding practices that emphasize the needs and capacity of local SDP organisations (Svensson & Hardie, 2024). Consequently, the NWSF was intentionally co-designed with a team of SDP practitioners and launched in 2024 to address challenges within the sector, while researching viable solutions.

Methodology

Situated within a monitoring and evaluation-oriented research design, this study combines multiple qualitative data sources to assess how the NWSF's processes shape accessibility, impact, and sustainability. Data collection is ongoing and currently comprises of four key elements: (1) applicant feedback surveys; (2) preliminary semi-structured interviews with the founders of all funded organisations; (3) reflective journals completed by those awardees; and (4) organisational documents (applications, reports, advisory-committee minutes, and internal correspondence). Final follow-up interviews are scheduled for late 2025 after grantees have fully expended funds, giving the project a 24-month longitudinal window. All materials are currently being analysed inductively through reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022) to identify patterns related to accessibility, perceived impact, and sustainability. Coding is iterative and constant-comparative, allowing to evolve themes as new data are integrated. Preliminary themes reported here therefore reflect an interim analysis of the dataset and will be refined once end-of-cycle interviews are incorporated.

Findings

Preliminary findings show that NWSF provides inclusive and accessible funding through: (1) clear application expectations, (2) six languages, (3) flexibility in timelines, and (4) wider eligibility criteria with understanding of local contexts. Preliminary findings regarding the impacts of NWSF funding and consulting support on organisations include: (1) capacity building for organisations normally overlooked, (2) empowerment through an organisation-centric approach, and (3) enhancing organisations' community engagement through flexibility and autonomy. Minor changes for NWSF improvements were provided in applicant feedback and will be discussed further during the conference presentation.

Contributions

This study offers practical insights into the evaluation of funding mechanisms that aim to disrupt traditional top-down donor models in SDP. As such, this research points to the potential for SDP funders to intentionally adopt bottom-up perspectives and strategically co-design funding mechanisms that better serve local organisations and communities. These findings are valuable for scholars and practitioners working to create more locally responsive funding systems.

Weaving Community Sport and Community Service Organization Partnerships for Inclusive Programming

Dr. Justin Robar (Western University)
Prof. Emerita Alison Doherty (Western University)
Mr. Nick Lenehan (Sport Nova Scotia)

Research Purpose/Question:

In Canada, the provincial association Sport Nova Scotia provides funding for community sport projects that are focused on engaging underrepresented groups. As part of the initiative, partnerships are required between sport organizations and community organizations that serve such groups. The participatory Integrated Knowledge Translation (IKT) approach guided our collaborative study wherein the EDIA Lead (“knowledge user”) at Sport Nova Scotia and two scholars worked together to address several mutually-determined research questions: (1) How do the partnerships impact the design, success and sustainability of community sport programs for underrepresented groups? (2) What have been the positive features and consequences of the partnerships? (3) What have been the challenges, including negative consequences, of the partnerships? and (4) What changes can be made to improve the partnerships and the funding initiative moving forward?

Literature Review:

Consistent with an IKT approach, the study is not framed by a particular theory however it builds on and contributes to the robust body of research on the features and outcomes of partnerships in non-profit and community sport (e.g., Gerke et al., 2018; Kihl et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2013), and community sport programming for underrepresented groups (e.g., Gipson et al., 2018; Jones et al., 2020; Marlier et al., 2015). The study also addresses the growing call for participatory research like IKT in the sport management field more broadly (Rich et al., 2024; Schinke et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2023; Whitley et al., 2023).

Research Methodology:

IKT is a participatory approach to research (Graham et al., 2006; Leggat et al., 2023; Nguyen et al., 2020) where a problem is identified collaboratively between researchers and the knowledge users who have the authority to directly implement the research recommendations (Kothari et al., 2017). Following a further constructivist approach (Skinner et al., 2021) that is consistent with IKT, semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives of five sport and four service organizations involved with different funded Sport Nova Scotia partnerships. Participants were asked about whether and how the partnership contributed to the success of the program, any challenges and negative consequences, and recommendations for Sport Nova Scotia to address in the funding initiative. The fully-transcribed interviews were coded thematically in a joint inductive analysis process.

Findings:

The partnerships had a positive impact through collaborative program design that aligned the needs and expertise of community sport and service organizations, increased capacity for sport delivery and community relations, and ultimately more accessible programming. Partnership challenges included navigating different cultures (sport, religious, or cultural), and added levels of bureaucracy.

Contribution:

These insights, plus specific recommendations for practice, have been directly acknowledged and are starting to be taken up by Sport Nova Scotia. The findings also enhance understanding of community sport partnerships, and conducting IKT research in the nonprofit sport context.

The Hidden Hand: Exploring Intermediary Dynamics in Superstar Labor Markets

Felix Sage (University of Duisburg-Essen)
Cedric Bardowieck (University of Duisburg-Essen)
Prof. Joachim Prinz (University of Duisburg-Essen)

Research Purpose/Question:

Even though representation markets in Winner-Take-All markets evolved to be multibillion-dollar businesses characterized by severe information asymmetries, research on these labor market intermediaries has been relatively scarce.

Research Methodology:

To remedy this, we conducted a global survey encompassing individual characteristics and labor market outcomes of intermediaries in professional football. The sample covers a substantial amount of 467 professionals, allowing to draw conclusions about an entire population of labor market intermediaries that has rarely been examined to date.

Results/Findings and Discussion:

The econometric analysis reveals that specific human capital holds greater significance over general human capital in determining the intermediaries' labor market outcomes. Further, individual effort and reputation significantly benefit the intermediaries' labor market outcome, while pre-contractual personal relationships indicate a mismatch between player and agent.

After the fire: Developing guidelines for return-to-play after wildfires

Dr Daniel Sailofsky (University of Toronto)
Dr Madeleine Orr (University of Toronto)

Literature

In 2023, Canada experienced the most devastating wildfire season on record. Several communities, most notably Yellowknife and Hay River in the Northwest Territories, were evacuated for up to days. In the days leading up to the evacuations, when wildfire smoke loomed over these communities, sporting activities and recreation ground to a halt. Sport and recreation programming pauses continued through the evacuation, for obvious reasons, and into the period following the fire. The return happened slowly, in fits and starts, as resources for sport programming were limited in the midst of significant economic and infrastructural deficits.

The mental and physical health benefits of sport and recreation programming are frequently

touted by sport providers (coaches, trainers, sport managers), public health specialists, and sport scholars. However, a growing body of literature has shown that sport can only deliver on these promises if the conditions of play are safe. In conditions where participants feel unwelcome (Bopp et al. 2017; Rundio & Bunning, 2021), are poorly supported (Breslin et al. 2017; Knight et al. 2018), experience abuse (Stirling & Kerr, 2009, 2013), or where resources are limited and basic needs can't be met (Adie et al. 2008), sport will fall short of its promise. When an environmental catastrophe such as a wildfire or hurricane wreaks havoc on entire communities, the capacity to deliver sport programming in a safe manner is compromised as resources are stretched – or reallocated entirely – and morale is low.

Research Purpose

In this paper, we extend Spaaj and Schlenker's (2014) framework for safe sport spaces by exploring how environmental threats and hazards impact upon sense of safety among sport participants, across all five dimensions of safe space, and how the conditions of safety can be re-established after a wildfire.

Methodology

Using a trauma-informed, participatory action approach, we conducted 25 virtual interviews with a variety of people in Yellowknife and surrounding communities across the Northwest Territories, including sport administrators, local politicians, parents, and sport participants members. Following these virtual conversations, we will visit Yellowknife and Hay River (another wildfire affected town) this upcoming August, to conduct site visits and field work, and speak to more members of the sport community about their wildfire experiences, including the evacuation, return, and the weeks and months following the fires.

Results and Discussion

In our first 25 interviews, participants explained that during the 2023 wildfires, communication and preparation and planning were key factors in safe evacuations and return to activity. Participants also described the heavy financial and emotional costs of the fires, staffing and work related difficulties, as well as the centrality of sport and community both during and after the fires. Adding field notes and ethnographic data to these preliminary interview findings, we aim to work with our participants to co-create policy recommendations and guidelines for returning to sport and physical activity and for preparing sport and municipal infrastructure for wildfires and other adverse weather events.

Examining the rivalry between the Professional Golfers' Association of America (PGA) Tour and LIV Golf: an institutional complexity perspective

Stirling Sharpe (University of Canberra)
Anna-Maria Strittmatter (Örebro University)
David M. Herold (Queensland University of Technology)
Hunter Fujak (Deakin University)
Jess Dixon (University of Windsor)

Research Purpose/Question:

Professional sport leagues play a crucial role in shaping international sport governance structures. This paper uses institutional complexity to examine how the Professional Golfers' Association of America (PGA) Tour responded to the emergence of LIV Golf, which

introduced a market-driven logic into a previously profession-dominated system

Theoretical Background and Literature Review:

We provide a systematic and structured understanding of how the interactions of two institutional logics, the profession logic, represented by the PGA Tour, and the market logic, represented by LIV Golf, impact the institutional landscape of professional golf tours and their actors. Building on existing research in institutionalism and institutional complexity, we discuss not only how institutional logics shape and influence field-level structures in the context of professional golf tours but also analyze and deconstruct the institutional responses of the PGA Tour to the emergence of a new competitor.

Research Methodology:

Drawing on data from secondary sources, we apply a two-step process: First, we identify three specific organizational attributes of the PGA Tour and elaborate on how the launch of LIV Golf threatened the established PGA Tour and led to an increase in complexity. In particular, we use the attributes of field positioning, power, and identity processes to unpack how the emergence of a new competitor challenges field-level structures and processes. Second, we provide a systematic and structured conceptualization of the PGA Tour's strategies and responses to the threat of LIV Golf. Specifically, we provide insights into how the market logic influences the previous dominant profession logic and identify three different field configurations that the PGA Tour used to reduce the institutional complexity stemming from the LIV Golf competition to stabilize the field.

Results/Findings and Discussion:

We found that the PGA Tour responded with three sequential escalation levels to the threat from LIV Golf, shifting more from the profession logic to the market logic with each response to stabilize the field, resulting in what we call 'sanctioned complexity.' Our analysis illustrates the organizational and institutional shifts caused by the LIV Golf disruption, focusing on the PGA Tour's adaptation and the broader implications for sport management in balancing conflicting institutional logics at an international level, including the emergence of new actors with multiple new, often conflicting, demands.

Contributions:

Competition arising from LIV Golf has had a ripple effect on a broad institutional level and the governance of professional golf tours and their sanctioned tournament events. Dominant sport leagues must continually innovate to reduce vulnerability from new actors to the field. More research to investigate the dynamics of logics between corporations and sport governing bodies is needed.

Business Model Innovation for Enhancing the Value of Mass Sports Events Through New Media Platforms

Dr.Prof Xiao Shuhong (Beijing Sport University)

The rapid evolution of new media platforms has significantly reshaped the landscape of sports communication, user engagement, and commercial exploitation. This study investigates how new media platforms can serve as catalysts for business model innovation in the context of mass sports events. It aims to elucidate mechanisms through which these

platforms enhance both the social visibility and economic performance of such events, thereby offering theoretical insights and actionable strategies for event organizers, operational stakeholders, and platform developers.

Extant scholarship has highlighted the enabling role of emerging technologies—such as 5G, VR/AR, and big data—in enhancing event interactivity and eliminating spatiotemporal constraints (Li et al., 2021). Platforms like TikTok and Kuaishou have emerged as dominant channels for event dissemination (Wang, 2022), while user-generated content (UGC) has proven effective in expanding audience reach (García & Welford, 2018). Additionally, new media ecosystems facilitate a transition from passive spectatorship to participatory co-creation through interactive tools such as bullet comments and social communities (Hutchins & Rowe, 2012).

Despite these advancements, prior research predominantly centers on professional sports, with limited focus on mass-participation events. Furthermore, few studies have systematically examined the frameworks underpinning business model innovation in this domain, and longitudinal analyses on sustainability remain sparse. This research addresses these gaps by exploring underlying innovation mechanisms and potential pathways for sustainable value creation.

Employing a multi-method approach, this study integrates case analysis, literature synthesis, and in-depth interviews. It selects representative cases involving collaborations between leading new media platforms (e.g. TikTok, Kuaishou, Weibo) and mass sports events, focusing on live broadcasting, interactive marketing, and content monetization. Utilizing the Business Model Canvas (BMC) as a theoretical lens, the study systematically categorizes innovation strategies across value proposition, customer engagement, revenue generation, and operational optimization.

Key Findings

Research has shown that new media platforms significantly enhance the dissemination reach, user engagement, and commercial value of mass sports events through three primary pathways: technological empowerment (e.g., live streaming, short videos, AI-based interaction), traffic empowerment (e.g., algorithm-driven content delivery, community-based operations), and commercial empowerment (e.g., advertising sponsorships, IP-driven derivative development). From a sports economics perspective, the integration of new media not only optimizes resource allocation within the sports value chain but also drives the transformation of event models from competition-centered activities to multi-dimensional ecosystems that integrate content production, social interaction, and consumption behavior. Nonetheless, this model continues to face structural challenges such as low user retention, complex copyright governance, and uncertainties surrounding the sustainability of profit generation mechanisms.

Conclusion:

Through strategic business model innovation, new media platforms can effectively unlock latent value in mass sports events. However, the realization of this potential depends on the integrated alignment of technology, content design, and revenue strategies. Future efforts should prioritize deep collaboration between event organizers and platform stakeholders, with a focus on optimizing user experience and exploring differentiated monetization models. Ultimately, such integration holds the potential to enhance both social value and economic performance.

