



EASM 2024

ABSTRACTS BOOK



The EASM conference was held in Paris from 6 to 9 September 2024. Nearly 450 proposals for papers were submitted for this conference. Each proposal was reviewed by two experts to select the papers to be presented during the conference. This expert assessment is a guarantee of the scientific quality of the EASM conference. It is also the product of the hard work of a community of academics, who carry it out efficiently and to very tight deadlines. This book is an opportunity to thank them, as their work is essential to the organisation of the conference and the scientific quality of the discussions.

This book is also an opportunity to publish and promote the abstracts of the papers presented during the conference and to share the work of the researchers.

Pierre-Olaf Schut
Head of LOC

Co-chairs of the scientific committee

Kostas Alexandris
Tim Ströbel
Pierre-Olaf Schut

Track chairs

Best Conference Paper: Kostas Alexandris
Broader, New and Critical Aspects of Sport Management: Mathew Dowling
Diversity and Inclusion Issues in Sport Management: Claudio Rocha
E-Sport, Innovation and Technology: Anna Gerke
ESMQ New Researcher Award: Simon Shibli
Olympic and Paralympic Games: Dikaia Chatziefstathiou
Public Health and Physical Activity Management: Karin Book
Sport Consumer Behaviour: Daniel Lock
Sport Development and Socio-Cultural Perspectives: Claire Jenkin
Sport Governance, Sport Policy and Sport Law: Johan Norberg
Sport Management Education: Anna-Maria Strittmatter
Sport Marketing and Sponsorship: Tim Ströbel
Sport Tourism and Events: Rui Biscaia
Sport, Media, and Communication: Argyro Elisavet Manoli
Strategy, Leadership, and Stakeholder Management in Sport: Géraldine Zeimers
Sustainability and Sport Management: Pascal Stegmann
Workshops: Tim Ströbel, Kostas Alexandris

Reviewers

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Table of Contents

BEST CONFERENCE PAPER

EXPLORING SUSTAINING FAN SUPPORT: SOCIAL COMPARISON AND COUNTERFACTUAL THINKING PERSPECTIVES

YOO, SEONGJIN ; KO, YONG JAE ; KIM, TAEHO20

FOOTBALL CULTURE IN BERLIN: WHEN THE “LOCKSMITH BOYS” SURPASSED THE “BIG CITY CLUB” AND MOVED INTO THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE. A QUALITATIVE EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF THE COMPETITION BETWEEN 1. FC UNION BERLIN, HERTHA BSC AND BFC DYNAMO.

BÄR, SÖREN; KURSCHIEDT, MARKUS21

ASSESSING THE WILLINGNESS TO PAY FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF MULTI-LEVEL SUSTAINABILITY LABELS IN THE GERMAN SPORTS APPAREL INDUSTRY

SPINDLER, VIKTORIA ; SCHUNK, HOLGER ; KÖNECKE, THOMAS23

BROADER, NEW AND CRITICAL ASPECTS OF SPORT MANAGEMENT

“HOW MUCH DO I HAVE TO GIVE?” CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS OF ATHLETE ACTIVISM SACRIFICE, SUPPORT AND AUTHENTICITY

O'NEILL, FRANCIS ; STRÖBEL, TIM ; DICKSON, GEOFF ; THOMPSON, ASHLEIGH-JANE26

A STUDY ON USER PERCEPTIONS OF SPORTS-CENTRIC DIGITAL HEALTHCARE SERVICES THROUGH TOPIC MODELING AND SENTIMENT ANALYSIS: FOCUSING ON SAMSUNG HEALTH

JANG, JUHWA; PARK, JONGCHUL; KIM, ILGWANG.....28

UNDERSTANDING SPORT-BASED MIGRATION AT THE NON-ELITE LEVEL: THE CASE OF KOREAN TAEKWONDO MASTERS IN THE UNITED STATES

SHIN, NARI; PARK, DOOJAE.....30

EARN IT, SPEND IT, SAVE IT: EXPLORING THE FINANCIAL WELLBEING OF CANADIAN NATIONAL TEAM ATHLETES

PATIL, SWARALI HRISHIKESH ; DOHERTY, ALISON32

MULTI-CLUB OWNERSHIP: A NEW BUSINESS MODEL IN FOOTBALL

METELSKI, ADAM ; KORNAKOV, KONSTANTIN ; JAROSZ, OLIVIER33

CONNECTING WITH SPORTS FANS: GAMBLING MARKETING STRATEGIES ON INSTAGRAM

TUGÇE, BIDAV ; APHRA, KERR ; KITCHIN, PAUL ; ERIN, MCEVOY ; JOHN, O'BRENNAN35

MEASUREMENT INVARIANCE REPORTING PRACTICES IN SPORT MANAGEMENT: METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES IN CROSS-GROUP COMPARISON ANALYSIS

PAEK, BOMIN ; OJA, BRENT D. ; HUTCHINSON, SUSAN .37

EFFECT OF DIGITAL ECONOMY ON THE INTELLIGENTIZATION OF NATIONAL FITNESS IN MAINLAND OF CHINA SPORTS CITIES: THE THRESHOLD EFFECT

ZHANG, HAODONG; YUAN, BO; ZHU, YAN.....39

NAVIGATING THE RATIONALIZATION OF QUALITATIVE INQUIRY IN THE NEOLIBERAL UNIVERSITY: STRATEGIES FOR RESISTANCE AND SURVIVAL IN SPORT MANAGEMENT RESEARCH

NEWMAN, JOSHUA ISAAC ; CHAHARDOVALI, TARLAN ; ROCHON, ROC ; DAI, SHUSHAN42

WINNING WITHOUT MATH – IMPLICATIONS OF THE ABOLITION OF THE AWAY GOALS RULE IN UEFA CLUB COMPETITIONS

MEIER-RÖHN, MAXIMILIAN; LEHNER, FABIAN; LENZ, ADRIAN; BRÄUNINGER, HENNING44

IMPACT OF SPORT MEGA-EVENT ON SOCIOECONOMICALLY VULNERABLE RESIDENTS IN SMALL HOST REGIONS

HUR, CHAN HYEON ; WATANABE, NICHOLAS M. ; YAN, GRACE ; SOEBBING, BRIAN P.45

THE DILEMMA OF COMMUNITY SPORTS COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE AND THE CRACKING PATH CHOICE- -BASED ON SFIC MODEL ANALYSIS

EXERCISE AT WORK: MANAGING PROMISING VISIONS IN A TROUBLESOME REALITY – AN EXAMPLE OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

WAGNER, ULRIK; OVERBYE, MARIE.....48

MENTAL WELL-BEING SUPPORT EXPECTATIONS OF FUTURE SPORT EMPLOYEES

ZIMMER, WENDI KAMMAN ; BOEDEKER, PETER50

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ISSUES IN SPORT MANAGEMENT

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION OF OLDER WOMEN IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: AN INTERSECTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

GHAFOURI, FARZAD ; GHOLIPOOR, MAHSHID ; PREUSS, HOLGER54

INVESTIGATING DISCOURSES CONCERNING WOMEN CRICKETERS IN THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN THROUGH A SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

MAXWELL, HAZEL ; O'SHEA, MICHELLE ; KHAN, AILA ; TALLON, LEAH ; DARCY, SIMON56

WORSE FOR WOMEN: EXPERIENCES OF FACULTY-TO-FACULTY INCIVILITY WITHIN SPORT MANAGEMENT	
GRAPPENDORF, HEIDI ; STRODE, JAMES ; STENSLAND, PEYTON ; SIMMONS, JASON	57
BARRIERS TO SOUTHEAST ASIAN WOMEN'S RISE IN SPORT GOVERNANCE	
CALO, MARIA RUBY ANN KAGAOAN	59
INTEGRATING WOMEN INTO THE GAME? ASPIRATION OF FEMALE SPORT PARTICIPATION WITHIN 'SPORT FOR ALL' POLICY IN SAUDI ARABIA	
BAMUHAIR, NOUF ABDULLAH; GIULIANOTTI, RICHARD; MASON, CAROLYNNE	62
SHE KNOWS HER STUFF (FOR A WOMAN)! EXPLORING WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES IN SPORTS MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS	
PATIL, SWARALI HRISHIKESH ; HINDMAN, LAUREN	63
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION REPORTING PRACTICES OF IRISH SPORTING ORGANISATIONS	
O' BRIEN, AILISH M ; HENNESSY, KAREN D	65
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN CAMPUS SPORT: A PRACTICAL CHALLENGE	
PYUN, DO YOUNG; MASON, CAROLYNNE; WANG, BINGJIE	67
EXPLORING A SEMI-PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S BASKETBALL SUMMER LEAGUE USING LAVOI'S ECOLOGICAL-INTERSECTIONAL MODEL	
ROGERS, MORGAN; DIN, CARI; WERTHNER, PENNY	69
EXPLORING FACTORS OF DIVERSITY MINDSETS IN SPORT: A SCOPING REVIEW	
AHN, NA YOUNG ; KANG, SEUNGMIN ; OH, JIHYEON ...	70
CONCEPTUALIZATION OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION FROM THE VOLUNTEER PERSPECTIVE IN PARA-SPORT EVENTS	
YAMAGUCHI, SHIRO; AOYAMA, MASAKI ; ENDO, HANAE	72
TRANSGENDER ATHLETES AND ELITE-LEVEL SPORT: MAKING AND IMPLEMENTING INCLUSION POLICIES	
THURSTON, ALEX ; WITCOMB, GEMMA ; HOULIHAN, BARRIE	73
UNDERREPRESENTATION IN ENGLISH PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL: PERSPECTIVES FROM 'THE SILENT OTHER'	
KIWOMYA, ANDREW ; MIGHTEN, EDDIE	75
NCAA DIVISION I AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENT-ATHLETES: OPENING DOORS TO GRADUATE EDUCATION	
ROMSA, BRYAN; ROMSA, KATELYN	77
ANALYZING THE GENDER PAY GAP IN SPORTS: A MIXED-METHOD STUDY ON ACADEMIC AND PUBLIC DISCOURSES	
SPERA, GAETANO; ANTONUCCI, GIANLUCA	79
REVISITING GENDER DIFFERENCES IN SPORTS PARTICIPATION: OBSERVED VERSUS UNOBSERVED FACTORS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY	
DOWNWARD, PAUL	81
WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL TEAM SPORT LEAGUES – A CONTINUUM OF DEVELOPMENT.	
TAYLOR, TRACY ; MARSHALL, SAMANTHA ; HANLON, CLARE	82
INCLUSION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AS A LEGACY OF A CANCELLED OLYMPIC BID: SAMI IN NORWAY	
VALIYEVA, DILARA; HERMANRUD, INGE.....	84
BETWEEN EUDEMONIA AND EXHAUSTION: EMOTION MANAGEMENT AMONG SPORT LEADERS WORKING WITH SOCIAL INCLUSION	
NÆSS, HANS ERIK ; MARI, SVENDSEN	86
WILLINGNESS OF VOLUNTARY SPORT CLUBS TO IMPLEMENT/DEVELOP INTEGRATION PROGRAMMES – A TYPOLOGY BASED ON THE CONCEPT OF ORGANISATIONAL IDENTITY	88
NAGEL, SIEGFRIED ; FAHLÉN, JOSEF ; STENLING, CECILIA ; SCHLESINGER, TORSTEN ; EHNOLD, PETER ; ELMOSE-ØSTERLUND, KARSTEN ; GOHRITZ, ANDREAS ; IBSEN, BJARNE ; JARCK, HENNING; SEIPPEL, ØRNULF; STRANDBU, ÅSE; DOHERTY, ALISON; ROBAR, JUSTIN.....	88
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SPORTS FACILITIES	
BEHREM, UMIT	90
CHALLENGES OF ACTIVE AGING: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF PERCEIVED AGE DISCRIMINATION ON PARTICIPATION IN LEISURE ACTIVITIES AMONG OLDER ADULTS	
MOHAMMADI, ZAHRA; KESHKAR, SARA; HONARI, HABIB; KARGAR, GHOLAMALI; GHAFOURI, FARZAD.....	93
BUILDING CAPACITY IN COLLEGIATE DISABILITY SPORT PROGRAMMES: AN EXAMINATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN'S ADAPTIVE SPORT PROGRAMME	
MALESKE, CHRISTINE LYNN ; SANT, STACY-LYNN	95
MEASURING SOCIAL INCLUSION THROUGH SPORT	
FÚRÉSZ, DIÁNA IVETT ; STRODE, JAMES P ; RAPPAL, GÁBOR	97
SPORT EVENTS WITH A PURPOSE: A CASE STUDY OF UCI CYCLING WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS	
MCIPHERSON, GAYLE ; MCGILLIVARY, DAVID ; MISENER, LAURA	99
BUILDING COMMUNITY INCLUSION AND SENSE OF BELONGING THROUGH SPORT: INSIGHTS FOR MANAGING SPORT DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE	
MORGAN, HAYDN; MANLEY, ANDREW; BUSH, ANTHONY	100
SPORT CLUB PRACTICE AND PERSPECTIVES ON DISABILITY INCLUSION	

JOHNSTON, MEL ; LEVERIDGE, SOPHIE ; SCOTT, REBECCA ; NAYLOR, MICHAEL ; MOORE, LINDEN	102
PARTICIPANTS' EXPERIENCES OF LOW THRESHOLD INCLUSIVE SPORT AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES FOR WOMEN – A CASE STUDY FROM NORWAY	
STRAUME, SOLVEIG	104
SPORT EVENT MANAGEMENT AND INCLUSIVE HIGHER EDUCATION	
BUTLER, BARBRA NALANI ; DUCHAC, NEIL ; STOKOWSKI, SARAH	106
FUNDING SPORT-BASED YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN THE GLOBAL NORTH AND GLOBAL SOUTH	
FRANCIS, JASON; WEGNER, CHRISTINE	108
LET'S PLAY: SOCIAL IMPACT OF SPORTS PARTICIPATION ON CHILDREN WITH HYDROCEPHALUS	
AJIEE, RICHARD OPARA ; KEHINDE, MISTURA ; DICKSON, GEOFF	110
YOUTH CO-DETERMINATION AND ORGANIZED SPORTS IN NORWAY	
SOLSTAD, SIRI BØRSET; BODEMAR, GUN ANNIKA VIOLA	111
E-SPORT, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY	
WOMEN IN E-SPORTS: RISING THROUGH INCLUSION AND RESILIENCE	
FRATANGELI, BEATRICE; FORTUNA, VALENTINA	114
ADVANCING SPORTS DATA MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION SERVICES	
ŠARLÁK, MICHAL	115
UNDERSTANDING PAY INEQUALITIES IN PROFESSIONAL ESPORTS: A MULTIDIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS	
TERRIEN, MICKAEL ; ANTOINE, FEUILLET ; BASTIEN, DUFAU	117
RURAL REVITALISATION THROUGH SPORT: THE EMERGENCE AND SUCCESS OF CHINESE FOOTBALL'S VILLAGE SUPER LEAGUE	
PENG, QI; WANG, PU; SCELLES, NICOLAS.....	119
NAVIGATING PERCEPTIONS: MEDIA ANALYSIS OF CHINESE GOVERNMENT ATTITUDES TOWARDS ESPSPORTS AND ONLINE GAMES	
LI, SHUQI; RAN, LI	121
THE BLUE OCEAN OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS – ESPORTS AS A DIPLOMATIC STRATEGY IN GLOBAL CULTURE	
ZHAO, YUPEI ; ZHU, QINGWEN ; MENG-LEWIS, YUE ..	123
TOXIC BEHAVIOURS IN ESPORTS ENVIRONMENTS: AN INTEGRATIVE REVIEW OF LITERATURE	
CALAPEZ, ANDRE ; RIBEIRO, TIAGO ; LOPEZ-CARRIL, SAMUEL	124

THE MODERNIZATION OF MONITORIZATION: TECHNOLOGICAL ADAPTION AND INNOVATION AS MECHANISMS FOR ATHLETE SURVEILLANCE	
CORR, CHRIS ; STOKOWSKI, SARAH ; PAULE-KOBA, AMANDA L. ; JOLLY, KARINA ; SOUTHALL, RICHARD M.	126
ESPSPORTS AND ECOLOGY: AN EXPLORATION OF HOW ESPSPORTS ORGANIZATIONS AND TEAMS ADVOCATE IN FAVOUR OF ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY	
PORTALURI, GIORGIO ; FRATANGELI, BEATRICE ; MURA, RITA ; VICENTINI, FRANCESCA	128
RIDING THE DIGITAL WAVE: EXPLORING ATHLETES' ADOPTION OF MIXED-REALITY SPORTS PLATFORMS	
BOTWINA, GRZEGORZ ; WESTMATTELMANN, DANIEL ; HONG, HEE JUNG ; KOLYPERAS, DIMITRIOS	130
A SYSTEMATIC QUANTITATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW OF INNOVATION IN SPORT MANAGEMENT	
HOFF, KRISTINA ; SMITH, NATALIE	132
ESPSPORTS ONLINE LIVE STREAMING VS ON-SITE CONSUMPTION: A COMPARISON OF SPECTATOR MOTIVATIONS AND MARKET SEGMENTATION	
KIM, SUNGKYUNG; HONG, HEE JUNG	134
SPONTANEOUS RECALL OF ESPSPORTS SPONSORING BRANDS IN SPAIN: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY USING RANDOMFOREST TECHNIQUE	
FERNANDEZ-LUNA, ALVARO; LEON-QUISMONDO, JAIRÓ; LEGUINA, MERCEDES; BURILLO, PABLO; MACIAS, RICARDO; IVAN-BARAGAÑO, IVAN	135
THE GENDERING OF TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS IN SPORTS COACHING AND REFEREEING	
TJØNNDAL, ANNE; SKIRBEKK, SIGBJØRN; ROGSTAD, EGIL; RØSTEN, STIAN	137
EXPLORING THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING NEEDS OF OLDER ADULTS AND EVALUATING A HYBRID PROGRAMME FOR OLDER ADULTS	139
HONG, HEE JUNG; KIM, SUNGKYUNG; RATTRAY, CAITLIN; WALKER, ROSS	139
MAKE OR BUY? FROM DECISION-MAKING TO PERFORMANCE: THE CASE OF E-LEAGUE 1 UBER EATS	
TERRIEN, MICKAEL ; WILLIAM, DE MOOR ; CHRISTOPHE, DURAND	141
TECHNOLOGICAL, INDIVIDUAL, AND ORGANIZATIONAL DETERMINANTS OF SPORT MANAGERS' PERCEPTION OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES DEGREE OF INNOVATIVENESS FOR SPORT ORGANIZATIONS – A QUANTITATIVE STUDY	
STEGMANN, PASCAL ; LEFEBVRE, ARTHUR ; ZEIMERS, GÉRALDINE	143

ESMQ NEW RESEARCHER AWARD

ADVANCING THE GLOBAL-LOCAL NEXUS: THE SPATIOTEMPORAL INTERFACE FOR THE EFFECT OF THE SPORT INDUSTRY ON COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

KIM, CHANGWOOK ; KIM, JINWON ; YUHEI, INOUE146

THEORIZING NON-PROFIT SPORT ORGANIZATION BOARD DECISION MAKING

LACHANCE, ERIC L. ; KERWIN, SHANNON ; HOYE, RUSSELL148

WHAT DOES A NETWORK OF SPORTS FANS LOOK LIKE? A STUDY ON THE FORMATION OF SOCIAL NETWORKS AND INFORMATION DIFFUSION

YANG, HONG WEI ; SONG, SONG MI ; LIM, CHOONG HOON149

OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES

DEVELOPING LEGACY-ORIENTED LOCAL STRATEGIES IN A MEGA-SPORTING EVENT ECOSYSTEM: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE MILANO-CORTINA 2026 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC WINTER GAMES

RIZZO, ANGELA; CARMINATI, MONICA; SANCINO, ALESSANDRO; MARTINI, MATTIA.....150

WHO STILL WANTS THE OLYMPIC FLAME? ANALYSING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OLYMPIC TORCH RELAY OF PARIS 2024

BOURBILLERES, HUGO.....154

THE HISTORY TRACING AND INFLUENCE OF THE "PEOPLE'S OLYMPICS"

WANG, KUN; TANG, BINYAN; DAI, JIANHUI; YANG, SHENGHE155

TAKING THE INITIATIVE: AN ANALYSIS OF MARKETING PRACTICES WITH PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES

TANIYEV, OLZHAS ; MAYER, K.C.157

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER FROM ORGANISING COMMITTEE TO LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS: A CASE STUDY OF BEIJING 2022 WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES

QIN, YUAN ; ROCHA, CLAUDIO ; MORROW, STEPHEN 159

INVESTIGATING ADMINISTRATIVE LEGACIES FROM THE RIO 2016 PARALYMPIC GAMES AND THE IMPACTS ON NATIONAL PARASPORT ORGANISATIONS 161

ZARDINI FILHO, CARLOS EUGENIO161

THE VOLUNTEER LEGACY OF THE TOKYO 2020 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES: IS VOLUNTEERING AT THE TOKYO 2020 JUST "ONCE-IN-A-LIFE TIME" EXPERIENCE?

KANEKO, FUMIHIRO.....163

SUSTAINABILITY OF THE OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES 2024

PREUSS, HOLGER164

ACCESSIBLE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SOCIAL INCLUSION: AN ATHLETES' PERSPECTIVE OF THE RIO 2016 PARALYMPIC GAMES

FELLER, RODRIGO; MERCADO, HAYLEE U.....165

USER MOTIVATIONS AND RESPONSES TO PARALYMPIC CONTENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA: A LONGITUDINAL ANALYSIS ACROSS SIX SUMMER AND WINTER GAMES

MAMO, YOSEPH Z; HAEGELE, JUSTIN A.....167

A CRITICAL POLICY DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES168

CAIN, ALISON; CALLAN, MICHAEL168

CRITICAL REALISM AS A LENS FOR ANALYZING BEIJING 2022 WINTER SPORTS PARTICIPATION LEGACY

ZHOU, JINGFAN ; PAPPUS, SAKIS ; BYERS, TERRI170

PARIS 2024: THE WORLD'S MOST SUSTAINABLE OLYMPIC GAMES? BEYOND LEGACY, ASSESSING PERSPECTIVE ON SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS AND ITS IMPACT ON INTENTION TO ACT

AKOUM, RAFAH; MEKAOUI, NARJISS171

PUBLIC HEALTH AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT

EFFECTS OF WATCHING PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL GAMES ON MENTAL HEALTH AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS - FOCUSING ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WATCHING THE GAMES ON SITE AND VIA MEDIA

YASUI, KENSUKE ; SHOJI, HIROTO ; KAWAKAMI, RYOKO ; IWAMA, KEISUKE176

THE FOOTBALL ACADEMY. A GOOD SCHOOLING?

HERSKEDAL, KJELL M.; GAMMELSAETER, HALLGEIR178

HOW DAILY WORK EXPERIENCES AFFECT EMPLOYEE BIOMETRICS WITHIN THE SPORT INDUSTRY

HUML, MATT R; STENSLAND, PEYTON J; SANDERS, GABRIEL J179

THE IMPACT OF EARLY SPORTS SPECIALIZATION ON FUTURE PARTICIPATION INTENTIONS AMONG NCAA COLLEGE ATHLETES 181

KULASEKARA PANDIAN, ROHAN PRAKASH; MANJUNATH, SANDHYA; SHONK, DAVID J.181

SPORT CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF PERCEIVED SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ACTIVITIES ON THE PREMIER LEAGUE'S CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP QUALITY AND WORD-OF-MOUTH INTENTION AMONG CHINESE CONSUMERS

CHENG, BINGXU; PYUN, DOYOUNG; YILMAZ, SERHAT .185	
HOW TO FOSTER THE PREMIER LEAGUE'S BRAND EQUITY IN CHINA? UNVEILING ITS ASSOCIATIONS WITH BRAND COMMUNICATION AND CONSUMERS' BEHAVIOURAL RESPONSES	
CHENG, BINGXU; PYUN, DOYOUNG; YILMAZ, SERHAT .187	
THE IMPACT OF HOSTING THE QATAR 2022 FIFA WORLD CUP ON LOCAL SPORT CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOR	
ALSHAMARI, SAAD M; SHAPIRO, STEPHEN L189	
CONCEPTUALISING PERCEIVED SPORT BRAND GLOBALNESS AND PERCEIVED SPORT BRAND LOCALNESS	
ZHANG, XIN ; PYUN, DO YOUNG ; MOUSAVI, SAHAR ; MANOLI, ARGYRO ELISAVET191	
BRAVO! LEVERAGING THE LUXURY BRANDS AND THE OLYMPIC GAMES OF CONSUMERS' PERCEPTIONS	
LIN, YONG-DIAN; CHEN, MEI-YEN; CHAN, YUN193	
RETRO LOGOS AND SPORT FANS: INVESTIGATING THE GENUINE INFLUENCE OF NOSTALGIA	
SCOLA, ZACHARY ; GORDON, BRIAN S. ; DILLARD, RYAN195	
AGE AND OVERCONFIDENCE AMONG SPORTS BETTORS	
DWYER, BRENDAN ; SHAPIRO, STEVE ; GUPTA, KESHEV196	
INVESTIGATING FOOTBALL FAN'S SECOND-SCREENING AND PARALLEL-SCREENING BEHAVIOUR IN A REAL-WORLD SETTING	
GAEDEKE, CELINA ; BEHRENS, ANTON ; RATZ, MARIA ; PFEFFEL, FLORIAN198	
HOW TO WIN (BACK) THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF YOUNG SPORTS FANS: AN ASSESSMENT OF GEN Z AND GEN ALPHA	
ULRICH, FABIAN; MARTIN, LUKE200	
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SPORT CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA FOR CHINESE GENERATION Z: A CASE OF EILEEN GU	
GUO, RACHEL; THURSTON, ALEX202	
SPORT FAN ENGAGEMENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA DURING PLAYOFFS IN MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL AND THE NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION: NATURAL LANGUAGE PROCESSING APPROACH	
CHANG, SHU-HAO; KO, YONG JAE204	
A COMPARISON BETWEEN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SATELLITE FANS IN TERMS OF MOTIVATIONS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON FAN LOYALTY	
NICKOLAI, VALENTIN; PFEFFEL, FLORIAN ; KEXEL, CHRISTOPH206	
ANALYZING THE IMPACT OF INSPIRATION PORN IN ADVERTISING USING DISABLED ATHLETES	
KWAK, DAE HEE ; JANG, NAMKYEONG208	

STUDY OF ONLINE TICKETING BEHAVIOUR OF PREMIER LEAGUE SPECTATORS: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE STIMULUS-ORGANISM-RESPONSE THEORY AND TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTANCE MODEL	
YU, GUO ; SONG, YU ; MUELLER, JACQUELINE209	
GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND ITS ASSOCIATION WITH ONLINE FAN ENGAGEMENT IN SPORTS	
DU, JAMES; KIM, AMY C.H.; JAMES, JEFFREY D.....211	
GAME, SET, EVENT? SURVEY EVIDENCE ON GERMAN TENNIS SPECTATORS AT MEN'S AND WOMEN'S TOURNAMENTS	
KURSCHEIDT, MARKUS; FERRAUTI, FABIO; BRANDT, CHRISTIAN; REICHEL, KRISTOFF213	
ANALYSIS OF THE MATCH BETWEEN TEAM SUPPORT AND HOME REGION BASED ON THE INTERACTION OF PROFESSIONAL SPORTS FANS' PLACE ATTACHMENT AND PERCEIVED SPORTS KNOWLEDGE AND EXPLORATION OF ANTECEDENT VARIABLES OF TEAM PREFERENCE	
KANG, DAHUI; KIM, HYUNJUN; HONG, YOONSIK; LIM, CHOONGHOON215	
THE EFFECT OF FAN-ORIENTED TRASH-TALK ON BEHAVIORAL ENGAGEMENTS OF OTHER FANS: THE ROLE OF PRE-EXISTING ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE TEAMS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL REACTANCE	
BAE, DEUKMOOK; SHAPIRO, STEPHEN217	
EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP RESPONSE STRATEGIES ON ATHLETE BRAND IMAGE AND FAN ENGAGEMENT IN PROFESSIONAL SPORTS	
KIM, DONGHYUN; LEE, HYUN-WOO.....219	
THE EFFECT OF ATTRIBUTION OF ATHLETE MIGRATION ON FANS' RESPONSES: THE CASES OF LIONEL MESSI AND CRISTIANO RONALDO	
YUN, LYDIA; KIM, JUNHO; KO, YONG JAE; SHIN, JIEUN221	
EXPLORING THE RELEVANCE OF UEFA EURO 2024 IN THE INDIAN MARKET: A STUDY OF FAN PERCEPTIONS AND ENGAGEMENT	
NARAYANAN, NISHANT; PFEFFEL, FLORIAN.....223	
THE IMPACT PERCEIVED BRAND COMMUNITY CHARACTER ON FAN LOYALTY THROUGH ORGANISATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR: A CASE OF SHANGHAI SHENHUA FC FANS	
ZHANG, XIN ; LU, TIANFENG225	
TRUE DESIRE FROM FAR AWAY: EXPLORING THE ANTECEDENTS OF FANDOM, TEAM IDENTIFICATION, AND LOYALTY OF HUNGARIAN NFL SATELLITE FANS	
KAJOS, ATTILA.....227	
THE IMPACT OF BIRFING AND CORFING ON REVIEWING AND SWITCHING INTENTIONS:	

MEDIATING EFFECTS OF HOPE AND ANGER AND MODERATING EFFECTS OF SPORT TYPE	
LEE, DOHEE; SONG, HYUNJUNG; CHOI, ONYU; LIM, CHOONG HOON	229
TIME TO SAY GOODBYE? - AN ANALYSIS OF GERMAN FOOTBALL FANS' EXIT TENDENCIES	
KADEN, MARTIN ; BRANDT, CHRISTIAN ; BAUERS, SEBASTIAN BJÖRN ; HOVEMANN, GREGOR	231
A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR ENHANCING SPORT FANS' CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE	
DOH, PAUL YUSEUNG ; DO, CHANWOOK ; KIM, HAN SOO	233
FOOTBALL CLUBS AS FACILITATORS OF REGIONAL EQUITY	
LINTUMÄKI, PETRI JAAKKO; ANDERLAN, RUBEN; WETZEL, LION; SCHNITZER, MARTIN	235
THE IMPACT OF THE ALCOHOL PROHIBITION POLICY IN EL SALVADOR'S FOOTBALL LEAGUE AND ITS IMPACT ON FAN SATISFACTION AND FAN CONSUMERISM	
ARGUELLO ROA, RODRIGO ALEJANDRO; YODA, RYUTA	237
ROBOTS 'TALKING' OVER THE WORLD? SPORTS COMMENTARY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE	
REGHUNATHAN, ARAVIND ; LOCK, DANIEL ;OBIGBU, JAMES	238
MODERATION OF IDENTIFICATION WITH THE DRIVER IN THE INFLUENCE OF MOTIVES ON WORD OF MOUTH: AN ANALYSIS OF BRAZILIAN FORMULA 1 FANS	
MIRANDA, YVES ; BARROS FILHO, MARCOS ; BISCAIA, RUI ; PEDROSO, CARLOS AUGUSTO MULATINHO DE QUEIROZ	240
SPORT DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES	
GAME ON OR ADVENTURE BOUND? DELVING INTO MASTER ATHLETES' TRAVEL MOTIVATIONS	
FARRAG, DALIA ABDELRAHMAN ; ADNAN, NADIA ; YOUSEF, MARAM ; MUSTAFA, BALSAM	244
DIGITAL UTILIZATION IN SPORTS PARTICIPATION: COMPARING BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS OF THE OLDER ADULTS USING THE TECHNOLOGY READINESS AND ACCEPTANCE MODEL (TRAM)	
SA, HYE JI ; HAN, JEE-HOON ; CHUL WON, LEE	245
YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN GAELIC GAMES: THE INFLUENCE OF COACH AUTONOMY ON YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCE OF GAELIC GAMES	247
DONNELLY, PAUL ; MCKAY, MICHAEL ; LANE, AOIFE ; HORGAN, PETER	247
CHALLENGES IN DIGITAL KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT	
MERTEN, SEBASTIAN ; SCHMIDT, SASCHA L. ; WINAND, MATHIEU	247
"IT'S NOT JUST ANOTHER INDIGENOUS PROJECT": AN EVALUATION OF THE AUSTRALIAN OLYMPIC INDIGENOUS COACHES SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM	
SHARPE, STIRLING	251
EXPLORING PERSPECTIVES AND EXPERIENCES OF PHILIPPINES WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAM HERITAGE-PLAYERS AND SUPPORTERS	
HARDIE, ASHLYN ; OSHIRO, KRISTI ; DIXON, MARLENE	253
USING A DECOLONIAL INTERSECTIONAL LENS TO IDENTITY WORK AND THE USE OF RHETORIC BY BATSWANA FEMALE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS IN SPORT	
KAMYUKA, DENISE; MISENER, LAURA	255
DANCE AND SENSE OF COMMUNITY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CITY OF CULTURE	
PARK, JEONGJU; PYUN, DOYOUNG; MASON, CAROLYNNE	256
EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES OF VOLUNTEER BOARD MEMBERS IN RURAL SPORTS CLUBS	
FAHN, KATHRIN; BURRMANN, ULRIKE	258
ANTECEDENTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY IN SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT	260
SVENSSON, PER ; HARDIE, ASHLYN ; MCCULLOUGH, BRIAN	260
PLAYER PERCEPTIONS ON THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY AT GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL CLUBS	
IKRAMULLAH, ANEES ; HINDMARSH, MATTHEW	262
KICK-STARTING DESISTANCE AND REHABILITATION PROCESSES THROUGH HARNESSING THE POWER OF FOOTBALL	
MASON, CAROLYNNE; KAY, CHRISTOPHER; HILLYARD, SUSAN; CARTER, LARA	264
SUCCESS AGAINST ALL ODDS? ORGANIZATIONAL AND PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT IN SCANDINAVIAN ELITE FOOTBALL	
SIGVARTSEN, KRISTIAN KJØLSTAD	266
THE CAREER WORK OF SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE PRACTITIONERS	
MC SWEENEY, MITCHELL; GUAN, ERJIA; LU, LANDY	268
CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY WITHIN PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL: BRAND IMAGE OR COMMUNITY DRIVEN OBJECTIVES?	
MILLAR, ROBBIE ; CLARKE, DR JO	269
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND GLOBAL MIGRATION IN PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL	
HAVRAN, ZSOLT ; FÜRÉSZ, DIÁNA IVETT ; JARJABKA, ÁKOS	272
RAE AT WOMENS FOOTBALL IN THE BIG 5 PROFESSIONAL EUROPEAN LEAGUES	
PÉREZ GONZÁLEZ, BENITO ; BONAL SÁNCHEZ, JOSÉ ; BURILLO, PABLO ; FERNÁNDEZ LUNA, ÁLVARO ; LEÓN QUISMONDO, JAIRO	273

WHAT WORKS AND WHY IN PLACE-BASED SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DEVELOPMENT: A REALIST-INFORMED EVALUATION OF 'ACTIVE THROUGH FOOTBALL'

BATES, DAN275

UNDERSTANDING UNIVERSITY-CLUB PLAYER TRANSITIONS: A CASE STUDY ON FEMALE RUGBY UNION PLAYERS IN ENGLAND

PARTINGTON, JANINE; BOND, ALEXANDER277

LEADERS BEYOND SPORT: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION ATHLETES' LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

JOLLY, KARINA ; CORR, CHRIS ; PAULE-KOBA, AMANDA L. ; SELLARS, NICOLE280

THE COLLEGE CHOICE PROCESS OF NCAA INTERNATIONAL STUDENT-ATHLETES

ROMSA, KATELYN; DE ALEMIDA, KAYLIN; ROMSA, BRYAN283

EXPLORING SHARED EXPERIENCES AS CITIZEN SPORT DIPLOMATS: A COLLABORATIVE SELF-ETHNOGRAPHY

GRIFFITHS, RANDALL J. ; TINGLE, JACOB K. ; BREIDENSTEIN, ANGELA284

HE COMES FROM A FAMILY WHERE ABUSE AND DRUGS WAS JUST THE NORM': SHARED EXPERIENCES AS CULTURAL CAPITAL FOR MENTORS WORKING AT SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

WALPOLE, CARON ; MASON, CAROLYNNE ; GODFREY, TARRYN286

PUBLIC EXPERIENCES, CAPITAL BUILDING, AND SUPPORT FOR SPORT EVENTS – THE CASE OF THE ASIAN MEN'S HANDBALL QUALIFICATION FOR PARIS 2024 OLYMPIC GAMES

ROCHA, CLAUDIO ; FARRAG, DALIA ; GIRGINOV, VASSIL ; GHANEM, MARWA ; AL THAWADI, OTHMAN288

UNDERSTANDING THE FACTORS INFLUENCING PARTICIPATION AND/OR NON-PARTICIPATION OF ADULT MALE RUGBY UNION PLAYERS IN ENGLAND

CLARKE, JOANNE; BOND, ALEX; PARTINGTON, JANINE; GASPARETTO, THADEU290

OLYMPIC CAREER DEVELOPMENT: STRATEGIC APPROACHES TO POST-SPORT TRANSITIONS IN EUROPE AND SOUTH AMERICA

EGOAVIL, SUSAN INDIRA; HAUTOBOIS, CHRISTOPHER292

ROLE MODELS IN MOTION: DAIANE DOS SANTOS' IMPACT ON GYMNASTICS AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN BRAZIL

SANTANA, WILLIAM FERRAZ DE; KAPLANIDOU, KYRIAKI295

THE WAY OF HARMONY: A STUDY OF THE REGIONAL IMAGE OF THE OPENING CEREMONY

OF THE 4TH ASIAN PARA GAMES HANGZHOU, CHINA

ZHU, YAN; TANG, QIUZHEN; CAO, HOUWEN.....297

SPORT GOVERNANCE, SPORT POLICY AND SPORT LAW

GOVERNANCE AND PERFORMANCE OF SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

AIT BIHI, ABDELHAMID; LAAROSSI, AYAH300

ROLE AMBIGUITY AND ACTORHOOD OF YOUTH COMMITTEES IN SPORT GOVERNANCE

STRITTMATTER, ANNA-MARIA301

GOVERNANCE OF ACTION SPORTS FROM LOCAL TO NATIONAL

STRITTMATTER, ANNA-MARIA ; BUNING, RICHARD J. .303

EXPLORING ATHLETE PERCEPTIONS OF NATIONAL SPORT FEDERATIONS' GOOD GOVERNANCE PRACTICES

THOMPSON, ASHLEY ; LACHANCE, ERIK L. ; ZEIMERS, GÉRALDINE ; LEFEBVRE, ARTHUR ; ROSALES, RAUL305

TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF ORGANIZATIONAL-SYSTEMIC GOVERNANCE ISSUES IN NATIONAL SPORT ORGANIZATIONS

THOMPSON, ASHLEY.....307

CASCADING GOOD GOVERNANCE: IMPLEMENTING THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION'S CODE OF GOVERNANCE FOR COUNTY FOOTBALL ASSOCIATIONS IN THE EAST OF ENGLAND

DOWLING, MATHEW ; HARRIS, SPENCER ; GARCIA, BORJA308

YOUTH SPORTS POLICY, TALENT IDENTIFICATION, AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY ACROSS SPORTS

DESCHEEMAEKER, KARI ; DE BOSSCHER, VEERLE ; SHIBLI, SIMON ; VAN BOTTENBURG, MAARTEN310

ELITE SPORTS UNDER PRESSURE: CHALLENGES IN UPHOLDING A SOUND ELITE SPORT SYSTEM

BREEDVELD, KOEN311

WHY ARE THEY THE FAVOURITES? PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS ON ELITE ATHLETE ROLE MODEL CHARACTERISTICS AND BEHAVIOURS

PRAET, LYNN; SMISMANS, SOFIE; DEROM, INGE; DE BOSSCHER, VEERLE.....313

SEMI-PROFESSIONAL SPORTS CLUBS AS HYBRIDS – AN INSTITUTIONAL LOGICS VIEW ON THE PROFESSIONALISATION PROCESS

KELLER-MEIER, ROMANO MARCO ; LANG, GRAZIA ; STIEGER, RAPHAEL ; SCHLESINGER, TORSTEN ; SCHULZ, LUC ALEXANDER ; NAGEL, SIEGFRIED314

SPORT POLICY ANALYSIS IN THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC, CANADA

LACHANCE, ERIK L.; RICH, KYLE316

LOCAL LEVEL RESPONSE TO INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE IN SAFESPORT PROGRAMMING: A CASE STUDY OF US FIGURE SKATING

KANG, JINGYI {ALICE}; KIH, LISA318

UNRAVELLING DEMOCRACY IN NATIONAL SPORT FEDERATIONS IN PORTUGAL

HAAS, LUIZ ; CORREIA, ABEL ; BRAVO, GONZALO320

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SPORTS EVENT HOSTING POLICIES IN 17 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

VAN DER STEEN, LUNA ; DEROM, INGE ; VAN HOECKE, JO ; TAKS, MARIJKE321

ESTABLISHING AN EXECUTIVE OFFICE IN VOLUNTARY SPORTS CLUBS – CAUSES, FORMS AND CONSEQUENCES FROM A GOVERNANCE PERSPECTIVE

STIEGER, RAPHAEL ; LANG, GRAZIA ; SCHLESINGER, TORSTEN ; SCHULZ, LUC ; KELLER-MEIER, ROMANO ; NAGEL, SIEGFRIED323

HOW VIRTUAL SPORTS BECAME SPORTS: A CASE STUDY OF WORLD TRIATHLON'S AND UCI'S LEGITIMATION STRATEGIES OF VIRTUAL CYCLING AS DISRUPTIVE SPORT INNOVATION

FOUQUAERT, THIBAUT ; TJØNNDAL, ANNE ; DE CLERCK, TOM ; WILLEM, ANNICK325

LEGITIMACY OF COMPETING GOLF TOURNAMENT SERIES: AN INTERVIEW STUDY ON FAN PERSPECTIVES

BRANDT, CHRISTIAN; HEIDENREICH, HEIKO; KURSCHEIDT, MARKUS327

TOWARDS A MORE DIFFERENTIATED UNDERSTANDING OF ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE – A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR CROSS-CASE PROCESSUAL ANALYSIS OF VOLUNTARY SPORTS ORGANISATIONS

LANG, GRAZIA ; SCHLESINGER, TORSTEN ; KELLER-MEIER, ROMANO ; SCHULZ, LUC ; STIEGER, RAPHAEL ; NAGEL, SIEGFRIED329

PERCEPTIONS OF SAFE SPORT PRACTICES AND DECISION-MAKING IN CANADIAN COMMUNITY SPORT ORGANIZATIONS

MISENER, KATIE E. ; DOHERTY, ALISON ; PENNOCK, KALEIGH ; LLEWELLYN, JOSH331

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE IN HOCKEY CANADA: A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF POLICY IMPACT?