Expert and Achiever Sport Management Students Make Meaning about Challenge and Support Elements During their Undergraduate Experience

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Laura Harris (Brock University)
Joseph Dick (University of Guelph)

Theoretical Background and Research Purpose

Kegan and Lahey (2010) noted leaders are incurring a 'leadership crisis,' resulting from increasingly complex demands. Although sport management educators have traditionally focused on students' competencies and skills as crucial in facilitating the development of future sport management leaders (DeSensi et al., 1990; Guidotti et al., 2023), this leadership crisis makes a compelling argument to shift leadership development from a competency-based approach to a consciousness approach (Chesley et al., 2020). In shifting approaches, vertical leadership development may provide an effective lens to foster and assess students' career readiness and transition to work in sport organizations. Specifically, vertical leadership development refers to how people transform their way of making sense towards broader and comprehensive perspectives (Cook-Greuter, 2004). While scholars have explored sport management students' vertical development (e.g., Experts and Achievers; Kerwin & Spence, 2021; Spence & McDonald, 2015), yet to be explored is how Expert and Achiever students interpret the key vertical developmental facilitators of challenge and support. The purpose of this research was to explore how students described their development over their 4-year undergraduate experience in the context of experiencing challenge and support elements while progressing through their degree program, relative to vertical development levels.

Research Methodology

We adopted a longitudinal sequential QUANT-QUAL mixed-method design (Creswell et al., 2003) and requested 18 fourth-year/senior sport management students complete the Washington University Sentence Completion Test (SCT, Binder, 2023) to determine their Total Weighted Score (TWS) to correspond with their Leadership Development Framework (LDF) vertical action logic. We also conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with these students to explore their perceptions on how they experienced challenge and support elements. We employed Braun and Clarke's (2021) thematic analysis to discover themes relevant to the purpose.

Findings and Discussion

The findings represent students' experience of challenges and supports, discussed in the context of their SCT scores and corresponding LDF action logic characteristics. First, students who rated as Experts and Achievers experienced challenges in nuanced, yet different ways. Some Experts approached challenges with concrete thinking, discussing their ideas with overconfidence and erring toward ego defensiveness, while other Experts differed in approaching challenges by adapting to others' needs while simultaneously giving up their locus of control. Alternatively, Achievers expressed greater balance in how they approached challenges, by facing them with flexibility and reflexivity to manage environmental constraints to ultimately incur growth.

Second, Experts differed in their approach to utilizing supports in the face of challenges compared to Achievers. Specifically, some Experts tended to avoid taking active advantage of any available supports while others used a highly product- or outcome-focused approach to using supports when mitigating challenges. Such approaches were opposed to

Achievers' use of supports, where most assumed a process-driven approach, connecting supports with their expanding knowledge, while fostering an increased sense of self. Findings will be discussed in relationship to literature and theory related to vertical development and LDF action logic characteristics. Implications from the findings will be outlined, in terms of program recommendations and necessary changes toward fostering students' vertical development.

The Impact of Sportscape on Spectators' Behavioral Intention and Satisfaction in the Taiwan Professional Volleyball League

Lee Ssu-Ying (National Taiwan University of Sport)
Chin-Huang Huang (National Taiwan University of Sport)

Research Purpose

Taiwan launched the inaugural Taiwan Professional Volleyball League (TPVL) in January 2025, marking a significant milestone in the country's volleyball development. To enhance competitiveness and audience engagement, the TPVL adopted a home-and-away system, with each team designating a primary venue in its home city. However, the physical environment, such as accessibility, architectural design, scoreboard visibility, seating comfort, and circulation planning—can lead to varying spectator experiences. These differences may, in turn, influence spectator satisfaction and revisit intention (Wakefield et al., 1996). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationships among spectators' perceptions of stadium facility quality, their satisfaction, and their intention to revisit within the context of the TPVL.

Literature Review

The SERVQUAL model later identified five key dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Building on this foundation, Bitner (1992) introduced the concept of the Servicescape, highlighting how physical environmental factors—ambient conditions, spatial layout and functionality, and signs, symbols, and artifacts—influence customer behavior. Wakefield (1996) extended this framework to the domain of sports, coining the term Sportscape to describe how stadium features affect spectator behavior and revisit intention. As research on Sportscape has expanded, scholars have found that factors such as seating comfort, cleanliness, and crowding levels have varying impacts depending on cultural context (Quansah, 2024). Overall, satisfaction with the quality of the physical environment remains a key determinant of behavioral intention, and a comprehensive understanding of Sportscape can provide actionable insights for improving venue service delivery.

Methodology

A questionnaire survey will be used to examine how TPVL spectators perceive venue service quality and how this perception affects satisfaction and revisit intention. Three hypotheses are proposed:

H1—Venue service quality positively influences behavioral intention.

H2—Venue service quality positively affects satisfaction.

H3—Satisfaction mediates the relationship between service quality and behavioral intention.

The study will employ descriptive statistics, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses,

and structural equation modeling to test these hypotheses and model fit.

Discussion

The findings are expected to demonstrate that the physical environment of TPVL venues positively influences spectators' behavioral intentions. Specifically, Sportscape is anticipated to have a significant impact on spectator satisfaction, which in turn enhances their intention to revisit. Among the core dimensions of service quality, such as ambient conditions, spatial layout and functionality, and symbols, is predicted to significantly affect satisfaction. Furthermore, satisfaction is expected to serve as a mediating variable between perceived service quality and behavioral intention.

Contributions

Theoretically, this study extends the application of Sportscape theory to examine Taiwan's inaugural professional volleyball league. By integrating the concepts of Sportscape and Servicescape, it proposes a model that links venue service quality to spectator satisfaction and behavioral intention. The Sportscape offer valuable insights into how physical venue environments influence spectator responses. Practically, the findings provide actionable recommendations for TPVL organizers and venue managers to enhance service quality and elevate the spectator experience. These improvements can foster greater satisfaction, strengthen spectator loyalty, and support strategic planning efforts during the league's formative stages.

Sports Work as Boundary Work: Exploring the Recursive Relationship Between Professionalization and Volunteering in Sport Clubs

A/Prof Cecilia Stenling (Umeå University)

Prof Josef Fahlén (Umeå University)

Dr Maria Johansson (Umeå University)

Dr Jenny Svender (Umeå University)

Research Purpose

This study explores the interrelation between professionalization and volunteering, focusing on how paid staff's everyday work shapes volunteering and how paid "sports work" (Kohe & Purdy, 2024) is structured and given meaning in volunteer-governed and volunteer-dependent workplaces.

Theoretical Background & Literature Review

We draw on the concept of boundary work (Langley et al., 2019) to place focus on how paid staff's everyday 'muddling through' involves interactions in which expectations around (in)appropriate conduct in paid and volunteer roles are negotiated and (re)shaped. This situates our study at the intersection of research on sport volunteering, sport governance, and human resource management in sport.

This is motivated by recent research (Bolleyer & Correa, 2020; McAllum, 2018; Terzieva et al., 2024) that suggest that the prevailing assumptions about the link between professionalization and volunteering has been too sweeping, and that more attention is needed to the internal dynamics of sport organizations and the role expectations formed through everyday interactions among organizational groups.

We also respond to calls in the volunteering literature (e.g., Schlesinger & Nagel, 2018) to

investigate how organizational dynamics shape the opportunities, expectations, and demands embedded in organizational roles. From sport governance and human resource management perspectives (e.g., Taylor et al., 2024), the boundary work framework helps illuminate the implications of role negotiations for volunteer boards as de facto employers and managers of paid staff, and for paid staff as managers of volunteers.

Research Methodology

Our purpose is achieved through an exploration of how interactions between paid staff and member groups in sport clubs create role responsibilities, mandates, and requirements that are consequential for individuals' sense of obligation, desire, and capacity to fulfil paid and volunteer roles. Empirically, the study builds on semi-structured interviews with 21 club employees in administrative/managerial roles in Swedish voluntary sport. Data analysis is inductive but guided by the boundary work concept.

Findings

Our ongoing analysis highlights how boundaries between paid staff and volunteers are both reinforced to (re)establish role distinctions or blurred. Key emerging themes include the expectation that paid staff absorb all tasks (because they are paid) and create an environment that supports volunteer roles and creates member satisfaction. This is achieved by staff being the administrative “janitor” and running a 24/7 “customer service” for the club.

Paradoxically, the work environment for paid staff lacks the very features they strive to create for others. The absence of role clarity, performance criteria, and support from volunteer boards leaves staff subject to the whims and demands of members and volunteers. This results in a work situation that is unpredictable, urgency-driven, and boundless in time, commitment, and scope—often lonely, yet deeply meaningful due to the purpose they ascribe to their work and the context in which it is carried out.

Contributions

Our analysis contributes to understanding the impact of professionalization on democratic governance and volunteering. It also offers rare insight into the everyday working life of paid staff in voluntary sport clubs and the conditions under which paid work is carried out.

What can Systems Thinking tell us about High Performance Pathways in Athletics? A Scoping Review

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Research Purpose

This research aims to apply a systems thinking approach to:

- identify and synthesise the factors described in the peer-reviewed literature as having an influence on the identification, development, and success of athletes within Athletics High Performance Pathways (HPPs); and
- explore the extent to which current knowledge extends beyond the athlete to consider the broader sports system.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The pursuit of international sporting success has become a billion-dollar global enterprise, with nations striving to optimise their high-performance sport systems for sustained competitive advantage (De Bosscher et al., 2008). Central to this endeavour is the development of HPPs that consistently identify and develop athletes to achieve podium success at peak events such as the Olympic, Paralympic Games and World Championships.

While there is extensive research investigating the identification and development of elite athletes, there remains limited integration of this research to inform how HPPs can produce optimal system-level outcomes (Rees et al., 2016)). Moreover, existing HPPs exhibit high attrition (Huxley et al., 2017), high incidences of injury and mental ill-health (Pilkington et al., 2024), and access barriers related to financial and social/cultural capital (Padya, 2021). Research exploring factors that influence both positive and negative HPP outcomes is therefore critical.

Systems thinking is presented as a theoretical approach to improve understanding of HPPs in Athletics. Systems thinking describes and understands complex problems by viewing them as emergent properties of interconnected systems rather than isolated parts (Salmon et al., 2023). In this case, it focuses on the whole athletics 'system' as the unit of analysis—its purpose, elements, and interconnections—and how these contribute to HPP outcomes. Systems thinking is emerging as an effective approach to address persistent, complex challenges in sport (McLean et al., 2025). As such, it provides a novel theoretical approach to understanding the interconnected systems underpinning HPPs.

Understanding the knowledge base to identify what is known about the factors influencing the identification, development, and success of athletes in Athletics HPPs is a key first step. Accordingly, this scoping review aimed to determine these factors.

Research Methodology

A scoping review methodology using the PRISMA-ScR checklist (Tricco et al., 2018) guided searches of peer reviewed literature in four databases. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were defined a priori, aligned with the research aims. Identified influencing factors were extracted and mapped using a systems thinking framework to visually represent the factors, providing a holistic view of influences across the Athletics HPP.

Results/Findings and Discussion

180 articles met inclusion criteria. Data extraction identified 334 factors reported to influence talent identification, development, and performance success in Athletics. Mapping these factors to a systems thinking framework showed that over half pertained to the athlete level, and a further one-fifth to coaches, supervisors, and managers. Fewer factors were mapped to higher or lower system levels. Findings and implications are discussed in the context of systems theory.

Contributions

The review reveals that research to date has focused heavily on the athlete. Further research exploring the whole Athletics HPP system is critical.

Optimizing Sport Course Performance in Consortium-Managed Sport Complexes: A Multi-Stage Metafrontier-to-SBM DEA Approach to Enhancing Operational Efficiency

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Dr Prof Chin-Yi Fang (National Taiwan Normal University)

Research Purpose/Question: For consortium-based sport complex management, evaluating operational performance is important for financial sustainability and increased public participation (Fang et al., 2023). This study assesses the efficiency of consortium-managed sport complexes by comparing small-scale and large-scale facilities and examining the performance of individual courses. It highlights how specific courses contribute to overall efficiency and proposes benchmarks for improving underperforming courses to support more targeted and effective operational improvements.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review: The Resource-Based Theory suggests that firm-specific resources and capabilities drive strategic success (Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 1991). Evaluating sport complex efficiency is vital for effective management. Previous studies have used Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) models to enhance revenue and attendance (Fang, 2020). Considering the heterogeneity of sport complexes, this study employs the metafrontier-to-SBM (slack-based measure) model. Input and output variables were selected through literature review, data availability, and expert opinions using a Modified Delphi Method (Ma et al., 2009; Lin et al., 2017; Lo & Fang, 2018). Inputs include course operating costs and course space size (Liu et al., 2007; Fang, 2020). Outputs include student enrollment of course and course revenue (Liu et al., 2007; Fang, 2020).

Research Methodology: This study proposes a three-stage performance evaluation framework using an output-oriented SBM model with constant returns to scale under the metafrontier approach. Stage 1 evaluates course-level efficiency across different sport complexes using group frontiers based on course types. Stage 2 assesses group frontier efficiency by comparing small-scale and large-scale sport complexes. Stage 3 measures the efficiency of individual courses within each sport complex as the metafrontier. Meta-Technology Ratios (MTR) are calculated at both the sport complex group level (Stage 1) and the scale-based group level (Stage 2) to identify performance gaps. Slack analysis is conducted to determine necessary output improvements and provide actionable recommendations for inefficient courses.

Results/Findings and Discussion: This study analyzed 80 courses from 19 sport complexes operated by a major Taiwanese consortium, categorized into small-scale and large-scale groups. The course types included swimming, yoga, badminton, TRX, strength training, and dancing. In Stage 1 (group efficiency across courses), 33 out of 80 courses were identified as inefficient (efficiency ≤ 1). Slack analysis showed that for small-scale sport complexes, student enrollment of course needs to increase by 8.45%–584.07%, and course revenue by 4.03%–163.71% to reach optimal efficiency. For large-scale sport complexes, student enrollment of course improvements ranged from 15.86%–377.11%, and course revenue from 3.82%–206.15%. Most courses with MTR 1 values near 1 were associated with large-scale sport complexes, indicating smaller performance gaps with the metafrontier. Between Stage 1 and Stage 3, 6.25% of courses achieved full efficiency (MTR 2 = 1).

Contributions: This three-stage methodological approach enables sports complex to incrementally enhance their output performance at each stage, thereby progressing toward

the efficiency frontier. Practically, it provides detailed efficiency insights and improvement recommendations for underperforming courses. Theoretically, the model demonstrates how multi-stage efficiency analysis can be applied to hierarchical organizations, offering broader applicability to firm evaluations across departments or business units.

Exploring Qualitative Research in Sport Consumer Research

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Despite growing interest in qualitative inquiry, much of sport consumer research continues to be dominated by quantitative research designs. Though, as qualitative research gains traction in this subdiscipline (e.g., Delia, 2020; Hoeber & Kerwin, 2013; Reifurth et al., 2020; Sveinson & Hoeber, 2020), there is an opportunity to better understand how these approaches are currently used and how they can deepen our knowledge of sport consumers. The purpose of this research was to understand the presence, trends, and potential of qualitative methodologies, method, and research design in sport consumer research.

Qualitative research offers a depth of insight into identity and lived experience that is especially relevant to sport consumer research. Though, researchers have critiqued the narrow methodological approaches in sport management and called for broader engagement with diverse paradigms and methods to advance knowledge production (e.g., Newman, 2014; Shaw & Hoeber, 2016). Indeed, Shaw and Hoeber's (2016) review of JSM, SMR, and ESMQ found that case studies and semi-structured interviews were dominant in research design and methods. Though more recently, scholars have brought attention to underutilized methodologies and methods and encouraged the field of sport management to adopt these approaches to enhance our understanding of sport phenomena (e.g., Cooper et al., 2017; Stride et al., 2016; Sveinson et al., 2021). However, a comprehensive review of how qualitative research is utilized in sport consumer research remains absent.

Thus, we conducted a 25-year (2000-2024) review of empirical qualitative work published in four sport management journals: Journal of Sport Management (JSM), Sport Management Review (SMR), and European Sport Management Quarterly (ESMQ), and Sport Marketing Quarterly (SMQ). Utilizing the key terms "consumer", "fans", and "spectators", we searched each journal for any studies utilizing multiple method (i.e., a portion of the data collected qualitatively) or a solely qualitative approach. In total, 142 articles were collected. For each study, we documented: paradigm (e.g., constructionist, interpretivist, etc.), research approach (qualitative or mixed method), research design (i.e., methodology), research method (e.g., interviews, focus groups, etc.), study context (i.e., women's sport, soccer, etc.), and rigor (e.g., member checking, transparency) were noted. We included mixed method studies to have a deeper understanding of how qualitative methods are used in all forms.

Preliminary findings show that 90 studies utilized a fully qualitative design, and 52 used mixed methods. Across the sample, 57% (n=81) of studies did not explicitly identify their methodological approach, which may cause questioning around the alignment of research

questions, data collection methods, and analytical approaches. Interviews were the most common method (n=81), followed by focus groups (n=15), and observations (n=12). Surveys, when used in mixed method or as a qualitative method, appeared in 42 studies. Notably, 62 studies employed multiple methods. Analysis of rigor is still on going.

This study contributes to the advancement of qualitative research in sport management by identifying trends and opportunities to improve clarity, rigor, and methodological diversity. We argue that deepening engagement with qualitative approaches can support richer understandings of sport consumer experiences.

Building Capacity Through a Sport for Development Accelerator

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Research Purpose

The purpose of our study was to explore the lived experiences of participants in a research-informed accelerator involving five Sport for Development (SFD) organizations. We were guided by three research questions: (1) What did the accelerator experience mean for the practitioners? (2) How did the participation in the SFD accelerator impact their organization's capacity building? and (3) What key insights and strategies do practitioners view as important for future SFD accelerators?

Literature Review

The SFD field has evolved significantly over the past 30 years, yet many organizations continue to operate with limited resources and within resource-constrained environments (Andersson et al., 2024; McSweeney et al., 2024). In response, scholars have identified organizational capacity as a key area where sport managers can drive meaningful impact in the SFD field (Schulenkorf, 2017; Welty Peachey, 2019). Despite this emphasis, capacity building effort remain insufficient, with ongoing needs that have been largely unfulfilled over the past 15 years (Svensson et al., 2018). Recent research reinforces this notion, in that existing resource providers have failed to provide adequate capacity building support (Shin et al., 2020; Svensson & Hardie, 2024), which warrants questions about what else can be done?

Related fields have seen a surge in entrepreneurship support initiatives in recent years (Cohen et al., 2019). One of these types of initiatives are business accelerator programs, which are cohort-based programs involving education and mentoring. Research from other disciplines suggest that accelerator programs can have a significant positive effect on the growth and development of early-stage entrepreneurial ventures (Hallen et al., 2023). To date, however, most research on accelerators remain limited to private industry rather than community-based nonprofits.

Methodology

For this study, we developed a capacity building nonprofit accelerator tailored to the SFD field to facilitate the translation of knowledge from theory to practice. The purposefully

selected participants were from Mozambique, Nepal, Greece, and Uganda. Data were collected through observations, participants' reflective journals, and interviews with participants. We analyzed the data through a reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021). More specifically, we applied descriptive, in vivo, and pattern coding strategies to identify themes (Saldaña, 2021).

Findings and Contributions

Our analysis revealed several important findings. Participants expressed immense appreciation and a sense of disbelief in their invitation to take part in the accelerator. The opportunity to bring their own organizational documents and gain feedback on current practices was highlighted as a significant positive benefit not experienced with prior capacity building programs. Participants also indicated that their involvement directly influenced their strategic planning process, funding models, and encouraged more creative approaches to operating within resource-constrained environments. Suggestions for improvement centered around the pre-accelerator phase, sequencing, and communication. Overall, our research highlights the value of research-informed accelerators dedicated to the SFD space, and advances knowledge on capacity-building (Wegner et al., 2023). Our work suggests that accelerators can provide cost-effective solutions for addressing capacity building needs in SFD. An important implication from our research is that scholars should be more intentional about translating knowledge from theory to practice.

Exploring the possibilities and pitfalls for marketing through mascots in women's sport

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Research Purpose

Women's sport is experiencing global growth, driven by increased participation, media coverage, and investment (Harris & Trussell, 2024). Such growth typically embodies a 'boom' period, with evident attempts to create and equalise women's opportunities to engage with competitive and revenue-generating sports (Thomson et al., 2023). While women's sports have experienced different levels of momentum before and past 'boom' periods have occurred (McLachlan, 2016), the current landscape is distinct in its scale.

The recent growth of women's sport has seen increased marketing and advertising of women's sport and athletes, promotion of elite pathways for women and a focus on encouraging junior participation for girls. Part of this promotion includes the introduction of team and/or league mascots to drive fan engagement and offer various marketing and branding opportunities.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

While increased marketing and advertising is important for broader visibility of women's sport and can be inspiring for young girls to see more sporting options available to them, there is also a risk of perpetuating gender stereotypes and infantilising women's sport to be perceived as only for young girls. Therefore, there is an opportunity for sporting organisations with women's teams to more effectively leverage mascots to signal to existing and prospective fanbases their values and provide more universal appeal to an audience

that is demonstrating different ways to consume and connect to sport (Symons, 2022; Schallhorn et al., 2023). Mascots can sometimes enter this pitfall with the perception that mascots are mostly for the entertainment of younger fans. Mascots are also at risk of presenting problematic stereotypes of gender when created for women's sporting teams.

These concepts feed into the broader marketing and advertising of women's sports which can also exclude adult women and gender diverse people who may be seeking entry or re-entry into sports at a mature age (Symons, 2022), young boys who need to see and experience women in sport normalised, and also adults who might only be seeking to participate in sport as fans in the stands.

Research Methodology and Discussion

This paper will explore examples of mascots, marketing and advertising that promotes women's sport and the accompanying fan engagement initiatives around women's sport that target young girls while framing women's sports through a lens of hyper-femininity and youth participation alongside examples that are working to reach a more diverse fanbase and challenge the status quo of women's sport marketing. Specifically, we analyse two case studies of professional women's sporting teams and their mascots, while providing reflections on how to produce more inclusive and intersectional campaigns. We analyse language, positioning, brand partnerships and fan engagement through the use of these mascots, explore how some mascots risk perpetuating gender stereotypes and infantilising women's sport and how some are showing new ways to utilise mascots to reach new audiences. This opportunity is worth conceptualising further given research has suggested that sport organisations are not provided sufficient guidance for the use of mascots (Ko et al., 2022).

Making Social Value Visible: Structuring the Outcomes of Professional sports Club-led Stadium Operations in Regional Japan

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Prof Masatoshi Tamamura (Keio University)
Prof Takashi Matsushashi (Takushoku University)

Research Purpose

This study explores how stadium operations led by professional sports clubs can foster local connections and civic participation.

This is typified in regional Japan, where depopulation and social disconnection are intensifying. While not unique to Japan, population decline and urban concentration are broader structural trends that may weaken community cohesion. Rather than focusing on quantitative metrics such as attendance or economic impact, the study seeks to visualize the relational, everyday social value generated through stadium operations and to propose an evaluation framework for redesigning collaboration.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Previous research emphasizes the importance of intentionally designing opportunities for social interaction in sport-for-development (SFD) contexts. Peachey, Borland, Lobpries, and Cohen (2015) argue that such interactions are vital for fostering a strong sense of social connection and shared belonging, and that event organizers must optimize both formal and

informal spaces for sociability. Drawing on O'Brien and Chalip (2008), the same study further notes that sport events can influence not only economic outcomes but also individual and collective social agendas. Rich, Spaaij, and Misener (2021) highlight that both sport and community are deeply implicated in processes of social change and stress the need for further research to map how community-related outcomes are realized through sport organizations. Gregori-Faus, Crespo, Calabuig, and Parra-Camacho (2024), in a systematic review of sustainability in sports facilities, identify a lack of integrated frameworks that assess environmental, social, and economic dimensions simultaneously. In addition, this study incorporates the perspective of Creating Shared Value (CSV; Porter & Kramer, 2011), which emphasizes the co-creation of social benefit and business sustainability through strategic collaboration.

Research Methodology

This study examines the case of Montedio Yamagata, a second-tier J.League football club located in a regional city and operating without a corporate parent company. The club manages a municipally owned stadium under Japan's designated administrator system and has revitalized its matchday atmosphere and significantly increased attendance since the appointment of a new president. To investigate the social value generated through this model, the study conducted 13 semi-structured interviews with club staff, sponsors, and local residents. Using the Modified Grounded Theory Approach (MGTA), which enables structured theorization while remaining grounded in participant narratives, the analysis focused on psychological changes and social experiences emerging from stadium involvement.

Findings and Discussion

Findings revealed a stepwise structure of perceived social value, progressing from individual enjoyment to interpersonal connection and ultimately to a sense of pride and belonging toward the community. These value elements and their interrelationships were organized and structured into an evaluative framework, intended to support stakeholder dialogue, guide strategic planning, and make the intangible outcomes of stadium governance more accountable and visible.

Contributions

This study contributes to the understanding of club-led stadium governance by making the structure of social outcomes visible and by offering a shared evaluation framework. The findings provide theoretical and practical insights for redefining the public role of stadiums and reimagining sustainable collaboration in regional communities.

A lack of follow through: An analysis of Safe Sport policy and education from national to community sport organizations

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Research Purpose/Question

The purpose of this research was to examine safe sport policy and associated educational resource adoption and utilization by Canadian national (NSO), multi-sport (MSO), provincial (PSO), and community sport organizations (CSO). This study was guided by the following research question: does safe sport policy and education follow through to the various organizational levels of Canadian sport, from NSOs through to CSOs? As of April 2024, the Canadian Federal Government mandated all NSOs to utilize the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent Maltreatment in Sport (UCCSM) and the Canadian Safe Sport Program (CSSP), directives tied to NSO funding.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Millar and Stevens' (2012) Transfer for Training Model served both as a theoretical foundation from which we developed data collection tools and as a structure for comparison across NSOs, PSOs, and CSOs. Wilson et al. (2022) noted that barriers to promoting safe sport include a win-at-all-cost mentality or focus, athletes' lack of trust in sport organizations, and sport managers' normalization of harm. Regarding solutions for promoting Safe Sport, these authors prioritized athletes recommendations, "including prioritizing holistic development, education for all stakeholders, (and) improving accountability of sport organizations" (p. 10). In this research, we explore the possible presence of such barriers and the promotion of these athletes' recommendations to endorse Canadian-based safe sport programs.