MONGEON, KEVIN; MACINTOSH, ERIC.....332

DRIVERS AND BARRIERS FOR HRM GENDER DEI POLICIES IN SPORT GOVERNING BODIES

LESCH, LARA ; LACHANCE, ERIC L. ; KERWIN, SHANNON ; WICKER, PAMELA334

ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE WITHIN SPORT GOVERNING BODIES: THE ROLE OF TRUST AND ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE IN MERGER DECISION-MAKING

FAHRNER, MARCEL ; LESCH, LARA336

MANAGING ETHICAL BEHAVIOR IN SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS: AN EXPLORATION OF IMPLEMENTATION PROCESSES DEFINED IN THE CODES OF ETHICS OF LEADING SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS

MENESES, ANDRES; KÖNECKE, THOMAS.....338

ANALYSIS OF THE SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES - A CLUSTER ANALYSIS OF HUNGARY AND ITS COMPETITORS 1996-2016

KENDELÉNYI-GULYÁS, ERIKA; KOCH, ÁGOSTON340

EXPLORING THE RELATION BETWEEN ETHICS CULTURES AND FRAUD OCCURRENCE IN COMMUNITY SPORT ORGANIZATIONS

SOUVENIR, GEMA ; DE CLERCK, TOM ; SCHYVINCK, CLEO ; HARDYNS, WIM ; WILLEM, ANNICK342

WILL PUMA STEAL OLYMPIC GOLD? A CASE STUDY OF RULE 40 IMPLEMENTATION FOR PARIS 2024

GRADY, JOHN; BALLOULI, KHALID; BRITT, MICKEY.....344

READY OR NOT, AI IS COMING TO THE OLYMPICS: LEGAL AND MARKETING CONSIDERATIONS

KIM, SUJI; GRADY, JOHN346

SAFEGUARDING FOR WHOM? A CRITICAL POLICY ANALYSE OF THE IOC'S SAFEGUARDING DOCUMENTS

ABDOLLAHKHANI, ZOHREH.....348

INVESTIGATING THE LEGITIMATION WORK OF THE UEFA FINANCIAL FAIR PLAY

JIANG, LIWEI; BYUN, JINSU; LEE, JOON SUNG349

INSTITUTIONAL WORK IN RESPONSE TO CRIMINAL INTERFERENCE IN COMMUNITY SPORT ORGANIZATIONS

VAN BOTTENBURG, MAARTEN ; CLARINGBOULD, INGE 351

EVOLVING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF SAFE SPORT EDUCATION: STUDYING CANADIAN SAFE SPORT RESOURCES AND INSTRUCTION

VAN BUSSEL, MICHAEL; SPENCE, KIRSTY; SCOTT, OLAN; FOGEL, CURTIS; CLUTTERBUCK, RYAN; MCKEE, TAYLOR353

LINKING PROFESSIONALISATION AND VOLUNTEERING IN VOLUNTARY SPORTS CLUBS – BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES

NAGEL, SIEGFRIED ; KELLER-MEIER, ROMANO ; LANG, GRAZIA ; SCHULZ, LUC ; STIEGER, RAPHAEL ; SCHLESINGER, TORSTEN354

THE USE OF FOOTBALL REFEREEING TECHNOLOGY AMONG REFEREE

DENG, SIXU356

SPORT MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

PODCASTS FOR LEARNING IN HIGER EDUCATION

EMSLEY, CHRIS360

LESSONS FROM USING HUMAN-CENTRED DESIGN THINKING IN SPORT MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

JOACHIM, GREG.....	361
THE FINANCIAL IMPACT OF STADIUM DEVELOPMENT IN PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL	
MARQUEZ, MATEO	363
TEACHING AND LEARNING SPORT MANAGEMENT WITH GROUP WORK	
PALMERO, MAURO	365
GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND INCLUSIVITY IN SPORT EDUCATION: A SURVEY STUDY	
CHANG, SHU-HAO ; CHEN, SU-YEN ; CHANG, CHIN-HAN	367
THE POWER OF INCLUSION: CREATING A MORE EQUITABLE SPORT MANAGEMENT FIELD	
RYDER, ASHLEY NICOLE ; VILLEMAIRE, JILLIAN MCNIFF ; GREGG, ELIZABETH	369
GAMBLING WITH THEIR FUTURE? EXPLORING THE PREVALENCE AND NORMALIZATION OF GAMBLING AMONG SPORT MANAGEMENT HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS IN THE NETHERLANDS	
HAIRWASSERS, JEROEN A. G. ; VAN BEZOOIJEN, BART J. A. ; CONSTANDT, BRAM	370
DUAL CAREER – YOUNG ATHLETES’ PERSPECTIVE ON EDUCATION 372	
VARMUS, MICHAL; MIĆIAK, MARTIN; ADÁMIK, ROMAN	372
SPORT ENTREPRENEURSHIP: ITS TIME HAS COME!	
CASE, ROBERT WAYNE	374
INVESTIGATION OF FACTORS AFFECTING LEANING TRANSFER IN DEVELOPING SPORT ENVIRONMENT: CASE OF DREAM TOGETHER MASTER PROGRAM	
KANG, JEEHYUN; KANG, JOON-HO.....	377
DISCOVERING BEST PRACTICES FOR TEACHING CRITICAL THINKING TO SPORT MANAGEMENT STUDENTS	
KEIPER, PAUL E.; ZIMMER, WENDI.....	379
SOURCE OF COMPETENCIES AND KNOWLEDGE AMONG SPORT INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS IN INDIA WITH LIMITED SPORT MANAGEMENT HIGHER EDUCATION	
MANJUNATH, SANDHYA ; NICHOLS, DAVID ; MILOCH, KIMBERLY ; TRUJILLO-JENKS, LAURA	381
SPORTIFICATION APPROACH FOR THE CHALLENGE OF SOCIAL INCLUSION	
NOSARI, SARA; GIANI, AMEDEO	382
WHAT CAN DETERMINE A PERSON’S CAREER IN SPORTS MANAGEMENT? CASE OF LITHUANIA	
FOMINIENE, VILIJIA BITE; STASKEVICIUTE BUTIENE, INGA; DELIAUTAITE, KAROLINA; VALANTINE, IRENA	384
EXPERIENCE IS KNOWLEDGE”: A MULTI-FACETED APPROACH IN ENHANCING SPORT MARKETING EDUCATION THROUGH ACTIVE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING	

Ji, GOUN.....	385
EXAMINING EMPLOYER AND STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF A SPORTS SALES EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROJECT	
DAEHNKE, HAILEY ; REED, SABRINA	387
BEYOND THE LECTURE: ACTIVE & EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING STRATEGIES FOR SPORT MANAGEMENT INSTRUCTORS	
VILLEMAIRE, JILLIAN MCNIFF; RYDER, ASHLEY; WOODHOUSE, MICHELLE; SEYMOUR, PAULA; SOLOMON, BLEN; HART, DANA	388
APPLICATION OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN SPORT MANAGEMENT CLASS: EFFECTIVENESS OF INDUSTRY-COUPLED PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING (IC-PBL) COURSE	
PARK, SUNG-BAE ROGER; KWON, TAKEN; LEE, JONG-SUNG; HYUN, SHIN-JAE	390
SPORT MARKETING AND SPONSORSHIP	
WHO WINS FROM THE GAMBLING SPONSORSHIP OF SPORT? CASE STUDIES FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM AND ONTARIO.	
WHEATON, JAMIE; ROSSI, RAFFAELLO; MOXEY, MARIA; TOZZI, EDOARDO; MORADIPOUR, SAIED.....	393
CONCURRENT SPONSORSHIP: HOW SPONSORSHIP CONGRUENCE AND GROUP DYNAMICS AFFECT SPECTATORS’ ATTITUDES	
WU, Ji; DUAN, YANLING	395
COMPONENTS AND PROCESSES OF CENTRALIZATION OF SPONSORSHIP MANAGEMENT IN MULTI-DIVISIONAL SPORTS CLUBS	
SCHULZ, LUC ; KELLER-MEIER, ROMANO ; LANG, GRAZIA ; NAGEL, SIEGFRIED ; STIEGER, RAPHAEL ; SCHLESINGER, TORSTEN	397
EXPLORING FEMALE ATHLETE ENDORSER MOTIVATIONS: VALUES AND AGENCY IN ACTION SPORTS	
PETRIE, MACKAYLA; BURTON, NICK; NARAIN, MICHAEL; HYATT, CRAIG.....	398
EXPLORING THE SPONSOR CREDIBILITY-ATTITUDE-PURCHASE INTENTIONS RELATIONSHIP: A CASE OF UNIVERSITY SPORT SPONSORED APPAREL 400	
FU, WENJING; DICKENSON, PETER	400
ATTENTION AND MEMORY IN SPORT SPONSORSHIP – THE EFFECT OF LANGUAGE ON SPORTS AUDIENCES IN ESPORTS BROADCASTING	
XU, ZIYUAN ; AMANO, HARUKA ; MATSUOKA, HIROTAKA	402
EXPRESSIONS OF PRIDE: CONSUMER RESPONSES TO SPORT TEAMS’ LGBTQIA+ ADVOCACY ON FACEBOOK	
BAKER, BRADLEY JAMES; SARCOOHI, PEGAH	404

ATHLETE'S PERSONAL BRAND: DO WE NEED TO THINK ABOUT SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY?

DELIAUTAITE, KAROLINA ; MISIKAITE, VEJUNE ; STASKEVICIUTE BUTIENE, INGA406

GREEN MEDIA MESSAGES IN MOTORSPORT? EXAMINING NASCAR, F1 AND THE WRC'S ENVIRONMENTAL APPROACH

TICKELL, SAMUEL CHARLES ; NAESS, HANS ERIK408

SURFING NOSTALGIA WAVES: EXAMINING THE EFFECT OF NOSTALGIA AND EMOTION ON BRAND MEMORY AND ATTITUDE WHILE WATCHING SPORTS

SONG, SONG-MI ; YANG, HONG WEI ; KIM, TAESEOK ; LIM, CHOONG HOON410

FOOTBALL FAN TOKENS SUPPORTERS AND DETRACTORS: UNCOVERING FOOTBALL FANS' VIEWS TOWARDS FAN TOKENS

MANOLI, ARGYRO ELISAVET ; MURTAS, GABRIELE ; DIXON, KEVIN ; ANTONOPOULOS, GEORGIOS A.412

ANALYSING COMMERCIAL REPRESENTATION BY FOOTBALL AGENTS IN THE FOOTBALL INDUSTRY

RAM, BICKRAM414

USING VIRTUAL ADVERTISING FOR INTERNATIONAL BRAND POSITIONING OF EUROPEAN FOOTBALL TEAM SPONSORS

PAARSCH, JILL KRISTIN; GROHS, REINHARD416

DO FANS CARE? AN EXPLORATIVE STUDY ON SOCCER FANS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE MORAL APPROPRIATENESS OF UNHEALTHY SPORTS SPONSORSHIPS

JACOBS, KATHO ; DE JANS, STEFFI ; EVENS, TOM ; CONSTANDT, BRAM418

TEAMING UP FOR SUCCESS: PARTNERSHIP OBJECTIVES IN PROFESSIONAL SPORT CLUBS

THEUS, LEONIE; VAN DALFSEN, GERCO.....420

"HE'S ONE OF OUR OWN" - AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY EXAMINING THE EFFECTS OF COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AND CLUB LEVELS ON FANS BEHAVIOR AND PURCHASE INTENTIONS AMONG ASIAN FANS OF THE GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

ANDERSKI, MATTHIAS ; STEGMANN, PASCAL ; DICKSON, GEOFF ; FULLER, RACHEL ; STRÖBEL, TIM422

THE EFFECT OF FITNESS CENTER'S SPATIAL LAYOUT, RAPPORT WITH TRAINER, AND CONSUMERS' PRICE SENSITIVITY ON SATISFACTION

LIM, GEUMJEONG ; KIM, HYUNWOO ; PARK, HEEYEON424

THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL ISOLATION AND PERCEIVED EASE OF USE OF PURCHASING ONLINE TICKETS FOR SPORTS GAMES ON SUICIDE INTENTIONS OF THE ELDERLY

KIM, HYUNWOO ; LIM, GEUMJEONG ; HONG, YOONSIK426

EFFECTIVENESS OF MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF DISCGOLF TO THE MARKET: THE CASE OF THE BALTIC STATES

STASKEVICIUTE BUTIENE, INGA; JURGELEVICIUTE, MIRETA428

UNPACKING SPORT BRAND CO-CREATION: AN EMPIRICAL EXAMINATION OF BRAND CO-CREATION PERFORMANCES

BRAND, LARS; ANDERSKI, MATTHIAS; STRÖBEL, TIM...430

PREDICTING FANS' SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT: THE ROLE OF BRAND ASSOCIATIONS AND TEAM IDENTIFICATION.

LIANOPOULOS, YANNIS ; TSORDIA, CHARITOMENI ; KASSIS, VASSILIS ; THEODORAKIS, NICHOLAS D. ; COSTA, GEORGE432

SPORT TOURISM AND EVENTS

PROFESSIONAL GOLF POST-ALLIANCE PURCHASE INTENTIONS: A SPORT IDENTIFICATION, COUNTRY-OF-ORIGIN, AND BRAND ASSOCIATION EXAMINATION

TOPOLESKI, CARLENE ; LUPINEK, JOSHUA ; BROWNLEE, ERIC ; KEIPER, MARGARET435

FISHING TOURISM: THE NICHE MARKET OF SPORT TOURISM AND THE USE OF SOLAR-POWERED VESSELS

YFANTIDOU, GEORGIA ; CHALASTRA, IOANNA ; SPYRIDOPOULOU, ELENI ; BALASKA, PANAGIOTA ; PAPAIOANNOU, ALKISTIS ; ZAFEIROUDI, AGLAIA ; COSTA, GEORGE437

SPORT EVENT DOMINANCE IN A US COLLEGE-TOWN: AN EVENT PORTFOLIO APPROACH

GIBSON, HEATHER; JUNG, DAHYE; BLASSNECK, BRIANNA439

MANAGING COMMUNITY SPORT EVENTS FOR HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT

RICH, KYLE.....441
BROCK UNIVERSITY, CANADA441

TESTING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SERVICE QUALITY AND EVENT IMAGE IN THE SETTING OF A SMALL-SCALE EVENT

BALASKA, PANAGIOTA ; YFANTIDOU, GEORGIA ; SPYRIDOPOULOU, ELENI ; PAPAIOANNOU, ALKISTIS442

UNDERSTANDING PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION: AN IMPORTANCE-PERFORMANCE AND SEGMENTATION ANALYSIS

AICHER, THOMAS J. ; NEWLAND, BRIANNA L. ; BAKER, THOMAS A.444

VOLUNTEER MOTIVATION, EXPERIENCE AND OUTCOMES AT CHINESE MEGA SPORT EVENTS: A LONGITUDINAL APPROACH

LYU, CHENGXIANG; DOWNWARD, PAUL; KENYON, JAMIE; PYUN, DOYOUNG445

NATIONAL MULTI-SPORT EVENTS' IMPACT ON SPORT FEDERATIONS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

JENSEN, CHRISTIAN TOLSTRUP447

EVOLUTION OF RESIDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE 2023 PAN AMERICAN GAMES FROM AN INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

PARRA-CAMACHO, DAVID ; BRAVO, GONZALO ; DUCLOS-BASTIAS, DANIEL ; VEGARA-FERRI, JOSE MIGUEL449

PERCEIVED VALUE AND BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS OF LOCAL MARATHON PARTICIPANTS

TOMIYAMA, KOZO ; RONG, RONG450

SCOPING REVIEW ON THE IMPACT OF HOSTING MULTIPLE AND RECURRING SPORTS EVENTS IN SHORT PERIODS

YODA, RYUTA452

PARTICIPANT SEGMENTATION IN AN INTERNATIONAL MARATHON USING UNSUPERVISED MACHINE LEARNING TECHNIQUES: A CASE STUDY OF THE MADRID POPULAR MARATHON

IVÁN-BARAGAÑO, IYÁN ; PÉREZ-GONZÁLEZ, BENITO ; DEL ARCO, JAVIER ; JIMÉNEZ DÍAZ-BENITO, VICTOR ; BONAL, JOSÉ454

EXPLORING INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT TO HELP SUSTAIN MAJOR SPORT EVENT LEGACIES

SON, JOUNGHWA; LU, LANDY; KIH, LISA456

INTERNATIONALIZATION STRATEGIES OF LEADING MARATHON RACES

PARAMIO-SALCINES, JUAN L. ; LLOPIS-GOIG, RAMÓN ; KIM, JONG-CHAE458

USING A SMART-PHONE APPLICATION TO MARKET SPORT TOURISM: THE CASE OF "GO BIKE."

ALEXANDRIS, KOSTAS ; NTOVOLI, APOSTOLIA ; OURANIA, TSALI ; ELENI, ANOYRKATI ; GLYKERIA, MYROVALI ; KARAGIORGOS, THOMAS460

APPLYING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE MODELING METHOD IN THE CONTEXT OF RUNNING EVENTS

ANASTASIADOU, KYRIAKI ; THEODORAKIS, NIKOLAOS ; TSIOLIS, GEORGE ; ALEXANDRIS, KONSTANTINOS ; KOSTA, GEORGE462

SPORT, MEDIA, AND COMMUNICATION

ESPORTS' COMMENTATORS AND COMMUNICATIVE EFFECT: A PRELIMINARY LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF EMERGING FEATURES FOR A HEALTHY AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

FAZIO, ALESSANDRA; TAMBURINI, VALERIA; MENGHINI, MICHELA.....466

A NEW APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING CRISIS COMMUNICATION IN SPORT: A NEWS MEDIA

ANALYSIS OF THE EUROPEAN SUPER LEAGUE CRISIS

SEMIAO CARMO SIMPSON, BENJAMIN ; MANOLI, ARGYRO ELISAVET ; SKEY, MICHAEL467

DESTIGMATIZING EFFECTS OF THE EUDAIMONIC EXPERIENCES GENERATED USING THE INTERDEPENDENCE FRAME IN MEDIA STORIES ABOUT PARASPORTS

SHIOUME, HIROYUKI.....469

CRISIS COMMUNICATION AND FAN DISCOURSE: BOTTOM-UP FRAMING IN THE EUROPEAN SPORTS CONTEXT

STALEY, LARSSYN.....470

SPINNING THE WHEELS OF SOFT POWER: WESTERN MEDIA FRAMING OF FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX AND SPORTSWASHING DYNAMICS IN AZERBAIJAN, CHINA, AND SAUDI ARABIA

MAINER, MARSHALL; XUE, HANHAN; ANDREW, DAMON472

PIRACY STREAMING: HOW AND WHY A CHALLENGE FOR THE SPORT AND MEDIA INDUSTRY

SOLBERG, HARRY ARNE ; DENSTADLI, JON MARTIN ; NESSELER, CORNEL MARIA474

EQUITY IN SPORTS MEDIA: A CASE STUDY OF SWISS OLYMPICS INSTAGRAM COVERAGE OF THE 2022 WINTER OLYMPICS AND ENHANCING ENGAGEMENT IN NON-MEDAL WINNING SPORTS FEDERATIONS

STALEY, LARSSYN.....476

BEYOND THE BROADCAST: UNDERSTANDING TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION OF SPORT BROADCASTING TECHNOLOGY IN SOUTH KOREA

KIM, SANGHYEON; KARG, ADAM; BREITBARTH, TIM; RAW, KATHERINE.....478

CONCEPTUALISING AND TESTING A SERVICE QUALITY MEASUREMENT MODEL FOR SPORT BROADCASTING VIA NEW MEDIA

SUN, SHANHANG; PYUN, DOYOUNG; YILMAZ, SERHAT 480

NICHE VS. MAINSTREAM SPORTS MEDIA VIEWING: ANALYZING CONSUMER EXPERIENCES IN YOUTUBE SPORTS DOCUMENTARIES THROUGH TOPIC MODELING AND SENTIMENT ANALYSIS

JUNG, SUYEON ; BASS, JORDAN ; BOGINA, AUSTIN ; LEE, WOO-YOUNG482

DIGITAL FLOURISHING ON SPORTS OTT PLATFORMS: MOTIVATION, ENGAGEMENT, AND TEAM IDENTIFICATION

JUNG, SUYEON ; JUNG, HOYOON ; LEE, WOO-YOUNG ; CHOI, KYUHYUN ; GANG, ALEX C.484

CHANGING CAREERS FOR HIGH-LEVEL ATHLETES: GENDER-DIFFERENTIATED MEDIA COVERAGE?

SARAIVA, ELODIE.....486

BEYOND WOMEN CLIMBING IN SKIRTS: MEDIA FRAMING OF CHOLITA MOUNTAINEERS

ARSOVA, ILINA; DZIKUS, LARS; SCHULZ, ANTON488

DISCRIMINATORY ONLINE ABUSE IN WOMEN'S SPORT: A LONGITUDINAL EXAMINATION

BURCH, LAUREN ; GEURIN, ANDREA ; HAYDAY, EMILY ; BAKER, THOMAS489

THE SELF-PRESENTATION OF SPORTSWOMEN ON DIGITAL SOCIAL NETWORKS: BETWEEN PROTEST POSITIONING AND ECONOMIC STAKES

PHILIPPE, MARION; JOLI, EMMA; PRADIER, SAMUEL ..491

WHEN SPORT SCANDALS GO BEYOND SPORT: MEDIA ANALYSIS OF THE 2023 RUBIALES CONTROVERSY

VERSCHUUREN, PIM; GARCIA-ARJONA, NOEMI493

BEYOND VIEWING: EXPLORING INDIVIDUAL MOTIVATIONS AND ATTITUDINAL RESPONSES TO WOMEN'S SPORT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

MAMO, YOSEPH ZEMEDE; RIDINGER, LYNN494

STRATEGY, LEADERSHIP, AND STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT IN SPORT

ACTIONS FOR ENHANCING YOUNG LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS IN NORWEGIAN SPORTS: BOOSTING YOUTH INVOLVEMENT AND LEADERSHIP CAPACITIES

BODEMAR, ANNIKA497

HOW CAN SPORT EMPLOYEES CREATE THEIR OWN HAPPINESS? EXAMINING SPORT EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING WITHIN INSTITUTIONAL LABOR DYNAMICS

OJA, BRENT D. ; KIM, MINJUNG ; NITE, CALVIN ; HILL, JASAMINE498

CAREER SELF-MANAGEMENT AND ITS IMPACT FOR SPORT EMPLOYEES

MARTINEZ, J. MICHAEL; BAREFOOT, MANDY500

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN SPORT ORGANIZATIONS: A CATALYST FOR EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION AND PERFORMANCE

HILL, JASAMINE ; KIM, MINJUNG501

HOW VOCATIONAL CALLING AFFECTS SPORT EMPLOYEE OUTCOMES

HUML, MATT R ; TAYLOR, ELIZABETH A ; WAYNE, JULIE503

THE MEDIATING EFFECTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIORS IN SPORT BETWEEN TEAM COHESION AND TEAM EFFECTIVENESS

KIM, SEUNGMO ; PARK, SANGHYUN ; LOVE, ADAM ...505

DYNAMIC STAKEHOLDER MAPPING: WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS FOR NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL SPORTS ASSOCIATIONS AND THEIR STAKEHOLDERS 507

BÜCHLING, ALEXANDRA; SCHMIDT, SASCHA L.507

THE FINANCIAL PLAYBOOK: REASSESSING THE WORTH OF NFL DRAFT PICKS

HADLEY, BRYCE ; KIM, JUN ; YOON, YOUNGMIN509

INTERNATIONALIZATION STRATEGIES OF LARGE, MEDIUM-SIZED, AND SMALL PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL CLUBS - AN ASSESSMENT IN TOP EUROPEAN LEAGUES

ULRICH, FABIAN ; DIMMER, JAN510

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF POLITICAL ASTUTENESS SKILLS FOR MANAGERS IN ELITE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

O'CALLAGHAN, LAURYN; KELLY, SEAMUS.....512

TYPOLGY AND DEFINITION OF MULTI CLUB OWNERSHIP. A CONCEPTUAL AND LEARNING FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

ANAGNOSTOU, MICHAEL ; MANOLI, ARGYRO-ELISAVET514

THE INFLUENCE OF MULTI-CLUB OWNERSHIP MODELS ON THE SPORTING PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL STABILITY OF FOOTBALL CLUBS IN AUSTRIA, PORTUGAL AND FRANCE

KASPAR, ROBERT; KNAUER, LUKAS515

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SPORT SYSTEMS: EXAMINING STRUCTURE, STRATEGIES, AND PUBLIC FUNDING IN RELATION TO OLYMPIC OUTCOMES IN HUNGARY, POLAND, SLOVAKIA, AND ROMANIA

ZARE, FATEME; SISA, KRISZTINA; SIPOS-ONYESTYÁK, NIKOLETTA; SZABÓ, PÉTER517

RESILIENCY IN COMMUNITY-BASED NONPROFIT SPORT ORGANIZATIONS

ZEIMERS, GÉRALDINE ; SVENSSON, PER G.520

PROFESSIONALIZATION OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN DUTCH FOOTBALL

VAN DER ROEST, JAN-WILLEM ; VAN EEKEREN, FRANK522

CONCEPTUALISATION AND ANALYSIS OF A FEDERATION ADVISORY PROGRAM FOR VOLUNTARY SPORTS CLUBS

MOSER, MARISA; BUSER, MATTHIAS; SIEGFRIED, NAGEL523

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN CHINESE SPORT: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS

WANG, ZHE; READ, DANIEL; BURCH, LAUREN525

SUSTAINABILITY AND SPORT MANAGEMENT

THE DUAL IMPACT OF SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS' ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES ON MEMBERS' WELL-BEING AND CLIMATE CHANGE ATTITUDES

KRAFT, CHRISTIAN ; BÜHREN, CHRISTOPH ; WICKER, PAMELA529

IS THERE AN ATTITUDE-BEHAVIOUR GAP IN SURFING?	
MOESCH, CHRISTIAN; CORAY, FLORIAN	530
GREEN CLUBS, HAPPY MEMBERS? EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY, SATISFACTION, COMMITMENT, AND LOYALTY IN NON-PROFIT SPORTS CLUBS	
LÉONARD, PIERRE; ZEIMERS, GÉRALDINE; SCHEERDER, JEROEN	532
“WE ARE PRIMARILY A MOUNTAIN SPORT CLUB” – THE ROLE OF SPORT CLUBS’ ORGANISATIONAL IDENTITY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES	
PILLER, SARAH; NAGEL, SIEGFRIED	534
CLIMATE-FRIENDLY ON-SITE MOBILITY TO SPORTS AND LEISURE FACILITIES – AN ANALYSIS OF DRIVERS AND BARRIERS	
SCHÖTTL, STEFANIE; HAPP, ELISABETH	536
SOCIOECONOMIC MODELS OF AMATEUR SPORT CLUBS: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY IN EUROPE AND SOUTH AMERICA	
CARIN, YANN; RIBEIRO, TIAGO; SANTOS, ANA; PERECHUDA, IGOR; TOMANEK, MATEUSZ; CINGIENE, VILMA	538
CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN CHINESE PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL: INSIGHTS INTO CONSUMER PERCEPTION AND ITS ANTECEDENTS AND OUTCOMES	540
WANG, BINGJIE; PYUN, DO YOUNG; PIGGIN, JOE	540
CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND LEGITIMACY MANAGEMENT IN CHARITABLE SPORT FOUNDATIONS: EVIDENCE FROM MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER CLUBS	
RITH, RONGTITYA; JONES, GARETH J.; BAKER, BRADLEY JAMES; SPINELLI, RICCARDO	542
GREEN SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT IN FOOTBALL	
DADDI, TIBERIO; NOVI, ALESSIO; IRALDO, FABIO.....	544
GREEN PLAY: SETTING THE RESEARCH AGENDA FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN SPORT SPONSORSHIP	
SIEGL, TINO; WORATSCHKE, HERBERT; KOLO, CASTULUS	545
CLIMATE RISKS IN FORMULA 1: “DRIVE TO SURVIVE?”	
ROSS, WALKER J; WATANABE, NICHOLAS M; ORR, MADELEINE; TRENDAFILOVA, SYLVIA; KELLISON, TIMOTHY; PELCHER, JAMEE; HOWELL, JORDAN P; ROUHAS, ZACHARY	547
A SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENT AND SPECIFIC REGULATIONS WITHIN SWISS PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL	
MUSTAFAI, ZAHID; BAYLE, EMMANUEL	549

MANAGING STAKEHOLDER TENSION IN THE HOSTING OF A MAJOR SKI SPRINT EVENT IN A NORWEGIAN CITY	
KRISTIANSEN, ELSA; HOULIHAN, BARRIE; ØHRMEN JOHNSEN, KRISTIN; OPSTAD, BIRGER; STUBBERUD, HANS ANTON	551
INTEGRATING INTEGRITY: ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION IN SPORT	
TRABERG, JOSEPHINE GUNILLA SOFIA; HORBEL, CHRIS	553
FAN PERCEPTIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES IN FOOTBALL	
HUTCHINSON, MATTHEW; VESTERGREN, SARA; CANSIZ, MINA; VOKEY, LILY; MAJER, SOPHIA; CAMPBELL, JADE; CLARKE, KATE.....	555
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND THE OLYMPICS: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE	
SCHULZ, ANTON; GRAHAM, JEFFREY ALEXANDER; TRENDAFILOVA, SYLVIA; ARSOVA, ILINA	556
SUSTAINABILITY IN SPORT EVENTS: CARBON FOOTPRINT IN A CANOE-KAYAK COMPETITION	
MUNSCH, CHARLOTTE; TRENDAFILOVA, SYLVIA; BALLY, CARLA; SCHUT, PIERRE-OLAF	558
IN SEARCH FOR ‘CLIMATE POSITIVE’ SPORT EVENTS: ASSESSING CARBON EMISSIONS IMPACT FOR THE BRISBANE 2032 OLYMPIC GAMES	
HEROLD, DAVID M.; RINDERMANN, MORITZ; RAHMAN, SOHANUR; BUCK, CHRISTOPH	560
EVALUATION OF THE SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT OF THE UEFA EURO 2024 – ANALYSING THE EXPECTATIONS OF RESIDENTS IN THE FRANKFURTRHEINMAIN METROPOLITAN REGION	
TROSIEN, GERHARD; PFEFFEL, FLORIAN; RATZ, MARIA; KÜHNER, CHRISTIAN; KNACKSTEDT, LENA; MARKUS, AHLBORN	562
THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MODEL AND FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSING SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE IN MAJOR SPORTS EVENTS: A DELPHI STUDY	
KONSTANTOPOULOS, IOANNIS; RAJAGOPAL, SHREYYA; BRODMANN, LEONIE; GOGISHVILI, DAVID; SCHOCH, LUCIE; LANG, MARKUS; MÜLLER, MARTIN; CANEPELE, STEFANO	564
THE REVISION OF THE VILNIUS DEFINITION OF SPORT AND THE METHODOLOGY FOR CONSTRUCTING SPORT SATELLITE ACCOUNTS (SSAS) IN THE EU	
KOKOLAKAKIS, THEMISTOCLES; GROHALL, GUENTER; KLEISSNER, ANNA	565
HIGHWAY TO HELL* OR A MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE ORGANISING OF ELITE SPORT – THE CASE OF SWEDEN	
PERSSON, H. THOMAS R.	567

**CAN ELITE SPORT EVER BE SUSTAINABLE?
EXPLORING DEGROWTH AS A POSSIBLE PATHWAY
TO ENHANCE SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES IN ELITE
SPORT**

BOSTOCK, JAMES THOMAS ; STEGMANN, PASCAL ;
MOESCH, CHRISTIAN ; SZATHMÁRI, ATTILA ; EMARA,
ANDREA569

**CRITICAL REALISM AS A LENS FOR ANALYZING
BEIJING 2022 WINTER SPORTS PARTICIPATION
LEGACY**

ZHOU, JINGFAN ; PAPPOUS, ATHANASIOS {SAKIS} ; BYERS,
TERRI571

**THE DIRTY AND LOUD SIDE OF THE FOOTBALL
BUNDESLIGA – AN ANALYSIS OF TRAFFIC DATA**

MENGE, JOHN A. ; BÜHREN, CHRISTOPH ; HWANG, HUI ;
SCHLESINGER, TORSTEN ; PYUN, HYUNWOONG573

**GREENWASHING IN SPORT: INSIGHTS, GAPS, AND
IMPLICATIONS**

TRABERG, JOSEPHINE GUNILLA SOFIA.....574

**ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS TO SPORT
INFRASTRUCTURE: THE CASE OF WATERFRONT
SPORT VENUES**

ROSS, WALKER J ; JAKAR, GIDON ; UZUN, BERK576

**CLIMATE CHANGE PERCEPTIONS AND PRO-
ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOURS AMONG EPL FANS
IN CHINA AND HONG KONG**

KENYON, JAMES ANDREW; LUMLEY-SMITH, NICK; ZHENG,
ZIJIAN578

**DO PROFESSIONAL SPORT ORGANISATIONS WALK
THE TALK? AN INVESTIGATION OF TENSIONS
RELATED TO CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURES**

DE COCK, MARIE B; SCHYVINCK, CLEO; WILLEM, ANNICK;
CONSTANDT, BRAM580

**UNDERSTANDING KEY DRIVERS OF SUSTAINABLE
TRAVEL BEHAVIOUR – A FOCUS ON THE
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF SPORT
MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE**

KOENIG-LEWIS, NICOLE ; COLLINS, ANDREA ;
KONSTANTOPOULOS, IOANNIS ; SCHNITZER, MARTIN ;
MCCULLOUGH, BRIAN P.582

**GAME CHANGERS: ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY CHANGE PROCESSES IN SPORT
ORGANIZATIONS 584**

SOLSTAD, SIRI BØRSET; HORBEL, CHRIS584

**UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY: A
SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW TOWARDS
DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK OF INDICATORS FOR
STAGING FUTURE MEGA SPORT EVENTS**

VAN WAES, STEFAAN ; LEMKE, FRED ; MOLDEREZ, INGRID
; EYCKMANS, JOHAN586

**EXPLORING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF
SPORT: A LIFE CYCLE ASSESSMENT (LCA) OF A
MULTI-DAY SPORT EVENT**

DADDI, TIBERIO; NOVI, ALESSIO; IRALDO, FABIO.....587

**AN EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS OF
INTERORGANISATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS
TOWARDS CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND THEIR
MOTIVES: INSIGHTS FROM SMALLER PLAYERS IN
THE SPORTING GOODS INDUSTRY 589**

GERKE, ANNA ; BENSON-REA, MAUREEN ; ODLIN, DENIS
.....589

**NAVIGATING THE PLAYING FIELD: REIMAGINING
THE SPORTS INDUSTRY IN THE FACE OF
ACCELERATED CLIMATE CHANGE**

SZATHMÁRI, ATTILA.....591

**CO-CREATION OF VALUE AMONG BRANDS AND
CUSTOMERS TO PROMOTE CIRCULARITY – A CASE
STUDY WITHIN THE SPORTSWEAR INDUSTRY**

DREHER, FREDERIC; STRÖBEL, TIM593

**HOW TO REDUCE SPORTS TEAMS EMPLOYEES'
TURNOVER INTENTION? THE EFFECT OF ESG
MANAGEMENT ON SPORT TEAMS EMPLOYEES'
PSYCHOLOGY CAPITAL AND TURNOVER
INTENTION: MODERATING EFFECT OF PERCEIVED
FAN SUPPORT**

CHAE, KIJAE; LIM, CHOON-HOON.....595

WORKSHOPS

**DECOLONIZING THE SELF, REFLEXIVE PRAXIS FOR
SPORT SCHOLARS**

KAMYUKA, DENISE ; MWAMBWA, LOMBE ; MISENER,
LAURA598

**SOCIAL INCLUSION IN AND THROUGH MAJOR
SPORTS EVENTS – MOVING FORWARD**

HORBEL, CHRIS ; LANGBEIN, ELKE ; SCHWARZ, DANIELA ;
LEGG, DAVID ; STRITTMATTER, ANNA-MARIA599

**SPORT EVENTS, HUMAN RIGHTS AND ADVOCACY:
PARTNERSHIPS FOR RESEARCH IMPACT**

MCGILLIVRAY, DAVID ; BISCAIA, RUI ; FLORENCE, ANDREA
; MISENER, LAURA ; PREUSS, HOLGER601

**IN PRACTICE AND EDUCATION: USING THE POWER
OF DISC FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT, RESEARCH,
EMPLOYABILITY, AND TEACHING**

MUELLER, JACQUELINE ; MASEN, ELIZABETH ; RIDINGER,
LYNN ; MCNIFF VILLEMAIRE, JILLIAN ; BOX, REBEKAH 602

**SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT IN SPORT
ORGANISATIONS**

KÖNECKE, THOMAS ; AHONEN, AILA603

**CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT WITH EDI IN SPORT
MANAGEMENT: IDENTIFYING THE ISSUES**

WALPOLE, CARON ; BOOK, KARIN ; SHIBLI, SIMON ;
DOWNWARD, PAUL ; KITCHIN, PAUL ; DONNELLY, PAUL
.....605

**BARRIERS TO INCLUSION FOR DISABLED
FOOTBALL FANS: IMPLICATIONS FOR INCLUSIVE
MANAGERIAL PRACTICES IN ENGLISH FOOTBALL**

PENFOLD, CONNOR ; KITCHIN, PAUL ; DARBY, PAUL ..	606
COMPETITIVE BALANCE AND COMPETITIVE INTENSITY IN MEN’S AND WOMEN’S NATIONAL TEAM FOOTBALL: AN ANALYSIS OF UEFA EURO AND ITS QUALIFIERS	
SCELLES, NICOLAS ; FRANÇOIS, AURELIEN ; VALENTI, MAURIZIO	608
CHALLENGES IN THE EVALUATION OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION: A GAELIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION CASE STUDY	
DONNELLY, PAUL ; BARRETT, DAVID ; MCTAVISH, GERALDINE ; HORGAN, PETER ; HAUGHEY, TANDY ; CLEMENTS, BEN ; TURNBULL, ORLA ; BORRIE, LAURA ..	610
EXPLORING INTERSECTIONALITIES IN SPORT PARTICIPATION IN ENGLAND	
DOWNWARD, PAUL	612
MEASURING AND MANAGING EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN THE UK’S MAJOR PUBLICLY FUNDED SPORTS ORGANISATIONS	
SHIBLI, SIMON	614
ENHANCING DELIVERY AND OUTCOMES OF INTERNATIONAL SPORT MANAGEMENT EDUCATION: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE	
DIXON, MARLENE A. ; SLAVOV, ARDEN ; ZHANG, HONGPING ; GIBSON, HEATHER ; GEYER, BECKY ; DANYLCHUK, KAREN ; LOCKLEAR, ALYSSA ; LASOTA, MARK ; GREEN, B CHRISTINE ; TAKS, MARIJKE ; CHALIP, LAURENCE ; BAKER, ROBERT ; BAKER, PAMELA H	615
AUTHORS INDEX	618
INSTITUTIONS INDEX	624

BEST CONFERENCE PAPER

Track chair: Kostas Alexandris

Exploring Sustaining Fan Support: Social Comparison and Counterfactual Thinking Perspectives

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In sports, where outcomes invariably result in wins or losses, a significant challenge for teams and marketers is maintaining fan support after defeats. Although numerous studies have shown that team losses provoke negative emotions and behaviors among fans, limited research has been conducted to understand why fans still support their teams in the face of undesirable outcomes, such as championship losses. To address this gap, by integrating social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954) and counterfactual thinking (Markman & McMullen, 2003), the authors examined how game outcomes (i.e., wins versus losses) and fans' counterfactual thinking (i.e., reflection versus evaluation) interactively influence fan supporting behavior, such as positive word-of-mouth (WOM). Additionally, we investigate the moderating role of fans' trait competitiveness, providing deeper insights into the psychological mechanisms that drive fan behavior.