Research Methodology

We conducted a content analysis of 1632 sport organizational websites utilizing Herring's (2004) Computer Mediated Discourse analysis. Using this methodology helped us articulate the research question, select the computer mediated sample, operationalize key concepts, and connect to the data sample. We examined 64 NSOs, 23 MSOs, 633 PSOs and 912 CSOs websites related to their use of safe sport related policy, safe sport (educational) programming, and peripheral safe sport related policy.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The results clearly denoted less follow-through of safe sport policy, processes, and educational programming from NSOs to PSOs to CSOs in Canada. While NSOs were found to be strong proponents in incorporating resources (i.e., over 55% receiving an A grade [above 80%]), we found declining rates of incorporation with respect to safe sport policy and educational programming among PSOs and CSOs (i.e., CSOs averaged a score of F [under 50%], with incorporation rates at only 8.9% of all CSOs). While we found sport organizations engaged in educational programming, we also found the same trend of declining rates of education engagement across all sport organizational levels, concerning given the majority of athletes participate within at the community sport level.

Contributions

This safe sport research contributes in areas of policy, governance, and identification of barriers to their enactment. From our findings, we ask: why are Canadian NSOs falling short in leading the implementation of safe sport policy and practices within associated PSOs and CSOs? Results and research-informed recommendations will be presented in New Zealand, meant to support sport managers as they navigate the issue in promoting safe sport at all levels in Canada.

The discursive delegitimisation of celebrities advocating for the exclusion of male-to-female transgender athletes in women's categories

Dr Savdeep Vasudeva (Amity University)
Professor Geoff Dickson (La Trobe University)

Research Purpose/Question

The purpose of this study is to analyse the discursive efforts of online critics to delegitimise two celebrities - J.K. Rowling and Sharron Davies. During the 2024 Paris Olympics, both Rowling and Davies used Twitter/X to criticise the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) decision to allow Imane Khelif and Lin Yu-ting to compete in the women's 66kg boxing category. The study is guided by two research questions: a) What discursive delegitimisation strategies were used by critics of Rowling and Davies? b) Which discursive delegitimisation strategies contained the strongest expressions of negative sentiment?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Celebrity advocacy refers to when a famous person (such as an actor, musician, athlete, or public figure) uses their platform, influence, and public visibility to support a cause, raise awareness, or promote social, political, or environmental issues. Regardless of the topic, there is evidence that such advocacy may lead to polarised public opinion regarding the celebrity (Park, 2019). Delegitimisation includes undermining or invalidating an individual's beliefs towards an issue of social importance. Van Leeuwen's (2007) discursive legitimisation framework encompasses four strategies: Moral Evaluation, Authorisation, Rationalisation, and Mythopoesis. Delegitimisation strategies are apparent in different media types (Reyes, 2011) and are practiced a lot through digital platforms and even internet memes (Montieri, 2018; Davis et al., 2016). Discursive delegitimisation is widely evident in the debates around controversial topics (Vaara & Monin, 2010) and could lead to portraying a negative characterisation of those advocating for an issue through public discourse (Screti, 2013; Reyes, 2011).

Research Methodology

This study analyses public discourse on the X platform directed at JK Rowling (author of Harry Potter) and Sharron Davies (retired elite British swimmer) between July 26 and August 11, 2024. Both are widely known for participating in discourse on the exclusion of transgender athletes from women's sports. A total of 836 tweets were manually extracted and reviewed to assess patterns of online delegitimisation. Of these, 240 tweets aimed to delegitimise Rowling, while 79 targeted Davies. Thus, in Phase 1, 319 delegitimising tweets were analysed deductively, guided by Van Leeuwen's (2007) framework of discursive legitimisation. In Phase 2, we conducted a sentiment analysis using Python to determine the emotional intensity of each delegitimising tweet.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Overall, the highest proportion of tweets aligned with Moral Evaluation followed by Rationalisation, Authorisation, and Mythopoesis. The sentiment analysis showed that negative sentiment was at its strongest towards Rowling via the Moral Evaluation strategy, with decreasing levels observed in Mythopoesis, Authorisation, and Rationalisation, respectively. In Davies's case, the Moral Evaluation strategy reflected the strongest negative emotional tone, with lesser negativity observed in Rationalisation and

Authorisation. The Mythopoesis strategy revealed no negative sentiment.

Running for Resilience: Participants' Motives, Experiences and Perceived Benefits

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Ben Alexander (Running for Resilience)
Andrew Flood (University of Canberra Institute for Sport and Exercise)

Research Purpose/Question

Running for Resilience (R4R) is a Canberra-based series of regular running events designed to promote mental health via physical activity and social connectedness. The program has established a running community built around mental health promotion (runningforresilience.com). This research project provides an in-depth case study designed to:

1. Examine the motives and experiences of participants in R4R.
2. Understand the specific perceived benefits obtained by participants in R4R.

Theoretical Background

Physical literacy is a theoretical framework that proposes an individual can draw on their integrated physical, psychological, cognitive, and social capacities to live a healthy and fulfilling life (Keegan et al., 2019). Existing research suggests physically literate individuals pursue physical activity on a regular basis (e.g., Carl et al., 2022). Physical literacy has also been associated with positive affect, vitality, resilience and overall psychological well-being in children, adolescents and emerging adults aged 18-25 (e.g., Britton et al., 2023). New research (Naylor et al., 2025) suggests physical literacy can also influence mental health experiences in adults aged 18-65. Subsequently, physical literacy is emerging as a valuable paradigm for understanding lifelong physical activity engagement and psychological wellbeing (Cairney et al., 2019) and thus presents as a viable framework for understanding R4R.

The examination of the R4R context can be positioned within the existing research that has examined other community-based running groups such as Parkrun (e.g., Peterson et al., 2022). Research has demonstrated that people associated Parkrun with reducing social isolation, depression, anxiety, stress and increased confidence (e.g., Morris & Scott, 2019). Despite a growing body of research examining Parkrun, a recent systematic review underscored that future research is needed to strengthen the knowledge base of the effects of Parkrun to determine its efficacy of as a health intervention strategy for physical and mental health (Peterson et al., 2022). The present study seeks to examine a context other than Parkrun and expands the current research into the benefits of community-based group exercise participation. Utilising qualitative research methods ensures a rich understanding of the specific R4R context capturing participants' perspective.

Research Methodology

Thirty R4R participants were recruited from two of the event sites, University of Canberra and Kingston for interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams and last 30-60 minute. Deidentified and finalised interview transcripts were uploaded to NVivo. Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clark, 2019) of the interview

transcripts allowed the identification of patterns participants' motives, involvement, experiences and perceived benefits of the community-based running events.

Results and Contribution

This research advances understanding of community-based physical activity events designed to promote mental health and suicide prevention. Sport management implications will be discussed. The research findings will assist the R4R organisers to refine, expand and promote delivery of their events in Canberra. The specific examination of R4R at the university could inform the implementation of similar programs at other university campuses.

Toward a Fair Game: Improving the Dispute Resolution System for Student Sport Events in Taiwan

Yu Wang (National Taiwan Sport University)
Prof Kai-Li Wang (National Taiwan Sport University)

Purpose

By interviewing the student athletes and their agents, this study aims to improve the dispute resolution system for student sports events in Taiwan, thereby safeguarding the rights of student-athletes.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

For student athletes in Taiwan, student sports events serve the purpose of self-fulfillment (Chen & Chien, 2008). Major student sports events, such as high school games and intercollegiate games, encompass over twenty different sports. Eligibility disputes among student-athletes frequently arise; however, the dispute resolution systems for these events typically remain within the student sport organization, which may lack independence and fairness towards the athletes. In contrast, the Ad Hoc Division established by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) provides immediate and effective relief for athletes facing disputes during the Olympic Games (McLaren, 2001). CAS has played a fair and independent role in resolving sports disputes (Blackshaw, 2013), accepting appeals from athletes regarding various issues, including selection, eligibility, and anti-doping (Dryden & Star, 2023). In 2025, the intercollegiate games in Taiwan trialed a sports arbitration system similar to that used in the Olympic Games. College student athletes who were deemed ineligible during registration by the organizers could appeal to an independent sport arbitration institution, marking a breakthrough in the protection of athletes' rights. The new dispute resolution system appears to function effectively, as two athletes successfully maintained their eligibility. However, to develop a more robust resolution system, particularly for implementation during competitions, there remains room for improvement.

Research Methodology

The study first examines how the sport arbitration system operates within intercollegiate athletics in Taiwan. It then conducts semi-structured interviews with student athletes and their agents to gain insight into their perspectives on the sports arbitration system. The aim of the study is to understand the viewpoints of student athletes and agents regarding the sports arbitration system and to identify potential areas for improvement from their perspective.

Results and Discussion

Both student athletes and agents have indicated that the sport arbitration institution provides fair and independent judgments, representing an improvement over the previous dispute resolution system. Disputes regarding athletes' eligibility may also arise during competitions; therefore, the arbitration system should be implemented during the events. However, it must be aligned with the event schedule, so it is recommended that awards be issued by the arbitrators within 24 hours or less. Since student athletes may be unfamiliar with the procedures of sport arbitration, auxiliary measures, such as pre-game education and pro bono legal counsel, should be implemented to assist student athletes in utilizing this system to protect their rights.

Contributions

The study gathered the perspectives of student athletes regarding the sports arbitration system used in student athletic events. The findings offer student sports organizations valuable insights to improve the dispute resolution process in these events.

Rethinking The “Gold Plan” Policy in Taiwan

Yu Wang (National Taiwan Sport University)
Prof Kai-Li Wang (National Taiwan Sport University)

Purpose

This study examines the policies implemented by the Taiwanese government to support high-performance athletes and references relevant policies from other countries to provide recommendations for better protecting the rights of athletes in the future.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Previous studies have indicated that government involvement in competitive sports is advantageous for the development of both the country and society (Sam, 2009). In Taiwan, the government's support for athletes has consistently been a focal point in the evolution of sports policy (Fang & Kuo, 2021). Consequently, the government has established the Gold Plan (Liang, 2008), which provides subsidies through contracts with national sport organizations (NSOs) and high-performance athletes, aiming to offer greater support to athletes. However, the outcomes of this policy's implementation in recent years may not optimally facilitate the career development of athletes. Therefore, there is a need for review and revision of the Gold Plan policy.

Methodology

This study will review the relevant texts of the Gold Plan, highlight its impact on the rights of athletes, and compare it with similar policies in other countries to provide recommendations for policy revisions.

Results/Findings, and Discussion

The research findings indicate that the Gold Plan contract, which mandates athletes to participate in designated competitions as stipulated by the single-sport association, may not always serve the best interests of athlete development. Furthermore, it has the potential to become a mechanism for NSOs to exert control over athletes. In comparison to the policies

of other countries, Taiwan should more comprehensively integrate athletes' perspectives during the negotiation of Gold Plan contracts. Additionally, it should encourage individual sports associations and athletes to effectively utilize sports arbitration and other systems to instantly resolve disputes when they occur.

Contributions

This study reviews and analyzes the current text and examines the systems of other countries to propose recommendations for amending the Gold Plan policy, with the aim of better protecting the rights and career development of athletes.

The Inclusion and Exclusion of Esports in the Olympic Games: A Scoping Review

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Dr Mel Johnston (Auckland University of Technology)
Dr Michael Naylor (Loughborough University London)

Research Aim and Question

This review aims to critically examine the ongoing debate surrounding the integration of esports within the Olympic Movement. The central research question guiding this review is: What factors have been identified as influencing the inclusion and exclusion of esports in the Olympic Games?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The inclusion of esports in the Olympic Games has generated considerable debate. On one hand, its global popularity, appeal to younger audiences, and alignment with contemporary digital trends position it as a compelling addition to the Olympic Movement (Jenny et al., 2024; Todt et al., 2020). Proponents argue that esports can contribute to modernizing the Olympics, fostering technological innovation, and increasing the cultural relevance of the Olympic Movement in a changing sports landscape (Parry & Giesbrecht, 2023; Todt et al., 2020).

On the other hand, critics highlight significant challenges, including commercial publishers dominating governance, ethical concerns such as violent content, gender inequities, and toxic community cultures, as well as debates over esports' legitimacy as a sport due to the absence of traditional physical activity (Heidenreich, 2025; Nelson et al., 2025; Pack & Hedlund, 2020).

Research Methodology

This review employs Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) five-stage scoping review framework: (1) identifying the research question, (2) identifying relevant studies, (3) selecting studies, (4) charting data, and (5) collating, summarizing, and reporting findings. Literature searches are conducted across multiple academic databases. Study selection involves initial screening of titles and abstracts, followed by full-text evaluation against the following criteria: peer-reviewed articles published in or after 2010, available in English, and relevant to the inclusion or exclusion of esports in the Olympics. Data extraction uses a standardized charting form capturing key attributes of the studies.

Findings and Discussion

With esports now formally integrated into the Olympic framework through the Olympic

Esports Games 2027 (IOC, 2025), the debate has shifted from whether esports should be included to how it can be effectively integrated. The review highlights the IOC's strategic focus on virtual sports simulations, such as cycling, sailing, and archery, which align closely with traditional Olympic disciplines (Lefebvre et al., 2023; Parry & Giesbrecht, 2023). This approach facilitates experimentation and digital innovation while preserving the Olympic Movement's integrity and values. However, significant challenges persist regarding governance and ethical considerations due to esports' commercially driven structure (Todd et al., 2020). Aligning the inherently digital nature of esports with Olympic traditions, institutional values, and broader cultural expectations remains a central challenge and offers important avenues for further research (Lefebvre et al., 2023; Parry, 2021).

Contributions

This review contributes to synthesizing existing debates and identifying critical factors influencing esports' Olympic integration, particularly institutional adaptation, legitimacy, and cultural representation. It highlights essential areas for future research, including governance structures, ethical frameworks, and the impact of esports integration on the Olympic Movement's broader identity. Furthermore, it offers practical recommendations for policymakers to align digital innovations with the Olympic Movement's core values and integrity, ensuring the sustainable integration of esports.