Theoretical Background

According to social comparison theory (Festinger, 1954), individuals who evaluate themselves and their groups in comparison to others feel positive or negative emotions. These emotions influence their behaviors, manifesting as either increased affiliation with their in-group or distancing from out-groups. The effect of social comparison can be maximized by coupling it with counterfactual thinking. According to the reflection and evaluation model (REM—Markman & McMullen, 2003), counterfactual thinking can be either reflective (imagining “what if” scenarios) or evaluative (assessing discrepancies between imagined desired outcomes and reality). Reflective thinking

mode “What if our team had won the championship?” can enhance the accessibility of hypothetical outcomes and reduce negative reactions to losses. Conversely, evaluative thoughts like “Our team had the opportunity to win the championship, but ultimately, we failed.” emphasize the importance of evaluating factual outcomes. Thus, this mode deepens the emotional impact of losses.

Trait competitiveness, the tendency to view interactions competitively boosts these effects. Particularly in a losing condition, highly competitive fans who engage in evaluative counterfactual thinking are more likely to intensify positive WOM to cope with disappointments from lost games. Conversely, less competitive fans who engage in reflective thinking enhance adaptive support behaviors (e.g., positive WOM) based on hypothetical alternatives.

Method

We employed a three-way experimental design of 2 (direction of comparison: upward versus downward) x 2 (counterfactual mode: reflection versus evaluation) x 2 (trait competitiveness: high versus low). We developed stimuli by using game outcomes (winning and losing) of the 2022 NBA Finals. We recruited 400 NBA fans through Prolific immediately after the championship game ended—200 fans of Boston Celtics (upward condition) and 200 fans of Golden State Warriors (downward condition).

Participants initially responded to questions associated with moderating (trait competitiveness) and control (team identification) variables. In the reflection mode of counterfactual thinking, Celtics fans were prompted, “What if the Celtics had played better in the final minutes and become NBA champions?” On the other hand, Warriors fans received a prompt: “What if the Warriors had missed the game-changing shot in the final minutes?”. In the evaluative mode, both groups were asked to critically assess the game's outcome rather than how better (or worse) play could have altered the result. Participants in both conditions then described these thoughts in writing using a minimum of five words and answered a manipulation check question focused on game outcome. They also responded to questions related to WOM for the team's charity event.

Results

For the counterfactual mode manipulation check, two coders reviewed each writing task response and excluded 18 inappropriate cases, leaving 385 valid cases. A two-way MANCOVA revealed a significant interaction between the direction of comparison and counterfactual mode on WOM ($F(1, 375) = 4.676, p = .031$). In the upward condition, reflective group exhibited higher WOM intentions compared to evaluative group. Conversely, in the downward condition this patterns were reversed.

The results of Hayes' Process macro (Model 3; 5000 bootstrap resampling) with a simple slope analysis suggest a significant three-way interaction effect on WOM ($b = -1.23, SE = .32, t = -3.78, p < .001, 95\% CI = -1.8728 \text{ to } -.5920$). Among the group of highly competitive fans, those in the downward condition who engaged in reflective thinking exhibited greater intentions for WOM compared to those who engaged in evaluative thinking. Conversely, in the upward condition, those who engaged in evaluative thinking showed higher WOM intentions. The patterns were reversed for the group with low trait competitiveness.

Discussion

The results of the current study support our hypotheses and provide new insights into enhancing fan engagement during challenging times. Sport marketers should carefully craft promotional messages that encourage fans to engage in counterfactual thinking, such as imagining nearly-won scenarios, to enhance engagement. Additionally, marketers should consider the trait competitiveness of their fans; after a loss, messages that critically analyze the game and highlight areas for improvement can be particularly motivating for highly competitive fans, fostering a deeper connection with the team's journey. For less competitive fans, messages that present alternative scenarios where the team could have won can be more effective.

Football Culture In Berlin: When The "Locksmith Boys" Surpassed The "Big City Club" And Moved Into The Champions League. A Qualitative Empirical Analysis of the Competition between 1. FC Union Berlin, Hertha BSC and BFC Dynamo.

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Aim and Research Questions

The German capital has a long-standing football tradition. The years of division into East and West and the separation caused by the Berlin Wall continue to have an impact. In 2023/2024, 1. FC Union Berlin, from the eastern district of Köpenick, is represented in the Bundesliga and the Champions League, while Hertha BSC, based in western Charlottenburg, only plays in the 2nd Bundesliga.

Contrasts could hardly be greater: The member-run 1. FC Union, founded in 1906 and associated with the myth of the "locksmith boys" from the 1920s, only won one GDR title - the FDGB Cup in 1968. After reunification, the club fell into the fourth division in 2005, but worked its way back up and celebrated promotion to the Bundesliga in 2019. Success continued: qualification for the Conference League in 2021, entry into the Europa League in 2022 and participation in the Champions League in 2023. Hertha, founded in 1892 and German champions in 1930 and 1931, tried to become a "big city club" with an investor model. In 2019, it came on the entry of Lars Windhorst. Differences of opinion led to him selling all of his shares and failure.

A third famous club, BFC Dynamo, based in Hohenschönhausen and now in the fourth division, became GDR champions ten times in a row from 1979 to 1988.

To date, there have been no studies on what influence the history of the city's division has on Berlin's football culture and fan culture. Thus, the following two overarching research questions were derived:

RQ 1: How do the fans of the Berlin football clubs interpret the term football culture?

RQ 2: What similarities and differences are there between the fan cultures of Berlin football clubs?

Theoretical Background

Sports clubs are carriers of regional identity (Gómez-Bantel, 2016; Collins et al., 2016;), making the region of origin an important motive for fan identification.

Social identity and group membership (Tajfel, 1974) are significant factors for fan careers. People find members of their own group more likeable.

The bandwagon effect (Lazarsfeld et al., 1944) describes psychological pressure to conform and is expressed through the preference for a successful club by followers who also want to be among the winners.

The passing on of myths is known as myth transfer. Myths in football are legends - memorable successes, outstanding goals and fascinating personalities.

Research Design

As part of an exploratory study, 15 semi-structured expert interviews (Döringer, 2021) with an average duration of 45 minutes were conducted with five fans of each club from June 14, 2022 to March 8, 2023. The selected experts consisted of members of the fan scene, insiders, club officials and football journalists.

The interview guide was divided into six main categories: (1) fan biography, (2) strategies of the own club, (3) perception of other Berlin clubs, (4) status of Berlin football culture, (5) political influence, (6) investor models. The interviews were conducted and recorded using the software ZOOM. Qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2019) was used as evaluation method. Qualitative content analysis was carried out using MAXQDA.

Results

A total of 483 coded segments were evaluated - 166 belonged to Hertha, 137 to Union and 180 to BFC. Family background, social environment, a strong connection to the city of Berlin and the local proximity are cited by all

experts as the main reasons for belonging to their club.

At Hertha, the success of the last few decades is mentioned as the reason for their support. Union and the BFC inspire their fans as underdogs.

Experts from all clubs claim that "Eastern clubs" refer to the past more than "West clubs". While the rivalry between Hertha BSC and Union is now primarily based on sport, there is downright hostility between Union and the BFC. Hertha fans also have a dislike for BFC.

All experts would like more support from politicians. The Berlin Senate's policy is considered slowing down the development of the clubs, which is why they have to act themselves on important issues such as stadium construction.

BFC and Union rely on diversification of sponsors, while Hertha markets sponsorship packages via "Sportfive". Opinions about investors' entry are varied. The 50+1 rule is considered inviolable. However, investors can help clubs financially achieve sporting success. A suitable concept is a prerequisite. There are also risks of the club becoming too dependent on the investor and fans splitting off. The model of Hertha is viewed as a negative example.

Conclusion

Tradition is cited by all experts as a central factor in the meaning of the term football culture. They see football culture in connection with the history and successes of the club. Fans have a major influence on football culture, including through participation or through social interaction. Ultra-fans are considered part of football culture. All experts distance themselves from overly commercialized clubs.

Assessing the Willingness to Pay for Different Types of Multi-Level Sustainability Labels in the German Sports Apparel Industry

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Aim and Research Questions

Past research has shown that sustainability attributes, whether environmental or social, are valued by the customer (Berger, 2019). Consequently, existing studies in the textile and sports industries highlight a higher willingness to pay (WTP) for environmentally and socially sustainable products (Ellis et al., 2012; Spindler et al., 2023). However, recent research suggests that green products need to be recognizable as green to generate a higher WTP in comparison to their non-green counterparts (Berger, 2019).

Previous research in the food industry has highlighted that consumers' preferences are influenced by labelling information (Jürkenbeck, 2023). However, this impact differs regarding the type of label. Interpretive labels have been found to work especially well, even without additional information or familiarity with the label (Jürkenbeck, 2023). Numerical information, on the other hand, seems to be difficult for customers to interpret (Maubach et al., 2014). While there is research on the comparison of labels in other industries (such as the food industry (Egnell et al., 2019)), no pertinent research can be found in the textile or sports industry.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to compare the impact of different labels (a percentage-based and a graphic one) on the customers' purchase intention when buying sports apparel. To reach this aim, the presentation

answers this research question: How do different labels differ in their effect on consumers' WTP for sustainable sports shirts? This is done based on two representative panel surveys among German runners incorporating two conjoint analyses.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Past research has found an information asymmetry between customers and producers when it comes to the environmental characteristics of a product (Osburg et al., 2020; Sigurdsson et al., 2022). As a possible solution, signaling theory (Spence, 1973) suggests to reduce this asymmetry by producers communicating the respective product attributes to the customers (Osburg et al., 2020).

Osburg et al. (2020) have shown that eco-labelling decreased information asymmetry and increased green consumption behaviour. Borin et al. (2011) observed that the state of research on eco-labelling is about two decades behind the research on nutritional labelling. Consequently, the research on eco-labelling should take previous research in the food industry into consideration, which will be done in this study.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

Two data collections were conducted in collaboration with panel providers among German runners in July 2021 and June 2023. Each study included a choice-based conjoint design, containing 16 choice-sets, with each set consisting of 3 product concepts and a "none"-option. The specific reference product was a functional sports shirt. The examined attributes were brands, price and level of environmental (ES) and social sustainability (SS). In the first study, ES and SS were communicated using a percentage-based label with five levels (0%, 25%, 50%, 75%, 100%). In the second study, graphic labels were developed based on the so-called Nutri-Score, a label that is frequently used in the food sector in Germany and very well-known. Specifically, the GREEN-Score (representing ES) and the SOCIAL-Score (for SS) were used that both also had five levels from A (green/best) to E (red/worst).

After screening, the studies included 1,000 (first) and 1,038 respondents (second data collection), with similar socio-demographic characteristics. The respondents' WTP was estimated with the market simulator of the Sawtooth Software.

Results and Discussion

In general, an additional WTP for higher degrees of ES and SS is observable. The results for the percentage-based labels show a steady increase of the WTP for ES and SS amounting to 31.50 EUR for 100% ES and 25.02 EUR for 100% SS. The results for the graphic labels, on the other hand, show a very steep increase in WTP between E and D for both sustainability types that then flattens considerably to eventually amount to 32.92 EUR for the A-level of ES and 31.34 EUR for the A-level of SS.

The very remarkable difference in the increase in the WTP for the first step between the levels E/0% and the levels D/25% shows that manufacturers could financially profit much more from limited sustainability efforts when using graphic labels. But these results should be solidified with field experiments before their application to professional practice.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This paper supports the idea that labels can generally function as signals that positively impact the WTP for sustainable products because for both labels higher sustainability levels were valued with a higher WTP. In comparison, it is particularly interesting that the graphic label resulted in a higher WTP for low levels of sustainability than the (seemingly) more specific percentage-based label.

These insights have many implications for academia and the (sports) apparel industry, but also for political institutions considering the implementation of marketing tools to strengthen sustainable consumption. Limitations and recommendations for future research will be discussed in the presentation.

Broader, New and Critical Aspects of Sport Management

Track chair : Mathew Dowling

“How Much Do I Have To Give?” Consumer Perceptions Of Athlete Activism Sacrifice, Support And Authenticity

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Aim and Research Questions

Activism by elite athletes is an increasingly visible yet divisive topic. Athletes who engage in activism face numerous barriers including stigma and negative public opinion (Kluch, 2023). To date, insufficient research exists in understanding whether specific athlete actions may mitigate public criticism of their activism. This study's purpose is to provide quantitative evidence to support the theory that sacrifice is an impacting factor into how activist athletes are perceived. The study is guided by the following research questions: 1) Do higher levels of sacrifice by activist athletes affect consumer perceptions of the athlete's authenticity? 2) Do higher levels of sacrifice positively affect the overall support that consumers have towards an athlete engaging in activism?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

This research is underpinned by costly signalling theory which suggests that by making substantial sacrifices, activist brands may be able to increase perceptions of authenticity (Mirzaei et al., 2022). Previous marketing research has shown that perceptions of authenticity are crucial for activist brands to avoid negative labels such as “woke washing” (Vredenburg et al., 2020). Research has meanwhile shown that athletes regularly face consequences and sacrifice for engaging in activism (Kaufman, 2008; Niven, 2020). Indeed, many of the most notable examples of athlete activism from Muhammed Ali to Colin Kaepernick have been punctuated by a willingness to endure consequences because of their activism. Despite this, no research has considered whether sacrifice impacts on how athlete activists are perceived

by the public. Studies have previously shown that support for athlete activism is impacted by the form and way athlete activism is undertaken (Atouba & Wilson, 2020). Prior research into athlete activism has primarily been studied in relation to the American context (O'Neill et al., 2023).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

This study makes use of a single-factor (Sacrifice), three-level (No sacrifice vs Low sacrifice vs High sacrifice) between-subjects experimental design. The experiment is conducted through an online survey. Participants are randomly assigned to one of three scenarios involving a fictional AI-generated athlete activist posting to social media. Artificial intelligence was utilised to make the athlete and their profile as authentic as possible. Each scenario contains different levels of sacrifice by the athlete. Pre-manipulation measurements include sports interest and general attitude towards athlete activism. Post-manipulation measurements include support for the activism in the scenario; attitudes towards the athlete; perceptions of athlete authenticity; and brand perception. To extend research beyond the American context, the target population is German people with an interest in sports. To test the validity of the survey items and the manipulation scenarios, a pilot survey will be conducted through a convenience sample of undergraduate sport management students. Following this, responses to the main survey will be obtained through a convenience sample by distributing the survey to sports social media pages. Survey experiments have proven a suitable method for studying factors impacting on people's perceptions of athlete activism (Cunningham & Regan Jr, 2012).

Results and Discussion

This research is still in progress, data collection is about to begin at the time of abstract submission, so data analysis and results will be presented at the conference. Findings will quantitatively illustrate if different levels of sacrifice by activist athletes have any impact on how the athletes are perceived by sports consumers. We hypothesise that athletes are more likely to be perceived as authentic in their activism when they engage in acts of sacrifice. Results will also indicate if sacrifice positively affects

sports consumers support for the athlete engaging in activism, as well as their perceptions of the athlete as a brand. Results may help indicate whether perceptions of authenticity are linked to intentions to support activist athletes.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implications

This study makes several contributions to the fields of sports management and sports marketing. Firstly, this study adds to the growing literature which extends athlete activism research beyond the American context. Second, this study is the first to quantitatively measure authenticity in relation to athlete activism. Being perceived as authentic has been shown to affect consumer perceptions of corporations when engaging in brand activism (Vredenburg et al., 2020), therefore this study extends this research by considering the impact of authenticity on athlete brands. Lastly, this study has implications for athletes when deciding to undertake activism. It adds to the literature on public perceptions of athlete activism by analysing if certain practices by athletes could lead to reduced public criticism. As sacrifice may be an impacting factor on public perceptions of authenticity and support, athletes should consider whether they are willing to make sacrifices when engaging in activism.

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A Study on User Perceptions of Sports-Centric Digital Healthcare Services Through Topic Modeling and Sentiment Analysis: Focusing on Samsung Health

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Aim and Research Questions

The revolutionary development of digital technology due to the Fourth Industrial Revolution is fundamentally changing the types of global healthcare services. Notably, the popularization of smart devices and the rising interest in health and well-being have led to an increase in public demand, resulting in the active implementation of various healthcare functions through mobile apps.

As exercise has become an essential element in leading an individual's healthy life, digital healthcare has been crucial in the sports industry, and leading to the proliferation of devices and services that make monitoring physical activities like running, walking, and fitness easily accessible through wearable bands and watches.

Among digital healthcare apps, Samsung Health stands out as a significant life logging app, supporting personalized healthcare services. Since its launch in 2012 with simple fitness tracking features, Samsung Health has continuously released a variety of functions, including meditation, sleep, heart rate, and blood pressure monitoring. Moreover, it has expanded consumer touchpoints by integrating wearable devices like the Galaxy Watch released in 2018 and the upcoming Galaxy Ring slated for the second half of 2024 (Yoon, 2024).

However, as with Samsung Health, numerous apps that assist in health management through wearable devices have been released, intensifying market competition. Products with excessively many features in one app can overwhelm consumers, leading to reduced usability (Lee et al., 2023), and a decline in usage rates to 25% after six months (Lee & Choi, 2017). Therefore, to maintain its market leadership and ensure continued use by both

new and existing users, Samsung Health must maximize the app's strengths and resolve its weaknesses based on user service experiences.

To achieve this goal, this study aims to empirically analyze the overall perception of digital healthcare app services using massive review data rather than standardized surveys. By adopting machine learning algorithms and evaluating model performance, the research minimizes subjective researcher intervention and identifies specific positive and negative factors experienced by users. This approach makes a significant contribution by not only providing cross-sectional analysis based on the use of digital healthcare services but also offering practical insights from long-term user reviews.

Literature Review

In academia, research has focused on verifying the effectiveness of digital healthcare services for weight management, habit formation, and chronic disease management (Li et al, 2020; Kim et al, 2020; Choi & Kim, 2017). Additionally, studies have aimed to identify the factors affecting user satisfaction and continuous usage intentions based on the technology acceptance model for digital healthcare (Jung et al, 2021; Lim et al 2021; Heo, 2020; Ki et al, 2019; Lee et al, 2017). Despite the growing academic interest in digital healthcare services, there is a lack of studies that examine the factors influencing positive and negative impacts on app usage and user engagement based on review data of actual operating apps.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

This study utilized Python for data collection and analysis, encompassing data collection, data preprocessing, and data analysis stages to gather and process review data from the Samsung Health app. A total of 14,921 review data entries were collected from Google play in KR server September 2018 to February 2024, and LDA-based topic modeling analysis was conducted along with logistic regression for machine learning-based sentiment analysis, producing odds ratio scores.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The topic modeling analysis yielded five themes: 'healthcare service,' 'activity

tracking,' 'device integration,' 'user experience,' and 'user interaction.' Sentiment analysis results produced positive keywords such as 'motivation, 3.87,' 'healthcare, 3.11,' 'beverage, 2.62,' 'breath, 2.53,' 'real-time, 2.48,' 'data, 2.22,' 'estimate, 2.22,' 'test, 2.1,' 'movement, 2.09,' 'combat, 2.08,' and negative keywords such as 'authentication, 4.4,' 'watch, 3.98,' 'login, 3.92,' 'contact, 3.79,' 'update, 3.49,' 'error, 3.45,' 'difficult, 3.42,' 'STRAVA, 3.42,' 'marketing, 3.34,' 'widget, 3.28.' These findings indicate that while Samsung Health users have a positive response to 'healthcare service' and 'activity tracking,' they perceive 'user interaction' and 'user experience' negatively. Overall, Users are satisfied with Samsung Health's core functions related to health management, but they experience discomfort with aspects of the user experience such as 'login', 'authentication', and 'update'.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The study examined the review data of Samsung Health to explore user experiences. Based on the results, Samsung Health operators should consider the following strategies: Firstly, with the negative factors emerging in 'user interaction' and 'user experience,' Samsung Health must more actively respond to user requests and feedback, improving authentication and login issues for service stability. Secondly, positive factors from 'activity tracking' suggest Samsung Health should consider offering diverse exercise tracking programs through various wearable devices. Lastly, positive factors from 'healthcare service' imply the need for more exclusive and diverse content, device integration, and visualized exercise records.

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Understanding sport-based migration at the non-elite level: The case of Korean Taekwondo masters in the United States

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Sport migration has emerged as a global phenomenon in both research and practice over the past few decades. There has been a notable rise in the transnational movement of athletes, coaches, and support personnel (Agergaard & Ryba, 2014). In the literature, sport migration has been predominantly studied in the context of elite, high-profile male athletes and coaches within a limited range of team sports, mostly soccer, with a focus on the mobilities between the global south and the global north (Agergaard et al., 2023; Elliott & Harris, 2016). Some attention has been paid to other team sports such as cricket, baseball, basketball, and ice hockey (Maguire & Falcoux, 2011). However, very limited work has been conducted to study sport migration in other disciplines (e.g., rugby, running) and in the case of non-elite, low-profile sport professionals.

Therefore, a significant gap exists in understanding how non-elite sport professionals decide to migrate (Carter, 2011). This study seeks to address this gap by investigating the experiences of Korean Taekwondo professionals who have migrated to the United States to work as Taekwondo masters. Unlike elite or professional athletes, these individuals possess sport skills at a certain level but not at the elite or professional tier. Thus, the aim of this study is to examine sport-based migration at the non-elite level through the lens of Korean Taekwondo masters who have migrated to the U.S. To achieve this objective, we pose the following research questions: How do Korean Taekwondo masters navigate the migration process to the U.S., and how does this process differ from elite-level sport migration?

This study is guided by the adjusted push-pull framework (Wicker et al., 2018), which enables us to examine both macro- and micro-level push and pull factors that influence migration decisions and processes. Push factors encompass circumstances prompting

individuals to leave a country, while pull factors attract them to another country (Daugeliene, 2007; O'Reilly, 2013). These push and pull factors operate at both macro and micro levels. Macro-level push and pull factors relate to population movements, international political-economic relations, labor market situations, and legal issues regarding transnational mobility. Micro-level push and pull factors pertain to family dynamics, individual identities (e.g., gender, race and ethnicity, religion), sense of place, and career considerations.

This study was designed using a qualitative case study approach (Starman, 2013). We collected two types of data: (a) narrative data through individual, semi-structured, in-depth interviews, and (b) document data through archival searches (e.g., media articles, policy and government reports). Participants for interview were purposively recruited based on two criteria: being a Taekwondo master who (a) immigrated to the U.S. using their Taekwondo skills, and (b) has worked as a Taekwondo master in the U.S. for more than 2 years. Recruitment was conducted using purposive and snowball methods (Heckathorn, 2011; Tracy, 2020). Archival searches were conducted both online and offline. Online searches were performed on Korean and U.S. databases, while offline searches were conducted at the National Library of Korea, where South Korean official government and policy documents are housed.

The collected data are being analyzed using thematic analysis with three steps: (a) reading and familiarizing ourselves with the data, (b) generating initial codes, (c) mapping the initial codes into representative themes (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Throughout the analysis process, the authors engaged in continuous discussion to ensure intercoder reliability. As of April 2024, 14 interviews have been completed. We aim to conduct 16 additional interviews to draw more in-depth findings and discussion before the EASM 2024 Conference.

The preliminary findings indicate that the migration of Korean Taekwondo masters to the U.S. was influenced by a dynamic interplay of macroscale and microscale factors. Macroscale factors included the availability of job opportunities stemming from the scarcity of Taekwondo talents in the U.S., as well as lower legal/immigration barrier with

Taekwondo skills being recognized as ‘talents.’ Microscale factors encompassed gender dynamics, with the majority of Taekwondo-based migrants being men, in line with societal expectations, and income considerations, with migration to the U.S. offering the prospect of higher earnings. In contrast to elite-level athletes and coaches, these non-elite level Taekwondo professionals migrated with the intention to establishing permanent residence in the U.S. (Maguire, 1996). Although the migration of Korean Taekwondo masters to the U.S. was voluntary, they faced many challenges while adjusting to their new country of residence. One of the major challenges was the lack of structural support and network. Policymakers and practitioners in the field of Taekwondo development and international relations in Korean institutions may find the results of this study useful for developing a support system and network for Korean Taekwondo masters working abroad, which will contribute to the well-being and professional development of the migrated masters.

With additional findings and discussions to be presented at the conference, this study makes a significant contribution to the literature on sport migration, particularly by expanding the application of the adjusted push-pull framework to the examination of non-elite level sport-based migration. For future research, we suggest that more studies can be done to investigate untypical sport migration pathways in other sport disciplines with a particular focus on the migration cases from non-Western countries to Western countries as well as the agentic capacity of sport professionals in their migration decisions.

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Earn It, Spend It, Save It: Exploring the Financial Wellbeing of Canadian National Team Athletes

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Aim and Research Questions

This study describes Canadian national team athletes' ability to meet their day-to-day financial commitments, and their sense of financial security and resiliency, and identifies factors that shape those conditions. This work was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the financial wellbeing of Canadian national team athletes?
2. Do money use and management behaviors influence athlete financial wellbeing?
3. Does financial wellbeing vary by athlete gender, income, and sport participation status?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The study is based on Kempson and Poppe's (2018) model, which states that financial wellbeing is indicated by an individual's ability to meet their commitments and avoid payment problems, feel financially comfortable, and resilience to withstand a financial challenge. Financial wellbeing is influenced by money use and management behaviors related to saving, not borrowing for daily expenses, planning use of income, and making informed financial decisions. The model has been used in Norway, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Canada, and the United States to assess the financial wellbeing of the general population (Kempson & Poppe, 2018).

We adapted the Kempson and Poppe (2018) model to explore the financial wellbeing of Canadian national team athletes, select socio-economic factors that might distinguish individuals, and money use and management behaviors that may explain that wellbeing. We focused on gender, income, and active or retired status to explore variations. Elite

women athletes may experience less financial stability because women's sport is not as commercialized as men's sport (Cooky et al., 2021), and because resources within sport are distributed unevenly (Evans et al., 2020). Former professional athletes have been noted to use financial literacy and money management skills to sustain their financial wellbeing (Hong & Fraser, 2022; Hong & Fraser, 2021). Our study builds on this work adds to the growing knowledge on athlete financial wellbeing.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Data were collected through an online survey, open to all Canadian national team athletes aged 18 and over, actively participating or retired (within three years of data collection). The survey was made available in both English and French. Survey questions captured socio-demographic information including athletes' age, gender, income, sport participation status, and education. Subsequent questions explored perspectives and behaviors related to athlete financial wellbeing and money use and management behaviors.

We analyzed 646 completed cases. Principal components analyses (PCA) were used to assess the structure of financial wellbeing and money use and management behaviors. Mixed between- and within-subject multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) tests were conducted to determine any variation in financial wellbeing by athlete gender, active or retired status, and income. Finally, multiple regression analyses were completed to examine the predictive effects of money use and management behaviors on financial wellbeing.

Results/Findings and Discussion

We found that the financial wellbeing of Canadian national team athletes is indicated by their ability to meet financial commitments, feel financially comfortable, and be resilient to face financial challenges. Money use and management behaviors did indeed predict athlete financial wellbeing, with particular emphasis on behaviors related to being vigilant about finances, saving, and making informed financial decisions.

We did not identify significant differences in athlete financial wellbeing based on sport participation status and gender. This indicates that financial pressures to keep up with expenses, including those related to sport participation, and resiliency to withstand financial challenges is a concern for all Canadian national team athletes. We did identify a significant effect for income, with athletes earning \$100,000 and over having the highest scores for financial wellbeing. However, scores were not perceived to be notably different among athletes in the \$50,000 to \$74,999 and \$75,000 to \$99,999 income groups. This indicates that higher levels of income alone may not contribute to greater financial wellbeing for Canadian national team athletes and that other factors may play a role.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

Study findings bring awareness to the financial wellbeing of Canadian national team athletes and factors which contribute to that state. Findings provide insight to any variation in financial wellbeing experienced by athletes based on their gender, income, and sport participation status. These findings have implications for Canadian national team athletes because results indicate that in addition to income, enhancing financial behaviors related to saving, staying informed on money matters, and being better prepared for financial setbacks can help them bolster their financial wellbeing.

Findings also have implications for multisport organizations who provide services to athletes related to money management. These organizations may develop strategies focused on enhancing athlete money use and management behaviors, such as connecting athletes with a financial advisor and providing education on budgeting, saving, and investments. Finally, this study underscores the need for more research into this area to identify and explain factors that may additionally and better explain financial wellbeing in the target population.

Multi-Club Ownership: A New Business Model in Football

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Aim and Research Questions

With growing commercialization and broadcast appeal, professional football is an increasing investment and diversification opportunity. A key tenet of why people are investing in football is that clubs are still undervalued (Massey, 2021). In times of advanced internationalization of sports, football clubs are developing new business models and adopting strategies borrowed from other industries to expand their network and maximize their income (Pastore, 2018). Multi-club ownership (MCO) has become a popular topic in the world of football, and by many claimed to be a business model that may dominate the future of this sport. However, while multi-club portfolios offer much appeal, such complex ownership structures also pose specific risks (KPMG, 2020).

In this paper, we aim to analyze the benefits of the MCO from a sports, business and community perspective. We list budgets, community activities, sustainability, and sports results in national and international competitions (UCL, UEL, and UECL) as the main indicators of success. An additional aim of the study is to estimate the optimal size of the MCO.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Although MCO are becoming more and more popular in football, there are only few scientific publications dealing with this topic (Breuer, 2018). In 2017 there were at least 26 first-division clubs across Europe involved in cross-ownership, in which a private person, club or entity had control of or a decisive influence over more than one club (KPMG, 2020). In 2021 there were already 156 clubs from around the world as part of 60 MCO groups (Menary, 2021). This phenomenon is a direct consequence of the economic growth of the football industry experienced in the past

decade. However, this topic also raises new questions of governance for everyone, from international football federations to clubs, players, and fans (Menary, 2021).

The City Football Group is mentioned by many as the best example of the MCO (Pastore, 2018). Another top MCO is Red Bull, which is one of the biggest brands in the world, and owns some of the best and the biggest football teams around the world (Ambille, 2021). The City Group model is based on the idea of establishing a single club in each major territory and attempting to make them the dominant force (Keech, 2020). The Red Bull model is based around owning multiple clubs with a single group-wide philosophy.

There are several reasons that can make MCO attractive: it brings a broader network and may result in profitable synergies from both a sporting (e.g. improve scouting networks) and business perspective (e.g. sharing staff, expertise and best practices) (Pastore, 2018). The most obvious areas where a group of clubs can realize a competitive advantage, are the areas of on-field performance and player development. MCOs can minimize sports-related risks and optimize on-the-pitch performance by transferring players to specific positions in case of injuries or a shortage in the squad. Watford and Udinese, for example, both under the ownership of the Italian Pozzo family, have completed over 50 transfers between themselves in the past decade (KPMG, 2020).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

This study employs a mixed-method approach to investigate the benefits of MCO in professional football. Primary data is collected through stakeholder interviews, supplemented by secondary data from literature and financial reports. It is important to emphasize the complexity of the task due to the dual connected/independent nature of football clubs. Quantitative analysis encompasses financial, sports, and community metrics, while qualitative analysis explores stakeholder perspectives. Interviews were conducted with the representatives (CEO, general director, or sport director) of clubs such as Lausanne Sport (part of INEOS), Sevilla FC (part of 777), and Manchester City F.C. (part of City Football Group). Comparative analysis evaluates MCO groups'

success and examines its relationship with size.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The study indicates that larger MCO portfolios tend to yield higher financial returns. Sporting achievements vary among different MCO models, influenced by investment strategies and player development initiatives. Community engagement efforts positively affect the clubs' public image and relationships with local communities. Qualitative analysis highlights diverse challenges and opportunities inherent in MCO structures. Overall, the research underscores the multifaceted impact of MCO in football, suggesting potential benefits for various stakeholders across sports, business, and communities.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The aforementioned information raises the question: what lies ahead for the world of football? Our research suggests a growing trend toward single-owner models, leading to the consolidation of successful groups that will expand and dominate the market. Additionally, it is crucial to consider the implications of multi-club ownership (MCO) models on leagues. As MCOs are inherently interconnected yet self-enclosed organizations, and with their increasing prevalence and apparent acceptance by sport governing bodies, a new methodology for calculating, monitoring, and comparing their results and success must be established. Our study is one of the initial steps towards taking such appropriate actions.

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Connecting With Sports Fans: Gambling Marketing Strategies On Instagram

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Aim and Research Questions

Our research questions how major gambling operators utilise sports media as a vehicle for marketing and brand building on Instagram.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Social media platforms have become a prominent space for the proliferation of commercial messaging, including gambling. These platforms facilitate gambling operators' promotion of their services via platform-based advertising, whilst also building and positioning their brand through cross media strategies. Accordingly, there is a growing multidisciplinary literature on the use of social media in gambling marketing (Gainsbury et al., 2016; James and Bradley, 2021; McEvoy et al, 2023). Previous research has explored gambling operators' use of multiple platforms (Lindeman et al., 2023) and of Twitter particularly, exploring their content strategies (Houghton et al., 2019) and engaging in sentiment analysis of the content (Bradley and James, 2019). Despite Instagram's increasing interest in the sports marketing and communication (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2018), sports gambling marketing via Instagram has been less explored by academics. Marketing through Instagram provides important impression management content, that when combined with relationship marketing tactics can build brands and position social media influencers in the minds of consumers (Doyle, et al., 2022).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

This paper presents findings from a larger mixed methods research project that examines young sport consumer's understanding of the relationship between sport and gambling mediated through and live sport on the island of Ireland. Evidence from McEvoy et al (2023) assisted us to identify live sporting events of interest to the young people involved in our larger study and the social media platforms that they used most frequently to consume this and other sport related content. From this, a purposeful sample of Instagram posts (N: 178) from 7 major gambling brands' social media accounts accessible on the island of Ireland between December 2023 and January 2024 were collected and analysed. To manage the data, we developed a codebook building on previous work (Lindeman et al., 2023; Rossi et al., 2023) and the qualitative data was coded in MAXQDA.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The findings are the first within this region to show that gambling operators utilise live sports media consumption as a vehicle for marketing and brand building. Gambling operators use social media not only to promote their services via platform-based advertising but also to build their brand image by connecting with customers and/or potential customers through the distribution of native social media content related to sport. Such content includes informative content related to upcoming sports events and statistics, and entertainment content like sport-related humorous sketches and interviews with sportspeople, which drive more audience engagement compared to responsible gambling messages and content promoting operators' services. Overall, the findings reveal disparities in exposure to gambling marketing based on sports and gender while the distribution of native social media content on Instagram increases the exposure of young people who enjoy sports media consumption to gambling marketing within algorithmic cultures of the platform.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

Our findings demonstrate that the distribution of native social media content on Instagram increases the exposure of some young adults who enjoy consuming sports

media to gambling marketing. Unlike televised live sporting events that provide an avenue for distributing direct gambling messages, social media platforms such as Instagram facilitate the distribution of a wide variety of content types that not only seek to capture the attention of adult and youth sports fans, but also users who would not typically engage with gambling content. Overall, our analysis found attempts by operators to reinforce the dominant industry narrative that gambling is a normal part of sport fandom and a normal 'leisure industry'.

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Measurement Invariance Reporting Practices in Sport Management: Methodological Issues in Cross-Group Comparison Analysis

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Aim and Research Questions

As the field of sport management continues to grow, it is critical for the discipline to utilize robust methods of analysis. One assessment that is commonly used is measurement invariance, which helps scholars determine whether or not differences between groups is a result of group characteristics or if the measure was interpreted differently by the groups, thus causing the differences (Putnick & Bornstein, 2016). For example, when measuring the survey item 'enjoy sports and games' across different cultures, the response patterns were disparate across cultures (Jeong & Lee, 2019). Australians interpreted the item as participating in sports and games, whereas Nigerians understood it as watching sports and games. To meaningfully compare heterogeneous subgroups, ensuring measurement invariance is an integral part of methodological principles (Alatli, 2020). In sport management literature, moderating analysis, pre-post testing, and path coefficients comparison have been used to perform multiple group analysis. However, measurement invariance has been overlooked in the process of comparing groups, highlighting the need for increased attention in sport management (Kim & Lee, 2018). This current study seeks to review reporting practices of invariance analysis and to provide sound methodological practices for meaningful group comparisons in sport management.

Two research questions of this current study are as follows: (1) What are the common methodological issues in studies using measurement invariance in sport management? (2) What considerations are needed to improve the identified methodological issues?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The primary levels of measurement invariance are baseline, configural, metric, and scalar models. A preliminary step of invariance is to conduct a separate confirmatory factor analysis for each subgroup and to ensure that the dataset fulfills the assumptions of the theoretical model (Pendergast et al., 2017). After confirming the baseline model, the next step is configural invariance to confirm whether common constructs produce identical patterns of factor loadings for items across groups (Vandenberg, 2002). Metric invariance relates to the equivalence of factor loadings to assess whether the underlying constructs have identical meanings across groups. Scalar invariance refers to the equivalence of factor loadings and thresholds/intercepts to assess whether comparisons of points of origin or distribution cutoff points are meaningful across groups (Pendergast et al., 2017). To make decisions of measurement equivalence, the descriptive model fits of a restrictive model should be compared with the model fit indices of a less restrictive model. Researchers who fail to find support for the invariance model have three options: (a) delete the noninvariant item, (b) use a noninvariant scale, or (c) employ partial invariance (Luong & Flake, 2023). Commonly overlooked approaches in measurement invariance include model fit comparisons (Greiff & Scherer, 2018), utilization of the partial invariance (Luong & Flake, 2023), and methodological considerations with ordinal data (Pendergast et al., 2017). However, such a review has not been undertaken in the field of sport management.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Content analysis was used to provide common reporting practices of measurement invariance analysis in the sport management field by coding 92 articles from sport management journals. We included articles with CFA/SEM (although not those only using PLS-SEM) that used invariance as part of their approach. Building upon methodologies from the fields of statistics and also management, including content analysis and expository studies, we developed a coding form that included 27 coding categories and 110 variables. During the coding process, three

reviewers independently rated each coding category and discussed any discrepancies (Hutchinson & Lovell, 2004).

Findings and Discussion

Major coding schemes of invariance testing were (a) theoretical model justification (rationale of invariance analysis, model support of invariance testing), (b) data collection design (sample sizes, software, estimation), (c) invariance model evaluation (levels of testing, delta descriptive fit indices and cutoffs for model fit comparison, reporting chi-square testing), and (d) decisions in invariance testing (presentation of invariance results in figures or tables, follow-up procedures after invariance testing, partial invariance). The coding work has been completed, and data analysis is currently ongoing with expected completion by the end of July.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

We seek to encourage sport management scholars to emphasize the importance of invariance testing for cross-group comparison and highlight suggestions for proper invariance testing. First, the presence of non-invariance can lead to bias due to different interpretations of measurement scales, making it crucial for authors to implement a standard invariance procedure during cross-group analyses. Second, for invariance testing, authors should consider suitable approaches based on model fit comparisons including delta (i.e., difference in model fit) criteria. Lastly, sport management scholars should account for partial invariance and expand invariance analyses beyond the chi-square difference test. In all, we aim to analyze common issues in invariance testing and recommend reporting practices. This study will facilitate a better understanding of the complexity of the invariance testing and increase the rigor of quantitative methods in sport management.

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Effect Of Digital Economy On The Intelligentization Of National Fitness In Mainland Of China Sports Cities: The Threshold Effect

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Aim and Research Questions

Currently, China's national fitness is trending towards digitalization and intelligence (Feng&Li, 2024). However, China's sports sector is still in the exploratory phase of intelligent construction, leading to a significant lack of intelligence (Wang & Cheng, 2022). Therefore, the present study investigate the impact of the digital economy on the intelligent transformational development of national fitness in Mainland China's Sports Cities. The study aims to promote intelligent transformation development of national fitness and help the building China into a leading sporting nation.

This inquiry raises the question: 'What role has the digital economy played in the intelligentization of national fitness? What factors affect the role of the former on the latter?'

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The intelligentization of national fitness stems from the convergence of modern information technology and fitness services, is a new pattern for national fitness service. The intelligentization of national fitness can provide residents with efficient, real-time, fast, low-cost, intelligent, instrumentation, connected and human-oriented fitness services(Feng&Tian, 2022). Overall the digital economy has a positive effect on the high-quality development of urban public sports services, and the digital economy has a positive impact on the high-quality development of public sports services in different types of cities (He et al., 2024).

Information ecology theory is concerned with the mutual influence and interaction among information people, information, and information environment (Nardi& O'Day, 1999). The digital, informatized and intelligent development of city national fitness

as an important part of the information ecology theory concerns, the present study introduces the dimensions of national fitness managers, modern information technology and the economic environment into the information ecology theoretical framework. This can provide a more comprehensive understanding and wider application of information ecology theory in the digital economy-enabled Intelligentization of national fitness.

The establishment of intelligent venue facilities, development of information service platforms, and consolidation of data resources emerge as pivotal prerequisites for fostering intelligentization of national fitness (Feng et al., 2022).

The effect of digital economy on the intelligentization of national fitness may be non-linear, and the degree of its influence may change after the certain important variables reach a certain value, which is also known as the “threshold effect”. In order to verify the possible threshold effect, the present study chooses the cross-sectional threshold regression model proposed by Hansen (2000) as the theoretical regression model to verify the research hypotheses.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

In order to study the impact of digital economy on the national fitness intelligentization of sports cities in mainland China, the present study collects data related to digital economy, the intelligentization of national fitness and other urban socio-economic development of 38 sports cities in mainland China in 2023. After constructing the evaluation index system of each of them, the explanatory variable Smart and the core explanatory variable Digital are derived. The data sources for the Smart Fitness Development Index (Smart) are China's national national fitness information service platform and each city's national fitness information service platform. According to certain principles, the platform information is investigated, judged, researched, and the data are collected manually. The data sources for the Digital Economy Index (Digital) and threshold variables are the statistical yearbooks of provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, the statistical bulletins of national economic and social development of

cities, the information disclosure of municipal governments of provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, the Unified Identity Authentication Platform for Patent and Integrated Circuit Layout Design Business Processing (CNIPA), and the Center for Digital Finance Research of Peking University. Some of the missing data were supplemented by interpolation.

In order to verify the hypotheses of the direct impact and threshold effect of digital economy and national fitness intelligence in mainland China's sports cities, the present study used cross-sectional OLS regression analysis and cross-sectional threshold regression analysis, respectively. The OLS regression model and the threshold regression model were processed using STATA18.0 statistical software.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The results of the benchmark regression showed that the regression coefficients of the core explanatory variables (Digital) were all significantly positive at the 1% level. This robustly substantiates the pivotal role of the digital economy in driving forward the enhancement of national fitness intelligentization. As previous literatures have pointed out, the digital economy has a positive effect on the development of high quality urban public sports services.

The threshold existence test shows that a single threshold exists in the model under different threshold variables.

Furthermore, the regression outcomes derived from the threshold model indicate that the regression coefficients pertaining to the digital economy will amplify when threshold variables (the level of economic development, technological innovation, and advanced industrial structure) surpass the threshold value. Importantly, these coefficients exhibit statistically significant positive effects at the 1% level. This underscores that the positive impact of the digital economy on the intelligentization of national fitness is significantly enhanced when attain the threshold variables mentioned above.

Subsequent linear regression analyses conducted by region reveal that the regression coefficients of the digital economy in both northern and southern cities exhibit

significant positive effects at least at the 5% level.

This reveals the salutary influence of the digital economy on the development of national fitness intellectualization across both northern and southern regions, a result that has not yet been found in previous studies. Notably, the existence test for thresholds identified that solely the advanced industrial structure within the northern region passed the single threshold test.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The study found that:

- The digital economy effectively promotes the intelligentization of national fitness in Mainland of China.
- The digital economy is a more pronounced driver of national fitness intelligentization with the rapid evolution of the social economy, continuous enhancements in scientific and technological innovation capabilities, and the optimization and upgrading of industrial structures. This dynamic is notably characterized by a conspicuous single-threshold effect.
- The driving effect of digital economy on the intelligentization of national fitness in Mainland of China sports cities presents obvious regional differences between north and south.

It is meaningful to explore the mechanistic interplay between the digital economy and the intelligentization of national fitness. This helps promote the intelligent development of national fitness and meet the diversified, intelligent and personalized fitness needs of the people.

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Navigating the Rationalization of Qualitative Inquiry in the Neoliberal University: Strategies for Resistance and Survival in Sport Management Research

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In this study, we explore the challenges faced by qualitative researchers in sport management within the neoliberal university, where research impact and quantitative metrics often take precedence over nuanced, context-rich qualitative inquiry. The main research questions are: 1) How does the neoliberal rationalization of higher education affect the conduct and valuation of qualitative research in sport management? 2) What strategies can qualitative researchers in sport management employ to navigate this environment and advocate for their work's value? We aim to provide insights and guidance for sport management scholars grappling with institutional pressures and politics shaping their research practice.

Our theoretical framework draws on Foucault's (1982; 1988) concepts of governmentality and subject position to analyze power dynamics and discursive formations shaping university administrators' and researchers' roles and experiences in the neoliberal university. The literature review highlights the increasing emphasis on research expenditures, impact metrics, and rankings, disadvantaging qualitative researchers in applied fields like sport management. We engage with critical pedagogy scholars and sport management researchers critiquing the neoliberal transformation of universities and its implications for academic freedom, social justice, and the public mission of higher education (Frisby, 2005; Newman, 2014; Knoppers, 2015; Singer, 2005). Our review also situates the study within debates about qualitative research's future in sport

management (Shaw & Hoerber, 2016) and the need for strategies of resistance and survival in the face of institutional pressures (Shaw & Hoerber, 2017).

We employ a co-emergent (Thorpe & Newman, 2023), multiperspectival entangled ethnography, involving critically reflexive dialogue between authors occupying different subject positions within the university system and the field of sport management. The first author, a university administrator with a background in sport management, provides an autoethnographic account of institutional logics, metrics, and politics governing research conduct and valuation in this field. Drawing on experiences in research administration and sport management, they offer a candid assessment of the challenges faced by qualitative researchers and the strategies they might employ to navigate this environment. The other authors, early career qualitative researchers in sport management, engage in critical dialogue with the first author, drawing on their own experiences and ethnographic reflections on the ways in which the neoliberal rationalization of higher education has shaped their research practice and aspirations. Our multiperspectival approach allows for a nuanced and situated understanding of the power relations, subject positions, and resistance strategies at play within the context of sport management research. We analyze the entangled ethnography using a Foucauldian lens to unpack these dynamics and their implications for qualitative inquiry in the field.

Our findings highlight the pervasive influence of neoliberal rationalities on the valuation and conduct of qualitative research in sport management (cf. Denzin & Giardina, 2017). Qualitative researchers in this field face pressures to align their work with quantifiable metrics, such as research expenditures, impact factors, and citation counts, and to prioritize outputs that contribute to institutional rankings and funding. This creates a research environment that often marginalizes and undervalues the rich, contextual insights and social justice commitments of qualitative inquiry in sport management, which often focuses on issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and the sociocultural dimensions of sport. However, we also identify strategies for resistance and survival that qualitative researchers in sport management can employ to navigate this

challenging terrain. These include: targeting high-impact sport management journals that value qualitative research; advocating for open access publishing to democratize access to sport management research; taking up editorships in sport management journals to shape the direction of the field; emphasizing the societal impact and public engagement of qualitative research in sport; and aligning qualitative work with the university's and the sport industry's stated commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our discussion situates these strategies within the broader context of ongoing struggles over the future of sport management education and research, highlighting the need for collective resistance and solidarity among qualitative researchers in the field.

We conclude by reasserting the vital importance of qualitative inquiry in sport management and the urgent need for researchers to strategically navigate the challenges posed by the neoliberal rationalization of higher education. We argue that the survival and flourishing of qualitative research in sport management depends on the ability of researchers to both resist the institutional logics that devalue their work and to proactively advocate for the value and impact of their scholarship. Our study contributes to ongoing debates about the future of qualitative research in sport management, offering a critical analysis of the power relations and subject positions that shape research practice in this field, as well as a set of concrete strategies for resistance and transformation. Ultimately, we call for a reimagining of sport management education and research as a space for critical, socially engaged scholarship that challenges the neoliberal status quo and works towards the realization of social justice and equity in sport.

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Winning Without Math – Implications Of The Abolition Of The Away Goals Rule In UEFA Club Competitions

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Aim and research questions

In 2021, UEFA decided to abolish the away goals rule (AGR) in the Champions League and Europa League with the intention of increasing the amount of goals scored in matches and thus more excitement for spectators. Teams should be encouraged to adopt a more offensive playing style that prioritizes risk-taking, particularly in the first game, to ensure equal value for home and away matches and promote a fairer distribution of victory chances (Čeferin according to UEFA, 2021). As rule changes not only have a massive impact on the sports result but also on the football experience for millions of fans (Horky, 2009), the question arises how the abolition of AGR affects Europe's most important club competitions. The present study analyzes whether the rule change achieved the intended outcomes (i.e., more excitement) and led to potentially unintended outcomes (e.g., decline in fairness).

Theoretical background and literature review

Although there is a large body of literature on the home advantage in football, evidence regarding the specific details of competition formats involving first and second legs is sparse. Kuvvetli and Çilengiroğlu (2024) examine home advantage in the UEFA Champions League from 2003/2004 to 2021/2022 over a total of 2,344 matches and the goals scored in each. Goumas (2017) followed a similar approach in his analysis of eleven top European teams between 2003 and 2013. Both studies documented a significant home advantage. Analysing European club competitions over 51 years, Page and Page (2007) found consistently higher home advantage for teams in the second leg. Similarly, based on an analysis of 398 matches, Lidor et al. (2010) found that teams that play the second match at home have a

significantly higher chance of advancing to the next round. Analysing 7075 matches between 1961 and 2011, Varela-Quintana et al. (2015) found that home advantage is particularly evident in extra time. All of these studies focus on the period before AGR was abolished. We are unaware of any studies that have looked at how the abolition of AGR affected home advantage as well as the excitement of matches.

Research design, methodology and data analysis

We analyse 378 knock-out games (i.e., round of 16, quarter-finals and semi-finals of the Europa League, Champions League and, since 2021/2022 Conference League) of the last three seasons before and after the AGR change, which was implemented with the 2021/2022 season. The 2019/2020 season is excluded, as only one final round was played in a differentiated mode due to the pandemic. The time limit is intended to ensure comparability of playing style. Following Page & Page (2007), we adjust for the quality differentials among teams to examine the potential impact of the rule change on home advantage experienced by teams during the second leg. Additionally, this research aims to elucidate whether the removal of AGR has resulted in a further propensity for favoured teams to secure victory. Excitement is measured as the number of goals per game, the frequency of extra time and penalty shoot-outs.

Results, findings and discussion + conclusion, contribution and implication

Data will be analysed after the 2023/24 season. We guarantee to have the final results by the end of June, comfortably in time for the conference. Our results will add empirical evidence as to whether the abolition of AGR achieved its intended goal of increasing excitement. Our results will also reveal whether the rule change brought along unintended consequences, such as a further advantage of the team that plays the second leg at home or the favorite. The results will have significant implications for various stakeholders in European football. In particular, the findings on the impact on the excitement and experience of football matches are of immediate importance for fan engagement and media coverage as well as those who are in charge of setting the rules.

Furthermore the analysis may be used by coaches, experts and even bookmakers and betting providers either for strategic match plans or for decision-making considering goal-odds probabilities and changes in home advantage.

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Impact of Sport Mega-event on Socioeconomically Vulnerable Residents in Small Host Regions

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Aim and Research Questions

Previous research highlighted the need for additional research focused on the impact that mega-events have on neglected communities (Rocha & Xiao, 2022). Thus, the proposed study analyzes the movement of low-income residents in and around the host regions of the 2018 Olympic Games in South Korea. As such, the proposed work advances the understanding of the socioeconomic impact that stems from the hosting of mega-events.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Research on the intangible outcomes of mega-events focused primarily on understanding how these events generate benefits for their local communities (Wicker & Downward, 2019) and impact property values (Humphreys, 2019; Hur & Kim, 2023). However, there is a lack of focus on how these development projects can cause shocks in the local market, including housing supply, demographics, and living costs (Gaffney, 2016), with most findings being anecdotal cases (Hamnett, 2003). The lack of comprehensive research on this topic is of particular concern as the influx of temporary labor needed to undertake these large projects can further exacerbate the demand and prices of affordable housing (Agha & Taks, 2015). Hosting a mega-event, especially in small regions like the 2018 Olympics, may have negative impacts on housing for residents leading to increase displacement. Thus, this work attempts to specifically analyze the patterns of movement in low-income households in the regions that hosted or were in close proximity to the PyeongChang Olympic facilities.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

To investigate the movement of socioeconomically vulnerable residents, this proposed research utilized low-income population data from the Korean government spanning from 2008 to 2020, encompassing three years before the Olympic bid announcement and three years after the Games. Employing a quasi-experimental design, we estimate Two-Way Fixed-Effects regressions with the three host regions designated as the treatment group and the remaining fifteen non-host regions as the control group. Moreover, time was also accounted for within these estimations to distinguish between periods before and after the bid announcement and the hosting of the Games. Next, Geographic Information System (GIS) Hot-Spot analysis was conducted to geographically explore the dispersed impact on the dynamic movement of low-income residents in and around host regions over time.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The results from the regression models indicated that following the hosting of the 2018 Games, there was a significant decline in low-income residents in host regions. Additionally, the GIS Hot-Spot analysis further highlighted shifts in the migration of low-income households throughout this time suggesting that short-term laborers likely relocated to host regions because of work related to the Games, and then left after their completion. This phenomenon could be attributed to the disappearance of temporary jobs and the unaffordability of housing, causing residents to return to their previous locations. Thus, the consistent relocation of low-income residents sheds light on their movement and potential gentrification of regions that hosted the Games.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The findings of this proposed research underscore the intricate dynamics affecting low-income residents in regions hosting sport mega-events. Building upon previous research indicating rising housing costs during such events (Hur & Kim, 2023), the observed decline in the low-income population following the conclusion of the Olympics suggests potential gentrification of host regions. It

implies increased living expenses may have compelled low-income individuals to seek housing in other regions. Consequently, our findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the impact that hosting sport mega-events can have on residents and communities, highlighting the need for socially inclusive event planning for individuals of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.

The Dilemma Of Community Sports Collaborative Governance And The Cracking Path Choice- - based On SFIC Model Analysis

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Purpose of research

Improve the level of community governance, ensure the community each work smoothly, is of great significance, the modernization of community governance need from the community culture, safety, education, sports and other sectors, community sports governance as the basic unit of community governance, its modernization level to some extent is the important embodiment of the community governance modernization. In the process of social governance, more attention should be paid to grassroots content governance, and community sports governance should be placed in an important position of grassroots governance. Based on this, how to provide diversified and personalized sports services for residents and how to play the role of sports in the process of the governance level improvement in grassroots governance are important topics in the current community sports governance research.

Research technique

Literature method: research through China, Google academic channels to «community sports», «collaborative governance», «community sports governance», «SFIC» model for keywords to search, select high correlation of literature, and refer to collaborative governance theory, interest theory, such as content, lay the theoretical foundation for this paper.

Logical analysis method: comprehensively use logical analysis method to comprehensively sort out, summarize and summarize the collected literature and theoretical content, analyze the practical dilemma of community sports collaborative governance, and put forward the solutions.

Findings

Initial conditions level: the ability and governance power of the community sports cooperative subject are insufficient. The rights and resources are unequal between the subjects of community sports cooperative governance. Social, government, community and other collaborative governance subjects are due to their own resources and capabilities.

Catalytic leadership level: the leadership role in the process of community sports governance is not clear. The boundary between the rights and responsibilities of each subject is blurred, and the linkage effect between the multiple subjects of community sports has not been released to the maximum extent. Community sports affairs are complex and lack of a clear personnel structure system.

System design level: the openness and transparency of the community sports collaborative governance system design are insufficient. As the final link, the sports system and conventions of community sports are not perfect, and they lack of rules and regulations related to sports management and sports management in the jurisdiction.

Collaborative process level: the communication of community sports collaborative governance subjects is not smooth. There is a lack of benign interaction between the subjects, and the legal provisions of the subjects of collaborative governance are not clear, and their own rights and obligations cannot be clarified in the process of community sports development.

Research conclusion

The cooperative governance of community sports should consolidate the initial conditions of the cooperative governance. The government gives sufficient guidance to communities and social organizations, and gives more abilities and authority to multiple governance subjects such as communities and social organizations, so as to encourage community residents to actively participate in community sports activities.

The coordinated governance of community sports should strengthen the government's catalytic leadership. To realize the collaborative governance of community sports,

it is necessary to give active guidance to the social organizations currently in the development stage, fully grasp the particularity of each community, and promote the governance of community sports in the form of combining commonness and characteristics.

The collaborative governance of community sports should innovate the collaborative system design. The subject of community sports collaborative governance is also the object of practice, and it accumulates experience and lessons through practice. There should be a clear division of responsibilities between the subjects of community sports governance. Improve the governance and procuratorial mechanism, and improve the work enthusiasm and motivation of community sports staff.

The collaborative governance of community sports should optimize the collaborative process. To strengthen the exchange and communication of multiple collaborative governance subjects, the government should clarify the rights and obligations of each subject through agreements, clarify the responsibilities of community sports organizations and security work, and improve the comprehensive benefits and cooperative governance level of community sports.

Exercise at Work: Managing Promising Visions in a Troublesome Reality – an Example of Distributed Leadership

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Aim

This study explores sport, exercise and physical activities introduced in a workplace setting. While this perspective is relatively new to the society of sport management and therefore represents an extension of sport management practices (Kim et al. 2024), the phenomenon has been studied for decades in such diverse fields like occupational and preventive medicine and critical management studies. Whereas occupational medicine has emphasized the measurable potentials for employees' health and well-being, critical management scholars have focused on the risk of blurring the line between work and leisure and using physical exercise to control employees. Less emphasis has been placed on investigating how promising visions of exercising employees can be enacted in a troublesome reality where time is a scarce resource, workplace hierarchy rules, and work tasks have precedence. One way to implement physical activities beyond a short, standardized, and researcher-assisted intervention is to appoint employees to take care of the task of introducing and facilitating exercise and serving as role models who can pursue colleagues to engage in new and healthy activities (Edmunds and Clow, 2016; Overbye and Wagner, 2023). Yet, empirically, our knowledge is still limited. Therefore, using workplace exercise as our topic the purpose of this study is to investigate the managerial efforts when promising visions are facing an often troublesome reality. We do so by qualitatively exploring the perceptions and experiences of managers and appointed employees acting as facilitators of exercise at work.

Theoretical background and literature review

The introduction of exercise and physical activity adds additional complexity to workplaces. We adopt an institutional logics perspective (Lounsbury et al. 2021) arguing that exercise practices draw on a logic

embedded in community that guides and frames exercise and sport-like activities. Transferred to work-settings exercise and physical activities are confronted with logics of profession and corporate bureaucracy. While the institutional logics perspective serves as our meta-theoretical framework (Pache and Thornton, 2021), we engage with the idea of distributed leadership (Bolden, 2011) to illustrate how strategic tasks are carried out by sub-ordinate employees without formal managerial responsibilities. Merging these two perspectives enable us to contextualize the efforts of distributing leadership activities (Sewerin & Holmberg, 2017). Hence, inspired by the conceptualizations of Besharov and Smith (2014) we elucidate how variation in logics' constellations may result in different outcomes with regard to implementation of exercise at work.

Research design

This qualitative study follows six Danish workplaces which introduce exercise during work hours facilitated by employees acting as exercise 'captains'. From each of these workplaces appointed employees participated a short training program provided by the Danish Confederation for Company Sports. The idea is that these so-called captains after ending their short training program will encourage peer colleagues to participate in exercise activities introduced during working hours. Because previous research has pointed to the relation between employees and the direct manager as crucial for success for exercise at work programmes (Bond et al. 2023), managers (n=6) and employees acting as captains (n=12) are interviewed in the initial phase of the project (December '23 – April '24, just after employees ending the training program). Online and face-to-face interview lasting approximately between 43 and 53 minutes are carried out at the worksites. A thematic analysis is conducted (Braun and Clarke, 2006). A second round of interviews will be carried out with the same persons a year later. The purpose of applying this long-term design is to follow the efforts and challenges appearing after the (potential) early enthusiasm.

Findings

Preliminary results indicate an immediate enthusiasm among captains just after finishing the training program. It also reveals ambiguous perceptions of the role of captains: On the one hand captains experience that they have a closer relation to their colleagues compared to managers and that this proximity to a community put them in a good position to convince them to join exercise activities. On the other hand, only few captains experience that they carry out managerial tasks normally characterizing a corporate logic because exercise activities are voluntary and there is a limited scope of power or sanctions towards colleagues deciding not to participate in movement and exercise activities. Simultaneously, there is an anticipation that if managers themselves join the activities this will support and legitimize the captains' efforts. This illustrates the oscillation between distributing informal leadership tasks to employees who nonetheless remain dependent of management's active commitment.

Conclusion and implications: A model where employees are acting as captains has been suggested as a way to implement exercise during work hours. However, findings illustrate that implementing exercise is not a matter of harmonious blending of logics but shall rather be seen as a balancing act where introducing community elements like physical activities are simultaneously dependent on corporate support from top- and middle management. Hence, this study points to the tensions and organizational complexity of implementing exercise during work.

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Mental Well-Being Support Expectations of Future Sport Employees

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Aim and Research Questions

This study aimed to test the hypotheses that 1. U.S.-based Sport Management (SPMT) students want mental well-being (MWB) support in their future sport careers but do not expect it, and 2. Multiple factors influence U.S.-based SPMT students' expectations of MWB support in their future careers. These hypotheses guide the research questions for this study, which include: What percentage of current U.S.-based SPMTs expect MWB support in their future careers? and What factors influence SPMT students' expectations of MWB support? While MWB of athletes has been largely studied along with the need for MWB support for career success and retention, little is known about MWB support needed and expected for future sport employees worldwide.

Background/Literature Review

MWB concerns appear in every world facet. An estimated 30.6% of Americans over age 18 suffer from mental disorders (Duszynski-Goodman, 2023), an increase of 13% over the past ten years, costing the global economy \$1 trillion annually (WHO, 2023). Additionally, 60% of American college students experience some mental illness, an almost 50% increase over the past decade (NEA, 2023), with a minimal explanation of the rapid increase. Globally, 12.85% of people aged five to 24 (324 million) have at least one mental disorder (NIH, 2024).

In the U.S. sport industry, the stressful work environment significantly impacts employees' MWB (Kim et al., 2019). Sport employees work long hours with excessive job demands, elevated stress levels (Lee, 2019), and pressure to overcommit which can lead to emotional exhaustion, burnout, and work-family conflict (Huml et al., 2020). These

factors can lead to decreased MWB and low job satisfaction (Kim et al., 2019).

With the challenging work environment in the U.S. sport industry, sport employee retention suffers. Recent data collected by Work in Sports (2022) demonstrate that 64.6% of U.S.-based sport employees seek new jobs, with 32.8% wanting to change careers. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2023) projects the sport and entertainment industry to grow faster than the average for all occupations over the next decade, with a projected 106,800 openings predicted yearly due to growth and occupational turnover. Turnover harms both employees and organizations, with employer costs surpassing 33% of an employee's annual salary (Rumora, 2018). While higher education institutions continually produce SPMT majors to fill needed jobs, retention should be a primary concern.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

Using a mixed methods approach, undergraduate SPMT students (N=181) at a large university in the United States completed an online survey about their experience with MWB support and expectations in their future careers. A 4-point Likert-scaled response item survey asked respondent to indicate their (1) desire for and (2) expectation of MWB support in their future careers. Finally, open-ended response items allowed participants to describe the support they want to receive from an employer. Predictors of WMB support expectation were evaluated using logistic regression. Both authors independently coded the open-ended response items for themes, reaching agreement on the themes and codes.

Results and Discussion

Quantitatively, survey results indicate that 72.2% of undergraduate SPMT students in this study want mental health support in their future careers; however, only 52.2% expect such support. The only statistically significant factor predicting MWB expectation was whether the learner had sought mental health services previously. If a learner has not sought mental health services previously, they were less likely to expect mental health services from their future employer, $b = -1.356$, 95% CI (-2.003, -0.733), OR = 0.258, $p < 0.001$.

Qualitatively, themes emerged around participant definitions of MWB and expectations of MWB in sport jobs. Participant definitions varied, mirroring well-being definitions in research. Themes included overall well-being, positive and negative connotations of MWB, related effects of feelings and emotions, external and internal influences, connections to physical health, and thought associated actions. Expectations of MWB were separated into two groups: support expectations and perceived workplace MWB support. Participants who expected support discussed themes of prioritizing MWB in society, work-life balance, asking for help, and sport job demands. Participants who did not expect support noted themes of priority for athletes, not employees, support as a personal responsibility, support barriers, associated stigmas, and lack of support needed. Themes around perceived support included providing a supportive and healthy work environment, access to support, and MWB professional development.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implications

MWB support is necessary in the sport industry. Study results indicate that higher education institutions in the U.S. need to do more to normalize MWB support so that students will receive the needed support in college leading to increased reception of industry support. Second, U.S.-based sport organizations must then provide MWB support. These two steps are iterative and transformative when combined for increased MWB and employee retention. While this study was limited to one institution in the U.S. making generalization to all SPMT students impossible, it stands as the start of a conversation worldwide.

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Diversity and Inclusion Issues in Sport Management

Track chair: Claudio Rocha

Social Inclusion and Exclusion of Older Women in Physical Activity: An Intersectional Perspective

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Aim and Research Questions

This study aimed to investigate the factors influencing the dynamics of social inclusion and exclusion experienced by older women in physical activity. To move beyond merely observing differences and identify unequal relationships between groups (Choo & Ferree, 2010), an intersectional perspective was employed. The main questions of the study were: What are the primary challenges and factors shaping the processes of social inclusion and exclusion experienced by older women in physical activity?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Social inclusion in physical activity, characterized by the provision of equitable access to physical activity for all individuals and the elimination of various exclusionary practices (Marivoet, 2014), is considered as a method to improve quality of life and reduce social isolation among specific demographic groups (Cordier et al., 2017; Schailée et al., 2019), including older adults within communities. However, within Iranian society, old age often brings numerous challenges for women, and these difficulties are also reflected in the social inclusion of older women in physical activity. Nonetheless, it's not that the disparity between men and women in terms of social inclusion in physical activity exacerbates with age, but rather it evolves in more intricate ways.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

The study was conducted through ethnographic fieldwork in two settings associated with organized physical activity: a physical activity club and a park in Khuzestan, Iran. The participants included 20

women over 60 years of age in the club and 37 women of the same age range in the park. Other individuals present in these environments included coaches, younger individuals, and men. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews with 13 older women and field notes from participant observation during 15 physical activity sessions. It is noteworthy that the participants represented diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, acknowledging the significant similarities in lifestyle and belief similarities among people worldwide, including those over 60 years old, which can be attributed to globalization and increased media access.

Data analysis was performed using thematic narrative analysis. Initially, all sequences and episodes in which elderly women, physical activity trainers, and other participants explicitly discussed gender and aging during interviews or activities, as documented in field notes, were coded. Subsequently, the codes were organized into main themes based on the collected data and relevant theoretical frameworks.

Results and Discussion

The findings revealed that three factors identity crisis, body shame, and acceptance of aging play significant roles in shaping the processes of social inclusion and exclusion experienced by older women in physical activity.

Identity crisis often leads elderly women to passively refrain from participating in social events, particularly physical activities, despite possessing the time and ability to engage, due to uncertainties about their identity and feelings of inadequacy. It is worth noting two key points: Firstly, older housewives (unemployed) tend to experience heightened identity crises in their later years, resulting in decreased involvement in social activities, including physical exercise. Secondly, participation in physical activity during old age is influenced by prior engagement in such activities earlier in life.

Research findings indicate that women face greater societal pressure than men to maintain a youthful appearance, leading them to often compare themselves to beauty standards. Taking care of appearance is a self-empowerment tool through which women can enhance values associated with their cultural

conditions, stemming from physical, sexual, and social attractiveness. (Twigg & Martin 2015). Foucault (1980) suggests that bodies are not born, but rather designed by cultures. This issue significantly impacts the social inclusion of older women in physical activity, particularly in Iran, where many women in old age have experienced multiple pregnancies, childbirths, breastfeeding, and subsequent changes in appearance due to these life events and inadequate nutrition. Consequently, some women may struggle with weight gain or mobility issues, feeling ashamed of their bodies and thus hesitant to participate actively in physical activity settings. Those who do engage may prefer closed environments like fitness clubs or sessions exclusively for older individuals.

Moreover, social class emerges as a significant factor influencing acceptance or rejection of aging. Elderly women from lower social classes may prioritize acceptance of aging over adherence to fitness standards, leading to reduced involvement in physical activity and a lower sense of inclusion. Conversely, women from higher social classes are more likely to strive for fitness standards and express dissatisfaction with exclusion from physical activity, motivating efforts to address existing disparities.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This research underscores the importance of adopting an intersectional perspective to identify factors shaping the social inclusion and exclusion processes experienced by older women in physical activity. Addressing the personal and social challenges faced by older women is crucial for promoting social inclusion in physical activity, raising awareness in society, and devising appropriate interventions to enhance their well-being.

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Investigating Discourses Concerning Women Cricketers In The Islamic Republic of Pakistan Through A Social Media Analysis

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Aim

The research explores social media constructions of female Pakistani cricketers in a masculine-dominated colonial sport. We ask how are female Pakistani cricketers represented in social media? Despite the emergence of some critique, there is a paucity of empirically grounded research that interrogates how the sport media depicts women's sports participation in Pakistan.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The research is informed by intersectional and feminist theory (Nash, 2008) which helps to locate and untangle the complex intersections between sport, colonization, religion, and gender in Pakistan. A study by Laar, Shi, and Ashraf (2019) explores these complexities, shedding light on the hurdles faced by female students in Pakistan, ranging from cultural and religious constraints to economic issues and insufficient sports facilities.

The literature on media representation of sportswomen provides valuable insights into historical and contemporary trends, offering a foundation for understanding the landscape of women's cricket. Bruce's (2016) exploration of the Third Wave emphasizes the evolving media rules governing sportswomen, highlighting the shift from traditional ambivalence to the emergence of a 'pretty and powerful' discourse. McDonald, McLachlan, and Spaaij (2023) extend this perspective by examining media representation during the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing the persistent impact of historical gendered hierarchies on women in American football.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

An examination of online discourses surrounding female Pakistan cricketers from both the official pages, athletes, and fans during the 2023 T20I World Cup Series New Zealand vs Pakistan was conducted. The investigation spanned from November 30, 2023, to January 30, 2024, focusing on prominent platforms—Instagram and Facebook—as these were the two most popular platforms utilised by both players, and the PCB. As well as a platform-specific analyses, our search titles included 'Pakistan Women Cricket team' and 'female Pakistan cricketers.' Furthermore, it focused on #NZWvPAKW and #BackOurGirls hashtags. Bruce's (2016) Rules of Media Coverage framework was adopted for the analysis of these discourses.

Findings and Discussion

On Instagram, the hashtag #NSWvPAKW accrued 227 posts while #BackOurGirls was captured in 6,012 posts, with Facebook, having 1.9K for #NSWvPAKW and 23K for #BackOurGirls. Bruce's framework below was used to showcase instances of athletes' non-sport-related life, comparison to men's sport, sexualization, ambivalence, and disparities in recognition.

Infantilization: the use of phrases such as «It's not the job of girls to play cricket» (translated), «Well done Girls,» and «Girls, your hard work and skill make the nation proud» contributes to the infantilization of female cricketers.

Non-Sport Related Aspects: the comment "Send me the WhatsApp numbers of these players" request for athletes' WhatsApp numbers, raises concerns about privacy invasion, emphasizing the importance of setting clear boundaries in the realm of sports.

Sportswomen Don't Matter: phrases like 'waste of money,' 'burden on the economy,' and the suggestion to prioritize a charity organization over women's cricket reflect a devaluation of women's sports, aligning with the rule that downplays the significance of female athletes.

Comparison to Men's Sport: comparing Bisma with Babar's joke of 2023 *laughing faces*» employs dismissive language, potentially trivializing women's cricket and perpetuating gender stereotypes that suggest women's performances are not as significant as men's.

Sexualization: explicit language and suggestive symbols, and icons like cucumbers and eggplants, in the comments section contribute to the objectification of individuals within the women's cricket context.

Ambivalence: comments like 'You should be washing dishes at home,' 'Go to the kitchen,' and 'Take a ticket to Dubai and return from Dubai to Karachi to cook dal ☺' reflect deep-seated gender stereotypes, perpetuating the idea that women's roles should be limited to domestic tasks rather than excelling in sports.

Conclusion

The preliminary findings point to systemic gender bias, economic and social neglect, and a stark social media disparity between men's and women's cricket. Using Bruce's (2016) framework we can see how the achievements of women cricketers, reinforce traditional gender norms on one hand and challenge them on another. This research is limited in scope and considers only one snapshot in time, further research is required to deepen our understanding of media representations and challenges underpinning women's cricket in Pakistan. There is also a need for longitudinal studies on media representation, intersectional barriers, and female and male player experiences.

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Worse For Women: Experiences of Faculty-to-Faculty Incivility Within Sport Management

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Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this research was to understand how female sport management faculty experienced faculty-to-faculty incivility. This study was part of a larger mixed-method query into perceptions and experiences of faculty-to-faculty incivility in sport management academia. Quantitative results indicated female sport management faculty were more likely to experience or witness incivility from colleagues than their male counterparts (Simmons et al., 2023). These findings align with earlier work by Cortina (2008) suggesting traditionally minoritized groups in male-dominated fields may be more likely to experience incivility. During the interviews it became evident that the depth, impact, and outcomes for women who were victims of faculty-to-faculty incivility were particularly intense and striking. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to understand these experiences and the impact faculty-to-faculty incivility has had on female sport management faculty. The following questions were developed to guide the qualitative portion of the study:

RQ1: How do women describe their experiences of faculty-to-faculty incivility (e.g., context, perpetrators, persistence, remedies)?

RQ2: How have experiences of faculty-to-faculty incivility affected female sport management faculty?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Faculty-to-faculty incivility can be defined as behaviors such as retaliation, being rude,

condescending, excluding, disregarding, mobbing, diminishing, bullying, yelling, coldness, dismissiveness, negativity, unpredictability, undermining, and belittling action and acts which violate workplace norms of respect (Clark, 2008; Cortina, et.al, 2017; Twale & De Luca, 2008). The outcomes from incivility can range from decreased job satisfaction, higher stress levels, intentions to quit, increased workplace tension, higher anxiety, poor performance, burnout, an increased questioning of competency, and increased turnover (Clark, 2008; Taylor et al., 2017; Volpone & Avery, 2013; Wagner, et al., 2019). Volpone & Avery (2013) noted that gender plays a significant role in incivility. The sole study which mentioned incivility in sport management academia (Taylor et al., 2017) suggested the appearance of an acceptance of uncivil behaviors and a culture towards women that perpetuated those behaviors.

Theoretical tenets utilized to explain incivility toward women have included selective incivility theory (Cortina, 2008), which proposes that individuals with traditionally minoritized status are not randomly selected for uncivil treatment but are instead most likely to be targeted. Similarly, minority stress theory (Meyer, 1995) contends that minoritized individuals are negatively affected by incivility experiences because of the daily stress which can lead to health issues.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

Semi-structured interviews were conducted via Zoom with twenty-two participants (12 women and 10 men). At least two researchers were present during each interview. Interviews ranged from 40-75 minutes and were recorded and transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy (Patton, 1987). Content analysis was utilized to identify themes and patterns within the data. Responses and quotes were viewed as a whole and then subdivided into categories, patterns, and themes through inductive analysis (Patton, 1987).

Results/Findings and Discussion

Twenty-two interviews were conducted with sport management faculty. Results indicated that women experienced gaslighting,

diminishing, bullying, hostility, undermining, and dismissive behaviors. In describing this behavior, women were brought to tears, indicated they were crushed, demoralized, questioning leaving the profession, and several indicated they had to seek counseling, professional treatment, and experienced post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Specific quotations demonstrating the themes will be provided.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implications

The implications of this research are far reaching. First, it brings to light the faculty-to-faculty incivility taking place in sport management academia. Second, it provides insight into the experiences of faculty, and disproportionately female faculty who experience it. Third, the deliberate examination offers an opportunity to acknowledge the perpetuation of an uncivil culture within the sport management field and aid strategic discussions to influence change.

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Barriers to Southeast Asian Women's Rise in Sport Governance

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Aim and Research Questions

This paper focuses on the Philippines, which is predominantly Catholic, Malaysia, which is predominantly Sunni Muslim, and Singapore, ranked as “the most religiously diverse country in the world,” where “no more than around a third of the population follows any one religion”. The heterogeneity of these three Southeast Asian nations gives a rich tapestry and range of insights into the uniqueness of Southeast Asia and a strong argument for developing sport programs and policies adapted to this region. This paper answers three fundamental questions about sport governance beyond women’s sports: What are the barriers to women’s rise in sport leadership roles in your country? How are the women in your country hindered or prevented from governing sports? If women in your country are leading or allowed to lead in sport organizations, what factors give them this access?

Theoretical Background Literature Review

The theoretical framework of this study, categorizing structural and cultural factors, is informed by the European Olympic Committees EU Office (2024) manual, which promotes gender equality in sport governance through a pool of actions adaptable to other regions and continents. In this paper, the term sport governance follows the definition of “leadership” in the EOC manual called GAMES, which stands for Guidance to Achieve More Equal Leadership in Sport, and refers to roles within the National Olympic Committees (NOCs), National Federations (NFs), or other significant sport organizations with titles such as: “President, Vice-President, Member of the Executive Body/Board, Secretary-General/CEO, Chair of the Committee, Chef de Mission, Staff with direct line-management responsibility, Staff with job titles such as ‘director’ or ‘head of...’”.

The current literature review of this paper covers papers and reports released from 2021

to 2024 on the sport participation of girls and women and women in leadership and governance. The research gap identified is on the barriers and access to sport participation and leadership specific to Southeast Asian females. Another uniqueness of this paper is the critical examination of whether having a predominant religion or a plural society is a determinant in women's access to sport participation and leadership in Southeast Asia. The paper also reports on the silver lining in women's representation in the Philippine, Malaysian, and Singaporean sport ecosystems.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

This qualitative research involves online interviews and a current literature review. It uses thematic analysis and inductive coding of the barriers identified from 13 online interviews. Interviewees are anonymized. Resource persons filled out a consent form for conducting and recording the interview and granting the right to use their data for publication. Online interviews were standardized at one hour in length, recorded, and transcribed, except for the first three interviews, because the author was still developing a protocol for the interviews. The interviews were conducted in English, with only one interviewee slightly using Filipino expressions. The translation is provided in the interview transcript.

The distribution of interviewees by gender is 61.5% female and 38.5% male. Singapore had a gender balance (2-2), while the Philippines and Malaysia had more female interviewees (3-1 and 2-1, respectively), indicating the need to increase male allyship in the Philippines and Malaysia. Even if the author had included more interviewees, the Philippines and Malaysia would still have had more female interviewees. The two experts who were non-Asians were a male and a female.

The interviewees are Sport Management lecturers, a FIFA advisor, former and current government sport executives, former and current elite athletes, a former university athletics director who is the convenor of an all-girls peace games in armed conflict zones, the first female national president of a contact sport and she sits in the executive council of the international sport federation, a university sport psychology professor, sport

policy consultants, Olympic and sport academy heads, a girls' football coach, a strength and conditioning coach of elite athletes, and fathers of daughters who are in sports and who themselves are in their country's sport ecosystem.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The research shows that the barriers to women's rise in sport governance in the Philippines, Malaysia, and Singapore fall under two themes: structural and cultural, coded as follows:

Structural – Lack of role models, lack of sport management education, government funding priorities, facilities are not female-friendly, uniform rules, national and international sport policies, election process, tokenism

Cultural – Social expectations, disempowering and non-inclusive language, religion, NOC and NF politics, the culture of political dynasty and nepotism.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implications

This study enabled the local interview partners to articulate what they have long observed in their respective countries and inspired them to actively participate should a movement for change result from this paper. The research findings are envisioned to catalyze policy reforms to empower Southeast Asian women to have greater participation in sport governance and administration. The author recommends expanding this paper to include the seven (7) other member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), using the same qualitative research method.

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Integrating Women into the Game? Aspiration of Female Sport Participation within 'Sport for All' Policy in Saudi Arabia

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This paper is part of an ongoing PhD project centred on women's sports in Saudi Arabia (SA). It aims to examine the inclusivity of women within the framework SFA initiative, which is designed to contribute to achieving the ambitious Vision 2030. This Vision aims at fostering a vibrant society, an ambitious nation, and a thriving economy. The research questions are as follows: What are the aspirations for women's participation in sport outlined in SFA? How do these aspirations reflect the experiences of women in SA?