'A game changer': An explanatory investigation into the impact of COVID-19 consequences on sport tourist motivations.

Ranjan Weerakoon (Auckland University of Technology, University of Kelaniya)
Dr Richard Keith Wright (Auckland University of Technology)
Dr Melody Johnston (Auckland University of Technology)

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic affected populations across every inhabited continent, severely disrupting lives and livelihoods. Among the most impacted sectors were sport, events, and tourism, which rely heavily on global travel and social interaction (Jamal & Budke, 2020; Ludvigsen & Hayton, 2020).

Research Purpose

This study aims to identify and compare the extent to which COVID-19-related travel restrictions and lockdowns influenced the decision-making behaviour of sport event tourists in Sri Lanka and New Zealand. Additionally, the research evaluates consumer mood, movement, and motivation during 2020 and 2021, but also in the aftermath of the global lockdowns.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Over the past two decades, numerous studies have examined the decision-making behaviour of sport consumers (Funk & James, 2001; Alonso Dos Santos & Montoro Rios, 2014; Keogh et al., 2019; Qian et al., 2020; Tachis & Tzetzis, 2015). These investigations often reflect the situational context at the time of data collection, highlighting how shifting socio-economic conditions influence individuals' moods and motivations. Literature published at the time of the unprecedented international travel restrictions, however, argued that findings from pre-pandemic studies may not be fully applicable in the current context

(Zwanka & Buff, 2021).

Protection Motivation Theory (PMT) posits that individuals make decisions based on their motivation to protect themselves from perceived threats (Rezende et al., 2024), while the Profile of Mood States (POMS), developed by McNair, Lorr, and Droppleman (1971), evaluates mood and its influence on behaviour. Along with the Theory of Planned Behaviour, these models provide a comprehensive framework for analysing both motivational and emotional factors affecting consumer behaviour during uncertain times.

Methodology

An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was employed to explore the decision-making processes of sport tourists, with data collected through self-administered online questionnaires. The study aims to reach 200 sport tourists via selected sport tour organising companies in Sri Lanka and New Zealand. A purposive sampling method will be used to recruit participants. To analyse the data, a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) will be conducted to compare the moods and motivations of sport tourists across three time periods: before, during, and after COVID-19. Additionally, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) will be employed to validate the dimensional structure of the mood and motivation measurement scales.

Expected Outcomes

The findings contribute valuable knowledge for sport management and marketing organisations in both Sri Lanka and New Zealand. The findings and recommendations support the development of targeted strategies to rebuild and sustain the sport event and sport tourism sector, taking into account noticeable shifts in behaviour, emotional responses, and safety perceptions following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sport governing bodies' pro-environmental behavior

Pamela Wicker (Bielefeld University)
Christian Zierke (Bielefeld University)

Research Purpose/Question

In the Agenda 2030, the United Nations (UN) highlight the need for climate action as one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2015). Sport is considered a valuable facilitator for reaching these goals (UN, 2015). Particularly sport governing bodies (SGBs) can serve as role models by signaling the need for change and draw member organizations' attention to the issue of pro-environmental behavior (PEB). McCullough et al. (2016) offer a 3-wave typology that categorizes the stages of sport organizations' PEB. Hugaerts et al. (2023) add a wave 0 for organizations that do not engage in PEB. However, correlates of sport organizations' PEB remain largely unexplored. The purpose of this study is to examine the PEB of SGBs in Germany and to identify its correlates. The research questions are as follows: (1) In which waves of PEB are German SGBs situated? (2) Which organizational- and state-level factors are associated with SGBs' belonging to different waves of PEB?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The study draws on institutional theory, stating that organizations are formed by their

institutional geographic environment (Scott, 2014), such as the state where the SGB's headquarter is located. For example, SGBs in more economically developed states might promote PEB, which is usually costly (Wall-Tweedie & Nguyen, 2016). Moreover, the political environment in terms of state government composition might also shape their PEB. At the organizational level, board gender diversity might play a role as boards with more women might be more prone to communal prosocial behavior (Eagly, 2009), i.e., actions intended to benefit others (Bierhoff, 2005), including the natural environment. Larger organizations might engage in PEB because they are exposed to greater stakeholder scrutiny and have access to more financial resources (Wall-Tweedie & Nguyen, 2016).

Research Methodology

Data on German national and regional SGBs (n=787) were collected with a website analysis between January and May 2025. The SGBs were subsequently categorized into an adjusted version of the above 4-wave typology. State-level data were retrieved from the Federal Statistical Office, the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, and the parliament of the state governments. The empirical analysis consisted of logistic regressions with the different waves (waves 0-3) as dependent variables and organizational factors (e.g., board gender diversity, size, national/regional level) and state-level factors (e.g., ecological factors, economic and political environment) as independent variables.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The results show that 38% of German SGBs show some form of PEB, with 21.5% being in wave 1, 13.1% in wave 2, and only 3.4% in wave 3. The regression results indicate that SGBs' size as well as whether the SGB represents a nature sport and operates at the national level are positively correlated with PEB. State nature reservation area and gross domestic product of the state as well as government participation of the Conservative and Green party are positively associated with higher waves of PEB.

Contributions

This study yields first insights into the PEB of SGBs in Germany, and provides information how organizational- and state-level factors correlate with SGBs' PEB.

Broadening Career Aspirations for Sport Management Students - Disability Sport

Cindy Wiersma (Auckland University of Technology)

Disability sport is gaining traction in the minds and budgets of central and local government agencies in New Zealand, as well as national, regional, and community sport organisations and facilities. It is a growing segment of the sport management industry with viable jobs and careers for graduates within various disability sport organisations as well as mainstream sport and school sport programmes.

Purpose:

To introduce a Disability Sport Symposium as part of the sport management curriculum to increase students' awareness and appreciation of disability as an important aspect of sport management, both in terms of career opportunities and as an area of responsibility for the wider sport sector.

Background and Literature:

Recent data collected by Sport New Zealand (2025) indicates that one in six New Zealanders experience some form of disability including physical, sensory, and intellectual impairments, with learning difficulty the most common for children (52% of disabled children and 6% of all NZ children). Sport NZ invested \$7million into the sector including direct funding into organisations and other initiatives arising from their 2019 Disability Plan. The Commission on Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA) is a specialised accrediting body whose purpose is to promote and recognise excellence in sport management education worldwide (COSMA, 2025). COSMA states that a sport management programme should ensure that students possess the knowledge, skills, and experiences to understand and operate effectively in a diverse sport environment by including diversity issues in sport management, across the undergraduate curriculum.

The Symposium:

A Disability Sport Symposium, featuring guest speakers from the disability sport sector, was held for sport management students at Auckland University of Technology this year as part of a Year 2 Sport Development course focussing on sport for social inclusion. Guest presenters from six different organisations were involved, including three recent graduates currently working in disability sport organisations. The lead up to the symposium included introductory information on the sector, key organisations, and New Zealand disability statistics. A worksheet was prepared including thought provoking questions for students to discuss and answer throughout the symposium. Students posed questions for a panel discussion in the second half of the symposium.

Results and Discussion:

Sixty one students attended the symposium with 60% of attendees completing an anonymous post symposium survey. Seventeen percent of respondents stated they had considered a career (or placement) in the disability sport sector before the symposium, with 92% answering 'yes' or 'maybe' they would consider a placement in this sector after the symposium, representing a 75% conversion from 'no' to 'yes' or 'maybe'. Inclusion of New Zealanders with disabilities is everybody's role and responsibility, not just the responsibility of disability organisations. Inclusionary change needs to be integrated into the strategic direction of the wider sport sector. It is our responsibility as sport management academics, to ensure that our graduates are prepared to enter the sport sector aware and able to continue to make progress in this important area.

'Full contact' Paradoxical tensions of addressing climate action in the midst of financial uncertainty: a case study of Professional Rugby Union

Jamie Wilks (Loughborough University London)
James Andrew Kenyon (Loughborough University)
Robert L. Wilby (Loughborough University)
Madeleine Orr (University of Toronto)

1. Research purpose/ questions

Since Rugby Union professionalised in 1995, the game has become increasingly commercialised and further entrenched in the globalised capitalist economic system (Skinner et al. 2003; Wilson and Millington, 2020). This hyper-commercialised model aims

to increase the number of events and participation numbers, attract new sponsorships, sell more TV subscriptions and maximise the consumption of sporting merchandise (Chen and Kellison, 2023). Yet, there is increasing pressure on sporting organisations to reduce their ecological footprint (Wilby et al. 2022). Therefore, sporting managers face the difficult challenge of balancing multiple objectives of maximising sporting performance, increasing commercial revenues, addressing gender inequalities, with the urgent environmental tasks of reducing carbon emissions, achieving circularity, halting biodiversity loss, and adapting to climate hazards (Orr et al. 2022). This led to the formulation of the following research question:

RQ1: What are the tensions between practices aimed at addressing the multiple planetary crises and sporting and financial objectives of Professional Rugby Union?

2. Theoretical background and literature review

To meet economic, environmental, and social objectives decision-makers are confronted with complex situations full of tensions (Hahn et al., 2015). Paradox theory asserts that organisations face “contradictory yet interrelated elements that exist simultaneously and persist over time” (Smith and Lewis, 2011: 382). Smith and Lewis (2011) assert there are four types of paradoxical tensions: learning, belonging, learning, and organising. Tensions can occur between individuals, organisations, and at the systems level (Hahn et al., 2015). In response to perceived tensions, firms draw on instrumental, acceptance, or defensive strategies (Van der Byl and Slawinski, 2015).

3. Methodology

This study used a multiple case study design of five Professional Rugby Union clubs across England, Wales and Ireland. At the time of writing, 14 semi-structured interviews have been conducted with sustainability managers, operations managers, and commercial directors. Interviews were transcribed verbatim, and using the Gioia et al. (2014) method, a grounded theory was developed to understand how Professional Rugby clubs manage paradox.

4. Results and discussion

Two cases perceived performing tensions, as the financial challenges facing the game meant limited budgets were prioritised on revenue-generating initiatives over climate mitigation practices. Second, organising tensions were perceived due to the lack of a regulatory framework across professional rugby in the United Kingdom. The professional clubs investing financial and human resources into climate action perceived that other clubs not investing the same capital could be at a competitive advantage on the field. In response to tensions, acceptance strategies were evident in three cases (Hahn et al., 2015). Professional clubs have responded to the tension between reducing carbon emissions and increasing revenues through commercial partnerships. Commercial partnerships with companies that are directly addressing energy transition – and not slowing it down – provide the clubs with renewable energy technologies while maintaining commercial revenue. These findings contribute to the sport ecology field by outlining the underlying tensions between climate action and the sporting or financial goals in professional sport. In addition, this research provides practical recommendations for sporting practitioners looking to reduce their carbon emissions.

Development and Validation of the Motivation Scale for Exergames

Yufan Wu (Waseda University)
Prof Hirotaka Matsuoka (Waseda University)

Research Purpose

Exergames, defined as the combination of exercise and video games (Bogost, 2007), have emerged as a popular form of physical activity; however, no validated instrument currently exists to measure individuals' motivations for playing them. This gap limits researchers' and developers' ability to understand why users engage with exergames and how to improve their design and promotion. To address this issue, the present study develops and validates a multidimensional scale that captures six motivational dimensions: Physical Fitness, Convenience, Social Interaction, Entertainment, Challenge, and Innovativeness. To enhance the cross-cultural applicability of the scale, it was translated and examined in Japanese, Chinese, and Spanish as well as English.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Grounded in Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz et al., 1974), this study views exergame play as a goal-directed behavior aimed at satisfying extrinsic and intrinsic needs. Exergame motivation integrates three domains: sport motivation, capturing the desire for physical fitness (Milne & McDonald, 1999); technology motivation, reflecting users' appreciation for the convenience and the innovativeness of technology equipment (Venkatesh et al., 2012); and video game motivation, encompassing the pursuit of entertainment, challenge, and social interaction through gameplay (Kim & Ross, 2006). These domains form a comprehensive model for understanding exergame engagement.

Research Methodology

Following DeVellis and Thorpe's (2021) scale development procedures, an initial item pool was generated and refined through a panel of experts, resulting in a 24-item scale. The English version was translated into Japanese, Chinese, and Spanish and reviewed by native-speaking experts in sport management. In June 2025, 351 valid responses were collected from exergame players via online questionnaires distributed on platforms such as Reddit, WeChat, Line, and WhatsApp. Confirmatory factor analyses were conducted to assess the scale's dimensionality and construct validity.

Results

Among the 351 valid responses collected, 201 were in English, 71 in Japanese, 44 in Chinese, and 35 in Spanish. CFA was conducted to test the proposed six-factor structure. One item with a standardized factor loading below .30 was removed. The model fit indices were satisfactory: $\chi^2(238) = 573.095$, $\chi^2/df = 2.408$ (< 3.00), RMSEA = .063 (< .08), CFI = .958, TLI = .951, and IFI = .958 (all > .90). The Cronbach's alpha values for the six dimensions ranged from .892 to .973 (> .70). CR values ranged from .884 to .974 (> .70), and AVE values from .617 to .923 (> .50). The AVE values for all dimensions also exceeded the squared correlations between constructs (R^2 ranging from .057 to .177).

Contributions

The motivation scale for exergames was structured as a six-dimensional 23-item construct (i.e., Physical Fitness, Convenience, Social Interaction, Entertainment, Challenge, and Innovativeness), filling a gap in existing measurement tools. This study contributes to sport management and exergame research by providing a reliable, valid, and cross-cultural

applicable instrument. The scale facilitates a better understanding of player motivations, informing exergame design, marketing strategies, and future research.