Saudi Arabia's gender norms have traditionally limited women's participation in physical activities (Al Salim, 2023; Aljehani et al., 2022). Despite this, recent societal reforms in the country have paved the way for women's entry into sports. This is evident in the licensing of women's gyms and the introduction of physical education in girls' schools, signalling a societal shift towards gender equality in sports (Albujulaya et al., 2023). Yet, according to the General Authority for Statistics, only 20.3% of Saudi women actively engage in regular physical activity in contrast to 36.1% of men (Stats.gov.sa, 2021). Thus, this review underscores the need for empirical research that explores the impact of these reforms on the lived experiences of Saudi women, bridging the gap between policy initiatives and actual participation rates in sports.

This study employs a two-phase qualitative approach to scrutinize the SFA policy in relation to the aspirations for women's participation in sports.

First, Bacchi's 'What's the Problem Represented to be' (WPR) framework was utilized to critically analyse the SFA policy, challenging the underlying assumptions within policy proposals (Bacchi, 2009). This approach facilitated a detailed examination of women's portrayal within the policy.

Second, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 29 Saudi women from diverse generational and social backgrounds in the cities of Jeddah and Riyadh to collect detailed insights into their sports-related experiences. Participants were selected using purposive sampling techniques. The interviews were analysed thematically using NVivo software.

The study allowed for a comparison between the policy's representation of issues and women's actual experiences. This reflective practice is key for identifying both similarities and differences in understanding the problem and determining necessary interventions to fulfil the policy's aims.

A- The policy recognizes women as a distinct category yet the lack to establish specific targets for them indicates a gap between policy aspirations and the nuanced reality. This approach implies a homogeneity among women, which contradicts our findings that reveal a spectrum of perspectives and requirements among women in sports.

B- The SFA policy aims to boost physical activity among all citizens, aligning with Vision 2030's goals. This approach, however, does not account for the gender disparities that are present. The data show that both genders exhibit low sports participation rates when compared internationally, underscoring the need for a gender-specific approach within the policy to genuinely reflect women's experiences.

C- The focus on numerical targets for sports participation in the SFA strategy, intended to support Vision 2030's health management goals, can inadvertently lead to a qualitative oversight in women's engagement in sports. The quantitative push may lead to prioritizing immediate outcomes over a more strategic and sustainable development of women's roles and involvement in sports, which our research suggests is a multifaceted issue.

The study calls for policy reformulation that recognizes women's real-life conditions in SA and recommends setting specific, qualitative targets for women's sports participation. Moreover, there should be an emphasis on creating culturally sensitive programs that resonate with women's interests and facilitate their active involvement in the sporting community.

This paper contributes to the literature on policy inclusivity in a relatively underexplored context, that of Saudi women in sports. Furthermore, by integrating women's voices, the study offers valuable insight that questions current policy narratives and suggests new directions for policy development. It also contributes to the discourse on gender inclusivity within sports, providing empirical evidence from a non-Western perspective, thereby expanding the geographical and cultural scope of the literature on women's sports engagement.

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She Knows Her Stuff (For a Woman)! Exploring Women's Experiences in Sports Media Organizations

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This study aims to bring awareness to gendered practices in sports media organizations and women's experiences of working in this space. This work is guided by the following research questions in the sports media context:

1. How and where do women access opportunities?
2. How do women conceptualize and navigate their gendered workspace?
3. How does women's ability to access opportunities and their overall experience vary based on socio-demographic factors?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Sport is produced for men by men and women's presence in sports media is constantly scrutinized (Bruce, 2013). Women are 'qualitatively and quantitatively' minoritized by the structures and processes in sports media organizations (Harrison, 2018, p. 952).

Women of color often experience extra hostility including racism and sexism (Harrison, 2018), imploring us to examine women's experiences in sport media beyond 'white femininity' (McClearen, 2018, p. 944). Liminal awareness (i.e., perception of one's experiences as gender and ethnically neutral; Martin, 2003) transfers the responsibility of fitting in on minoritized groups. Simply providing opportunities to women and ethnic minorities will not achieve change unless organizational processes and practices related to the conceptualization of gender and ethnicity are understood and addressed (Claringbould et al., 2004).

We aim to add to the conversation on gendered practices in sports media organizations by exploring women's experiences in this space.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

This qualitative study is guided by a constructivist paradigm (Patton, 2015), which states that understanding is created individually through personal experiences and knowledge is co-created by participants and researchers through an exchange of ideas and constant reflection.

Data collection is currently underway and will be completed by July 2024. Semi-structured interviews following a conversational approach (Patton, 2015) have been undertaken with 15 women working in sports media. Participants were identified through purposeful and snowball sampling (Patton, 2015) and invited to one 60-minute audio-recorded interview. Any woman over the age of 18, currently working or retired in the past five years as a sports writer, journalist, broadcaster, reporter, photographer or in production roles in the United States or United Kingdom was invited.

Framed by social exchange theory (Homans, 1958), gendered organization theory (Acker, 1990), and intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), interview questions explore how participants seek and access opportunities in sports media, gain benefits and experience challenges from work, and conceptualize and navigate gendered and racialized processes in the sports media space overall.

We have used reflexive thematic analysis (Braun et al., 2023) to analyze how women perceive their experiences and how this may potentially reflect larger gender-based inequities in sports media. Themes are being conceptualized based on the research questions and data collected. We have taken an intersectional lens and unpacked potential variations in opportunities, how they are accessed and by whom, and women's overall experiences.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Study findings are anticipated to create greater social awareness of women's experiences, with practical recommendations on how they may be better served in their workspace. Findings are expected to promote accessibility and inclusivity for women in sports media, create a sense of belonging, and contribute to their work-related and overall

wellbeing. Finally, findings are expected to prompt leaders to evaluate the practices in their sports media organizations and how they may be gendered, leading to the development of policies that promote and prioritize the engagement and well-being of women in sport media.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The expected contribution of this study includes extending our knowledge of gendered organization and social exchange theories in sport management, and specifically in the women in sports media context. Our study expands the examination of women's experiences to a variety of roles in sports media and takes an intersectional lens in our analyses to provide updated insights to organizational processes and their impact on women's experiences. This, in turn, is expected to provide the impetus to assess and improve organizational practices related to better supporting women and be used as a foundation to measure women's progress in sports media overall.

Diversity and Inclusion Reporting Practices of Irish Sporting Organisations

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Research aims and objectives

This study explores how government funded sporting organisations have evolved in their reporting on diversity and inclusion practices. The research objective is to examine how government-funded sporting organisations frame Diversity and Inclusion practices over time. The research questions are: How have sporting organisations changed in their reporting of Diversity and Inclusion over the past ten years? What Diversity and inclusion themes have become more and less important over the 10-year period? How do sporting organisations maintain their legitimacy in relation to how they report on Diversity and Inclusions?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Diversity and inclusion issues are an important element of the management of sports organisations. Sporting organisations require a diverse pool of people from which to enact strategy. However, while sporting organisations have been to the fore in enacting Diversity and Inclusion policies and procedures, there is a gap between policy and practice (Gardner et al., 2023). Garg and Sangwan (2021) describe inclusion as the characteristics of an organisation composing of the organisational culture and climate in which people of a diverse background are treated and rewarded equitably. Some of the benefits to having an inclusive environment include a decrease in conflict, stress and staff turnover (Hopkins, 2012).

Diversity relates to the “presence of socially meaningful differences among members of a group” according to Cunningham (2015, p.6), who note that benefits to having a diverse workforce include increased productivity, and creativity. Despite developments in relation to diversity, there remains, in sporting organisations, problems in relation to ageism,

sexism and racism (Frey, 2019). More recent literature suggests that sports organisations frame diversity in such a way as to obscure structural causes of inequality (Gardner et al., 2023).

The theoretical framework for this study draws upon legitimacy theory, first espoused by Adams and Roberts (1995) and impression management, based on Goffman’s symbolic interactionist framework (Goffman, 1956). According to Legitimacy Theory, organisations view disclosure as a way of legitimising their operations and may depict themselves as behaving in a socially responsible manner, in line with current social norms and expectations. Impression management considers how managers and organisations present themselves in a favourable light. It has been widely used in the Accounting literature (Edgar et al., 2018), but also more recently in sports (Åkesdotter et al., 2024). Organisations engage in impression management in relation to diversity by being more attentive to how they portray their image, as opposed to encouraging diversity through more inclusive practices (Windscheid et al., 2016).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The approach to the research is qualitative in nature, drawing upon a social constructivist ontological position. This involves understanding how social order is produced and reproduced (Merkle-Davies, Brennan and Vourvachis, 2011). It uses interpretative text analysis to examine documentary evidence, with a view to extracting organisational actors’ meaning making in organisational narratives, such as the annual report. The setting for the research is Ireland and the organisations chosen are ten of the larger-funded organisations by Sport Ireland. Sport Ireland launched a Diversity and Inclusion Policy in 2022, which aimed to “celebrate diversity” and inclusion (Sport Ireland 2022). They have been selected based on the size of their funding from Sport Ireland and the number of members involved in the sport.

Data is collected from the organisational documents submitted to Sport Ireland including their Annual Reports, Board Assurance Statements and Compliance Records, ESG reports, and Diversity and Inclusion reports. Data from the websites are

also included, including statements and policies, as well as photographic evidence. It is anticipated approximately fifty documents will be reviewed, to determine how diversity and inclusion practices are framed, and identifying codes and themes for each frame.

Results, Findings and Discussion

(not available yet – will be completed by deadline)

Envisioned: Conclusion, Contribution, and Implications

It is expected to conclude that Diversity and Inclusion practices of sporting organisations will have evolved over the past ten years in relation to what they are reporting, particularly around the quantity of reporting and approaches they are taking to make their organisations more inclusive, such as having inclusion committees, partnerships.

Sporting organisations need to be leaders when it comes to having robust reporting mechanisms around Diversity and Inclusion. The research will highlight the evolving nature of the reporting strategies being used by Sporting organisations. Implications for policy and future research opportunities will be highlighted, such as the need for and managing diverse groups through committees.

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Diversity and Inclusion in Campus Sport: A Practical Challenge

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Aim and Research Questions

Recently, one flagship university in the southeastern United State has eliminated all positions and programmes associated with equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) from its campus, following the new state regulations that prohibit spending on any EDI initiatives (Nottingham et al, 2024). This action stems from the belief that EDI is “radical indoctrination that promotes division in our society”, as stated by Manny Diaz Jr, Florida’s Commissioner of Education (Helmore, 2024). However, this stance completely contrasts with that of most higher education institutions in the UK and Europe, where EDI has become a major priority on the agenda (Watson et al., 2023). Although we acknowledge the importance of upholding EDI as a core value in every university’s strategy, it is also worth revisiting the phrase, “...that promote division in our society” to ensure better alignment with and prioritisation of EDI principles. Therefore, with a research question of whether both diversity and inclusion can move forward in the same direction, this research aims to examine the impact of diversity, along with other positive factors, on inclusion among UK university students. We are also interested in exploring whether sport engagements would enhance the hypothesised path from diversity to inclusion in a more positive way.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The term diversity denotes the present of distinct individual characteristics that contribute to the perception of difference in a society (van Knippenberg et al., 2004). Diversity is not only an inevitable but also a desirable phenomenon in higher education institutions, with belief that we all benefit when our community brings together multifaceted student and staff with different backgrounds and perspectives, ensuring that every member can feel like part of its community. Yet, several theoretical positions highlight potential challenges associated with

diversity, addressing that it may hinder the development of a sense of belonging within a larger university community. For instance, according to the social categorisation perspective (Turner et al., 1987), individuals tend to categorise themselves and others into in-groups and out-groups based on similarities and differences. This grouping can produce a higher level of conflict between two groups as well as reduce identification with a team. These propositions were empirically supported by Hentschel et al. (2013). Thus, we assume that perceived diversity among students would be negatively (or not) associated with perceived inclusion. However, this disappointing expectation could be mitigated by active sport participation and social interactions with peers. According to the student involvement theory (Astin, 1984), students’ extracurricular activities such as sport experience and social interactions with their peers would enhance their commitment to the university and sense of community. Thus, we anticipate moderation effects from such student involvement.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

We recruited 131 students who purchased university gym memberships for the 2023-4 academic year at a large university in the East Midlands, UK. The measures used in this study were adapted and modified from existing literature; perceived diversity (Hentschel et al., 2013), perceived equality (Kossek & Zonia, 1993), organisational identification (Mael & Ashforth, 1992), social cohesion (as a measure of perceived inclusion; Pearce & Randel, 2004), sport participation (Pace, 1990), and sociability (Ko & Pastore, 2007). A multiple regression was conducted to test the hypothetical relationships at the .05 probability level.

Results/Findings

The regressions yielded two key findings. While organisational identification ($\beta = .45$), perceived equality ($\beta = .32$) and sport participation ($\beta = .17$) were significantly associated with social cohesion, perceived diversity ($\beta = .01$) was not a significant predictor. Additionally, the moderating roles of both sport participation and sociability on the relationship between perceived diversity and social cohesion were not found to be significant at $p = .05$. It is noteworthy,

however, that the interactions effects between diversity and sociability ($\beta = .28, p = .067$) was close to significance, warranting further consideration. It suggests the potential role of social interactions during sport participation in fostering social cohesion.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

Theoretically, a university community thrives on diversity in various social identities and ethnic backgrounds. In reality, however, some universities have become dominated by a few ethnic groups, sometimes showing a lack of inclusion. The social categorisation theory (Turner et al., 1987) explains this phenomenon, positing that individuals tend to exhibit greater inclusion and cohesion within their own groups which are perceived as more homogeneous. While this fosters a strong sense of community, it can also limit interactions with other groups. This lack of interaction is not ideal for university management, which strives for a more inclusive campus environment as a whole. Further discussions on the role of a more ambient sport environment in promoting social cohesion among diverse student populations, as well as some managerial implications, will be discussed, as will the current limitations (e.g., nature of the population) and future research ideas, along this line of inquiry.

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Exploring a Semi-Professional Women's Basketball Summer League Using LaVoi's Ecological-Intersectional Model

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Aim and Research Questions

The aim of the present research was to explore and analyze a women's semi-professional basketball league through the lens of LaVoi's ecological-intersectional model.

Research question: What are the supports for and barriers to developing, delivering, and sustaining a woman's semi-professional basketball league?

Background and Literature Review

While women's sport is experiencing a period of growth in terms of visibility and professional leagues, a number of inequities still exist, particularly with regards to pay, coaching, officiating opportunities, and media coverage (Cooky et al., 2015; Demers et al., 2021). The increasing development of professional and semi-professional women's sports leagues present an opportunity to address a number of these inequities through examining how various groups are creating dedicated spaces for women, and particularly women of colour, to compete, lead, and serve as role models for girls and women in sport (Fink et al., 2014). However, there is a gap in the research literature analyzing how such leagues are created and how they operate (Pegoraro & Taylor, 2021).

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

A case study was conducted on the 2023 season of the HoopQueens Summer League, which is a women's semi-professional basketball league in Toronto, Canada. For this instrumental case study, we adopted a pragmatic worldview, allowing for flexibility and a variety of data sources while working with a community sport partner (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Hodge & Sharpe, 2017). Data collection included the first author's observations, surveys of the league players

(19) and fans (up to 70), and interviews with league staff and contractors (3), players (3), and coaches (3). Data were analysed inductively and deductively using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022), and guided by LaVoi's (2016) ecological-intersectional model.

Results and Discussion

In utilizing LaVoi's (2016) ecological-intersectional model to examine how the league is creating a sporting environment where women of colour can thrive, and where the league might still have work to do, the results help us understand the facilitators and barriers to developing, delivering, and sustaining a women's semi-professional basketball league. The results illustrate ways that the ecological-intersectional model can inform: being a basketball player and a Hoop Queen reflects an opportunity to develop personally through playing basketball (individual); developing a sisterhood highlights a possibility to build community (interpersonal); developing the league details a number of initiatives related to growing and sustaining the league (organizational); and changing the landscape of women's basketball in Canada, which is where work remains (societal). Finally, beyond the model, the league founder's leadership approach is discussed. Findings also reflect the league founder's success in creating a community and specific development opportunities for players, coaches, and officials. Additionally, she has given attention to the broader ecosystem through beginning to consider the fan experience, and engaging in strategic partnerships with media, marketing, and sponsorship.

Based on the findings, the facilitators of league success include the dedication to supporting the league participants as whole people on and off the basketball court with an emphasis on community through creating a sisterhood (Joseph & McKenzie, 2021). These approaches have resulted in increased commitment from the players and coaches to remain in the sport of basketball, and, more specifically, share a commitment to return to the league and contribute to its development. An additional area that may contribute to league development is to understand the league fans and gather further data in order to tailor media and sponsorship efforts to the audience (Pegoraro et al., 2018).

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The present study explores a women's semi-professional basketball league from the perspective of LaVoi's ecological-intersectional model (2016). This work contributes to an understanding of how this model is useful in providing insight into what it may take, in particular, to change the sport system through creating opportunities for all women can play or coach and thrive on their own terms. Practical implications of this work will also be shared.

Exploring Factors of Diversity Mindsets in Sport: A Scoping Review

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Aim and Research Questions

Diversity and inclusion are critical for any thriving organisation, transcending profit-oriented goals and strategies (Cunningham, 2019). Consequently, understanding the diverse experiences and needs of employees becomes paramount in attracting, retaining, and inspiring creativity and innovation (Cooper et al., 2020; Cox & Blake, 1991; Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999). The aim of the study was to conduct a scoping review to explore the elements of diversity mindsets and develop its conceptual framework. By doing so, we aim to understand the trends in research on diversity and inclusion in sport. To achieve this, our systematic scoping review is guided by the following RQs:

RQ1: What research approaches are commonly utilised in the study of diversity in sport?

RQ2: How has the concept and definition of diversity evolved over the several decades?

RQ3: Are there any significant patterns in the publication trends on diversity research over time?

RQ4: What shifts have occurred in the landscape of diversity research publications in recent years?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The scoping review systematically analyses literature on a specific topic (Peters et al., 2015), allowing researchers to pinpoint key discussions within a field. Unlike a systematic review, a scoping review takes a broader approach, does not confine itself to particular research questions (RQs), and appraise the usefulness of a concept for future research and policymaking (Munn et al., 2018). In this systematic scoping review, we aim to critically evaluate how scholars and practitioners have

defined and applied diversity mindsets as a concept. Based on these findings, we can propose a new definition of a diversity mindset in sport.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

We conducted a scoping review following Arsky and O'Malley's (2005) framework, enhanced by Levac and colleagues (2010). Our 6-stage method employed the PRISMA-ScR guidelines to establish a systematic search strategy. We identified studies using various databases (Academic Search Complete [EBSCO], Business Source Complete [EBSCO], Cochrane Library [ERIC], JSTOR Business, ProQuest Central [ABI/INFORM], PsycINFO, ScienceDirect, SPORTDiscus with Full Text [EBSCO]), followed by screening, selection, and data extraction based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. We also conducted manual search of the top sport management journals, including *European Sport Management Quarterly*, *Sport Management Review*, and *Journal of Sport Management*. We used a combination of the following terms and keywords, separately: "diversity," "inclusion," "gender," "race," "ethnicity," "nationality." To ensure the reliability and consistency, two researchers independently performed screening, charting, and data extraction, with any discrepancies resolved by a third researcher. Key themes and patterns within the literature compiled through an iterative process, and the collected data were summarised using a thematic analysis approach. Finally, we presented an overview of the breadth and depth of literature on diversity mindsets in sport, addressing our research questions.

Expected Results/Findings and Discussion

As the data analysis is ongoing, there are no findings available yet. Data collection is currently in progress and is expected to be completed by the time of the 2024 EASM conference.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

We are going to present the preliminary findings, discussing their implications, and significance of the study. As the first scoping review of literature on diversity and inclusion, the initial insights will offer meaningful perspectives on diversity mindset, potentially

encouraging further exploration by diversity scholars in sport. Furthermore, we shed light on the potential impact of incorporating this concept in sport management programmes, providing useful guidance for both practitioners and scholars looking to enhance its application. Overall, this scoping review will offer a comprehensive summary of the existing literature on diversity mindsets.

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Conceptualization of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion from the Volunteer Perspective in Para-Sport Events

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Aim and Research Questions

In recent years, “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” (DE & I) has gained global attention as a crucial management and social issue. The promotion of DE & I is important in para-sport events because it is expected that people from all walks of life will participate in the event and contribute to the realization of an inclusive society through the events. Within the field of sport management, DE & I has become a focal point of academic inquiry, as evidenced by the publication of special issues on the topic (Williams et al., 2023). However, little attention has been paid to conceptualizing and comprehensively examining DE & I in the context of para-sport events. This study aimed to conceptualize perceived diversity, equity, and inclusion in para-sport events from volunteers’ perspectives.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Mega sporting events, including the Paralympic Games, bring together people with diverse characteristics to the host region, leading to increased awareness of individual and cultural diversity among residents and acceptance and appreciation of diverse others (Inoue et al., 2023). However, several scholars (e.g., Brittain & Beacom, 2016) raised the question of whether and how the para-sport events contribute to the emancipation and empowerment of disabled people. The understanding of the DE & I in para-sport events is still evolving, and it is necessary to verify the concrete benefits that can be measured.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

The study utilized a modification of the Ten-Statement Test, a self-concept assessment commonly employed in the field of leisure studies (e.g., Ito & Walker, 2014; Yamaguchi & Ito, 2021). Specifically, participants were asked, “What keywords (or phrases) come to mind when you hear the words diversity, equity, and inclusion in para-sport events?” Respondents were instructed to provide a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 10 keywords. An online survey was then distributed to 1,400 volunteers via email with a URL between February 22 and March 4, 2024. In total, responses were received from 439 volunteers, but only 697 keywords from 352 respondents were used in this study after eliminating items with low reliability.

This study was based on the following two steps of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). First, each of the three authors inductively categorized the content of the survey as 1) diversity, 2) equity, 3) inclusion, 4) content applicable to all DE & I, and 5) others. The results of each author’s responses were reviewed and discussed, including the definition of DE & I, to improve the coding accuracy. Next, the three authors again made the same five classifications as above and calculated the kappa coefficients. As a result, the kappa coefficient was .78, which exceeded the standard value of .75 (Fleiss et al., 1981), thus completing the analysis.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The results of the thematic analysis showed that 118 keywords were classified as diversity by the three researchers. The specific keyword groups were: 1) subject (e.g., individuality, disability, race); 2) variety (diverse, borderless, genderless); 3) understanding and respect (e.g., accept, tolerance, tolerate); 4) distinction (e.g., discrimination, barriers, prejudice); 5) difference (e.g., gap, difference); and 6) other. Next, 24 keywords were classified as equity. The specific keyword groups were: 1) equality (e.g., fair, neutral, reasonable); 2) accessibility (e.g., transportation, accessible); 3) accommodation (e.g., consideration, flexibility); 4) inequality (e.g., unfair, inconvenient); 5) legal (e.g., law, policy); 6) security (e.g., stability, comfort); and 7) opportunity (e.g., chance). Moreover, 52 keywords were classified as inclusion. The

specific keywords were: 1) inclusion (e.g., coexistence, togetherness, acceptance); 2) support (e.g., compassion, cuddling, caring); 3) communication (e.g., interaction, friendship); 4) vitality (e.g., demonstrate, life worth living); 5) participation (e.g., participate, get involved); and 6) independence (autonomy). Finally, 57 keywords were classified as all (included in all DE & I) and 447 were not included in the above categories, including those not included in any of the DE & I categories and words on which the three respondents disagreed.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The Ten-Statement Test was employed to gather keywords associated with DE & I in para-sport events and to delineate the components of each concept. By elucidating the concept of DE & I as perceived by volunteers participating in para-sport events, this study paved the way for devising strategies to promote DE & I in future para-sport events.

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Transgender Athletes and Elite-Level Sport: Making and Implementing Inclusion Policies

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Aim and Research Questions:

Recognising, specifying, and protecting the rights of transgender and gender-diverse (TGD) athletes is one of the most complex and conflicted areas of contemporary sport policy. The aim of this paper is to analyse the policy response to TGD inclusion within the sports industry in England/UK, focusing on three sports: swimming, triathlon, and rugby by answering the main research question: What is the process by which each national governing body (NGB) developed and implemented policy in relation to transgender athletes?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

NGBs frequently deal with ambiguous, complex, and conflictual issues. To explore the policy-making challenges facing the NGBs within the case studies of the three selected sports, we utilised Matland's ambiguity-conflict model which suggests implementation of any policy will experience some degree of conflict and ambiguity (Matland, 1995). Matland's model is selected partly because it explicitly addresses issues of policy complexity, conflict and ambiguity, and partly because it focuses on policy implementation.

Issues concerning the fundamental human rights of TGD individuals have become deeply divisive and politically polarised, particularly when challenging institutions and practices that organise around a binary construction of sex. Globally, issues around sex and gender are particularly visible within sport, where the binary sex division is argued as being essential and non-negotiable (Hilton & Lundberg, 2021).

In addition to UK legislation on equality and guidelines from the International Olympic Committee (IOC), NGBs need to take account of the advice from their International

Federation (IF) while also developing policy that has the support of their membership and fans/supporters. The context within which sport organisations are making their policy on TGD inclusion is socially and culturally divided and, on issues such as safety and fairness, often polarised. It is also an organisationally fragmented and densely populated policy network. While sport faces many of the same policy challenges as other industries, some are specific to sport, and manifest in sport, in a particularly complex fashion. Recent high-profile examples surrounding TGD athlete inclusion debates in elite-level sport include Lia Thomas and Emily Bridges (Ingle, 2024; Wardropper, 2024).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

A case study research design was adopted with data collected from policy documents of national and international sport organisations, domestic legislation, government agencies, and media sources. A qualitative Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach was adopted to examine 23 TDG-related policies, published between 2011 and October 2023, that impacted elite-level sport, for three selected sports/NGBs. The paper utilises Matland's ambiguity-conflict model as the analytical framework. The value of CDA is that it allows an analysis of the degree to which ambiguity and conflicts were recognised, understood, and managed (e.g., whether ambiguities and conflicts were addressed directly or ignored/downplayed) and how NGBs were influenced by environmental factors such as lobby groups, other NGBs, and the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The main findings are: a) NGB policy demonstrated instability; b) scientific evidence (to varying degrees) was deferred to for decision-making; c) extensive consultation with TGD people did not necessarily equate to influence over policy; d) NGBs engaged in 'value shopping' between the values of safety, inclusion, fairness and the 'essence' of the sport; and, e) policy change reflected a high degree of policy isomorphism.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The environment in which the three NGBs were making policy affecting TGD athletes is characterised by considerable ambiguity and potential for conflict. All three sports had long-established, deeply embedded (organisationally and culturally) policies and governance arrangements predicated on a binary division of sex. The abrupt policy changes reflect the pace of scientific research into sex, gender transition, and performance but also reflect the high degree of uncertainty among sport organisations in relation to: a) whether to treat TGD athletes as a category or on an individual basis; b) the relative weight to be given to the values of safety, inclusion and fairness; c) the implications of the value mix for the essence of the sport; and d) whether the application of gender regulations should apply to all levels of the sport.

The paper contributes to knowledge in four ways: 1) it provides an analysis of the process of organisational decision-making concerning an important complex issue – an analysis that has not been undertaken previously; 2) it provides the foundation for comparative analysis – with other similarly complex issues (doping, bullying, racism) and with other countries; 3) it introduces the Matland analytical framework; and 4) it provides a series of implications for NGB management.

The implications for practice include the need for NGBs to be aware of the dynamic nature of the policy area and the need to navigate a complex mix of governmental and sporting interests. The article also refines Matland's model, particularly in relation to the strategies for reducing conflict by deferring to one powerful or deeply embedded interest.

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Underrepresentation in English Professional Football: Perspectives From 'The Silent Other'

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Aim and Research Questions

The main purpose of the research was to develop a deeper understanding of underrepresentation of blacks in leadership positions in English professional football. The study also aimed to explain a current imbalance in representation of blacks on the playing and non-playing side of the game and was guided by the following question: Why despite initiatives to redress the balance is representation of blacks in management and leadership positions in English football so low?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Underrepresentation of blacks in English professional football is a longstanding issue and one that continues to invite debate (Cashmore & Clelland, 2011). According to Bradbury and Conricode (2021) the last 50 years has seen significant increase in workforce diversity in men's professional sports and progress, however glacial, is being made.

Figures from 2023 show players from black heritage are well represented on the field of play. At the highest level 43% of players in the English Premier League are black. More than double since the inception of the league in 1992 (16.5%). In lower English Football Leagues black players are also fairly well represented at 34%. However, when one looks at the wider football industry there is a disparity. In managerial positions (e.g., coaches and football managers), representation drops to 4.4% of the workforce and at executive and ownership levels, a paltry 1.6% of individuals are black (Szymanski, 2023).

Custodians of the game have responded with measures and positive action initiatives aimed at tackling racial and gender inequality. These

include a version of an American style Rooney Rule and a Football Diversity and Leadership Code (FA, 2021). The Code also hopes to increase numbers of females on the women's side of the game through diversity targets in coaching and leadership roles on a voluntary basis (Bradbury & Conricode, 2021).

This paper makes an original contribution as we examine under explored narratives of males, all racialised as White and working in the football industry who are, paradoxically, less represented speaking on black representation or who are indeed silent (Kluch et al., 2022). We apply the idea of egalitarian segregation, which draws deep analogies between women and blacks to conceptualise the inclusion of marginalised groups, as an apposite theoretical framework to address our stated ambitions (De Beauvoir, 1949).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Adopting an interpretive approach, the study explored narratives of participants from white heritage who hold roles in the English football sector (Gill et al., 2010). Eight in depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted by the first author, a black male and longstanding 'insider' of the game. Lived experiences, perceptions, and participants' reflections were analysed by each researcher independently, cross checked, then organised on key themes of the idea of egalitarian segregation to develop theoretically grounded explanations.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Drawing on Simone De Beauvoir's idea of egalitarian segregation, three features that contribute to establishing and sustaining underrepresentation were found. Interconnected dimensions of economic issues and discussion of opportunity and morality (human will and intention) addressed our research questions (Liu, 2019).

Findings left little doubt that black players are seen to bring great value and benefit to football clubs. Paradoxically, perception existed that the source of the anomaly in representation off the field rests with blacks themselves (Lusted, 2017). First, narrative of recruitment processes highlighted well established structural issues and cultural capital which favoured whites economically that are found in patterns of assumptions

embedded in current practices. Second, privilege, a tendency to see the world in a particular way rather than consider or be aware of other points of view, and to act in ways that benefit certain groups, limit opportunities (Garner, 2007; Levine-Rasky, 2013). Third, will, intentions and actions of decision makers in the game was found to be the root cause of what leads to lack of progress and change.

Conclusion, Contribution and Implication

We argue, the game of football is hiding behind and profiting from an uncomfortable truth that blacks are granted equal status for their talents as players. But, in other parts of the industry, they remain separate. Recruitment practices, sense of privilege, and most significantly, lack of will and intention foster marginalisation. In terms of the broader aim, our analysis showed perceptions of whites in football demonstrate quasi good faith but also serve to foster and continue discrimination (De Beauvoir, 1949).

Theoretically, the perspective of egalitarian segregation explained why representation in leadership positions remains low. In practice, our contribution along with issues discussed emphasize the immense difficulty in tackling the situation. To address the issue, the starting point requires meaningful dialogue and collective commitment between league officials, club executives, and stakeholders from all backgrounds. Further, there is an imperative for football to show the same moral appetite that has seen successful representation on the field to realise equal status throughout.

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NCAA Division I African American Student-Athletes: Opening Doors to Graduate Education

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Aim and Research Question

The researchers are developing initiatives for faculty, academic advising professionals, and athletic departments to enhance the support services for NCAA African American student-athletes considering graduate education and planning for careers that require graduate degrees. Multiple career opportunities are available for African Americans student-athletes after exiting their sport, but awareness of careers that require graduate education and the role that their sport and academics has in obtaining them is often not made known or explored (Okahana et al., 2016; Singer, 2008). The major research question of their qualitative study was: How can faculty, academic advising professionals, and university athletic departments partner to develop initiatives for African American student-athletes to increase awareness of careers requiring graduate education, including the process and expectations for admittance into graduate school?

Literature Review

Research examining the graduate education services in place for African American student-athletes is lacking and must be examined for two main reasons: (1) there continues to be a debate concerning the psychosocial identity of African American student-athletes where their athletic identity remains to be held of most importance and their academics is viewed as secondary, with the goal of academics being for their eligibility to compete in their sport (Campbell, 2017; Singer, 2008) and (2) although student support services are in place for student-athletes, African Americans remain underrepresented in career fields requiring a graduate education, including those within intercollegiate athletic departments (Okahana et al., 2016).

Methods

The participants of this study included a group of 9 African American student-athletes chosen through purpose sampling. Each participant participated in a semi-structured, one-on-one interview to determine influencing factors for their choice of career and a desire to pursue graduate education. Interviewers identified themes utilizing Planned Happenstance Theory (Mitchell et al., 1999; Krumboltz, 1996) to explain the phenomena of African American student-athletes in college and the challenges that they encounter as they pursue both athletic and academic success. Data triangulation, member checking, and eliciting examples of interviewee accounts was conducted for validity purposes (Ritchie et al., 2013).

Results and Discussion

This study discovered some of the challenges that these African American student-athletes encounter as they pursue both athletic and academic success and in identifying strategies leading to their success. The main influencing factors that emerged from the interviews included financial barriers, mentors or lack of one, the role of family members, and access and education about graduate school. Education about graduate school was important for these individuals to fully understand the process and steps necessary to get accepted into graduate school. The findings of the study revealed pervasive realities concerning African American student athletes. The student-athletes stated that they would benefit from a training program the second semester of their freshman year that provided information about careers that require graduate education, the application process and requirements for graduate school, and funding opportunities like graduate assistantships. These insights may prove valuable to players, coaches, teachers, professors, athletic directors, parents, and others associated with intercollegiate athletics.

Conclusion

With their qualitative study, the researchers are building a stronger body of knowledge of initiatives for reducing inequality in graduate education so that faculty, academic advising professionals, and athletic departments can more effectively respond to the need for

graduate career exploration and career planning services for African American student-athletes. Developing a training program to be delivered in the second semester of their freshman year to provide information about careers that require graduate education, the application process and requirements for graduate school, and funding opportunities like graduate assistantships may better prepare African American student-athletes to be positioned to pursue graduate school and a career requiring graduate school if they choose to do so.

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Analyzing the Gender Pay Gap in Sports: A Mixed-Method Study on Academic and Public Discourses

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Aim and Research Questions

This study examines the gender pay gap in professional sports through a bibliometric analysis of academic literature and a content analysis of grey literature. It aims to synthesize insights from these sources to understand the scope and evolution of the discourse on the issue. The research questions are:

- RQ1: What are the key themes and developments in the scholarly literature on the gender pay gap in professional sports?
- RQ2: How do public narratives and media discussions about the gender pay gap in sports compare to academic findings?

The analysis begins with a bibliometric review to map the academic landscape, identifying pivotal authors and trend, and pairs it with a content analysis of non-academic sources to capture broader public and policy perspectives. A sequential mixed-method exploratory design ensues, integrating different data sources to deepen understanding and inform conclusions.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The recognition of Claudia Goldin's Nobel Prize-winning research on the gender pay gap (Goldin et al., 2017) marks a significant moment in global discussions about gender equality and wage disparities. This discourse has extended into the realm of professional sports, a sector where the pay disparities between male and female athletes have attracted extensive media coverage and public debate. Notable instances, such as the earnings gap between top male and female soccer players (Bergman, 2023), underscore persistent inequalities and have spurred legislative changes worldwide, including equal pay laws supported by soccer federations in Norway, Ireland, and Australia, and the professionalization of women's football in

Italy. The heightened interest culminated with the 2024 Women's NCAA basketball final, which for the first time outranked the men's in viewership, illustrating the changing economic and cultural valuation of women's sports. Academic efforts have intensified, focusing on the systemic biases that perpetuate wage inequalities in sports and examining the roles of societal perceptions and media portrayals in perpetuating these gaps (Arutiunova & Gasparetto, 2023). The call for deeper, action-oriented research continues to grow, emphasizing the need for comprehensive analyses that inform strategic media and policy adjustments to address these disparities effectively.

Methodology

This study addresses the complex dynamics of the gender pay gap in professional sports through a two-pronged analytical approach, reflecting the evolving academic and public discussions on the issue. Initially, a bibliometric analysis of peer-reviewed sports management literature is conducted to chart the evolution of the scholarly dialogue, identifying key contributors, seminal works, and emerging trends (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). This method provides a macroscopic view of the academic landscape, grounding the research in empirical evidence and delineating the scope of existing studies. Complementing this, a content analysis of grey literature is employed to gauge current public sentiment and media narratives (Benzies et al., 2006). The qualitative exploration captures the immediacy and contextual richness of the ongoing public discourse, offering insights into how the gender pay gap is perceived outside of academic circles.

Together, these methodologies enable a comprehensive examination of the gender pay gap, combining rigorous academic analysis with broader societal perspectives. This mixed-method exploratory approach not only enhances the depth of the study but also aligns with the calls for multifaceted research strategies in sports management, crucial for unpacking the nuanced aspects of wage disparities in sports.

Expected Results/Findings and Discussion

Note: Full results and findings will be available at the conference.

Preliminary analyses suggest a significant uptick in research on the gender pay gap within professional sports since the mid-1990s, correlating with intensified global gender equality initiatives. This body of work is largely contributed by researchers from Anglo-Saxon countries and China, offering perspectives shaped by their unique sports cultures. From the bibliometric review, we anticipate identifying two predominant themes: the impact of educational initiatives and socio-economic factors on the gender pay gap in sports. Meanwhile, the content analysis of grey literature is expected to reveal a stark contrast in pay disparities across sports. Popular sports like football and basketball tend to show greater pay gaps compared to more gender-integrated sports such as tennis.

These findings imply that strategies to enhance the commercial appeal and viewership of women's sports may be pivotal in reducing pay inequities. The discussion at the conference will explore these trends in depth, aiming to develop a comprehensive understanding of the factors driving the gender pay gap and proposing actionable strategies that go beyond traditional economic and sociological models.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This study offers unprecedented analytical detail on the gender pay gap in sports, merging academic and societal dialogues. It asserts the need for specific strategies tailored to sports, particularly those enhancing the visibility of women's sports. This research enriches sport management literature by aligning academic findings with public discourse, uncovering less examined areas, and providing insights for policy and practice. Ultimately, it advances the conversation on gender pay inequities by embracing diverse perspectives, contributing valuable insights to academia and sports industry practices.

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Revisiting Gender Differences in Sports Participation: Observed versus Unobserved Factors and Implications for Policy

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Aim and Research Questions

Current UK Sports strategy emphasises the need to transform inactive individuals into becoming active, and to do so in an inclusive way (DCMS, 2023). Increasing women's sports participation is identified to be particularly important (Sport England, n.d.).

These strategies are informed by observed differences in participation according to gender. However, the differences in participation may also reflect differences in other observable socio-economic characteristics which may not be shared across women and men. This confounds the extent of the difference in sport participation being attributed specifically to gender. To better inform policy, the aim of this paper is to address the following research question:

To what extent is the difference in sport participation between women and men influenced by unobserved gender specific factors controlling for observable socio-economic factors?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The research is based on time-allocation micro-economic theory (Becker, 1965), which has been applied to explore how interrelated observable individual and socio-economic characteristics structure sports participation, recognising that women tend to participate in sport less than men (Downward & Riordan, 2007). Literature identifies that many characteristics such as ethnicity, work status, the presence of children in the household etc will also shape sports participation (Downward & Muniz, 2019). These factors are either given or not likely to be directly influenceable by sport policy, though might be accommodated in policy. However, if differences in participation exist between women and men that share the same socio-

economic characteristics, then this suggests an important potential target for gender specific policy emphasis. The extent of the gender gap due to these specific factors rather than other socio-economic factors confounded with gender is however unknown.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Data is drawn from the Active Lives Survey initially covering 2018-2019 (but data covering this period up to and including 2021-2022 will be analysed before the conference) providing usable samples of n=99,102 women and n=78,529 men. Measures of the weekly hours of participation in traditional sports, health and fitness activities, recreational cycling and recreational walking in England are derived, along with a large set of socio-economic characteristics of individuals. Blinder-Oaxaca decomposition regression analyses is then undertaken to identify the unobserved differences in women's compared to men's participation. This approach develops a counterfactual analysis of women's participation based on them having the same observable characteristics as men (Jann, 2008).