Examining the Streaming Practices of Small and Niche Sports: Have Norms Emerged?

Sarah Wymer (Auckland University of Technology)
Jason Doyle (Griffith University)
Hunter Fujak (Deakin University)

Research Purpose/Question

This study examines the dominant norms that have emerged in the streaming practices of small and emerging sports and investigates the variation across production and monetisation strategies. It addresses the research question: Which dominant norms have emerged in the streaming practices of small and emerging sports, and what variation exists across production and monetisation models?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Streaming has been widely positioned as a democratising force in sport broadcasting, allowing smaller sport organisations to bypass traditional gatekeepers and reach audiences directly via platforms such as YouTube Live, Facebook Live, and OTT services (Tickell et al., 2024; Wymer et al., 2021). This shift is often credited with increasing access and visibility for sports typically excluded from mainstream coverage. However, research increasingly suggests that digital access alone does not ensure sustained engagement, commercial viability, or consistent production quality (Evens & Donders, 2018; Read & Smith, 2023). Institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Gammelsæter, 2010) underpins this study, offering a lens to explore how coercive, mimetic, and normative pressures shape organisational behaviour. While major leagues have institutionalised production and monetisation practices (Nicholson et al., 2015), it is unclear whether similar norms are forming across less visible sports with reduced access to infrastructure or strategic support.

Research Methodology

A quantitative audit was conducted across ten niche sports in Australia with the lowest participation rates, as identified in the 2024 AusPlay dataset (Clearinghouse for Sport, 2024). The sample comprised 187 unique broadcast instances from 140 sanctioned events. Each stream was coded for platform use, production features (e.g. overlays, commentary, replays), and monetisation model (e.g. advertising, donation, sponsor integration). Descriptive statistics mapped key practices, followed by Fisher's Exact Tests to examine associations between features and monetisation. A Random Forest classifier was used to determine which production features best predicted monetised content.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Digital overlays were near-universal (72%), but other features, multi-camera setups (8.5%), interactivity (12.5%), and live commentary (27.7%), were applied inconsistently. Only 16% of streams featured monetisation, with advertising dominating (74%) and little use of donation-based or sponsor-integrated models. Streams with live replay functionality were significantly more likely to be monetised ($p = 0.002$), suggesting a connection between

production investment and commercial potential. However, no consistent convergence around production or revenue strategies emerged across sports.

Contributions

These findings offer empirical insight into how smaller sport organisations navigate digital broadcasting. Rather than shared norms, the landscape is fragmented, shaped by uneven capacity and limited commercial return. Without coordinated infrastructure, targeted investment, or sector-wide support, the push to “go digital” may deepen existing disparities and miss a crucial opportunity to build more sustainable, commercially viable approaches for sports outside the mainstream. Strengthening digital capacity in these contexts is essential not only for visibility but also for promoting media diversity, equitable access, and resilience across the broader sport ecosystem. Further implications and recommendations will be shared during the conference presentation.

Athletic CEO and Corporate Innovation

Asso. Prof Bo Xu (Harbin Institute of Technology)

Research Purpose/Question

This paper examines the impact of CEOs’ sports backgrounds on corporate innovation. The Olympic Games and the athletic achievements of students from top universities such as Stanford and Harvard underscore the potential benefits of sports participation. Drawing on insights from sports psychology and behavioral finance, we propose that athletic experience instills qualities such as goal orientation, stress tolerance, and teamwork in CEOs. These traits shape their risk preferences and decision-making styles, which in turn influence firms’ innovation strategies and outcomes.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The existing literature has extensively examined how CEOs’ personal characteristics—such as educational background, career trajectory, and demographic traits—influence corporate strategy. However, relatively little attention has been paid to nontraditional formative experiences, such as participation in sports. This study addresses this gap by focusing on athletic CEOs. Our theoretical framework draws on Imprinting Theory (Stinchcombe, 1965), Upper Echelons Theory (Hambrick and Mason, 1984), and Principal-Agent Theory (Jensen and Meckling, 1976). Imprinting Theory suggests that early life experiences leave lasting effects on individuals; Upper Echelons Theory posits that executives’ personal attributes shape strategic choices; and Principal-Agent Theory highlights the agency problems between shareholders and managers, emphasizing how managerial characteristics can affect corporate decision-making. Building on these perspectives, we hypothesize that participation in sports imprints CEOs with greater risk tolerance and endurance, which in turn fosters firm innovations that are both more numerous and of higher quality, as innovation represents a key form of corporate risk-taking and sustained managerial effort (Holmstrom, 1989; Aghion and Tirole, 1994; Manso, 2011).

Research Methodology

Our study utilizes data from the CSMAR and Wind databases covering all China A-share listed companies from 2000 to 2023. The key explanatory variable—CEOs’ sports

background—was manually collected through two methods: extracting relevant keywords from annual financial reports and conducting searches on AI platforms for news and reports reflecting CEOs’ athletic experience. CEOs with confirmed sports participation were coded as 1, and others as 0. Innovation quantity and quality are proxied by the number of patent applications and their citations, respectively.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Preliminary results show that CEOs with a sports background have a significant and robust positive impact on both the scale and quality of firm innovation, with the effect being more pronounced in non-state-owned enterprises than in state-owned ones.

Contributions

This study contributes to the literature on corporate finance and organizational behavior by highlighting how athletic CEOs, shaped by nontraditional experiences such as sports participation, influence firm innovation. It provides robust evidence that a CEO’s sports background is a valuable form of human capital, particularly in non-state-owned firms. By uncovering a novel determinant of business innovation, the study broadens our understanding of how personal experiences shape executive decision-making and offers practical implications for the recruitment and selection of top corporate talent.

Trust and Flow in Sport Officiating: How Fans Process Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency in Technology-Assisted Decisions

Yelim Yoo (Texas A&M University)
Juneseok Lee (Texas A&M University)
Hyun-Woo Lee (Texas A&M University)

Research Purpose

Officiating technologies such as Video Assistant Referee and Automated Ball-Strike System are increasingly adopted to enhance decision accuracy and fairness in sports. Although these technologies offer technical improvements aimed at fairness, they have elicited mixed reactions from fans due to trust concerns and disruptions to spectator flow (Mártins et al., 2023; Scanlon et al., 2022). To address this, we propose the Trust and Flow in Technology-Assisted Decisions (TFTAD) framework to examine how fans develop trust in officiating technologies while maintaining experiential flow.

Literature Review & Conceptual Framework

The TFTAD framework posits that fans process officiating decisions through either heuristic (intuitive) or systematic (deliberative) pathways, shaping their trust and flow experiences. Trust is the belief that a system will consistently support fair decision-making in uncertain situations (Kramer, 1999; Lee & See, 2004), while flow is a psychological state of deep immersion and absorption during sport spectatorship (Lee et al., 2017). Drawing on the heuristic-systematic model (Chaiken, 1989) and machine heuristic theory (Sundar, 2008), individuals often perceive machines as more objective than humans. Accordingly, automated systems with visible human oversight may elicit accountability through systematic processing, whereas autonomous systems—operating with greater machine authority—may signal fairness and transparency through heuristic cues (Harasta, 2021; Kaber, 2017). Thus, we propose that the level of machine authority (automated vs.

autonomous) influences fans' trust and flow (P1).

We further posit that these effects depend on perceptions of Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (FAT), which serve as key evaluative criteria. When FAT is unclear or lacking, trust may decline, disrupting flow (Lee, 2018; Scanlon et al., 2022; Shin & Park, 2019). We therefore propose that FAT mediates the relationship between the level of machine authority and fans' trust and flow (P2). This relationship is further shaped by sport-specific contexts. For example, strong team identification intensifies emotional involvement, leading to systematic processing and heightened sensitivity to fairness, particularly in high-stakes matches (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Wann & Branscombe, 1993). In contrast, when fans are less invested or stakes are low, heuristic processing is more likely (Märtins et al., 2023; Scanlon et al., 2022; Winand et al., 2021). Accordingly, we identify contextual factors such as team identification, viewing context (e.g., in-person vs. broadcast), and match importance as moderators changing the relationships in the current framework (P3).

Contributions

The TFTAD framework highlights the dual importance of trust and flow, bridging technological legitimacy and fan experience. Trust is essential to the perceived legitimacy of these technologies, while flow determines how they are socially accepted—both influencing long-term sustainability and effectiveness. Theoretically, TFTAD extends dual-process models by identifying trust and flow as co-determined outcomes mediated by FAT and moderated by sport-specific contexts. The framework bridges cognitive, emotional, and technological dimensions in a unified model. Practically, it offers actionable guidance for enhancing technology acceptance and fan experience. Design strategies such as visualizing fairness, emphasizing human oversight, and tailoring communication to context can help organizations preserve psychological security (trust) and experiential continuity (flow) in officiating.

Enlightening Talks Abstracts



Listed in alphabetical order

Fundraising in Difficult Times: How Charity Sport Event Participants Can Navigate the Challenges Confronting Charities

Kevin Filo (Griffith University)
Matthew Wade (La Trobe University)
Nicholas Hookway (University of Tasmania)
Catherine Palmer (Torrens University)

Research Purpose/Question

Charity sport events (CSEs) allow individuals to partake in an activity (e.g., running, walking, swimming) while raising funds for charity. These events have recently been experiencing an array of challenges including rising insurance costs and competition from other grassroots fundraising initiatives (e.g., crowdfunding) (Independent Sector, 2023). Meanwhile, COVID-19 had a devastating impact on the CSE sector (Australian Mass Participation Sport Event Alliance, 2022). Further, individual rates for charitable giving are declining in many countries (Charities Aid Foundation, 2022), while trust in charities is decaying (Edelman's Trust Barometer, 2022). Amidst this backdrop, the current research investigates CSE participant reflections on the fundraising experience during challenging times.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The challenges experienced by CSEs described above have reduced the number of events taking place. This limits both the opportunities for individuals to obtain these benefits, and the fundraising impacts of CSEs (Wade et al., 2022). Charitable Triad Theory (CTT) (Chapman et al., 2022) guides this research. CTT advances that charitable giving is driven by: donors, fundraisers and beneficiaries, and that these stakeholders are necessary to promote charitable giving. The current research applies CTT through an examination of participants (i.e., fundraisers) in the Cancer Council Women's 5K Walk/Run in Australia (W5K). In applying this theory to this context and stakeholder, the current research responds to a key finding of CTT: that is, fundraisers have been underrepresented within the existing research on charitable giving.

Research Methodology

Data were collected via semi-structured interviews with W5K participants (N = 13) following the event. The interview guide was designed to explore: the preparation for the event, the experience of the event, and perspectives derived from participant fundraising and advocacy. Data were analysed via thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Results/Findings and Discussion

Three themes were generated: civic duty, heightened sensitivity, and increased motivation. Civic duty positioned fundraising via CSEs during challenging times as a mechanism to give back to your community in exchange for support received in navigating your own difficulties: “I think volunteering your time ... is a really important part of giving back to a community who can give you so much in return.” Heightened sensitivity highlighted that the challenges confronting charities are reflective of challenges that individuals are currently experiencing: “There’s so many people here struggling... as a community, I think we...haven’t been asking for a lot [of donations]... I just felt that people just didn’t have the money.” Finally, increased motivation illustrated that participant understanding of the challenges facing charities served to inspire effort towards fundraising: “This year,...I had a drive to raise money and I was really prepared to put myself out there....to raise awareness... I seem to have sort of more of an emotional driver around this particular event as well...It was just different all around.”

Contributions

The findings contribute to CTT through collecting insights from CSE participants concerning their fundraising efforts. These insights can inform CSE promotions to empower participants throughout the fundraising journey. Collectively, this work can help optimise fundraising to bolster CSE outcomes.

Active Ageing Through Sport: Exploring participation and identity in AFL Masters Football

Jennifer Pitson (RMIT University)

As global populations age, understanding how competitive sport contributes to active ageing becomes the focus of this PhD thesis. Through the lens of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and the Active Ageing Policy Framework (World Health Organisation, 2014) the study aims to explain how group membership within a sporting club environment contributes to members' social identity and sense of belonging.

This presentation reports preliminary findings from phase 1 of an explanatory sequential mixed-methods study (Guetterman & Fetters, 2018) examining AFL Masters - a modified Australian rules football competition for adults 35+ - and its role in supporting social identity and belonging among older competitive sport members.

The methodology adopted a national online survey for the phase 1 data collection, distributed to AFL Masters members across Australia, drawing from a population of 14,000 registered members. The survey yielded 967 responses from current and lapsed members dating back to 2018. Survey respondents identified as male (81%), female (18%), and non-binary (1%). The survey instrument (Qualtrics) measured perceived barriers and enablers to participation, physical and social connection outcomes. Social connection was assessed using the Social Innovation Research Institute's Social Connection Measurement (SIRI-SCM) Toolkit medium form (Verhagen et al., 2024). Data analysis employed descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations to examine relationships between demographic variables and social connection outcomes.

The survey key findings revealed strong participation motivations across both current and lapsed members, with current members citing fun/enjoyment, physical health/fitness, and social reasons as primary drivers. Lapsed members showed similar patterns: fun/enjoyment, physical health/fitness, and performance/competition. However, gender and age differences emerged in social identity and belonging measures as well as gendered participation pathway discrepancies relating to sustained involvement.

The phase 1 data collection findings reveal that AFL Masters differently serves male and female participants' social identity needs, with important implications for sporting organisations developing age-appropriate competitive programs. The data suggests that while the competition successfully maintains long-term male engagement through established sporting pathways, female participants may require different support mechanisms to strengthen belonging and prevent disengagement.

Following Creswell & Creswell (2023), the phase 1 quantitative findings will inform the development of phase 2 focus groups to explain these results in greater detail. Furthermore, the research will study AFL Masters' role in adopting and implementing modified rule changes while promoting positive health and social wellbeing outcomes and supporting participants social identity as a participant of a high-impact sport. It is envisaged that the phase 2 data collection will be completed by the conference, allowing some initial findings to be shared in the presentation.

This research provides empirical evidence for sporting organisations seeking to optimise competitive sport participation opportunities for older adults, particularly regarding gender-specific approaches to fostering social identity and belonging in masters sport contexts.

Days Of Our Lives: The Risks and Rewards of bringing the Sporting Memories Network to Australia and Aotearoa.

A/Prof Richard Keith Wright (Auckland University of Technology)
Daniel Capeto (Auckland University of Technology)
Dr Kay Shannon (Auckland University of Technology)

Research Purpose/Question

Ka haere takirua ngā mea katoa – Nothing lives in isolation (Papa Rereata Makiha)
'Despite great difficulties, Tāne reached the pinnacle and brought back to earth the sacred knowledge of the three kete for Māori and mankind. The Poutama pattern, found in Māori weaving and plaiting, symbolises Tāne's triumph. But for us te ira tangata/human beings, the Poutama lays a path to pursue and attain mātauranga/knowledge and waiora/positive wellbeing. Its two sides tell us that nothing lives in isolation' (Mental Health Foundation, 2022).

Sporting Memories Clubs (SMCs) offer sport fans of a similar vintage a place to come together to (re)connect, reminisce and replay. SMC patrons collectively harness the power of nostalgic sentiment to tackle social isolation, loneliness and physical inactivity within/amongst adults, specifically older men. This presentation invites critical reflection on how memory, sport, and storytelling can contribute to inclusion, identity, and collective well-being in later life.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Nostalgia is defined as an 'affectionate and often sentimental feeling experienced when remembering past times, places, and experiences, especially those with happy personal associations. The feeling may also connote a desire to return to past times and places or wishing that they could be experienced again' (Britannica, 2025). Throughout the United Kingdom, since its emergence in 2011, members of the Sporting Memories Network (SMN) have been stimulating sport lovers aged 50 and over to talk about past activities, events and experiences to enhance their quality of life, triggering positive memories through engaging the operational senses (Clark et al, 2016). The SMN's theory of change empowers SMC's to deliver impactful social change and personal connection to a cohort feeling excluded/ignored or unloved by sporting codes obsessed with tomorrow's world (those who value recruitment over retention).

Research Methodology

Glory days is an ongoing longitudinal participatory action research project, which commenced in 2019 with an initial feasibility study conducted by the AUT Centre for Active Ageing. The second phase, conducted between 2020 and 2024, included a Social Return on Investment Analysis (SROI). The current phase includes a critical evaluation of the resources being produced and provided by those looking to expand the network within Australasia.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The findings reveal the perceived risks and potential rewards associated with attempts to expand the SMN across the Commonwealth. The recommendations suggest that the establishment of an international network of SMCs have noticeably enhanced sense of purpose/belonging amongst the managers responsible for championing the purpose, priorities and pledge made by SMN leaders located in the UK, Australia and Aotearoa.

From First Steps to Capstone: Weaving WIL into the Sport Management Journey

Yvonne Wood (Auckland University of Technology)
Dr Patricia Lucas (Auckland University of Technology)

Purpose

This Pecha Kucha presentation shares a scaffolded model of Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) designed to run across three years of an undergraduate sport degree at Auckland University of Technology. It aims to provoke reflection on how carefully sequenced and clearly grounded WIL can strengthen student confidence, industry connection, and career clarity. The talk offers practical curriculum insights for sport management educators seeking to embed WIL beyond traditional placements.

Theoretical Background

While WIL is widely endorsed for enhancing graduate employability, its implementation often privileges capstone placements rather than a sustained developmental approach (Jackson et al., 2023; Patrick et al., 2008). In contrast, this model treats WIL as a theoretical and pedagogical spine, drawing on experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984), identity development frameworks (Smith et al., 2022), and the role of critical reflection as a

process of meaning-making in cooperative education (Lucas, 2017). The concept of whiria te tāngata (to weave the people together) offers a cultural metaphor for designing WIL that braids learning, identity, and industry over time. The model aligns with current calls for more relational, inclusive, and purpose-driven approaches to WIL in higher education (Cooper et al., 2020).

Discussion

The three-phase WIL model reflects a progressive and intentional design.

First year foundations involve short, community-connected activities that foster curiosity and help students develop an early understanding of their local sporting environment. These activities introduce the value of community engagement and raise awareness of sport's broader social context.

Second year courses feature short industry placements where students explore different parts of the sport sector, begin developing professional networks, and consider potential career pathways. These experiences encourage students to test their interests and expand their knowledge of the sport ecosystem.

Third year cooperative education enables students to engage in extended placements aligned with their evolving career aspirations. These placements are supported by critical reflection and academic supervision, allowing students to consolidate their learning, articulate their professional identity, and transition with confidence into the workforce.

This braided progression supports students to move from initial curiosity to committed contribution. In our structured WIL journey students will transition from learning about the industry, to learning in it, and ultimately learning through it - ensuring they graduate not just with knowledge, but with the experience and confidence to succeed.

Conclusion

This presentation argues for a deliberate, whole-of-program approach to WIL in sport management education. By weaving together academic, personal, and professional threads, the model fosters students' capacity to move from participation to contribution within the sport sector. As interest in diverse and inclusive WIL formats grows, this case highlights the value of designing with progression and purpose. Through curated images and reflective moments, this Pecha Kucha presentation will illustrate how WIL bridges theory and practice across the student learning journey.

Workshop Abstracts



Listed in alphabetical order

Negotiation and Sport Management

Dr. Ryan Clutterbuck (Brock University)
Dr. Michael Van Bussel (Brock University)

This Negotiation and Sport Management Workshop is designed to support interested sport management instructors who teach in the broad areas of negotiation and dispute resolution, communications, sales, and folks who might someday negotiate for themselves.

For those who may be less familiar, negotiation is defined as “the process by which two or more parties who perceive a difference in interests or perspective attempt to reach agreement” (Malhotra, 2025, p. 5). Though, with due respect to Malhotra, our preferred definition is simply this: a purposeful conversation (Shapiro, 2020). Thus, this workshop is a series of purposeful conversations.

The first purposeful conversation of the Workshop – meant to establish baseline understanding – involves a short mini-lecture (approx. 15 mins) in which the co-facilitators introduce foundational negotiation concepts and principles, including underlying interests and positions, zone of possible agreement (ZOPA), reservation value (RV), objective criteria, best alternative to a negotiated agreement (BATNA), and post-settlement-settlements (PSS). The co-facilitators will then summarize the latest sport management research on negotiation and negotiators (see e.g., Conlin et al., 2013; Grappendorf et al., 2021; 2024).

The second purposeful conversation of the Workshop – that is meant to reinforce the aforementioned concepts and principles through active learning and immersive role-playing – involves adopting the role of negotiator in a one-on-one exercise versus a fellow workshop attendee. Please know the co-facilitators have used these role-play simulations in sport management classrooms with thousands of students and everyone always has fun!

Co-facilitators will manage all aspects of the negotiation role play exercise, including offering introductory comments on the simulation parameters, matching attendees, and providing direction and support to ensure everyone has a positive experience. In total, this phase of the Workshop should last approximately 35 minutes.

The third and final purposeful conversation of the Workshop – meant to simultaneously reinforce and reveal key learnings from the negotiation role play exercise, alongside reflections from the negotiation instructor’s perspective – involves open Q&A and engaging conversation between Workshop attendees and the co-facilitators. This phase is allocated 10 minutes.

In the closing moments, Workshop attendees will be encouraged to share their contact information with each other and continue discussions on negotiation teaching and research for the duration of the SMAANZ conference.

The Business Case for Cultural Integration in Sport Organizations: Why Authentic Community Partnership Drives Organizational Performance

Dr. Sean Daly (University of Oklahoma)
Nicholas Tobey (University of Oklahoma)

Research Purpose/Question

This presentation argues that authentic cultural integration represents a critical competitive advantage for sport organizations, moving beyond traditional diversity metrics to examine how genuine cultural community partnership drives measurable business outcomes. The central argument addresses: Why should sport organizations prioritize authentic cultural integration as a strategic business imperative rather than a social responsibility afterthought?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Extensive organizational behavior research demonstrates that culturally aligned organizations achieve superior performance outcomes, with companies effectively managing cultural diversity showing 682% revenue increases compared to 166% for organizations without cultural management (Kotter, 2008). Social Identity Theory suggests that when employees' cultural identities align with organizational values, organizations experience 40% lower turnover, 70% higher engagement, and 25% improved customer satisfaction (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). However, sport management research reveals significant gaps in understanding how cultural integration affects business outcomes, with systematic reviews identifying limited examination of employee experiences and organizational performance relationships (Maitland et al., 2015; Wagstaff & Burton-Wylie, 2018). Recent cultural intelligence frameworks suggest sport organizations with culturally competent employees demonstrate enhanced stakeholder relationships and community engagement (Johnson et al., 2024), yet empirical evidence for business impact remains limited.

Research Methodology

This conceptual presentation employs systematic literature synthesis across organizational behavior, sport management, and business performance research to construct evidence-based arguments for cultural integration as strategic business practice. Analysis integrates findings from cross-cultural management studies, employee engagement research, and sport industry case examples to demonstrate measurable outcomes associated with authentic cultural integration initiatives.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Evidence reveals five critical business advantages of authentic cultural integration in sport organizations. First, employee retention and satisfaction improve significantly when organizations support cultural identity expression, reducing recruitment costs and enhancing workplace productivity. Second, community stakeholder relationships strengthen through authentic cultural partnership, generating increased fan loyalty, corporate

sponsorship appeal, and facility usage rates. Third, brand authenticity enhances market differentiation in increasingly diverse consumer markets, creating competitive advantages through genuine cultural connection rather than superficial marketing campaigns. Fourth, operational effectiveness improves through incorporation of indigenous knowledge systems and collective decision-making approaches that enhance problem-solving and innovation capacity. Fifth, risk management benefits emerge through reduced community relations conflicts and enhanced regulatory compliance in jurisdictions with indigenous rights frameworks.

Contributions

This presentation contributes to sport management practice by providing evidence-based business justification for cultural integration investments, moving beyond moral arguments to demonstrate quantifiable returns on cultural competency development. The systematic evidence synthesis offers sport organizations concrete performance metrics and implementation frameworks for evaluating cultural integration effectiveness. Academic contributions include bridging organizational behavior and sport management literature while identifying specific areas where cultural integration research can inform evidence-based management practices that benefit both organizational performance and community relationships.

Weaving Cultural Intelligence into Sport Education: Experiential Learning to Prepare Future Leaders of the Global Sport Industry

Dr. Alexia Lopes (Syracuse University)
Benjamin Pincus (Seton Hall University)

Research Purpose/Question

This workshop explores how experiential learning (EL) programs and activities can be strategically designed to develop cultural intelligence (CQ) in sport management programs, preparing students for the global sport industry. The session aims to demonstrate how weaving together diverse cultural experiences and reflective practices fosters globally competent leaders who are equipped to navigate the complexities of international sport environments.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Globalization has transformed sport into a deeply interconnected cultural and economic phenomenon (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007; Maguire, 1999). As sport organizations expand internationally, professionals must possess not only technical skills but also the cultural agility to operate across diverse contexts (Lapchick, 2020). Cultural intelligence (CQ), which is defined as the capability to function effectively in culturally diverse settings (Earley & Ang, 2003), has emerged as a critical competency. Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) (Kolb, 1984) provides a robust framework for developing CQ through immersive, reflective, and action-oriented learning. This workshop draws on recent research that links ELT to CQ development within sport education (Wang & Goh, 2020; Miller et al., 2022).

Research Methodology

The workshop is informed by a qualitative study involving semi-structured interviews with sport management educators who lead international-focused experiential programs. Data

were analyzed using thematic analysis rooted in the cultural intelligence framework, with additional inductive coding to capture emergent themes (Braun & Clarke, 2019; Corbin & Strauss, 2014).

Results/Findings and Discussion

Initial findings will be shared, highlighting how programs that integrate structured reflection, cultural immersion, and real-world engagement in the sport industry significantly enhance students' CQ. Key themes include the importance of intentional program design, the role of faculty positionality, and the value of combining in-class and out-of-class learning experiences. These insights inform the workshop's structure and content.

Workshop Structure and Format

This workshop will include:

A brief introduction to the theoretical foundations

Presentation of the findings of our study

Discussions based on prompts developed from in-depth interactions with leaders across the sport industry

Small-group discussions using real-world case studies from international sport education programs

A group discussion to share experiences and recommendations

A collaborative design sprint where participants co-create CQ-focused EL activities

Interactive Methods

Participants will engage in:

Reflective journaling and peer dialogue

Scenario-based role play

Group brainstorming and feedback sessions

Contributions

This workshop contributes by offering a replicable model and structure for embedding CQ development into sport management curricula through experiential learning. It aligns with the conference theme through its focus on weaving together diverse cultural perspectives to build inclusive, globally competent sport professionals. What sets this workshop apart is its practitioner influence and emphasis on real-world application. We hope that participants will leave with concrete strategies and practitioner-informed recommendations that can be directly implemented in academic and professional sport settings.