Results/Findings and Discussion

The results identify that the vast proportion of the differences in participation between women and men is due to unobserved gender specific factors but the results are sport specific. For example men participate more hours per week than women in traditional sports, with approximately 98% of the difference being due to unobserved factors. In contrast women participate in more hours of fitness activities per week than men, with approximately 85% of the difference being due to unobserved factors. These results suggest that the main differences in participation between women and men reflect unobserved gender specific factors. Potential sources of difference are discussed such as institutionalised gender inequity in traditional sports (Fink, 2016) or the informality provided by fitness activities and their provision (Deelen et al., 2018). It follows that policy development needs to better understand the sources of these differences to close the gaps between women's and men's participation.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This paper is unique in that it disentangles the association between observable socio-economic features of women and men and their sports participation, from the role that unobserved gender specific factors play. This is important as it provides clear evidence of the potential for policy to impact on participation without needing to focus on variables that are not easily amenable to policy intervention. However, challenges in finding out what the nature of these unobserved factors are remain.

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Women's Professional Team Sport Leagues – A continuum of development.

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Research Aim

Over the past decade there has been significant growth in women's semi and professional team sport leagues. In many cases these new and emerging competitions offer women the opportunity to be 'paid to play' for the first time in the respective sports (Taylor et al., 2023). In entering into traditionally masculine 'workplaces', these women's professional team sport leagues (WPTSL) grappled with ways to demonstrate success (Thomson et al., 2023). If these leagues are breaking new ground, reshaping perceptions about women's sport, bringing in a new set of fans, and creating a different way of positioning their sport - should they be judged by the same performance criteria as men's leagues? This research explores the growth in professionalisation of WPTSL, with the aim of proposing a continuum of development of professionalisation.

Literature and theoretical framing

Scholars argue that how professionalisation in WPTSL is determined, currently lacks clarity and includes many paradoxes (Tjonndal et al., 2024). Bowes and Culvin (2021) suggest that the process of women's professionalisation is distinct from men's leagues and one critical marker of professionalisation being paid a liveable wage. What are the other indicators, and how can these be determined in ways that do not situate women's sport as 'less than' or 'the other' (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005)? Revenue, game attendance and membership are example of the markers of success of men's professional sport leagues, but these criteria may not be as meaningful for nascent women's sport leagues. Thus, we drew on previous studies suggestions of potential criteria and indicators that have particular relevance for women's sport (Bowes & Culvin, 2021; Taylor et al., 2022). Using feminist critical theory (Jahn, 2021) we further explored criteria

inherent in the different forms of WPTSL, and the stages of growth (Churchill & Lewis, 1983) in professionalisation that forms the continuum of development.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

We conducted a systematic document analysis of publicly available sources for three WPTSL. Each of the three sports (basketball, cricket, football) have a professional or semi-professional league for women in Australia, operating as a baseline comparison, and at least one professional or semi-professional domestic league operating outside of Australia. The criteria considered included: League and Club ownership structure; Major funding sources; Women's club governance; League structure (season duration, timing etc); League/Club Board membership gender; Gender of head coaches; Minimum salary; National team world ranking; Female participation rates; and Average crowd attendance. As these data were difficult to source across all leagues, the analyses are based on available data, and this is acknowledged as a limitation.

The analysis drew on critical feminist theory, concepts from the literature on professional women's sport, and grey literature on women's leagues. Each league was awarded a nominal score and assigned along a continuum according to the above criteria, which was used to situate the leagues on a continuum of development of professionalisation.

Results and Discussion

The detailed results cover each of the WPTSL domestic competitions (football =6, basketball =2, cricket =2). The analysis generated three categories of growth in professionalisation: (i) Subsistence Survival, (ii) Pursuing Growth (iii) Resource Maturity and Achieving Success. The results for each league and sport are located within one of these stages and discussed with consideration of dimensions of feminine justice: distribution, division of labour, decision making power and cultural meanings (McLaren, 2017).

The sports and leagues analysed demonstrate progression through varying stages of growth (Churchill & Lewis, 1983) and professionalisation. The progression shown across nearly all the criterion of

professionalisation are reflective of research that has documented improvements in employment conditions (Taylor et al., 2023), on and off field support, and remuneration for athletes in WPTSL.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implications

Our study suggests a three-phase continuum of development of professionalisation: (i) Subsistence Survival, (ii) Pursuing Growth (iii) Resource Maturity and Achieving Success, is evident in the growth of WPTSL. This exploratory research would benefit from further development and refinement of the measures of growth in professionalisation. Explicit criteria such as sponsorship arrangements, merchandising revenue, media rights and coverage, etc. together with more inclusive indicators such as organisational culture, gender-based brand reputation, community engagement, role model influence, could be assessed for relevance. A longitudinal approach that tracks WPTSL over time could be used to further develop and refine this approach.

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Inclusion of Indigenous Peoples as a Legacy of a Cancelled Olympic Bid: Sámi in Norway

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Indigenous Peoples continue to face discrimination, exclusion and difficulties with preserving and practising Oral traditions and languages, which are some of the consequences of assimilation practices and cultural colonisation (Hansen, 2022; Menzies, 2019). The Olympic Games and the Olympic Movement argue to stand for equality and inclusion and represent more than just a sports event (IOC, n.d.). However, the development of long-lasting social legacy and inclusion efforts either gets neglected and/or is still not fully utilised during the planning and legacy-shaping processes (Minnaert, 2012; Thomson et al., 2020). Social legacy research has been mostly applied to successful bids (Thomson et al., 2020), also in regards to Indigenous Peoples (Dickson et al., 2022). However, the legacies of failed bids recently gained importance (Leopkey et al., 2021), and there is a lack of legacy research on cancelled/terminated bids. This study connects the timely topics of social inclusion of Indigenous Peoples, Olympic legacy from cancelled bids. More precisely, the paper explores the potential and lack of inclusion and promotion of Indigenous sport and culture from cancelled Olympic bids. The research question is: how has social inclusion of Indigenous Peoples, specifically Sámi, been approached before, under and after the Tromsø Olympic 2014 and 2018 bids?

The theoretical framework of the study is based on the translation theory (Røvik, 2016). Translation theory is used to uncover how ideas of inclusion are transformed over time and adapted by different stakeholders for their own use. Translation theory is chosen as there is a need to broaden our understanding of the planning and interpretation of legacy and inclusion in particular contexts (Thomson et al., 2019; Thomson et al., 2020).

Norway is chosen as national context because it is a multicultural country with Indigenous Peoples - Sámi, who also live across Sweden, Finland and Russia (Hansen, 2022). However, Sámi in Norway have Sámi sports

organisation and Sámi parliament, which are stronger than in the neighbouring countries. The paper is a single case study and is interpretative in nature. The data is generated through semi-structured interviews with Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples who were and/or are working with Sámi sport and/or Sámi inclusion policy and initiatives, also connected to the Olympic bid. Additionally, the document analysis was used to gain insights into the formal planning procedures and official legacy claims from Tromsø Olympic 2014 and 2018 bids, reports from Sámi Parliament and the state. Data is analysed by using critical thematic analysis (Lawless & Chen, 2019), applying the theoretical framework stated above as analytical lens.

The paper is currently in the final stage of data collection and analysis phase, however, the authors ensure that results will be presented during the EASM 2024. Some preliminary findings that we can highlight are emphasis on sport-related and infrastructural legacies. Knowledge share and cooperation with the previous Olympic cities were little used when it came to inclusion ideas. Impact and changes of the bids on how Sámi are included and excluded and impact on Sámi sport development, are evident. The preliminary results show that even though Sámi people were involved in the planning process and some legacy discussions, nowadays, the Norwegian sports system is not prioritising inclusion of Sámi sport. Structural changes and specific programmes for Sámi inclusion or promotion of Sámi sport from the Norwegian Sports Confederation (NIF) are neglected. Sámi and Sámi sports are mostly considered as one of the ethnic minorities who are also a diverse group with different needs, however not prioritised through action plans. Sámi organisations emphasise that the inclusion of other minority groups, such as refugees, should be prioritized as there is more urgency and the promotion of Sámi sport can be seen as somewhat selfish. One of the 'tangible' legacies of the Tromsø applications is the development and establishment of the deer racing in Tromsø. There is a prioritisation struggle for Sámi sport organisation to promote not only the Sámi sport but also Sámi language and culture which also can be controversial in terms of inclusion.

We contribute to the growing literature on social legacy from mega sports events by

offering an additional perspective of legacies from a cancelled bid. This can offer insights for practitioners of previous host cities working with inclusion and equity policies/issues and for future hosts during the planning and legacy-shaping processes. The paper contributes to the literature on legacies from sports mega-events and advocates for going beyond the tangible and emphasising the social aspect, like inclusion. Applying the inclusion ideas from the bids as an addition to policy making through a multiculturalism lens can contribute to moving away from postcolonial and assimilation thinking. Utilising these documents could help create a more informed decision as it would maintain/develop the legacy from an unrealised bid through the official documents and keep the promises.

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4

Between Eudemonia and Exhaustion: Emotion Management Among Sport Leaders Working with Social Inclusion

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Aims and Research Questions

In their review of inclusive leadership research Veli Korkmaz et al. (2022, p. 14) 'recommend researchers to investigate how being an inclusive leader impacts the leaders themselves', as this poses a major gap in the field. One of the reasons is that leaders' aim to be inclusive and facilitate social inclusion may impact them personally in a positive way (as in nursing good relationships with ramifications for organizational performance and well-being) and negatively (as in facing a risk of becoming exhausted by the personal investment often needed to create inclusive climates). The aim of this study is therefore to examine how leaders in grassroot sport manage to balance these impacts. The research question is how these leaders 'keep the fire burning' while not becoming 'burned out'?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Discussing 'social inclusion and exclusion' is part and parcel of what grassroot sport should be in contemporary society (Agergaard & Karen, 2024). However, the inclusion/exclusion dynamic can relate to either goals, processes, or outcomes, often shaped by diverse and contradictory expectations from stakeholders. For those in charge of developing, implementing, and evaluating social inclusion efforts in sport organizations, this complexity, thus, represents a major challenge. Despite this, sport leaders are rare in research on social inclusion (Næss & Svendsen, forthcoming). To fill this void, this study couples a theory on emotional management (Hochschild, 2012) as point of departure to examine the oscillation between eudemonia and exhaustion sport leaders (are likely to) experience in their efforts to reach the ideals of inclusive leadership.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

This qualitative study draws upon a global sample of leaders in sport recruited through networks and associations working with sport and social inclusion. Data is gathered through a multi-methodological approach dubbed 'bricolage' (Pratt et al. 2022), which includes semi-structured interviews (N = approximately 20), online qualitative survey interviews (N = approximately 15), organizational field visits (N = 2), and document analysis (approximately N = 10 key policy reports from all regions of the world). In addition to that we are currently gathering some of this data, the existing transcripts are coded by using the six-step framework of thematic analysis developed by Braun et al. (2016).

Results/Findings and Discussion

Data gathering is ongoing, and the analysis will be completed in the spring/summer of 2024. However, preliminary findings indicate a diverse utilization of emotive work strategies for maintaining inclusive leadership practices in sport without getting 'lost' in the process.

Conclusion, Contribution and Implication

The study contributes to the field of sport management by bringing empirical insights about how working with social inclusion might affect grassroots leaders positively and negatively. The study also contributes to the field of leadership research by providing arguments for rehumanizing the role of leaders.

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Willingness of Voluntary Sport Clubs to Implement/Develop Integration Programmes – A Typology Based on the Concept of Organisational Identity

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Aim and Research Questions

Integration of migrants and refugees is currently among the most relevant political issues in Western societies because of ongoing conflicts across the world, and the patterns of forced migration produced by them. In this context, organised sport, and voluntary sport clubs (VSC) in particular, have been granted substantial trust to bring people together in joint sport activities. Due to their ample provision of opportunities to establish social and emotional bonds and build knowledge around societal norms and values, sport clubs can indeed play a crucial role in promoting social integration among specific target groups like migrants and refugees (e.g., Nagel et al., 2020). However, despite ambitious programmes launched by public authorities and/or sport federations, a relatively small proportion of sport clubs implements or develops such targeted initiatives (Ehnold et al., 2023).

Therefore, the aim of our contribution is to understand why some voluntary sports clubs implement or develop programmes that promote social integration of people with

migration background. In pursuing this aim, we recognize that clubs' autonomous position within sport systems leaves public authorities and federations reliant on clubs' willingness to act as implementers of programmes (Skille, 2008). As policy makers continue to launch programmes and measures that position sport clubs as agents of social integration, clubs' somewhat lukewarm approach to this ascribed role raises questions around how public authorities and federations can provide support that increases the number and impact of sport clubs that engage in integrative work (Ehnold et al., 2023). Key to addressing this issue is understanding why often highly autonomous and member-oriented sport clubs set up activities that are directed at the migrant target group.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Previous studies on sport clubs as policy implementers suggest that clubs avoid or decouple programmes if their content misaligns with existing club goals (e.g., Harris et al., 2009), and core purpose and practices (e.g., Stenling, 2014; Skille & Stenling, 2018). The existing literature mainly gives explanations as to why clubs do not implement external initiatives, but it notably falls short in explaining why they do. Thus, we still lack detailed knowledge concerning why sport clubs prioritise integrative goals and launch specific initiatives for migrants and refugees. To address this issue, we use the concept of organisational identity (Stenling & Fahlen, 2016) as an analytical framework to develop a deeper understanding of clubs' core purposes and practices as well as the logics of action, with the aim to construct a typology that demonstrates clubs' varying willingness to adopt and/or develop integrative measures.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Our study is based on the international research project INAMOS (Integration of Newly Arrived Migrants through Organised Sport). Using a multi-case study design across five European countries, interviews were conducted with key decision-makers in 30 VSCs already engaged in initiatives/programmes for the target group. The cross-national design facilitated the selection of VSCs with a broad variety of socio-political contexts as well as structural

characteristics (e.g., local settlement, size and type of sport). In a first step, the data was analysed by the research teams in the participating countries applying qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2022) in order to avail for comparisons. In a second step, we merged the findings in order to construct a typology on the differences in willingness to implement/develop integrative measures.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Preliminary analyses imply that VSCs show a broad variety in terms of core purpose, logic of action, target group, and core practice in the context of integrative work. On the one hand, there are clubs with a main focus on integrating migrants with sport activities as a vehicle. On the other hand, there are clubs that mainly organise sports for their members, viewing integration issues as more of a side-effect. The complete typology will be available at the conference, where findings on the different types will be presented.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

With a typology on varying willingness of VSCs to implement/develop integrative programmes, we extend existing research on sport clubs as policy implementers (Skille, 2008) by providing an explanatory framework for why clubs broaden their focus and target group of their core activities. Such knowledge is crucial to advance our understanding of how societal ambitions to further integrative goals interact with club-internal dynamics, and how public authorities and sport federations can support club-level processes (Ehnold et al., 2023). Thus, our findings have implications for the potential in more extensive implementation of integrative programmes and initiatives for specific target groups in organised sport.

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Performance Management in Public Sports Facilities

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Research Aim and Objectives

The aim of this project is to develop a deeper understanding to find ways to enhance the performance of public sports facilities and to inform the Turkish public sports industry with the help of the findings to be obtained.

The specific objectives of this study are:

- a. Understanding the most prominent problems of the public sports facility management in Türkiye.
- b. Developing a deeper understanding to find ways to enhance the performance of public sports facilities.
- c. Contributing ideas to the Turkish sporting system from the understanding of policy decisions, priorities and outcomes in the UK's public sports facility management system.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Rationale – Why the UK System? The starting point of this research were the shortcomings encountering in Turkish public sports facilities. When Turkish sport management literature is examined, the reason for these shortcomings were mostly associated with the centralised management of the facilities is seen (Adatepe et al., 2020, Ozen et al., 2012, Zengin and Oztas, 2010, Bayansalduz, 2003). As a result of most of these studies, it is recommended that facilities should be managed locally. This is a correct conclusion, but it is not sufficient and a key challenge and the current knowledge gap which this study aims to address. Because this is not the only reason and solution to the deficiencies encountered. Besides, central government power has always existed in the culture of a country like Türkiye, which is a continuation of the Ottoman Empire, and it is very difficult to try to change this cultural situation. Moreover, politically, the central government will not want to transfer this power to the local government, as it sees managing the facilities as a power. Therefore, this research will not only suggest some ways for such a difficult

change but also suggest more feasible changes.

Many specialists, including politicians, government officials, sports policy experts, academics, and professionals in the sports industry, recognised the different issues that necessitated changing the public sports facility policies in Türkiye. The most prominent of these are: centralised management, deficiencies in monitoring, administrative problems caused by rapid establishment of the facilities, inability to use the facilities effectively and efficiently, inability to attract disadvantaged groups to the facilities, inability to increase sport participation.

Investments in sports facilities have increased in Türkiye, however, some deficiencies in terms of management recently occurred. Although there are also problems in public sports facility management in the United Kingdom (Ramchandani et al., 2018, Robinson and Taylor 2003, Taylor and Godfrey, 2003), their area of interest has been facility management beyond establishing facilities, as they, as a developed country, took the step of establishing the facilities long time ago. As a developed country in general and in the field of sports, the United Kingdom took the step of establishing facilities a long time ago and as a result, they focused on facility management in the continuation of the establishing facility step and are a very experienced and competent country in this regard.

Tinaz et al. (2014) suggest that, from a theoretical perspective, beliefs in the «virtuous cycle of sport» exert control over Türkiye's sports policy. Stated differently, the success of top athletes contributes to the growth of grassroots sports participation. Furthermore, as demonstrated by Grix and Carmichael (2012), the UK is a prime example of their sustained attempts to preserve this structure in the performance of top sports while simultaneously increasing participation in grassroots sports.

Türkiye differs from the UK in a number of ways, particularly when it comes to the sports environment and facility system. However, there are some similarities between the two countries' government investment in sports facilities to help athletes excel in international competitions, support for grassroots sports participation rates as a general environment

for the growth of sports systems. In addition, compared to other developed countries in sports facility management such as America, Australia and Canada, the UK (68 million) is similar to Türkiye (80 million) in terms of population, which is an important variable in terms of sports facility management. As a result, the sports policy approaches and populations of the two countries are similar.

This study's objective is to examine public sports facility policies and different programmes that have been effectively implemented to support the development of sports systems in the UK. The examined policies and initiatives aim to address issues with the Turkish public sports facility system by taking into account the country's sports culture, the government's involvement in the sector, organisational protocols, and feasibility. To sum up, rather than copying every aspect of the policy to be improved using the UK policy framework, the goal of this study is to identify and benchmark the essential components that are feasible.

In addition, while filling the gap in the literature, to inform the Turkish public sports industry, which makes very important investments in sports facilities and wants these investments to be used efficiently and effectively, as well as for young people and disadvantaged groups to benefit from these facilities, with the help of the findings to be obtained.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Sport business research is frequently guided by a positivist strategy that is based on a scientific research methodology. It is frequently employed to look for cause and effect connections (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). However, this method has trouble evaluating behaviour and comprehending why it happens, therefore there are not many practical applications for decision makers (Hammersley, 2013). A positivist paradigm would help in identifying the cause and effect relationship that performance indicators have on sport facility performance, yet it would not help in finding better facility performance result solutions for the stakeholders involved. An interpretivist approach is required to fully comprehend the rich and in-depth viewpoints of stakeholders and interpret their opinions on how best practices will be obtained. The

interpretivist (qualitative) approach will be conducted with the epistemological position in this study. Policy transfer will be used as a framework.

First of all, the most prominent problems in Turkish public sport facility industry will be examined and then will be provided some recommendations from the UK public sport facility industry. Semi-structured interviews will be first applied to the facility managers and experts from Türkiye. Purposive sampling method is used for this study. This method entails locating and choosing individuals or groups of individuals who are knowledgeable and skilled about an interest phenomenon (Creswell and Clark, 2011). Also, managers of large and very large facilities are the sample of this study. For this reason, three cities with the highest population density in Türkiye is selected in order to best reflect the most prominent problems in public sports facilities in Türkiye. Three sports facility managers, three Olympic athlete preparation facility managers and three city managers who are the responsible from these facilities in these cities in a way that will one manager from each of these cities will be interviewed. The theme analysis method is generally accepted to require anywhere between 6 and 16 interviews to reach data saturation (Guest et al., 2006). Then the document analysis will be conducted. Documents describing the different service delivery models (such as Super Trust, In house, Leisure Trust, Community Asset Transfer, High Performance Sport Centre) and demonstrating related case studies will be analysed. At the end of the data collection, the results of the interviews and the document analysis will be combined to create best practice guidelines to develop a deeper understanding to find ways to enhance the performance of public sports facilities and to inform the Turkish public sports industry with the help of the findings to be obtained.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The complete results/findings are not yet available at the time of submission of the abstract, but they will be provided at the time of the conference. A sports facilities policy is envisaged that gives more space to the private sector, sport clubs and trusts and then monitors this structure in terms of access to facilities for disadvantaged groups.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The study will contribute to sport management literature providing an original case study research. In addition to its theoretical contribution, the study will also contribute to the Turkish sports industry by using the results to inform policy and strategy in this area. This knowledge may be helpful for other countries that invest in their sports facilities and suffering from similar deficiencies in terms of performance management. In this sense, this research will contribute to sport management and sport facility management literature.

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Challenges of Active Aging: Exploring the Impact of Perceived Age Discrimination on Participation in Leisure Activities among Older Adults

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Aim and Research Questions

This study aims to utilize the lived experiences of active older adults and explore how perceived Age Discrimination (AD) can impact their inclusion in leisure activities in sports facilities and their lifestyle.

1. What are the challenges that AD poses for maintaining an active lifestyle among older adults through their participation in sports?
2. Considering the prevalence of AD as a challenge of aging, can it be asserted that AD undermines efforts to promote older adults' health through engagement in sports activities?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Butler (1969) describes AD as a subjective experience encompassing the popular notion of the generation gap, as well as a personal aversion to aging, disease, disability; and fear of powerlessness, uselessness, and death (Butler, 1969, p. 243). AD manifests as prejudiced treatment directed towards individuals based on their age, commonly observed in different societal contexts, stereotyping older individuals as less competent or capable (Swift & Chasteen, 2021). Impacts of AD are also evident in sports-related platforms; Mankin et al. (2022) demonstrated the positive effects of interventions promoting anti-discrimination messages among older adults, resulting in improved participation in sports activities compared to control groups. Researchers consistently emphasize physical activity to enhance life expectancy and quality of life (Marquez et al., 2020) of older adults and, promote an active lifestyle (Keshkar & Mohammadi, 2022). However, older adults' perception of AD, particularly within sports facilities, where performance and relatively

high levels of physical energy are required, may hinder their participation. Therefore, comprehending and acknowledging this phenomenon and its effects can offer valuable insights by contextualizing the experiences of older adults in sports environments, thereby guiding policymakers in making informed decisions.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

This qualitative study employed the Phenomenology method to explore the lived experiences of active older adults aged 60 years and above in Tehran, who engaged in at least 150 minutes per week of low to moderate physical activity, following the guidelines set by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2023), and possessed at least one year of experience in physical activity. Purposive sampling was utilized for participant selection. A semi-structured interview program guided by the framework outlined by Smith and Shinebourne (2012) was developed and theoretical saturation was achieved following 19 interviews. Written consent, was obtained. Data analysis was conducted using the seven-step strategy outlined by Dickelman (1992).

Results and Discussion

The findings reveal four main themes of older adults' experience of AD: Proactive lifestyle changes: Older adults exhibit it as a response to discriminatory behaviors. These responses encompass a decline in positive self-perception of aging, seeking escapism, engaging in age fabrication, and an increased reliance on digital technology. These changes may be viewed as a form of protest against discriminatory attitudes. In seeking inner peace, and alignment with younger generations to evade age-based judgment, they endeavor to synchronize their lifestyles.

Age-sports stereotypes and aging: Despite the well-established benefits of sports and physical activity for older adults, certain beliefs persist. Moreover, the public nature of older adults' sports platforms, often shared with individuals from different age groups holding diverse beliefs, can lead to experiences of AD, perpetuation of stereotypes, adherence to common beliefs, homogenization, and inhibitory attitudes towards engaging in physical activity.

Revision to leisure time activities: Encountering AD in sports facilities prompts older adults to reconsider their leisure pursuits. They often choose to forego gym visits and instead engage in a variety of home-based activities, prioritizing leisure time spent with family and friends. The hesitation to visit sports facilities also stems from the unpreparedness of these spaces, staff, and sports club members to accommodate older adults and demonstrate appropriate behavior towards them.

Diminishing social interaction parameters: Older adults may prefer isolation, avoid social gatherings, harbor a lack of trust in others, and experience social insecurity, particularly in urban areas. Additionally, the absence of a welcoming and accepting atmosphere within societies hinders their ability to initiate and sustain social relationships in both social and sports settings, thereby negatively impacting their social inclusion.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This study underscores that the social inclusion of older adults is greatly influenced by social behaviors toward them. They adjust their health-related behaviors, motivation for physical activity, quality of relationships and social participation, and lifestyle in response to societal feedback. Some older adults adopt behaviors such as strict diets, cosmetic procedures, unconventional attire, and using smart digital devices aiming to bridge intergenerational gaps and mitigate ageist attitudes. In terms of theoretical contribution to sports management, the findings suggest that understanding older adults' experiences with AD in sports venues sheds light on the influence of sports spaces, individuals, equipment, and facilities on their willingness to engage in physical activities. Consequently, there is a need for specialized sports facilities, the establishment of dedicated sports social networks for older adults, training programs for sports coaches catering to this demographic, and leveraging the resources of educational institutions to foster the inclusion of older adults as a valued generation.

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Building Capacity In Collegiate Disability Sport Programmes: An Examination Of The University of Michigan's Adaptive Sport Programme

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Aim and research question

Persons with disabilities commonly encounter social exclusion in cultural activities, including sports. Various barriers, such as psychological, social, and environmental factors, hinder sports participation among individuals with disabilities. Research indicates that exposure to disability (sometimes referred to as adaptive) sports can reduce discomfort for able-bodied individuals when interacting with persons with disabilities (Lundberg et al., 2008) and foster a sense of belonging and acceptance among persons with disabilities themselves (Schmidt Hanson et al., 2001).

In the United States, a growing number of persons with disabilities are pursuing higher education (Barfield et al., 2007), with approximately 19% of college students indicating some form of disability. Despite this trend, only 23 out of the 350 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) member institutions offer adaptive sports programmes. Notably, in 2022, the NCAA partnered with the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee to launch the Para-College Inclusion Project. This initiative aims to involve member institutions and enhance understanding and awareness of adaptive sports.

While research exists on major disability sport events (Misener, 2015) and programmes provided by community sport organisations (Wicker & Breuer, 2014), there is limited research on disability/adaptive programmes in higher education institutions. Specifically, there is a lack of understanding regarding the organisational capacity of colleges and universities to coordinate and implement adaptive sports programmes and how these

institutions develop capacity. Therefore, this study examines how collegiate adaptive sports programmes enhance organisational capacity. Drawing on organisational capacity and capacity building research, this study sheds light on (i) the capacity required to implement an adaptive sports programme at the collegiate level, and (ii) how staff of adaptive sports programmes enhance their capacity.

Theoretical background and literature review

Organisational capacity encompasses vital capabilities that aid an organisation in fulfilling its mission and performing services. While studies have explored organisational capacities and challenges within disability sport organisations, limited research has focused on disability sport at the collegiate level. A prevalent framework utilised in studies examining organisational capacity, proposed by Hall et al., (2003) outlines three critical internal capacities managed by organisations: financial, human resource, and structural capacities. Financial capacity encompasses managing financial resources, while human resource capacity focuses on human capital. Structural capacity encompasses non-financial and non-human capital, including relationships, infrastructure, processes, and planning and development.

Capacity building aims to enhance organisational effectiveness or address deficiencies through a process of change. While there is no universal approach, Millar and Doherty (2016) proposed a model outlining its stages. The first stage involves a stimulus prompting organisations to evaluate existing capacities and needs. Those with sufficient capacities act immediately, while those lacking the necessary capacity assess the organisation's readiness to change. To gauge readiness, organisations must ensure staff and management possess the capability and motivation to engage in capacity building strategies. Moreover, organisations may explore alternative strategies to address these needs and the stimulus. Following selecting and implementing a capacity building strategy, organisations should achieve sustainable organisational outcomes. This success may, in turn, catalyse further cycles of the capacity building process.

Research design, methodology and data analysis

Adopting a social constructionist perspective, this study utilises a qualitative instrumental case study design (Stake, 2006). Focused on the University of Michigan's 'Adaptive Sport Program,' this case enhances our understanding of how adaptive sports programmes of higher education institutions develop their capacity. Data for this study were gathered from various sources, including webpages, reports, and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders such as programme managers, participating athletes/students, institutional leaders, and officials responsible for disability student services and recreational/athletic activities on campus. Data analysis will follow Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic content analysis, which systematically codes data to identify and report patterns that reflect social reality.

Research/findings and discussion

As this study is in progress, findings cannot be presented at this time. However, this study is anticipated to identify various stimuli, such as development programmes, that may initiate capacity building processes and enhance organisational capacity (Maleske & Sant, 2022). Results are also expected to demonstrate how personnel managing collegiate adaptive sports programmes assess their current capacities, prioritise the development of capacities, and identify alternative strategies to enhance capacity. Finally, the findings are expected to highlight the challenges faced by collegiate adaptive sports programmes in building capacity and which capacities are most challenging to enhance.

Conclusion, contribution, and implications

Overall, this study is expected to contribute to the limited research on adaptive/disability sports at the collegiate level and enhance our understanding of how capacities are assessed, prioritised, managed, and built. By examining these aspects, the study aims to provide valuable insights for programme managers and higher education institutions, aiding in strategic decision-making and resource allocation. Overall, the findings will enhance our understanding of collegiate adaptive sports programmes by offering insights to improve their services, fulfil their missions,

address participation barriers, and promote social inclusion for persons with disabilities.

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Measuring Social Inclusion Through Sport

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Aim and Research Question

In the realm of Paralympic sports, inclusivity plays a crucial role in challenging stereotypes and promoting the representation of athletes with disabilities. There are several attempts to measure and assess the extent of inclusivity (Buts et al., 2011; Brown & Pappous, 2018; Misener & Darcy, 2014; Misener et al., 2013; Swartz et al., 2016); however, a quantitative measure is still to be developed following the collection of relevant data. Since sport can be considered a laboratory for society, our research first aims to measure the level of inclusivity through parasports, then answer the research question of whether the richest countries' inclusivity in parasports mirrors that of their society

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Institutional theory (Scott, 2014) provides a useful framework for understanding the parallel between a country's inclusiveness and its Paralympic movement. Institutional theory focuses on the impact of social institutions, such as norms, values, and regulations, on shaping individual and organizational behavior. In the context of the Paralympic movement, the inclusiveness of a country can be analyzed through the lens of institutional theory, comparing key success metrics associated with the Paralympic games with metrics related to a country's wealth and social structure. Isomorphism, which is "the notion that institutionalized ideas can influence organizations to embrace structures and forms that resemble other organizations in the field and as a result, become increasingly similar" (Robertson et al., 2022, from DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), is posited to exist between how society treats athletes with disabilities and how well their country supports and succeeds within their Paralympic movement.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

The data set is based on primary and secondary data related to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games and 2021. The primary data set was collected by a questionnaire sent to all the national paralympic associations. Based on over 60 countries' responses, and after cleaning the data set (39 countries) as an initial step, the composite index of inclusion was constructed to measure the inclusivity of the countries. The composite indicator is based on three pillars: the variables related to the extent, the variables related to the appreciation, and the variables associated with sports success. Besides measuring inclusivity, the novelty of the research is the weighting system of the composite indicator applied. This research used the expectation level-based weight determination and scoring procedure (Dombi & Jonas, 2022).

Results and Discussion

As an initial analysis, a multiple regression model was constructed, including the dependent variable of the inclusivity composite indicator and the explanatory variables of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, the Human Development Index (HDI), and the Rule of law index. Furthermore, other potential factors are also included as control variables, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development index (or OECD, which indicates developing countries). Since the countries investigated are heterogeneous regarding their composite indicator, we have not found a significant relationship between the composite index and the regressors, suggesting that the level of inclusivity and macroeconomic factors are independent. As a next step, a k-mean cluster analysis was performed, resulting in well-categorized groups of the countries. While the attitudes of social inclusion regarding the vast majority of the countries (three clusters) are closely similar, one cluster with six countries can be considered «outliers.» This cluster includes countries (Iran, Malaysia, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, and Uzbekistan) with higher composite indexes but lower GDP per capita and HDI index, suggesting the Paralympic games can be used as a tool to improve a country's reputation.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The novelty of this research is based on the methodology applied to measure the social inclusion of countries under the guise of isomorphism; by creating the composite index of social inclusion, an expectation level-based weight determination and scoring procedure was used. Our contribution to the literature is the results of the composite indicator, which allows us not only to order the countries but also to classify the countries and highlight the factors to be improved. Nevertheless, the research has limitations since the sample size (the number of responses) should be increased to get more sophisticated results. For further study, other potential factors should be taken into account.

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Sport Events with a Purpose: A Case Study of UCI Cycling World Championships

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Aim and Research Questions

Sport events are increasingly tasked with delivering on objectives beyond the sporting spectacle itself. With significant investment from host governments and sporting federations, sport events are now expected to purposively deliver on wider social objectives, including advancing equality, diversity, and inclusion outcomes. In this paper, we explore the convening power of events for social leverage, focusing on a case study of the UCI Cycling World Championships (CWC) which took place in Scotland in August 2023. The Championships developed an ambitious Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Framework and Pledge and committed to planning for accessibility and inclusion in all areas of activity. Our guiding research question is 'how can sport events be leveraged to improve equality, diversity and inclusion outcomes?'.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

We build on sport event leveraging theory and align this with literature pertaining to the convening power of sport events to accelerate social legacy ambitions. Leveraging is associated most strongly with the work of Chalip (2006). Chalip called for a more complex and nuanced approach to event planning where 'strategies and tactics are implemented prior and during an event to lever desired outcomes' (Chalip, 2006, p112). As Schulenkorf (2010: 120) suggests, leveraging is concerned with 'a focus on growing positive impacts beyond event borders, and 'making things happen', rather than leaving them to chance'. The literature suggests that for an event to be leveraged effectively there needs to be evidence of pre-planning around desired outcomes, resourcing of specific programmes or projects and less reliance on the event itself as central to the achievement of these outcomes. Smith (2014)

proposes that event-themed leverage offers an effective strategy for hosts because it should enable a model based on local ownership and empowerment to be embedded alongside the event project itself.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

In this paper we draw on three methods. First, we conducted a document analysis of published strategies and policies related to the CWC, where it pertained to equality, diversity and inclusion. Second, we conducted visual ethnographies of various CWC sites and events with a focus on those emphasising ethnic minority and disability participation. Detailed field notes, photographs and video was captured by researchers. Finally, we conducted 13 in-depth semi-structured interviews with both institutional and non-institutional actors responsible for: planning and delivering the UCI Cycling World Championship events with a focus on EDI issues. Interviewees included those involved in decision-making and those consulted in decision-making processes. Interviews took place before and after the event to provide insights into the planning, delivery and post-event reflections.

Findings and Discussion

Our findings provide evidence that the arrangements put in place within the CWC organisational structures, and the convening power of the event enabled EDI objectives to be successfully advanced. This was because they made things happen rather than leaving them to chance (Schulenkorf, 2010). First, the principal funder, the Scottish Government effectively framed EDI as a legal and moral issue. They set out that the CWC, the venues, the event organisers, and associated partners all had duties under the UK Equality Act (2010) to legally protect people from discrimination where they had any of the legally defined protected characteristics (including race and disability, our focus here). They also strategically aligned the CWC and its EDI Framework with legal responsibility to avoid treating those with a protected characteristics less favourably, including service providers (e.g. event suppliers). This helped focus planning and delivery on accessibility, for example, which was recognised as a strength of the event. Second, in governance terms, the allocation of senior

leadership with responsibility for policy impacts, separate from operational or logistical roles, enabled a clear and consistent focus on EDI within event planning, delivery and evaluation. This included the appointment of a well respects EDI advocate and champion to act as a conscience for the CWC organising committee. Finally, resourcing EDI within the event budget was enabled the recruitment of expertise, effective representation from underserved groups and investment in facilities, activities and communications that were EDI conscious and compliant.

However, our empirical enquiries also found that, while EDI was a strategic priority for the CWC, plans were in place too late, allocated resources were stretched too far and governmental rhetoric to create a new model for how policy impacts were going to be sustained beyond the event has proved empty.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

We conclude that the CWC provides a template for how sport events can contribute to social leveraging when strategic goals from outside the event are aligned with those of organisers and their sporting partners, supported by appropriate governance arrangements, adequate resourcing and, crucially, convening power. Organisational structures by themselves can only achieve so much. Social objectives need to be championed within and beyond the lifetime of the event itself and governance arrangements need to reflect this.

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Building Community Inclusion and Sense of Belonging Through Sport: Insights for Managing Sport Development Practice

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Aim and Research Questions

The potential of sport to contribute positively towards broader social benefits is well-documented (Hermens et al., 2017), yet sport has also been labelled as an exclusionary practice, and one that inhibits certain populations (e.g., marginalised youth, disabled, and ethnic minorities) from obtaining these perceived benefits (Collins and Kay, 2014). Therefore, understanding how to make sport participation more inclusive is critical to enabling the wider benefits of sports participation to be accessed (Darcy et al. 2017). This creates important implications for the management of sport programmes and the clubs that offer opportunities to participate in sport, specifically on how to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where participants feel that they belong and can develop a sense of community. This paper presents findings from a study conducted in the UK, which examined how community engagement and sense of belonging contribute to building stronger communities through sport and physical activity. The research sought to address the following research questions: i) what is the impact of, and barriers to, building community engagement and a sense of belonging through sport; and ii) what are the managerial processes or operational conditions which may enable increased community engagement and sense of belonging through sport.

Theoretical background

The concept of community is a contested term, with definitional clarity often elusive or open to debate and different interpretation (Rich et al., 2021). Traditional views of community adopt a 'locality-based' definition, which portray them as fixed territorial entities or geographically bounded areas that act as spaces for friendship, hope, neighbourliness, and place attachment (Harvey, 2012; Rich et al., 2021). However, more recently, this

locality or 'place-based' understanding of community has been challenged by a concern that a purely geographical definition of community fails to acknowledge the impact of wider forces on the formation and experience of community (Harvey, 2012). Consequently, connections to community have become more fluid, and the definition of community has begun to be expressed as a 'relational' or 'symbolic' idea, where individuals decide the extent to which they identify with a particular community (see Rich et al., 2021). Therefore, individuals are perhaps more likely to base their connection to a community around such factors as a collective of like-minded people, or a protected characteristic. For professionals who lead community-based interventions, including ones that use sport and physical activity as an instrument for social inclusion, understanding the extent to which participants belong to and engage with different forms of community is essential (Zanbar, 2020).

Research Design

The research utilised a mixed methods approach, which involved two concurrent and overlapping phases: i) qualitative case study examinations of sports clubs (n=12) in three UK cities (Bristol, London, Manchester), to illuminate perspectives from a range of stakeholders (n = 90), including club staff, club volunteers, parents/guardians of programme participants, and (child) participants) on how the sport programme contributed to community engagement and a sense of belonging; and ii) a quantitative online survey which was distributed nationally across an inclusive club network, which was completed by 193 parents/guardians and 270 programme participants, that adapted two validated questionnaires – the Sense of Community Index (version I and II) (Peterson et al., 2008) and the Sense of Belonging Scale (Anderson-Butcher and Conroy, 2002).

Findings

The research identified that developing community inclusion and sense of belonging underpins the wider transformational benefits that sport participation can offer, and that community sports clubs provide essential opportunities for (young) people to have positive, safe, and meaningful social interactions, something that 'traditional' social institutions (e.g., schools) were often

unable to offer. In addition, the research found that community sport clubs can have a positive impact on community engagement for the parents and guardians of participants by enabling opportunities to socially interact with one other and build social networks to share information and resources and provide emotional support.

Conclusion

The research concludes that creating an inclusive sport environment and enabling deeper social connections to be made requires the investment of time and effort to get to know and understand the needs, preferences, and challenges facing the participants of the sport programme. A flexible and responsive approach to session planning, which involves enabling participants to take ownership of how they engage with sport was also perceived as critical to developing a deeper sense of belonging. Furthermore, an incremental approach to improvement, where participants can develop their sport skills at their own pace, helped them to persist with the achievement of goals, which, in turn prolongs sport engagement and helped to facilitate social belonging.

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Sport Club Practice and Perspectives on Disability Inclusion

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There are an array of benefits arising from disability sport programs (Grenier et al., 2023) but managers still lack a comprehensive understanding on their provision within community sport. Indeed, many people with a disability are unable to benefit from participation in sport clubs (Wicker & Breuer, 2014). Sport clubs are an appropriate context to explore disability sport as it is in this setting that the “realization of inclusion and equal opportunities (are) sought” (Andersson, Karp & Wickman; 2023, p. 1914). Although disability sport policy is most often initiated at national sport organisation level, it is community sport clubs that have the leading role in implementation (Christiaens & Brittain, 2023).