Why We Are Well-Positioned

The facilitators bring academic and industry experience across multiple countries and sport contexts. Their lived experiences as international educators and industry practitioners, combined with their research on CQ and EL, uniquely position them to lead this session and foster meaningful dialogue among participants. SMAANZ presents the perfect audience for this workshop, as it brings together academics and industry professionals from around the world, creating an ideal space to share, reflect, and co-create strategies for preparing students for the global sport industry.

Inclusive Leadership for Sport Boards: A Practical Workshop

Kelly McCallum (University of Technology)
Professor Lesley Ferkins (Auckland of University of Technology)
Dr, Charlotte Jelleyman (Auckland of University of Technology)

The topic and purpose of the session

In the context of nonprofit sport governance, recent global interest has been accompanied by a heightened focus on the associated challenges of insufficient diversity and inclusion practices within organisations, leading to issues such as tokenism, bias, and discrimination (Mayo et al., 2016). Furthermore, demographic characteristics and proactive diversity strategies have often been narrowly concentrated on gender (Adriaanse, 2019; McLeod et al., 2023; Mayo et al., 2016). Research suggests that merely enhancing demographic diversity does not automatically yield anticipated benefits like greater creativity or innovation (Cook & Glass, 2014; Knoppers et al., 2021; Piggot & Pike, 2020; Randel et al., 2018). Furthermore, inclusion policies can in fact uphold status quo through alleging one's organisation inclusive, without enacting meaningful change towards inclusion (Peers et al., 2023). Leadership that understands and embeds effective inclusive practices in sport governance is key to sustaining diversity and the associated benefits. Theoretical frameworks for embedding inclusive practices within sport governance remain underdeveloped, particularly given the complex leadership dynamics of nonprofit sport organisations. The purpose of this session will present current research on inclusive environments in sport governance facilitated through a pre-arranged statement ranking (Qsort) activity and post activity group discussion.

The structure and format of the workshop

The workshop will be delivered in three interactive segments designed to engage participants and connect theory to practice:

1. Q-sort Activity (15 minutes): Participants will engage in a structured activity to explore and reflect on diverse perspectives related to inclusion in sport governance.
2. Group Discussion (30 minutes): Small table discussions will facilitate deeper dialogue around the themes emerging from the Q-sort. A full room discussion will encourage collaborative interpretation and knowledge sharing.
3. Application to PhD project (15 minutes): Lead facilitator will apply insights and reflections from the discussion to their own doctoral research project.

Why the authors are well-positioned to deliver this workshop

The lead facilitator is nearing completion of her PhD, titled 'Developing Inclusive Leadership Practices in Sport Boards Through an Emotional and Cultural Intelligence Lens.' She has recently delivered similar interactive workshops, as outlined above, and has published scholarly articles on the subject, demonstrating her expertise and practical experience in this context. Professor Lesley Ferkins is a leading expert in sport governance, with research focused on reimagining leadership, enhancing board strategic capability, and promoting inclusive decision-making. Her academic contributions include numerous peer-reviewed publications, book chapters, and editorial roles, alongside long-standing service to SMAANZ. Dr. Charlotte Jelleyman brings substantial expertise in inclusive leadership, evidenced by recent scholarly publications in the field and her role as a senior lecturer for the AUT Leadership program.

Play well, research well: Shaping the future of sport participation research

Dr Katherine Raw (Swinburne University of Technology)
Prof Adam Karg (Deakin University)
A/Prof. Jonathan Robertson (Deakin University)
Dr Lindsey Reece (Australian Sport Commission)

This workshop introduces sport management scholars from Australia and New Zealand to Play Well, the Australian Sports Commission's (ASC) national sport participation strategy and recently established dedicated research unit. It provides a timely opportunity for academics to consider how sport participation research might be extended, aligned, and applied considering these policy developments.

Launched in late 2023, Play Well represents a national commitment to ensuring that every person in Australia can participate in sport in ways that are welcoming, inclusive, safe and responsive to their needs and identities (ASC, 2023). Developed through co-design and engagement with over 7,000 Australians, it outlines six priority areas: empowering people and organisations, driving lifelong involvement, activating places and spaces, building connections, equitable access, and transforming culture (ASC, 2023).

To support the strategy's implementation, the ASC has initiated a new research unit focused on strengthening the evidence base for participation policy and practice. This includes generating, synthesising and translating research to inform decision-making and guide sector capability. The broad areas of focus include research, evaluation and translation activities related to participation trends and experiences in sport, inclusive practice, and the broader social outcomes of sport.

The 60-minute session introduce the strategy and research unit, before transitioning into a series of applied, interactive activities. Participants will work in small groups to identify research gaps, discuss emerging questions, and explore how academic insights can contribute to sector priorities. Guided prompts will encourage critical reflection on methodological approaches, partnership models, funding opportunities and the practical implications of working in and with sport policy environments. Given the shared challenges facing the sport sectors in both Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, the session will also encourage reflection on how regional collaboration might strengthen the relevance and reach of sport participation research, and how Play Well initiatives could help support academic work across the region.

The workshop is designed to support participants to begin co-developing ideas that could contribute to an inclusive, practice-oriented research agenda. It also aims to build dialogue between researchers and policymakers, creating a foundation for stronger alignment between academic knowledge and system needs.

This session will be relevant to researchers working in participation, inclusion, evaluation, sport development, social impact and policy. It provides a space to engage with national policy directions and consider how existing or future research could play a role in shaping outcomes in this area. The workshop will be co-designed by academic and industry representatives in collaboration with the ASC, and co-facilitated by academic contributors, including one of the four research fellows appointed to support the development of the ASC's Play Well research unit. This ensures facilitators are well-placed to guide discussion

and support meaningful engagement with the strategy and research directions and effective translation of the outcomes of the session.

Decolonising Australian Sport - Examining Indigenous Leadership and Allyship for The Classroom.

Stirling Sharpe (University of Canberra)
Chelsey Taylor (Swinburne University of Technology)
Daniel Egan (Australian Olympic Committee)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are recognised as the first inhabitants of continental Australia, with a cultural heritage that represents the oldest continuous living tradition globally. Central to Indigenous communities are deep-rooted values of respect for Country (mother earth) and collective care for community. These principles underpin Indigenous leadership, which is guided by ethics of reciprocity, relationality, and responsibility.

This workshop explores Indigenous leadership and non-Indigenous allyship within the Australian sport landscape. Sport serves as a powerful platform for social connection and cultural exchange, offering opportunities to dismantle barriers to inclusion and promote reconciliation (Australian Government, 2013). Through a decolonising lens, we will examine how authentic engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities can drive meaningful change in sport.

Participants will be introduced to decolonising practices that challenge colonial norms and elevate Indigenous voices in decision-making. This approach involves collaborating with Indigenous communities, reflecting on colonial impacts, and prioritizing Indigenous voices in decision-making. It bridges Indigenous and Western paradigms through reflexivity and relational methods and underscores effective participatory research methods. For non-Indigenous individuals, allyship is a vital pathway to support Indigenous empowerment. As Duke et al. (2021) highlight, critical allyship is a continuous process that requires awareness of systemic inequities and a commitment to transformative action.

The workshop will feature two case studies: the Indigenous Marathon Foundation—a non-Indigenous-led health promotion charity—and the Australian Olympic Committee. These examples illustrate how integrating Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing can lead to impactful programs with far-reaching benefits. They also demonstrate how Indigenous and non-Indigenous leadership can complement each other in advancing reconciliation.

We will incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogical approaches throughout the session. Recognising that participants may be at different stages of their learning journey, the workshop will encourage open dialogue, small group discussions, and critical reflection. Attendees should be prepared to engage respectfully, share perspectives, and consider new ways of thinking—particularly in relation to working with Indigenous communities.

Artificial Intelligence and Sports Management

Dr.Prof.Xiao Shuhong (Beijing Sport University)

Conference Theme

Harnessing Artificial Intelligence to Generate Value in the Sports Industry

This workshop seeks to foster in-depth dialogue among participants concerning the multifaceted value that artificial intelligence (AI) contributes to the sports industry. It aims to cultivate a nuanced understanding of such value beyond the economic benefits, encompassing also social benefits and environmental benefits.

Workshop Structure and Methodology

The workshop will be conducted in groups. First, the leader of the seminar will provide an overview and explanation of the issue, and at the same time, explain the core points of the discussion methods adopted. Then, the participants will be divided into several groups (depending on the specific situation), and the leaders will be selected. After that, the specific issues will be discussed in groups, followed by group reports and mutual questions for debate.

Engagement Strategy and Interactive Design

To stimulate audience engagement and critical thinking, the workshop will incorporate the analysis of three representative case studies drawn from distinct sectors of the sports industry:

Kuaishou Sports and its initiatives in mass sports events, A metaverse-driven golf project, and East Star, a youth basketball development program. These cases come from different business forms, with both successes and failures. Please give your own answers based on the specific circumstances.

Facilitator Qualifications and Workshop Feasibility

The organizing team possesses substantial expertise in the fields of sports industry education, research, and consultancy, with experience dating back to 1988. The lead facilitator is a certified Value Management Professional (VMP) accredited by the International Association for Value Engineering. Their extensive knowledge base and methodological proficiency—particularly in the application of value engineering and structured brainstorming—provide a strong foundation for ensuring the intellectual rigor and organizational coherence of the workshop.

Bridging the Theory-Practice Gap: The Critical Need for Executive Education Approaches in Sport Management Professional Development

Nicholas Tobey (University of Oklahoma)
Dr. Sean Daly (University of Oklahoma)

Research Purpose/Question

This presentation argues that sport management education must embrace executive education methodologies to address critical gaps between academic preparation and industry practice demands. The central argument examines: Why do sport management

professionals require ongoing executive education opportunities, and how can academic institutions better serve industry professional development needs through applied learning approaches?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Professional development research demonstrates that executive education significantly enhances management effectiveness, with participants showing 25% improvement in leadership competencies and 40% increase in strategic thinking capabilities following structured professional learning experiences (Mintzberg, 2004). Adult learning theory emphasizes the importance of experience-based education that connects directly to workplace challenges and immediate application opportunities (Kolb, 1984). However, sport management education research reveals concerning gaps between academic curricula and industry practice requirements, with professionals reporting insufficient preparation for cultural competency, stakeholder management, and complex organizational dynamics (Cunningham et al., 2021). Recent industry surveys indicate that 78% of sport management professionals seek additional professional development opportunities beyond initial degree preparation yet limited executive education options exist specifically designed for sport industry contexts (North American Society for Sport Management, 2023).

Research Methodology

This presentation employs gap analysis methodology, comparing sport management academic curricula with industry professional development needs through systematic review of educational literature, industry surveys, and professional competency frameworks. Analysis synthesizes findings from executive education effectiveness studies, adult learning research, and sport management professional development assessments to construct arguments for enhanced executive education offerings.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Evidence reveals five critical areas where executive education can address sport management professional development gaps. First, cultural competency and diversity management skills require ongoing development as demographic changes and community expectations evolve, necessitating continuous learning opportunities beyond initial academic preparation. Second, stakeholder relationship management in sport contexts involves complex dynamics not adequately addressed in traditional curricula, requiring experiential learning approaches that simulate real-world challenges. Third, organizational change management and innovation leadership demand adaptive expertise developed through peer learning and case-based analysis rather than theoretical instruction alone. Fourth, ethical decision-making in high-pressure sport environments requires scenario-based training and reflective practice opportunities typically unavailable in academic settings. Fifth, global sport business competencies increasingly require cross-cultural understanding and international perspective development through immersive learning experiences.

Contributions

This presentation contributes to sport management education by providing evidence-based justification for expanded executive education programming that serves both individual professional development and industry advancement needs. The systematic analysis offers concrete recommendations for academic institutions seeking to enhance their professional education offerings while meeting industry demands for ongoing competency development. Educational contributions include frameworks for designing sport-specific executive

education programs that bridge theory-practice gaps while generating revenue streams for academic institutions and enhanced career advancement opportunities for sport management professionals.

Poetry in Motion: Creative Analytical Practice and Arts-Based Research with/for the Creators and Consumers of Sports Entertainment Experiences.

A/Prof Richard Keith Wright (Auckland University of Technology)

Poetry in Motion is an inclusive and interactive professional development workshop open to both the curious and the critical, specifically new and emerging researchers. The immersive workshop will outline the myriad lessons learned through the production and consumption of Creative Analytical Practice (CAP) and Arts-Based Research (ABR).

Coined by Laurel Richardson, CAP allows researchers to explore deeply personal, embodied, or emotional experiences through coherent narrative and impactful, evocative literary forms. Researchers seek resonance that is relatable, creditable, believable and memorable. In comparison, ABR, rooted in education, through the work of Thomas Barone and Elliot Eisner, uses artmaking to generate or interpret data across disciplines. Researchers evoke transformative insight and personal resonance rather than proving causality. Although CAP and ABR stem from slightly different traditions, both use artistic mediums such as poetry, performance, visual arts, and multimedia to represent knowledge and findings. Both embrace the researcher's subjectivity, positioning the self as part of the socially constructed research process, challenging conventional academic writing and presentation.

Together, we will explore the perceived value, validity and viability of adopting CAP and ABR within the field of sport management and marketing, particularly explorations into consumer behaviour and fandom. Participants will be shown the potential, the possibilities, the pitfalls and the problems that accompanies the process of engaging academic and non-academic audiences emotionally, aesthetically, and intellectually. In sum, my session invites you to gaze beyond well-trodden traditional pathways, forged and followed by sport management and marketing scholarship.