Disability inclusion at the community level has rarely been the focus of academic inquiry (Darcy et al., 2023). The separatist nature of disability provision within clubs has been noted (Jeanes et al., 2018) and therefore an understanding of the integration of specialised programs into mainstream programs organised by non-disabled organisations (Hammond et al. 2021) ought to be a priority. Research on the way in which disability sport is “mainstreamed” within sport is not extensive (Jeanes et al., 2018). To this point many studies of disability in community sport have been within a single sport context. Attention has rightly been placed on the voices of people with disabilities and their experiences (Clish et al. 2023 for e.g.), but a complementary focus on organisational and management perceptions and practices is important.

In line with Sport New Zealand’s focus on “creating a system-wide capability to deliver better outcomes for disabled people” (Sport NZ, 2023) a series of items were included in the 2023 National Sport Club Survey (NSCS)

generate insights about how disabled people engage within clubs. The NSCS provides an annual snapshot of the management and operation of New Zealand's sport clubs. Club representatives including administrators and board members respond to an online questionnaire on behalf of their club. Data collection for the 2023 NSCS took place in August with 800 clubs participating. Respondents represented clubs from 75 sports and all 16 regions of New Zealand. Items included both numeric and open-text questions, which generated a complementary set of insights.

Noting the framework's appropriateness for the non-profit sector, Misener and Doherty's (2009) work on organizational capacity has been a pivotal lens to explore how community sport clubs meet the needs of a community. Wicker and Breuer (2014) utilised the framework in the context of disability sport specifically and thus the current study contributes to our evolving understanding of this area of the sport system. Club representatives reporting on their club's capacity and practice relating to provision of disability sport opportunities has value.

The numeric findings from this data set offer high level insights about disability sport in community sport clubs some of which reflect capacity belief. Specifically, most clubs report they are able to provide opportunities for disabled participants alongside other disabled participants (65%) or alongside non-disabled people (78%). Further, more than half of club representatives reported an opportunity (56%) to work with their regional disability sport organisation on an event, program or initiative – and reflecting a perception of capacity.

Club representatives were given the opportunity to expand via open-text boxes on their responses to the numeric questions listed above as well as others. This resulted in a robust data set offering the opportunity to better understand club perceptions and practices of disability sport. This data was thematically analysed and related insights, some providing deeper insight about capacity for disabled sport provision, were the result.

One club that reported facilitating opportunities for disabled participants highlighted their practice of "partnering up" those with disability as well as the custom

equipment they have available: "We have dedicated boats, that allow two disabled people to row together." (Rowing Club, Auckland)

When asked to describe how barriers were being addressed, one club highlighted capability improvements: "Encouraging learning and development within the coaching team." (Swimming Club, Canterbury)

Among the reasons described by disengaged/inactive clubs as related to provision of disability sport opportunities was a perceived lack of demand: "We don't believe there are sufficient numbers of disabled cyclists wanting to race on open public roads." (Cycling Club, Wellington)

Overall, evidence has emerged here indicating mixed beliefs and perceptions of capacity to provide opportunities for disabled sport participants. The most important implication of the current study is that community clubs appear to have disparate beliefs about their capacity to facilitate sport opportunities for people with a disability. That leaves an opportunity for organisations at regional level (i.e., state, province) to support, educate club volunteers and this should ideally flow on from national level strategy that has been well developed. There are numerous ways in which this line of research can be moved forward including in-depth interviews with those in community sport clubs providing disability sport opportunities.

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Participants' Experiences of Low Threshold Inclusive Sport and Cultural Activities for Women – a Case Study from Norway

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Aim and Research Questions

This paper reports a case study of a community programme that uses sport and cultural activities to create an arena for friendship and networking. The vision is that everyone should have equal opportunities to participate in sport and other activities regardless of their social and cultural background, and therefore, the free-of-charge initiative targets anyone in the community that wants to participate. Among the activities offered are sessions run by and for women only. The aim of this paper is to illuminate how this low-threshold sport and cultural activity offer impact its female participants, and how multiple identities intersect and interact to shape the experiences of these women in the programme. The research questions addressed are: what attracts female participants to the programme? And: how do different social identities intersect and inform the experiences of the participants?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

In recent years, increasing attention have been directed towards addressing one of the most crucial challenges in post-industrial societies – that of social exclusion. Much of the current research on sport, social exclusion, inclusion and gender have centred around women from culturally and linguistically diverse groups, such as those with refugee or immigrant backgrounds (e.g. Maxwell et.al, 2013; Spaaij, Magee & Jeanes, 2014). The paper draws on intersectional analysis “to explore intersecting patterns between different structures of power and how people are simultaneously positioned – and position themselves – in multiple categories, such as gender, class and ethnicity” (Christensen & Jensen, 2012, p. 110). An intersectional approach enables a multi-dimensional understanding of how social categories serve as tools for inclusion and exclusion, positioning, and hierarchy creation and how

related experiences intersect in daily interactions (Collins & Bilge, 2020). As the programme under study, in the paper, the aim is not to single out one marginalised group over another (for instance in regard to social status or ethnicity), however the aim is to illuminate the intersections in the experiences of anyone participating in activities organised by the community programme.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

This paper builds on data from two focus groups with altogether 11 participants as well as field notes from six different activities involving the target group. For the focus groups, semi-structured interview guides were developed, informed by the research questions as well as relevant research on social inclusion in sport. One of the focus groups was with six participants that spoke Norwegian. Two of the participants were born and raised in Norway, the other four had lived in Norway for several years. The other focus group was with five Ukrainian women who had lived in Norway for less than one year. This focus group was conducted with a Ukrainian-speaking interpreter who spoke both English and Norwegian fluently. Both focus groups lasted approximately 60 minutes, they were recorded and thereafter transcribed after each participants' consent. The focus group participants were recruited through the program's activity sessions. The empirical data of this paper also consist of direct observations field notes from six organised activity sessions (bowling, yoga, indoor climbing, 2 x football, flower arranging) targeting women. Ethics approval for the project was granted from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (SIKT). The focus groups were coded in NVivo 12 and thematically analysed utilizing Braun and Clarke (2006). The aim of the analysis is to identify themes that illuminate the participants' reflections of what attracts them to the programme, as well as how intersecting social categories are played out in their reflections.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Preliminary findings indicate that the participants mention the social aspect as the main motivator for joining the community programme. For the interviewees with refugee status and without permanent work, the

programme activities are much appreciated in an unusually quiet new 'normal'. The free of charge, low-threshold and drop-in character of the programme is highlighted as a benefit by the participants. The low-threshold character facilitates for a large variation in who attends the programme activities. However, instead of creating an arena where people can socialize across backgrounds, both the findings from the field observations and the focus groups indicate that limited socialization is going on across the participant (cultural) groups.

The data analysis is still in the process of finalization, and further findings will be presented at the conference.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The paper aims at adding to the literature on sport, inclusion, and gender. It contributes to the literature by illuminating the stories of female participants from marginalized backgrounds. It further contributes to the literature by demonstrating how intersectionality can be used to explain the lived experiences of the participants, and to illustrate how they are simultaneously positioned by the community, the programme, each other and themselves in different social categories.

In relation to sport management, the case study is an example of sport activity programming, and, by illuminating participants' perspectives, the results may further inform the development of future sport and inclusion programmes.

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Sport Event Management and Inclusive Higher Education

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Statement that Abstract Relates to Professional Practice

This research study on inclusive higher education focused on a case in which students with and without an intellectual disability (ID) were able to come together to plan and lead a sporting event. Students worked together and were able to foster roles in leadership, build a sense of community, organize an event, participate in an event, and were able to create a new opportunity through interactions with students they did not necessarily interact with on a daily basis. This study found that sport can create an opportunity for those from diverse backgrounds to work together and learn new life skills. This study has added to the literature in higher education and shows how students from all ability levels must be included from beginning to end as an active member, rather than in a passive participatory role. Based upon the results of this study, sport management educators should encourage students with varying abilities to work together collectively in order to cultivate synergy and understanding, while building confidence and partnerships to enhance post-school outcomes.

Aim

Individuals with ID lack cognitive and adaptive functioning, often leaving this population unable to live independently or gain employment. To assist individuals with ID in delivering valuable outcomes (i.e., independent living, employment), inclusive postsecondary education (IPSE) programs have emerged for individuals with ID. Scholars (e.g., Pitts et al., 2022; Springer et al., 2022) have called upon sport management educators to be inclusive of individuals with disabilities and to recognize the role sport

management education plays surrounding the inequities among marginalized groups. Previous research has discussed the lack of leadership development opportunities for individuals with ID. This study demonstrated that through inclusive higher education within a sport management setting, students with ID, can lead alongside their peers without ID.

Purpose and Background

The purpose of this case study (Yin, 2018) was to explore students' perceptions regarding inclusive higher education within sport event management. Specifically, this inquiry focused on the interactions of students in an IPSE program and students in a sport event management class as both of these groups came together to collectively plan, lead, and participate in a sporting event. Upon completion of the event, students participated in focus groups. Data analysis revealed four themes: Leadership, Relationship Building, Organizational Behavior, and Opportunities. Overall, the results of this case study showed the importance of collaboration between students of different abilities and demonstrated that such partnerships are beneficial for all involved.

Design and Implementation

This study employed a case study methodology (Yin, 2018). To explore the students' experiences executing a kickball tournament, a group interviewing technique, or focus group method was selected (Dittmore & Stokowski, 2019). The interview protocol consisted of six open-ended questions. The questions revolved around the students' experiences planning, leading, and participating in the sporting event (Gill et al., 2008). Questions were written in a way to ensure accessible language (Schwartz et al., 2020). The think, pair, and share model was implemented throughout the focus group process to encourage critical thinking and small group discussions (Kaddoura, 2013). Once the focus groups were completed, the transcriptions were downloaded into a word document. Upon transcription any identifying markers (e.g., names) were removed, and the document was deleted upon the completion of the coding process. Two populations were a part of this study, which included students with an intellectual disability and students without an intellectual disability. A total of 67

students from both the Academy (n=42) and the SEM class (n=25) participated in this study.

Outputs/Outcomes, Reflections and Future Development

Principal investigators reviewed each transcript separately, coded the transcripts, and then compared their codes with one another. Inductive coding was used to determine the similarities found in the responses among both focus groups (Chandra et al., 2019). The results of this inquiry emphasized how students with and without ID perceived their experiences planning and participating in a sporting event.

This study demonstrated the importance of inclusive higher education and innovative teaching practices. Sport management educators must recognize that there is indeed a need for innovative teaching practices that encourage leadership development, networking, and practical learning experiences (Gardner & Love, 2023; Lower-Hoppe et al., 2019). Overall, the results of this case study showed the importance of collaboration between students of varying abilities and demonstrated that such partnerships are beneficial for all involved. Lastly, this model of collaboration can be implemented within sport management classes, when working with diverse populations.

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Funding Sport-Based Youth Development Programs in the Global North and Global South

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Aim and Research Question

The purpose of this study is to examine sport-based youth development (SBYD) funding dichotomies between the Global North (GN) and Global South (GS).

Funding serves as leverage that benefits SFD organizations and optimizes overall operations (Jones et al., 2020). Additionally, sustainable fund development models may position SFD organizations to proactively respond to threats or weaknesses (Svensson et al., 2017). In contrast, empirical studies have demonstrated that SFD organizations encounter onerous challenges to sustain projects after initial funding ends. Further, this is exacerbated with limited SFD-specific and short-term funding cycles (Lindsey, 2017).

SBYD programs are often viewed as pillars that are tasked with solving complex social problems associated with both middle-class and disadvantaged youth (Jones et al., 2020). Moreover, SBYD programs depend on funding as an essential resource required to sustain their design, delivery, and mission. To build upon this, resource-dependency theory (RDT) serves as an appropriate guide to examine this topic. Additionally, RDT is positioned to distill emerging themes related to social, strategic, and power dynamics that may exist between SBYD funding in the GN and GS. While funding plays a critical role in the SBYD landscape, more interrogation into SBYD funding dichotomies between the GN and GS is needed. That is, SFD literature addresses the importance of funding, yet there is a dearth of studies that investigate the requisite steps and processes to acquire funding (Svensson et al., 2023). Thus, two research questions were developed:

RQ1: What are the funding enablers and constraints in sport-based youth development programs in the GS and GN?

RQ2: What factors are drivers of sustainable funding in sport-based youth development programs in the GS and GN?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

RDT will be used to guide this study. RDT is central to the idea that organizations, specifically nonprofits, depend on external resources to function (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). To better understand the usability of RDT, it is critical to interrogate the funding as a resource. Funding is an essential determinant for nonprofits to establish agency and guide their operations. It is important to note that funding may derive from private donors, public support, and private or commercial activity (Hodge et al., 2005). Within the nonprofit space, SBYD programs often vie for funding resources that are controlled by an external entity. This relationship may foster a dependency that produces power imbalances and tensions. RDT illuminates the power imbalances and tensions between resource providers and organizations in need of resources (Lucidarme et al., 2018). While power imbalances and tensions are realized through RDT, it has not been used to explore the resource-related dichotomies that exist between the GN and GS. This study potentially provides an analysis of SBYD funding structures in the GN and GS.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews. The research team recruited participants from SBYD programs in the GN and GS. It is important to note that we recruited from our existing networks as well as employed snowball sampling. The SBYD programs involved in the study are both grassroots and structured organizations. The interviews will be conducted via Zoom and transcribed using a transcription service. Further, we will perform a document/website analysis to supplement the interviews and add methodological rigor to the study (Walzel et al., 2018).

Data Analysis

The data will be analyzed deductively using RDT theory. Additionally, we will allow for emergent themes.

Findings

This is a working paper and we have recruited four participants. We will continue to recruit participants during the summer months. The research team will be prepared to present the paper and preliminary findings at the time of the conference.

Conclusion and Implications

Scholars have outlined funding as the next vanguard of SFD literature (Svensson et al., 2023). Therefore, this study is important as it demonstrates that diverse funding models may exist and potentially provides practical recommendations for SBYD programs in the GN and GS. Additionally, the study contributes to the literature by analyzing how grassroots and structured SBYD programs may have different funding needs, yet address similar issues related to social change.

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Let's Play: Social Impact of Sports Participation on Children with Hydrocephalus

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Aim and Research Questions

Despite a growing body of research highlighting the potential of sports participation to benefit children with disabilities, including those with hydrocephalus, there exists a gap in understanding the specific social implications of sports involvement for this demographic, particularly within the Nigerian context. This study aims to bridge this gap by providing a comprehensive examination of the social dynamics associated with sports participation among children living with hydrocephalus. Specifically, the study seeks to investigate how sports engagement influences the social development and inclusion of children with hydrocephalus in Nigeria.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Hydrocephalus, characterised by the abnormal accumulation of cerebrospinal fluid within the brain, presents multifaceted challenges to the physical, cognitive, and social development of affected children (Kahle et al., 2016). While medical interventions remain crucial, there is an increasing recognition of the need for holistic approaches to address the diverse needs of individuals, particularly within the Nigerian context (Oyegoke et al., 2020). Sports participation emerges as a promising avenue for promoting social inclusion and well-being among children living with hydrocephalus.

Existing literature underscores the positive impacts of sports engagement on the physical, psychological, and social dimensions of children with disabilities (Barr, 2019; McKinnon et al., 2022). However, there remains a paucity of qualitative research specifically exploring the social effects of sports on children with hydrocephalus.

Drawing upon the Social Model of Disability (Oliver, 1990), this study adopts a theoretical framework that challenges the traditional medical model by emphasising societal barriers in disabling individuals. According to this perspective, disability is not solely a result of impairment but is significantly influenced by social and environmental factors (Oliver, 1990; Barnes et al., 2010). By employing this framework, the study aims to understand how societal attitudes, accessibility issues, and social norms shape the experiences of children with hydrocephalus in sports participation.

Furthermore, the Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1989) provides a lens to examine the complex interplay of individual, interpersonal, and environmental factors in shaping children's social development within the context of sports. This theory suggests that children's development is influenced by interactions across multiple systems, including the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. By considering these interconnected levels, the study aims to uncover the mechanisms through which sports participation can foster social inclusion and well-being among children with hydrocephalus.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

To explore these issues, a phenomenological qualitative research design was employed. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 35 significant others (parents, caregivers and teachers) of children diagnosed with hydrocephalus in Oyo State, Nigeria. Purposive sampling ensured diversity in perspectives and backgrounds. Thematic analysis was utilized to identify recurring patterns, themes, and insights from the interview data.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The findings highlighted the multifaceted social benefits of sports participation for children with hydrocephalus in Nigeria. Significant others consistently reported improvements in social skills, confidence, and peer relationships among participating children. Themes of social connection and independence indicated that sports helped children break the barrier of isolation and provided them with self-belief. However, some

significant others perceived children with hydrocephalus as burdens to their families, indicating persistent societal stigma. Barriers to sports participation, such as lack of accessibility, specialized equipment, stigma, and financial constraints, were also identified.

Conclusion

This study illuminates the transformative potential of sports participation in enhancing the social well-being and inclusion of children living with hydrocephalus in Nigeria. By integrating the Social Model of Disability and the Ecological Systems Theory, the study underscores the importance of holistic support systems in facilitating the social development of affected children. The findings advocate for inclusive sporting opportunities and underscore the social rights of children with hydrocephalus in Nigeria.

Contribution and Implication

This study contributes nuanced insights into the social impact of sports participation on children with hydrocephalus in Nigeria, addressing a significant gap in the literature. The findings have implications for healthcare professionals, educators, policymakers, and community stakeholders involved in promoting the holistic well-being and social inclusion of children with hydrocephalus. By addressing identified barriers and leveraging the social benefits of sports, more inclusive environments can be created to empower children with hydrocephalus to thrive socially, emotionally, and physically.

Youth Co-Determination and Organized Sports in Norway

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Aim and Research Questions

The research report aimed to examine two key initiatives within the Norwegian Sports Federation's (NIF) decade-long strategic project named Ungdomsløftet ("Youth Uplift"), which sought to recruit and retain more young individuals aged 13 to 19 in sports. The two measures implemented under this project and explored in this research report were: youth committees, and leadership courses for youth aged 15-19. However, the findings provided additional insights into youth co-determination beyond these youth committees and leadership courses. Consequently, it was deemed important to include this perspective as a third component. This section of the research report discusses barriers that prevent young people from effectively participating in decision-making processes and propose measures to promote youth co-determination in sports.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

This section represents the theoretical perspectives relevant to youth participation in sports governance, focusing on mechanisms that facilitate or hinder their involvement. These includes Jennings et al. (2006) which emphasizes the importance of youth agency within community and organizational structures, and Tajfel and Turner's (1979) social identity theory, relevant for understanding group dynamics within sports organizations. Also Strittmatter (2020) explored barriers and solutions to youth participation. Strittmatter's work discusses the importance of treating young participants not merely as representatives of their age group but as equal stakeholders in leadership, advocating for equal participation in all matters. These insights are central to the interpretation of the findings presented later in the report, providing a nuanced understanding of the theoretical and practical aspects of enhancing youth involvement in sports governance.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

A qualitative approach was utilized for this research. Interviews, following a semi-structured format, were carried out with 20 members of youth committees from various levels of Norwegian sports organizations, including national and regional federations, regional sport confederations, and local sports clubs. The ages of the participants ranged from 16 to 27 years. The interviews were transcribed and subjected to a detailed six-step analysis process as outlined by Braun and Clarke. This method facilitated both inductive and theory-led exploration of the data, enabling the identification of key themes.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The investigation revealed structural and systematic challenges within the sports' administrative leaderships and boards at both the sports-political and organizational levels. Findings indicated that power structures, attitudes, and values within the administrative bodies hinder youth co-determination. Within these bodies, a lack of environmental safety was also identified as a barrier preventing young people from expressing themselves. Additionally, a lack of support to ensure meaningful and valuable engagement for youth was recognized. Challenges in recruiting young people to positions, insufficient integration of youth in strategic sports dialogues, and a lack of visibility and accessibility of meeting places for young people were also identified as obstacles to youth co-determination.

To address these issues, several measures were proposed, such as improving leadership structures, enhancing the roles and involvement of young people, and increasing focus on inclusive and effective communication and resource management. The findings highlight significant challenges for young leaders, especially concerning gaining recognition as equals to experienced leaders. To strengthen the position of young leaders and promote youth co-determination in Norwegian sports, measures targeting the system and experienced leaders are recommended.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

Youth co-determination is significant because young people constitute a large portion of the membership in Norwegian sports, and there is a requirement to include a stakeholder group that represents a substantial fraction of the membership base. This is a fundamental democratic principle and aligns with the NIF's values. By facilitating young people's participation in decision-making processes, NIF leaders demonstrate their appreciation for and take seriously the membership's contributions and opinions. Furthermore, an enhanced focus on youth co-determination is necessary to meet governmental expectations and could thus improve the prospects for continued support in the future.

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E-Sport, Innovation and Technology

Track chair: Anna Gerke

Women In E-Sports: Rising Through Inclusion And Resilience

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Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this study is to examine the impact of E-Sports from the perspective of social inclusion and resilience on female society. E-Sports have been growing and becoming deeply professionalized with experts struggling to integrate them into society; it will therefore be necessary to understand the reasons why women are underrepresented in E-Sports and which can be support tools for them.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

According to a literature review, in the E-Sports industry women representing a lower proportion of participants, fans, and leaders (Entertainment Software Association, 2018). Despite this, in recent years, the number of female players has increased. However, this growth hasn't necessarily led to equitable representation in the professional and competitive E-Sports sector. In terms of gender issues related to sexism and exclusion (Ruvalcaba et al., 2018; Ratan et al., 2015; Taylor, 2012), the culture surrounding competitive video gaming has been characterised as toxic, particularly toward women often manifests in the form of verbal abuse and marginalization (Orme, 2021). Women writing about their own experiences and the experiences of other women routinely instances where gender-based toxicity has lasting impacts beyond the scope of the game where that toxicity was encountered (Cote, 2020; Vossen, 2018) and, unchecked, the trajectory of this toxicity can cause lasting damage to players and game communities (Mercante, 2023). Despite the toxicity confronting women in E-Sports, many of them consider themselves video game enthusiasts; however, many do not identify as part of the mainstream competitive video gaming community (Orme, 2021). For this reason, it becomes essential to explore not only the concept of inclusivity but also resilience among women engaged in E-Sports. In this context, resilience refers to the ability of female gamers to overcome obstacles and

continue to fight for a lack of representation in a male-dominated industry. The lack of female representation in a surprising considering that female gamers perform equally as well in competitive video games (Shen et al., 2016) and have a near equal interest (Paaßen et al., 2017) relative to their male counterparts.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Moving from the recent study (Balakina, D., Serada, A., & Schott, G., 2022) in which several female gamers were interviewed, it has been observed that a common motivation for them to overcome all barriers has been their dedication to competitive gaming. However, women continue to face barriers, such as a lack of support from other female and rigid gender social expectations. Therefore, we contribute to address this gap, by interviewing some key women players in the Italian Esports industry in order to better shed light on this phenomenon, by remarking what are the main issues for women to affirm themselves.

Results/Findings and Discussion

There are various problems that women face in the gaming industry. First of all, there are no role models that women can identify with, as E-Sports is heavily dominated by men. This does not only concern all players, but also other areas, such as management and managerial roles in associations. Also, women fear not being judged on their worth, but on their gender; in this way, however, as a consequence of the stereotype of women and girls not being interested in video games, the gaming sector does not consider them as a target group (Denk, n.d.). Overall, females face a challenging environment and barriers that likely inhibits their engagement with E-Sports. This is fundamentally problematic as individuals need visible representation to help them see themselves represented and realize they belong. This supports why many females, despite being active gamers, do not identify as such (Paaßen et al., 2017). Greater results/findings are not yet available at the time of submission of the abstract, but we are guaranteeing that we will have the results at the time of the conference. Personal interviews and questionnaires will be carried out with professional figures about the topic of the abstract.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

To foster identification with an activity, leaders within the E-Sports industry should recognize the importance of providing platforms that empower females in E-Sports. In future, visible female representation at the professional levels of E-Sports will help encourage women to see themselves not only as players but also indirectly foster their involvement in related positions. Furthermore, efforts to promote inclusiveness and resilience among women in E-Sports are crucial to promoting a fair and diverse industry. The long-term goal should be for women and men to play together, without sex having any relevance (Denk, n.d.). By addressing these obstacles and by providing support to women players, we can work towards a future in which gender equality is fully achieved in the world of E-Sports.

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1

Advancing Sports Data Management and Information Services

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Aim and Research Questions

This study aims to conduct a comprehensive comparative analysis of the use of information systems in sports (ISs) within the Slovak Republic, Czech Republic, England, and Denmark. The output is therefore not only the analysis of cross-cultural operation of the selected systems, but also the identification of the impact of information and communication technologies (ICTs) on the managers' decision-making processes in sports. Primary data were analyzed in the case of Slovak Republic, other countries were analyzed based on available literature. For the Slovak Republic, the study delves into the historical development of these systems, as it influences the issues addressed in the hypotheses verification. Research questions:

RQ1: What are the main advantages and challenges in the implementation of integrated ISs in the sports sector?

RQ2: How do integrated ISs support decision-making and planning processes in sports organizations within the selected countries?

RQ3: What specific factors influence the success of the implementation of integrated ISs in sports organizations?

RQ4: How has the historical development of ISs in the Slovak sports impacted current practices and challenges in this area?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The evolution of sports management has been significantly influenced by advancements in ICTs. These technologies became integral to management practices across various sectors, including businesses and sports organizations (Koman et al., 2022). ICTs facilitate access to vast amounts of information in real-time, enhancing sports managers' decision-making (Varmus et al., 2023).

ICTs have revolutionized sports by improving learning resource utilization, enhancing functionalities, and fostering innovation (Reyaz et al., 2023). These technologies

support athletes' training and performance monitoring, which is critical for talent identification and the nurturing of future sports stars (Grüttner, 2019). The integration of ICTs in sports management also led to improved efficiency, enabling organizations to stay competitive (Varmus and Adámik, 2023).

Effective knowledge and information management within ISs depend heavily on the development and maintenance of robust computer databases (Rainer and Prince, 2022). Relational databases, organizing data into tables, are essential for comprehensive information management and analysis. ISs encompass hardware, software, data, processes, and people, working together to enhance organizational effectiveness (Sabetrasekh et al., 2023). These systems facilitate collection, analysis, and utilization of information, crucial for informed decision-making and competitive edge in sports.

At the core of ISs are Database Management Systems. These allow users to define tables, manage relationships, and manipulate data using Structured Query Language (SQL) (Vincent et al., 2009; Dikovic and Paney, 2023). Proficiency in SQL is increasingly valued in sports management due to its role in structuring data for strategic decisions and performance optimization (Miočić et al., 2023).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The research builds on previous work in sports funding, marketing, and organizational management, emphasizing technology's pivotal role. Data sources include national sports databases from Denmark, England, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia, supplemented by scholarly publications and research reports. The study intentionally selected the Czech Republic, Denmark, and England based on prior research, reflecting different sports policy models, maximizing effectiveness. Efficiency of ISs in this study includes dimensions such as costs, time, process, organizational, and technological aspects. The research uses both secondary and primary data, which are combined to achieve an in-depth exploration of the situation. The primary data represent interviews with representatives of sports associations in Slovakia only. Secondary data represent statistical outputs from database systems, government documents and other research

activities of other authors. Processed data from each country are summarized in tables, detailing various IS modules' functionalities. These findings identify areas for future research and the imperative to increase sports ISs' efficiency.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Research builds on prior studies analyzing sports operations in Slovakia, focusing on economic, informational, managerial, marketing, and legal elements. Despite limitations in data availability, the study highlights Slovakia's comprehensive sports funding module and contrasts it with the lack of such transparency in England and Denmark. The findings show the importance of effective sports ISs for data-driven decision-making, athletes' development, and event management, advocating for high-quality, transparency, and integration.

The implementation of sports ISs in Slovakia has been inefficient due to prolonged timelines, contractor changes, and issues like data duplicity and missing functions. Research shows that automated data processes enhance administrative, analytical, and managerial functions in Slovak sports. Comparatively, England features a geographic module for sports infrastructures.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The study examines the impact of ICTs on sports managers' decision-making via a comparative analysis of Slovakia, the Czech Republic, England, and Denmark, highlighting the inefficiencies in Slovakia's sports ISs despite some successes in automation and security. Key findings suggest that Slovakia's systems need better integration and management to improve cost and time efficiency, and policymakers should focus on transparency, automation, and strategic planning. Study also recommends enhancing interoperability of these systems for more effective use by sports managers and policymakers. Research sets a precedent for comparing sports ISs in different countries. Future research should address ethical and legal issues in sports data handling and explore how integrated ISs can enhance fan interactions and personalized training programs.

This is the outcome of the project KEGA: 025ŽU-4/2022 Creating an interactive program with a focus on sports management based on ICT and WEB technologies.

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Understanding Pay Inequalities in Professional Esports: A Multidimensional Analysis

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Aim and Research Question

This research delves into the causes of pay inequalities in professional esports. The primary explanation for differences in prize money earnings typically points to the reward structures established by esports competition organizers. However, other explanations are possible. Our central question is how various factors, including game features, competition design, and sociological influences, contribute to disparities in earnings among professional esports players.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Since the publication of «Capital in the Twenty-First Century» (Piketty 2014), numerous studies have focused on economic inequalities (e.g., Alvaredo et al. 2018). Esports is not immune to this phenomenon, and McLeod et al. (2021) recently highlighted significant disparities in tournament earnings among professional esports players. They found that many players, apart from the top earners, often live below the poverty line.

McLeod's assessment is compelling but lacks a thorough analysis of the underlying causes of these inequalities. The focus on prize money structures as a deliberate choice by competition organizers is supported by sociological theories such as rent redistribution, aspirational labor, and hope labor. Tournament theory (Lazear & Rosen 1981) also offers insights, suggesting that significant gaps in monetary rewards can incentivize top performance, thus widening the earnings gap between winners and other competitors.

It is evident that many elements beyond the reward structures can explain earnings disparities. Factors such as the randomness of competition outcomes (Feuillet et al. 2018;

Sobkowicz et al. 2020), the design of competitions (Szymanski 2003), and the dominance of certain tournaments (Jeangout 2018) are crucial.

Methodology

Our methodological approach utilizes econometric analysis to understand the causes of pay inequalities in the professional scenes of Dota 2, Counter-Strike: Global Offensive, Fortnite, League of Legends, and StarCraft II. Data were collected from the Esport Earnings website, covering 2010 to 2023, a frequently used source in esports research (e.g., Ward & Hamon 2019).

Inequalities observed at the end of the esports season serve as the dependent variable, while explanatory variables include competition characteristics (e.g., tournament or championship, single round or series), game features (e.g., frequency of updates), the number of major events in the esports calendar, and gameplay dynamics (e.g., solo, duo, trio formats).

Preliminary Results and Discussion

Our preliminary findings indicate that disparities in prize money earnings are influenced by a combination of factors, including tournament structure, game-specific features, and competitive environment. For instance, games with frequent updates and a higher number of major events tend to exhibit larger gaps between top earners and other players. Additionally, the ability to compete in various formats (solo, duo, trio) also impacts the distribution of earnings.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The complete results of this analysis, including detailed econometric models and in-depth analyses, will be presented at the upcoming EASM conference. These findings will provide valuable insights for researchers, practitioners, and decision-makers in esports, helping them understand the root causes of pay inequalities among professional players. This information will be essential for developing policies and mechanisms aimed at promoting a more equitable distribution of earnings, thereby supporting the long-term sustainability of the esports ecosystem (De Moor et al. 2023).

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Rural revitalisation through sport: The emergence and success of Chinese football's Village Super League

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Aim and Research Questions

Rural areas have gone through a global crisis in the last decade with traditional agriculture and rural culture gradually disappearing or undergoing assimilation through urbanisation (Gao & Wu, 2017). In China, this prompted a rural vitalization strategy proposed in 2017 and detailed in the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) for National Economic and Social Development (Xinhua, 2021). It is in this context that Chinese football's Village Super League (VSL) in Rongjiang has emerged. The VSL is an amateur football tournament created, organised and played by local rural residents (Odonkor, 2024). Its 2023 season that began on May 13 went viral, gaining more than 20 billion views online by the end of June (China Daily, 2023). Against this background, the present research aims to investigate the reasons behind the emergence and success of the VSL, asking the research questions why and how it has emerged and is successful.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

To address the aim and research questions, the lens of social innovation is used (van der Have & Rubalcaba, 2016). Social innovation is as old as humankind, as civilisations are the result of human innovations. Social innovations refer to new social practices created from collective, intentional or unintentional, and goal-oriented actions aimed at prompting social change through reconfiguration of how social goals are accomplished (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014). It is considered a promising strategy for coping with societal challenges in rural areas (Chen et al., 2022). There is a plethora of studies on factors that drive the emergence and spreading of social innovation, which can be broadly categorised into exogenous and endogenous forces. The exogenous factors, or the socio-structural context, have captured most attention in the field of social innovation

research which implies that structure and context are the main contributors to innovation. For example, Yin et al. (2022) in their analysis of Chinese rural innovation systems concluded that government and public policies play a crucial role in driving the formation of the revitalisation process in the countryside. The endogenous force, or the individualistic perspective, highlights that effective societal changes brought by social innovation are often derived from internal, agent-led initiatives. Chen et al. (2022) in their study of two rural communities from Taiwan argue it is a group of engaged residents who share the same vision of their communities that fuels social innovation. Therefore, opportunities for and capabilities of agents to innovate are emphasised by this school of thought. However, both the individualistic and structuralist approach have been criticised for their overreliance on one-sided explanation. An integrative view of both perspectives therefore potentially offers a more holistic understanding of the case in this study, that is, acknowledging social innovation can be created and reproduced by both actions and institutions.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Underpinned by a critical realist ontology (Bhaskar, 2014), we conducted 15 semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders (including local residents) involved in the organisation and participation of the VSL. Questions covered the perceived reasons as to why the VSL is successful, the roles played by different stakeholders in the emergence and success of the VSL, as well as the conditions to make it sustainable in the future. Secondary data such as relevant policy documents and media reports were collected as complementary material. All qualitative data are currently analysed using the thematic analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Results/Findings and Discussion

The results are being analysed and will be ready to share and discussed in September. Preliminary findings indicate that both structure (e.g., central and local governments) and agents (e.g., local residents and media professionals) played an equal part in the emergence and success of the VSL. The local government had the vision to embed technology in the strategic development of the

village, which empowered individuals with knowledge and capability to innovate. In turn, local residents took this opportunity to develop their individual business combining local ethnic cultures and traditions, which contribute to the overall popularity of the VSL.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This study will contribute to the overlooked empirical research on social innovation in the sport management literature, particularly from a non-western perspective. Through the examination of a successful social innovation project through sport/football, it will add to the discussion of the social impact of sport in modern society and in this case, rural revitalisation in China. It will help identify the factors leading to the emergence and success of a social innovation project in sport and will therefore provide useful insights for managers and policy makers involved in the sport sector and beyond.

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Navigating Perceptions: Media Analysis of Chinese Government Attitudes Towards Esports and Online Games

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Aim and Research Questions

The rapid growth of China's esports industry over the past decade has been remarkable in terms of both participants and economic value. However, despite this growth, Chinese society still harbors a relatively negative perception of the industry, largely due to the lack of clarity in distinguishing esports from online gaming. While the Chinese government formally recognized esports as a sport back in 2008, it has yet to publicly delineate the fundamental disparities between esports and online gaming, thus exacerbating negative sentiments toward esports. If left unaddressed, this ambiguity could have profound ramifications for the esports industry (Yang et al., 2014; Zhao & Zhu, 2020), potentially leading to parental resistance to minors' involvement in the industry and impeding practitioners' opportunities. Given the challenges associated with direct engagement with government stakeholders, this study seeks to investigate disparities in government attitudes toward esports and online gaming through an analysis of reports in China's official news media. The objective is to elucidate the government's stance on both concepts, offering valuable insights for enhancing social awareness and advancing the continued growth of esports.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The media plays a vital role in raising awareness, shaping perceptions, conveying social attitudes, and disseminating information (Liao, 2023). Despite the proliferation of various online media platforms due to technological advancement, traditional news media remain the cornerstone of information dissemination in modern society (Wildin et al., 2018). Content reported by large, reputable news organizations is generally considered more credible by the public, giving the media significant influence in shaping public opinion (Happer and Philo,

2013). Unlike Western countries, Chinese newspapers often have direct relationships with the government. Li Liangrong emphasized in «Introduction to News and Communication» that the primary mission of China's news media is to serve the people wholeheartedly under the guidance of the Communist Party of China, prioritize social benefits, and support the country's modernization drive (Chapter 8). Therefore, while news coverage should remain neutral, Chinese media often reflect the government's stance on events and significantly shape or guide public opinion on these issues. The choice of news topics can succinctly reflect the purpose and core concepts of the article and can further explore the potential motivations behind the reporting of specific events, thereby uncovering the hidden attitudes behind them.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Computer-assisted text mining methods have proven effective in identifying social controversies within extensive collections of news texts. By conducting thematic analysis on relevant reports from media outlets and newspapers, we can gain better insights into how the government frames certain topics and analyze the underlying attitudes behind them. For this study, data sources were sourced from People's Daily and Xinhua News Agency, selected for their representation of mainstream media and reflection of shifts in Chinese government ideology. These outlets serve as reliable indicators of official perspectives. The study focused on collecting news reports on two subjects: esports and online games, with the time span from 2002 to 2023. Utilizing Python, the Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) algorithm was employed. LDA, a statistical topic modeling technique, provides a robust framework for uncovering latent themes in large text corpora. It automatically identifies hidden topics within a set of documents (Hannigan et al., 2019). By applying LDA, this study aims to analyze the underlying themes present in news reports about esports and online games from Chinese official newspapers, thereby providing insights into the government's stance on these subjects.

Results/Findings and Discussion

This study delineates several key findings: (1) Esports coverage encompasses various topics, including economic, policy, and sports-related aspects, with an overall neutral sentiment. (2) In contrast, online game-related coverage exhibits a more diverse array of themes, spanning society, economy, culture, policy, and industry, with noticeable negativity observed in social topics. (3) A significant disparity in the volume of reports is evident, with online game-related articles comprising 84.504% of the total database, while esports-related articles constitute only 15.495%. These findings shed light on the nuanced perspectives present in Chinese official newspaper coverage. While governmental statements may be scarce, the distinct thematic frameworks attributed to esports, and online games underscore the government's delineation between the two. However, the observed imbalance and limited societal awareness remain pertinent factors.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

Indeed, the prevailing negative sentiment surrounding esports within Chinese society may stem from the spillover effect of extensive coverage on online games. This underscores a prevailing misconception and incomplete understanding of the esports industry among the public. As an emerging sector, it is imperative for the government to prioritize public awareness through science education initiatives. These research findings serve as a crucial groundwork and point towards avenues for future investigation into the underlying causes of misconceptions regarding esports among the Chinese populace, as well as potential strategies to rectify these misunderstandings. This study also offers practical programming methodologies and illustrative examples for analyzing sports news using LDA. It contributes novel insights and technical approaches that can be utilized by future researchers in the field. This not only enhances the understanding of sports-related media analysis but also facilitates the application of advanced natural language processing techniques in studying various domains.

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The Blue Ocean of International Relations – Esports as a Diplomatic Strategy in Global Culture

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Aim and Research Questions

Esports, a rapidly growing cross-field industry, could be considered as a sport (Jin, 2010), or a medium (Watts, 2021), or a type of business (Scholz, 2019). However, empirical research on esports' global, regional, and local influences remains limited. Taking case studies from esports programs and their international tournaments led by China, the US and Russia, this research employs the blue ocean strategy (Kim and Mauborgne, 2005) to explore how eSports serves as a tool for diplomacy and to what extent it navigates cultural dynamics across geographical boundaries.

Literature Review and Theoretical Background

Advancements in technology, liberalization of trade, capital flows, and the rise of multinational corporations have all propelled the progress of globalization (ANBOUND, 2020). The rise of counter-globalization movement, sparked by economic uncertainty and exacerbation of inequality following the global financial crisis, raises concerns regarding cultural clashes and social instability (Warner, 2005). These dynamics highlight the challenge of sustaining local development while respecting diverse regional cultural and consumption choices (Straddling, 2002). eSports, as a synergistic concept, emphasizes the importance to understanding the nuanced relationship between global, regional, and local aspects. Prior research has highlighted eSports' positive role in shaping national image and enhancing cultural soft power, promoting some countries and regions to consider it as a critical national strategy that supports the industry to attract tourists and investments (Leon et al., 2022; Wong & Meng-Lewis, 2022). However, there is limited empirical and comparative research detailing

how these mechanisms work. Therefore, this research employs the blue ocean strategy as a strategic framework to investigate how eSports identifies new growth opportunities in highly competitive markets by creating and developing untapped or underutilized market spaces, leading to sustainable innovation and profitability (Kim and Mauborgne, 2005).

Research Design and Methodology

This research employs a case study methodology, incorporating observations, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. It focuses on 8 representative eSports programs – five Chinese, three American, and five 5 International eSports tournaments (e.g., Honor of Kings, League of Legends and Games of The Future). The dataset includes 20 reports on the Asia Games, 5 interviews with international game rights holders, and 8 interviews with esports athletes who participated in the Asia Games. Additionally, insights are drawn from a reflective journal detailing network activities and field observations.

Analysis and Results

Thematic analysis was employed, and our findings align with the ocean strategy framework (Kim and Mauborgne, 2005). Firstly, the eliminate aspect aims to reduce cost and eliminate any elements that international customers find non-essential. Within esports, several common issues that game developers aim to eliminate fall under the game optimization umbrella. This includes improving performance mechanisms and game design elements, such as character portrayal in Honor of Kings and game design features in Dream of Three Kingdoms 2, with the intent to localize content appropriately. Secondly, reduce targets the over-design or outdated elements that no longer attract customers. It is best exemplified by Honor of Kings adjusting overpowered characters and simplifying mechanics to ensure broader accessibility. Another case is the competition between Mobile Legends: Bang Bang (MLBB) and Arena of Valor (AoV) in the Indonesia market, where MLBB strategically kept the initial package size below 200MB to attract more customers. Thirdly, a tripartite approach – government support and collaboration (e.g. partnerships with capital ventures), cultural exportation (e.g. enhancing cultural soft power), and social inclusivity (e.g. players

diversity) illuminates the raise aspect of the eSport market. Lastly, create refers to new sources of value for customers, and the appeal to non-customers. This embodies the importance of cross-cultural communication, the global esports commercial market, the development of digital infrastructure and cultural diplomatic methods. Detailed interview and documentary data will be presented.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implications

Our research emphasizes the potential of esports to act as both a commercial enterprise and a diplomatic channel. Employing the blue ocean strategy, esports move beyond mere entertainment to promote global, regional, and local connections, and hence contribute to a novel form of cultural diplomacy. By identifying and eliminating non-essential elements, simplifying complex mechanics, leveraging government support, exporting cultural values, and enhancing social inclusivity, esports act as a bridge between different cultures and national identities. This strategy not only optimizes games for a global audience but also facilitates cross-cultural understanding and exchange.

This study makes significant academic contributions by linking the blue ocean strategy with international relations theories. It provides the novel application of the blue ocean strategy to the esports context and explains how esports can generate new demand and capture new markets through innovation. For policymakers and governments, esports present an innovative avenue for cultural exchange and international image-building. For businesses, the blue ocean framework applied in the esports context highlights the importance of creativity and innovation in a competitive market.

Toxic Behaviours In Esports Environments: An Integrative Review Of Literature

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Aim and Research Questions

Esports' toxic culture provides a fertile ground for the spread of multiple types of toxic behaviours (TBs) that can intoxicate both the players who perform them and those who interact with them. Despite its prevalence in the literature (Kordyaka et al., 2020), recent research has shown ambiguous findings, disregarding the multiplicity of TBs stemming from the online competitive environment. In this study, our aim is twofold: a) to comprehensively analyse and conceptualize the multiple TBs in the context of esports and b) to critically review the current literature on TBs in gaming communities.

Theoretical Background

Originally introduced by Suler (2004), TBs describe hostile acts, disrespectful remarks or antisocial behaviour in cyberspace. Over time, the term evolved to include a wide range of antisocial actions in online gaming environments. TBs are a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that encompasses multiple types of behaviours, such as cyberbullying, racism, cheating, sexism, and trolling, leading to substantial disruptions to the overall gaming experience (Türkay et al., 2020). These pervasive behaviours pose a significant threat to esports communities and the broader video gaming industry, impacting major enterprises such as Electronic Arts or Riot Games. Recent instances of sexual harassment and toxic work cultures in the gaming industry have gained significant attention, with notable cases reported in Riot Games in 2018 and Ubisoft in 2020 (Holden et al. 2019). As this pressing issue continues to gain prominence, the need to thoroughly explore each type of TBs intensifies. This exploration can address pivotal questions, including whether there is a theoretical pattern that underlies toxicity in esports, how TBs are defined, and their significance within

the gaming community. We aim to address this issue in our work – the lack of comprehension of TBs and their potential to shape esports communities.

Methodology

A five-step process was followed to manage the integrative review of literature (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005): 1-problem identification (i.e., TBs in esports), 2-literature search, 3-data evaluation, 4-data analysis, and 5-presentation of the findings obtained. The research was based on three main databases (Web of Science, SportDiscus, and ScienceDirect). The initial search allowed us to gather a total of 249 records. An additional ancestry research was conducted on three more databases: Esports Research Network (ERN), Olympic Library (OL), and Google Scholar (GS), which resulted in 100 additional documents (a total of 349). After all the documents were analysed, a total of 46 records met our inclusion criteria (i.e., TBs conceptualization, discussion, type of TBs identification, and type of relationship with other constructs) and respected the exclusion criteria imposed (i.e., non-English and articles without peer review or association with the subject and context). To further strengthen our review, the TCCM framework (analysis by theory, characteristics, context, and methodology; Paul et al., 2021) was used to provide a comprehensive and detailed breakdown. These combined approaches allow us to perform a more incisive analysis of the literature while shaping a roadmap for future study.

Results

Our results highlight the complex and multifaceted nature of TBs in esports. A total of 32 theoretical frameworks (T) (69%) were employed to analyse toxic behaviours in the gathered documents, while 14 did not specify a theory to explain their results (31%) of the total records. The largest proportion came from the sports management field (22.73%) within the context (Cs) category, whereas scientific articles constituted the majority of our record typology (63,04%). The research focus has predominantly focused on defining and conceptualizing toxic behaviours (n=21), followed by the exploration of sexism (n=11) and flaming (n=6). The remaining identified toxic behaviours that were discussed in our records were trash-talking, trolling, cheating,

cyberbullying, gambling, grieving, racism, and toxic consumption (e.g., smurfing, excessive spending and indoctrinating), all between four and one records. Regarding characteristics (Cr), 47,82% of our records addressed TBs as an independent variable, while 45,65% looked at TBs as an outcome (dependent variable). Variables such as online disinhibition and attitudes were among the standouts of the linkage with TBs. Qualitative approaches (n=20) led the methods used, while quantitative strands followed closely (n=14), having increased in the last two years.

Conclusion, Contribution and Implication

Based on our analysis, future studies should prioritize the use of theories, such as the online disinhibition effect theory (ODET; Suler, 2004), the theory of practice (ToP; Bourdieu, 1977), or the theory of need satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2000) to examine TBs in esports environments. Instead of attempting to construct a unified framework, it is crucial to recognize the unique characteristics of esports. Multiple explanations may be necessary, rather than relying on the one-size-fits-all theory. Moreover, implementing practical recommendations such as tailored interventions according to game-type, player base, and type of community is imperative for game publishers to effectively address TBs or promote a sense of corporate social responsibility (CSR). This approach involves proactively aligning corporate strategies with broader societal values, enhancing player well-being.

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The Modernization of Monitorization: Technological Adaption and Innovation as Mechanisms for Athlete Surveillance

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Aims and Research Questions

While wearable technologies possess many perceived and realized benefits to performance and athlete development, the issuance and reliance on such technologies may pose as threats for athletes competing in any number of sporting spaces. Athletes competing in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) have long been monitored by their respective athletic departments. Such monitorization and overt control exhibited by athletic department institutional members (e.g., administrators, coaches, staff) has led scholars to characterize NCAA athletics as a total institutional setting (Hatteberg, 2018; Southall & Weiler, 2014). As technology continues to advance and become more socially pervasive, many NCAA member institutions have issued wearable technology devices to athletes. Accordingly, the present exploratory study sought to examine the outcomes of such implementation of wearable technologies within a sporting space, specifically utilizing college athletics as a research setting.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Paternalism persists in various forms throughout the institutional field of NCAA athletics. Hawkins (2010) and Southall and Weiler (2014) claim a paternal relationship exists between coaches and college athletes, in general, and Black male profit-athletes specifically. In the current collegiate model,

male football and basketball coaches, as agents of the university, athletic department, conference, and NCAA, serve as father figures who act in the best interests of their children (i.e., athletes). Within the collegiate model, traditional grants-in-aid (GIA), as well as more recent forms of compensation, including cost-of-attendance stipends, education-based benefits, and interim name, image, and likeness (NIL) policies not only reflect adaptation necessitated by legal setbacks to the NCAA's collegiate model, but are also designed to protect and preserve a paternalistic code of amateurism.

Within this setting of institutionalized paternalism, and considering the immense financial value of collegiate athletics, the activities and whereabouts of college athletes have historically been monitored through mechanisms such as class checkers (New, 2015; Stokowski et al., 2017). However, the pervasiveness of wearable technology in collegiate athletics offers athletic department institutional members (i.e., administrators, coaches, staff) a viable means to monitor athletes through digital systems (Comeaux, 2018; New, 2015). Accordingly, the present exploratory study sought to examine the function and pervasiveness of wearable technology implementation in NCAA athletics.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

While interviews consisted of current college athletes discussing their experiences with wearable technology, the aim of the study was to explore the pervasiveness of wearable technology in collegiate athletics. Accordingly, the researchers' directed each interview in a manner that focused on a more holistic description of the use of wearable technology among college athletes, teams, and athletic departments. Such approach was deemed appropriate by the researchers given the present study sought to explore the function and pervasiveness of wearable technology in collegiate athletics, rather than individual athletes' unique experiences with wearable technology.

At the conclusion of the in-vivo coding process, researchers collaborated to identify primary thematic areas that emerged from the interviews. Given the exploratory nature of this study seeking to examine the function and

pervasiveness of wearable technology in collegiate athletics, identified thematic areas lend themselves to these primary points of emphasis; purpose (i.e., function) and usage (i.e., pervasiveness). The conceptualization of these thematic areas was deductive in nature based on the responses and coding of interviews. Accordingly, the researchers conceptualized three primary thematic areas in which interview responses provided context to the function and pervasiveness of wearable technology in collegiate athletics: (1) use of wearable technology, (2) effect of wearable technology, and (3) the amount of surveilled activity.

The participants in this study consisted of 59 (n = 59) athletes currently participating in 16 unique NCAA athletic programs as of Fall 2023. Representative primarily of NCAA Division I institutions (n = 12), participants were identified through a convenience, snowball sampling technique. Thirty-nine (n = 39) interview participants currently competed in women's sports and 20 (n = 20) competed in men's sports.

Findings and Discussion

Findings from interviews with current NCAA athletes reveal that the widespread use of wearable technology in college athletics has resulted in increased surveillance of athletes. In addition, participants stated that while implementation of wearable technology within training programs was instrumental in improving performance, such increasing biometric monitoring was detrimental to individual development and occasionally fostered dissension among teammates. While contextualized in the setting of NCAA athletics, the findings of this study are indicative of the implementation and utilization of wearable technologies in various areas of sport and athletics. Considering the breadth of media coverage on Olympic athletes' reliance on wearable technology to improve athlete performance and the growth of the wearable technology market globally (Barden, 2021; Harle, 2024), the adverse outcomes associated with amateur and professional athletes' utilization of wearable technology is of potential note and worthy of future examination. We believe this presentation will be of interest to conference attendees and provide an opportunity for engagement with scholars on future

collaborative research from a variety of paradigmatic and national backgrounds.

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Esports And Ecology: An Exploration Of How Esports Organizations and Teams Advocate In Favour Of Environmental Awareness And Sustainability

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Aim and Research Questions

The purpose of this explorative study is to investigate whether and how esports events and organizations are addressing and raising awareness concerning issues related to environmental sustainability, climate change adaptation and sustainable degrowth. Accordingly, key research questions are the following:

RQ1: Are esports events and organizations engaging in raising ecological and climate change awarenesses among target audience and related stakeholders? How?

RQ2: Are esports events and organizations taking any action to address ecological and climate change issues? How?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Notwithstanding the 'sportification' process witnessed by global esports ecosystem and the centrality of ecology in sports management (McCullough et al., 2020; Ross & Fisackerly, 2023), a lack of academic knowledge concerning esports and environmental themes has been underlined (Flegr & Schmidt, 2022; Nystrom et al., 2022). In traditional sports, teams and leagues were found to be strategic sites for and drivers of ecological activism (McCullough et al., 2023); environmental advocacy from institutions, clubs and athletes combine and reinforce fans' and the larger communities' environmental sensitivity (McCullough et al., 2023; Trendafilova & Babiak, 2013). Yet, recent research has reported how environmental sustainability issues are not perceived as crucial issues across esports academics and industry stakeholders (Nystrom et al., 2022). Nurzali (2022) reported a lack of commitment to

promote sustainable development practices and issues among Malaysian gamers. In addition, drawing from sports ecology research (McCullough et al., 2020), it has been argued that esports simultaneously are influenced by climate changes and leave ecological footprints (Ross & Fisackerly, 2023). The latter include also: (a) transportation to and from the in-presence event; (b) raw materials used for the production of hardware and devices; (c) enormous amount of electricity utilised for game development (Ross & Fisackerly, 2023)

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Given esports consist in complex and multi-layered managerial phenomenon an integrated qualitative research methodology is adopted and include: (a) reviewing official documents, reports and statements provided by organizations and events; (b) 8 semi-structured interviews involving key figures in Italian esports organizations and events; (c) related thematic analysis of interview transcripts. Organizations, events and interviewees are selected by purpose and convenience sampling through the identification of relevant stakeholders in Italian esports system. In-depth interviews have been consistently adopted to gather data in sports ecology research (Trendafilova & Babiak, 2013). Content-driven, inductive thematic analysis follows Braun's and Clarke's six steps including: (1) getting familiar with the data; (2) creating initial codes; (3) identifying the most frequently mentioned themes; (4) reviewing themes based on themes' reoccurrence; (5) defining and naming themes primarily by their frequency and then by patterns of meaning and shared core concepts, and (6) producing a report detailing the process. To date, only one interview has been conducted. Key emerging and recurrent themes are recognized consensually among researchers and manually coded using NVivo14.

Results/Findings and Discussion

To date, primary findings reveal a lack of attention of esports organizations, institutions and teams to environmental and climate change awarenesses; limited engagement and actions are performed to address ecological strategies and climate change effects including: (a) offsetting carbon footprints of a

limited number of esports tournaments; and (b) favouring event-day via train and other public and shared mobility among participants and audience. Although results are limited to date, this research is expected to contribute to current academic and industrial knowledge by highlighting the (limited) existing ecological best practices and practical attempts in Italian esports system. These attempts are expected to be limited to sustainable event management approaches, particularly referred to transportation and material procurement.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This explorative and on-going study aims at contributing at filling previously highlighted research gaps concerning environmental themes in esports management (Flegr & Schmidt, 2022). Sports ecology approach might be adapted and extended to esports management (McCullough et al., 2020; Ross & Fisackerly, 2023); this study attempts at extending the emerging esports ecology research field (Ross & Fisackerly, 2023). In particular, esports might perform as a communication lever to capture youngest generations' attention and awareness on ecological issues (McCullough et al., 2020). For instance, Razer – a global hardware provider - performs, promotes and reports the company-led activities to fight climate changes (2023). Fnatic, one of the most prominent British esports teams, carries an internal environmental project to reduce company ecological footprint and aim at internal decarbonization, supported by Planet Mark's certification (Fnatic, 2023). From a managerial point of view, esports organizations and events might enhance their environmental Corporate Social Responsibility (Trendafilova & Babiak., 2013) as well as their credibility and awareness across target audience.

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Riding the Digital Wave: Exploring Athletes' Adoption of Mixed-Reality Sports Platforms

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Aim and Research Questions

The growing importance of digitally mediated sports underscores the need to understand the factors driving athletes to adopt Mixed-Reality (MR) sports platforms. This insight is crucial for developing strategies that enhance athletes' engagement with these innovative technologies (Hoerber et al., 2023). The aim of the present study is to identify contributing factors to the adoption of these platforms, using the example of the indoor cycling platform Zwift. The research question is as follows: What factors influence athletes' intentions to use and their actual usage behavior of MR sports platforms?

Literature Review and Theoretical Background

The sports industry's digital transformation has significantly changed how sports activities are conducted, experienced, and valued, occurring in two main waves. The first wave, digitalization, has seamlessly integrated digital technologies into various facets of sports, including training, talent recruiting, refereeing, and fan engagement (e.g., Märtins et al., 2023). The second wave, virtualization, gained prominence, especially highlighted during the Covid-19 pandemic (Rojas-Valverde et al., 2022, Westmattmann et al., 2021b). This era ushered in the adoption of MR technologies to forge interactive and immersive sports experiences (Smith & Skinner, 2022). Prominent first examples, such as the Virtual Olympic Series 2021 and the Virtual Tour de France, demonstrate that traditional sports stakeholders are increasingly engaging in virtual sports (Westmattmann et al., 2021b).

Building on the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2; Venkatesh et al., 2012), our theoretical model examines

the determinants of athletes' intentions and actual usage of MR sports platforms. Acknowledging the observed gaps between intention and actual behavior in sports (Theodorakis, 1992), we enhance the UTAUT2 framework by incorporating three contextual factors as antecedents of actual use behavior: performance level, urbanization, and workload.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

To address the research question, we investigate the adoption of MR sports platforms, using Zwift as a popular example. Zwift allows athletes to measure their performance using specific interface devices (smart trainers) and translate this data into a virtual world where they are represented by avatars. Beyond training, users can also compete in scheduled races against others or customize their virtual bikes.

This study adopts a Mixed-Methods approach following the guidelines provided by Venkatesh et al. (2013). This approach integrates both quantitative (Study I) and qualitative (Study II) research methodologies, facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem by leveraging the strengths of both methods. In Study I, we test our theoretical model on the adoption of MR sports platforms using survey and In-App Data from 515 Zwift users. For analysis, covariance-based structural equation modeling is utilized (Kline, 2023). In Study II, we conduct 20 semi-structured interviews with Zwift users and perform thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to corroborate the quantitative findings and provide deeper insights into user experiences.

Results and Discussion

The results from Study I reveal that performance expectancy, hedonic motivation, and price value increase users' intentions to continue using Zwift. These findings suggest that the perceived benefits, enjoyment, and cost-effectiveness of Zwift are key drivers of user retention. Conversely, we did not observe significant effects from effort expectancy, facilitating conditions, and social influence on users' continuance intentions. Furthermore, continuance intention demonstrates a medium effect on the actual use of Zwift. This finding underscores the importance of users'

intentions in translating into actual engagement with the platform. Among the context factors examined, users' performance level is the only context factor that increases actual use. This suggests that higher-performing users engage more frequently with Zwift. In contrast, the level of urbanization in the users' place of residence and their workload do not significantly affect the actual use of the platform.

The qualitative content in Study II corroborates the quantitative results, providing insight into the factors that encourage participation in Zwift. By exploring participants' motivations for starting and continuing to use Zwift, as well as the benefits that sustain their involvement, the results indicate that local weather and infrastructure initially drive users to engage with the platform. Once engaged, the platform's easy access and training and performance features affect decisions to continue subscriptions. Importantly, many participants not only use the platform for fitness but also engage in rigorous training and racing to prepare for outdoor cycling competitions. In this context, Zwift serves as a critical tool, significantly aiding users in achieving their athletic goals.

Conclusion

Our mixed-methods study found that perceived benefits, enjoyment, and cost-effectiveness drive user retention on MR sports platforms like Zwift, with user intentions closely translating into actual usage. Theoretically, these findings enhance our understanding of the adoption of highly immersive technologies in sports and the reasons for the intention-behavior gap. Practically, sports organizations can leverage these insights to strategically develop virtual sports, focusing on aspects that enhance user engagement and satisfaction, effectively complementing traditional sports.

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A Systematic Quantitative Literature Review of Innovation In Sport Management

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Purpose and Literature Review

Innovation (i.e., successful implementation of novel ideas to enhance performance) (Anderson et al., 2014) has become an important phenomenon for sport practitioners and scholars alike. Thus, sport management researchers have studied innovation antecedents (Svenson et al., 2020), types of innovation (Corthouts et al., 2023), and innovativeness (Delshab et al., 2022) in various sport settings. Yet, gaps in our understanding of innovation in sport remain due to an unclear understanding of innovation, its context-specific nature, and the fact that some sport entities are risk-averse. Given the growing interest of innovation in sport, a systematic review of the existing sport innovation literature would help scholars efficiently integrate existing information regarding a complex phenomenon (i.e., innovation) and help practitioners with their innovation-related decision-making and capabilities. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to systematically review and synthesize contemporary literature on innovation in sport management academic literature.

Methods

A systematic quantitative literature review (SQLR) approach was employed to systematically examine innovation research in peer-reviewed sport management-related journals, written in English, and published between 2016 and 2024. This date range was selected to build on a previous systematic review conducted in 2016 (Tjonndal, 2016). A new systematic review is needed, however, as the world and sport have drastically changed, and a plethora of meaningful sport innovation literature has been published since 2016.

The SQLR approach includes five main stages: (1) define research questions, (2) formulate a review process, (3) search the literature, (4)

extract relevant literature, and (5) synthesize findings (Pickering & Byrne, 2014).

The SQLR was guided by the following research questions: (RQ1) How is innovation being studied in sport management literature? And (RQ2) What is known about innovation in sport management literature? An expert librarian helped the lead author create a detailed search strategy that included a combination of keywords: sport* AND innovate* AND federati*, organizat*, associati*, team*, league*, employee*, stakeholder* for stage two. For stage three, various databases (i.e., EBSCOhost, ProQuest, Scopus, and Google Scholar), yielded an initial retrieval of records (n=567) that were uploaded to Zotero, a database management system. When extracting literature for the fourth stage, all duplicates were first removed (n=82). Then, the remaining records (n=485) were scanned and thoroughly scrutinized, removing records based on the exclusion criteria set by the two authors, yielding the final records included in the SQLR (n=105). A more detailed explanation and summation of this process will be illustrated following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) flowchart design (Moher et al., 2009).

Preliminary Findings and Implications

The final accumulated 105 records are currently undergoing a detailed analysis and will be synthesized as the findings of this study (i.e., stage five) at the time of presentation. Specifically, findings will quantitatively synthesize how innovation has been studied (e.g., methods, context, and theoretical perspective) (i.e., RQ1) and a qualitative inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2004) of the SQLR records' findings will be conducted to synthesize what innovation types (e.g., social, technological, organizational) and components (e.g., antecedents, outcomes, typologies, perspectives) of innovation that has been studied (i.e., RQ2) in contemporary sport management literature. By providing a better map of the current literature, including issues, opportunities, and failures, sport researchers can better see the gaps and improve how we as a field conduct innovation in sport research.

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Esports Online Live Streaming vs On-site Consumption: A Comparison of Spectator Motivations and Market Segmentation

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Aim and Research Questions

The focal point of this research is the domain of electronic sports (commonly known as «Esports») event management and consumer behaviours (i.e., esports fans in our context). As a distinct category of sporting events, esports has garnered immense popularity, drawing millions of spectators both in person to host cities and online via live-streaming platforms such as YouTube Live and Twitch. A larger market not only signifies more opportunities but also presents challenges that demand more nuanced and sophisticated marketing strategies. In addition, there is a gap in knowledge in understanding online viewership and on-site spectatorship in esports event management and consumer behaviours. The existing knowledge is limited to a comparison between traditional and esports spectator motivations (e.g., Pizzo et al., 2018) or streamer and audience behaviour (Li et al., 2020).

To fill the gap, the first objective is to identify and categorise the different segments of esports fans as effective marketing often begins with customer segmentation. The second objective is to explore the relationship between spectators' motivational desires—performance dimensions, social dimensions, and performer dimensions—and their flow experience and behaviour intention (to continue attend the event).

RQ1. Who attended the esports event (market segmentation)?

RQ2. How are spectators' motivational desires ([a] performance dimensions, [b] social dimensions, and [c] performer dimensions) related to flow experience and subjective wellbeing?

RQ3. Are their differences between online live streaming and on-site spectatorship in terms of market segmentation and the structural model?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The current body of literature reveals notable gaps in our understanding of esports spectatorship. Rietz and Hallnamm (2022) posited that research on this topic should pivot towards a more qualitative and explanatory direction. Comprehending the motives of esports spectators is crucial, as these motivations can effectively predict behavioural outcomes (Hamari & Sjöblom, 2017). Much of the research on consumer behaviour and motivation in esports centres on player consumption, leaving spectatorship relatively unexplored (Lee & Schoenstedt, 2011). Consequently, this study's primary aim is to shed light on the psychology of consumer behaviour in esports attendance for both on-site and online, with an emphasis on understanding the mechanism of the flow experience. We put the flow experience as a dependent variable as it has many positive outcomes such as subjective wellbeing, behavioural intention, and loyalty (e.g., Kim & Kim, 2020). Thus, this study establishes hypothetical relationships based on the empirical studies among the variables.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The data collection for this study will be conducted in collaboration with the Korea eSports Association (KeSPA) by utilising their official website and social media channels during May. Convenience sampling will be employed to facilitate data collection. This study assesses ten esports spectator motivations, drawing on the Motivation Scale for Sports Consumption (MSSC) developed by Trail et al. (2003). Additionally, the measurement of flow experience is adapted from Kim and Kim (2020). The research methods employed in this study are twofold: (1) K-means clustering technique (to address RQ1 and to fulfil the first research objective) and (2) structural equation modelling (to answer RQ2 and RQ3, thereby achieving the second and third research objectives). K-means clustering is a widely adopted unsupervised learning algorithm in data mining, designed to detect and group distinct clusters based on specified attributes. K-means clustering aims to segment data into groups where respondents are as close to each other as possible while ensuring these groups remain distinct from one another. In our

research, we will analyse the four attributes: (a) age (b) gender (c) annual income and (d) the length of being a esports fan.

The partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) is to use to test direct and indirect effect of the established hypotheses among motivations, flow, and behaviour intention. The research employs established measurement scales that have been psychometrically validated to assess the variables. Then, the model comparison between two different consumer groups is conducted: (a) online live streaming spectators and (b) on-site (venue) spectators.

Results/findings and Discussion

The anticipated outcomes of this study include distinct market segments within the esports audience, differentiated by variables such as age, gender, income, and duration of fandom. We expect to identify unique profiles for both online and on-site spectators, which may reveal differing motivational factors driving their engagement. The structural equation modeling is expected to demonstrate nuanced differences in the mechanism of behaviour intention formation between online viewers and physical attendees, potentially highlighting unique strategic opportunities for each group.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

Understanding the distinct spectator segments and their motivations could enable organisers and marketers to design more effective communication and promotional strategies, ultimately enhancing spectator satisfaction and loyalty. Also, by confirming the model difference between online live-streaming spectators and on-site spectators' behaviour intention formation, this study can broaden the understanding of consumer behaviour across various digital and live entertainment formats.

Spontaneous Recall of Esports Sponsoring Brands in Spain: a Cross-sectional Study Using RandomForest Technique

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Aim and Research Questions

The objective of this study was to identify the differences in spontaneous recall of commercial brands linked to eSports based on gender and the type of game played. Additionally, it aimed to apply supervised machine learning techniques to correctly classify gender and type of game based on this spontaneous recall

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Esports have become a professionalized industry showing great financial health and a growing audience according to specialized consulting firms (Deloitte, 2022; Newzoo, 2022). This fact attracts numerous sponsoring brands that primarily seek greater visibility and impact on segments of young populations from Generation Z or millennials, who constitute the main viewers and fans of electronic sports (Kelly and Van der Leij, 2021). However, there are many concerns related to esports that may be related to discrimination and toxic behaviours (Pauketat, 2022) and sedentary habits, even though no evidence has been found on this aspect (Tuomas and Veli-Matti, 2016).

There are different types or categories of esports, highlighting the following: Massive Online Battle Arena (MOBA), First Person Shooter (FPS), Collectible Cards, Sport Simulators, and Battle Royale. Each of these esports has a different audience, as well as being subject to different codes of protection based on age and the content of the video game, also known as PEGI (Pan-European Game Information). Knowing which brands are remembered by players in these types of video games, based on the type of game and gender, can enable commercial brands to

assess the effectiveness of different marketing strategies aimed at this target audience.

Research Design, Methodology And Data Analysis

1251 individuals (800 men; 21.54 ± 3.9 years - 451 women; 20.66 ± 3.17 years) participated in this study. Participants were selected by the researchers through convenience sampling. Only participants who were frequent players of any esports were administered the questionnaire. Study participants completed a face-to-face questionnaire using QuickTapSurvey® software. The variables recorded were: Age, Gender, Type of esports played, and Spontaneous recall of sponsorship. The type of game played by the interviewees was categorized following the most popular esports types mentioned previously. On the other hand, the spontaneous recall of commercial brands associated with esports in Spain was assessed using the following question: «What three commercial brands sponsoring esports in Spain come to your mind?»

All analyses were conducted using R® programming software with the Random Forest library. Six Random Forest classification models were proposed, with the following variables taken as dependent variables: Gender, MOBA Player, FPS Player, BattleRoyale Player, Collectible Cards Player, and Sports Simulator Player. For the creation of each model, a random 65% of the dataset was used as a training sample and 35% as a validation sample. For each model, 1000 random decision trees were run. Model fitting was performed using the classification table and the ROC curve, finding the Area Under the Curve (AUC) considered as excellent ($0.90 < \text{AUC} < 1.00$), good ($0.80 < \text{AUC} < 0.90$), fair ($0.70 < \text{AUC} < 0.80$), poor ($0.60 < \text{AUC} < 0.70$), and fail ($0.50 < \text{AUC} < 0.60$). The influence of each variable was contrasted using the Mean Decrease Gini (MDG), a measure of the importance of each variable in the proposed models calculated from the contribution of each to the homogeneity of the resulting nodes and leaves of the model (Han et al., 2016).

Results/Findings and Discussion

The model proposed for the variable Sex presented an $\text{AUC} = .763$ and a predictive capacity of 70.9% (53.64% sensitivity; 80.43% specificity). On the other hand, spontaneous

recall of commercial brands correctly classified the variable FPS Player ($\text{AUC} = .644$; Sensitivity = 86.21%; Specificity = 33.58%) and MOBA Player ($\text{AUC} = .725$; Sensitivity = 96.56%; Specificity = 25.23%). However, the classification capacity of the Random Forest models did not correctly classify the variables BattleRoyale Player ($\text{AUC} = .57$), Collectible Card Player ($\text{AUC} = .58$), and Sports Simulator Player ($\text{AUC} = .52$). The five commercial brands with the greatest influence on the predictive capacity of the Sex variable were: Dominos Pizza ($\text{MDG} = 14.52$), G Fuel ($\text{MDG} = 14.14$), Logitech ($\text{MDG} = 13.15$), Team Razer ($\text{MDG} = 12.71$), and Nike ($\text{MDG} = 10.41$). Regarding the MOBA Player variable, the variables with the greatest influence were: Logitech ($\text{MDG} = 16.28$), Omen ($\text{MDG} = 11.81$), Dominos Pizza ($\text{MDG} = 11.44$), Orange ($\text{MDG} = 10.58$), and Vodafone ($\text{MDG} = 9.96$). Lastly, spontaneous recall associated with the FPS Player variable influenced more based on recall of the following brands: Team Razer ($\text{MDG} = 11.89$), G Fuel ($\text{MDG} = 11.19$), Sony ($\text{MDG} = 10.42$), Logitech ($\text{MDG} = 9.88$), Orange ($\text{MDG} = 9.79$).

Conclusion, Contribution, And Implication

Evaluating the impact of different sponsorship strategies on brand recall or purchase intention can often be challenging due to the multiple interactions of variables to be analyzed. This study demonstrates that using ensemble machine learning techniques such as Random Forest, with a high capacity to detect hidden patterns in high-dimensional data, allows the identification of different population segments (men vs. women or players of certain types of video games) through specific brand recall. Therefore, the use of such techniques can be employed in these types of studies as a means to evaluate the impact of brands on target population segments.

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The Gendering of Technological Innovations in Sports Coaching and Refereeing

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Aim and Research Questions

High-performance sport heavily rely on technological innovation, where sophisticated technological systems aid in both coaching strategies and refereeing decisions. Technological innovation is therefore a crucial part of sports coaching and refereeing. For instance, coaches use wearable technology, digital platforms, and artificial intelligence (AI) to manage and monitor the training load, performance, and health of their athletes, while referees use digital communication, video, and AI systems to assist their decision-making. While these technologies and the data they produce impact a multitude of stakeholders, including athletes, coaches, referees, fans, and audiences, the innovation side of sports technologies is seldom discussed. Furthermore, it is often taken for granted that technological innovations in sports are objective and neutral tools that are suitable for all athletes, coaches, and referees (Toner, 2024). In other words, technological innovations in sports are commonly understood as gender neutral. From this starting point, this study investigates technological innovation in sports coaching and refereeing from a gender perspective. The following research questions are examined: (1) In what ways are technological innovations in sports coaching and refereeing gendered? And (2) How do any gendered disparities in the development, implementation, and use of sports technologies impact women coaches and referees?

Literature and Theoretical Framing

While technological innovation in sports is a growing field of research (Mallen, 2019), there is limited scholarly attention given to the intersections of technology and gender in sports. Current literature often investigates either technological innovations in sport organizations, or gender equality issues in sports management (Skirbekk, 2023). Therefore, this study builds on empirical insights from two fields: the adoption of

technological innovations in sport organisations (Harding et al., 2016), and gender equality issues in sport management (Hovden & Tjønndal, 2019; Alsarve, 2024). Theoretically, we combine perspectives from sociology with that of science and technology studies (STS) to analyze the gendering of technological innovations in sports coaching and refereeing. Here we build on STS frameworks of domestication of technologies (Berker et al., 2005), in combination with feminist theories of the gendering of leadership ideals (Acker, 1992), and critical perspectives on techno-optimism, power, and data analytics in sport (Beer, 2018).

Research Design

Methodology and Data Analysis: This study is based on qualitative interview data from the Nordic research project *Women in a Digitized Sports Culture*, funded by The Joint Committee for Nordic Research Councils in the Humanities and Social Sciences (NOS-HS). The sample consists of 34 interviews with coaches and referees from football, ice hockey, ski jumping, and athletics in Norway (15 referees and 19 coaches). Data was analyzed using Eggebø's (2020) collective qualitative analysis, which builds on Braun & Clark's thematic analysis.

Findings and Discussion

The findings demonstrate the diverse ways technological innovations in coaching and refereeing impact gender equity in these leadership roles. Despite the potential for technological innovation to enhance performance, health, and decision-making in sport, their predominant use in men's elite sports highlights a gender divide, where women in coaching and refereeing positions often find themselves at a disadvantage due to limited access and resources. In this way, the interview data uncover hidden biases and show how many technological innovations in sports coaching and refereeing are gender blind. A main finding here is that women coaches and referees have limited opportunities to use novel technologies compared to their male counterparts, indicating a digital divide in access to technological innovation in high-performance sports. This further implies that the adoption of technological innovation may contribute to widening the gender gap in high-performance sports. Overall, the findings point to some of

the challenges women's sports face due to gender-blind algorithms, women's underrepresentation in sports tech development, and sex-data gaps in sports performance big data. Thus, a key focus in our discussion is on the often-implicit bias through omission as a mechanism upholding and generating gendered biases that increase gender inequalities.

Conclusion and Implications

Based on the findings we outline what a more gender inclusive approach to the development and use of technological innovation in sports coaching and refereeing might look like. Here, we advocate for more inclusive technology design and policy interventions to bridge the digital divide, ensuring that sports technologies serve as empowering tools for men and women in high-performance sports.

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Exploring the Health and Wellbeing Needs of Older Adults and Evaluating a Hybrid Programme for Older Adults

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Aim and Research Questions

The study aims to explore the health and wellbeing needs of U.K. older adults aged over 65 and the feasibility of establishing a university-affiliated community centre. This centre would offer a unique hybrid programme combining physical, technological, and social activities in an engaging and educational environment. Thus, the research questions are as follows: (1) What are the perceived health and wellbeing needs of older adults? (2) How do older adults perceive a hybrid programme potentially offered by a higher education institution? (3) How can the hybrid programme be improved to better support the health and wellbeing of older adults?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Building upon the intersection of gerontology and digital innovation, our study seeks to promote healthy ageing by fostering engagement in social and physical activities. This endeavour is informed by a comprehensive review of social science research, which examines the nuances of ageing, the adoption and impact of technology, and the principles of effective community building among older populations (e.g., Cabbia et al., 2019; Fisk et al., 2020; Hennessy & Innes, 2020; Stafford et al., 2018). By synthesising insights from these areas, we aim to address the multifaceted needs of older adults. In response to the challenge of declining engagement in new activities among older adults, a phenomenon often attributed to cognitive ageing processes (Charness & Boot, 2009), our project proposes a hybrid programme that integrates physical, technological, and social activities, which will be assessed by the target population in the present study. This innovative approach leverages Virtual Reality (VR) technology, not only as a tool for immersive experience but also as a means to stimulate interest and

participation in both familiar and novel activities. By incorporating VR, we intend to bridge the gap between traditional activity programmes and the digital era, thus offering a tailored solution that aligns with the evolving preferences and capabilities of the ageing population. Developed from literature reviews and consultations with sport practitioners experienced in designing physical activities for older adults, the hybrid programme seeks to connect older adults with digital technology and provide a model for improving their life quality through continued participation in social and physical activities. Aiming to establish a university-affiliated community centre offering the hybrid programme, it is crucial to highlight that universities have transformed from isolated ivory towers into dynamic centres that actively engage with the scientific world and society at large. Their standing is determined not just by their place in global rankings but also by their success in collaborating with stakeholders at local, regional, and national levels to address pressing issues in their surrounding communities (Müller-Christ et al., 2014).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

We employ a feasibility study design to explore whether the proposed hybrid programme is suitable for implementation through a university-affiliated community centre. This approach has been widely used in public health studies to test interventions (Bowen et al., 2009). This design is exploratory, aimed at assessing the viability of the programme by gathering insights and feedback from participants. Twenty-four older adults, who are members of a sport centre at a higher education institution in the U.K., have been recruited. Utilising the World Café method (Löhr et al., 2020), we aim to understand their perceived health and wellbeing needs and gather feedback on the hybrid programme through two discussion sessions, each lasting 45 minutes. The data collected during the World Café sessions, which include notes taken by research team members, audio recordings, and visual materials such as flip charts and post-it notes, will be analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

Results/Findings and Discussion

The anticipated outcomes of this research include gaining insights into the perceived health and wellbeing needs of older adults in the U.K., which will inform the necessary modifications and enhancements to the hybrid programme. We also expect to gather valuable feedback on how higher education institutions can more effectively support the wellbeing of older adults, thereby contributing to improvements in community and public health. Please note that the data collection will be completed on Monday 1st July 2024. The research team is confident that we can present the results at the conference.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The findings of this study will lay the groundwork for establishing a university-affiliated community centre, aiming to enhance the health and wellbeing of older adults in the U.K. through the proposed hybrid programme. By identifying specific needs and evaluating programme feasibility, our research will not only enrich academic understanding of gerontology and digital innovation but also provides practical insights for universities to support older adults more effectively. This approach highlights the potential of such centres to contribute to community health improvements and the evolving role of higher education institutions in societal wellbeing (786 words).

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Make or Buy? From decision-making to performance: The case of E-League 1 Uber Eats

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Aim and research question

As part of their diversification strategy, increasing numbers of professional football clubs are entering the esports sector (Schmidt & Holzmayer, 2018). This is the case for the French clubs that have joined E-League 1, which is a competition organised by the French Professional Football League (LFP) around the game of FIFA. These clubs have the choice over their mode of governance: develop the activity in-house or outsource through a partnership with an esports structure. This study investigates this Make or Buy dilemma across three key dimensions: the decision-making process, operationalization of the activity, and the resulting esports and marketing performance.

Theoretical background and Literature review

This research mobilise three complementary theories, as prerequisite to study the outsourcing decision of the organisations (Medina Serrano et al., 2018). The Resource-Based View (RBV) and Transaction Cost Economics (TCE) theories elucidate how choices can be optimized to access superior resources while minimizing costs (McIvor, 2009). Nonetheless, the ultimate decision-making process may not solely rely on economic rationality, as external influences can play a significant role (Medina Serrano et al., 2018), a phenomenon explicable through the theory of institutional isomorphism (Barreto and Baden-Fuller, 2006).

Methodology

This study used a qualitative approach and surveyed 46% of the clubs involved in the competition using semi-structured interviews. Additional stakeholders were interviewed to supplement the findings. Professional esports structures partnered with clubs were surveyed, as well as the esports manager of

the LFP. The interviews were then transcribed and coded.

Findings and discussion

Clubs that have outsourced seek access to better resources provided by partnered professional esports structures while minimizing operational costs. On the contrary, internally managed clubs perceive themselves as having equal or superior standing compared to professional esports structures, along with potential opportunistic costs and market-related uncertainty. Finally, some clubs have opted for internalization due to coercive isomorphism applied by the LFP, which aims to promote this governance model for clubs. However, clubs have not made significant investments in E-Ligue 1 because it is an activity that creates little value for them as a whole. Thus, outsourced clubs benefit from better resources at lower costs through their partnership with esports structures. Internally managed clubs are unwilling to invest enough to bridge the resource gap with these structures, and the additional resources provided by the LFP for clubs of this model are also insufficient. As a result, clubs with the outsourcing model have better esports performance because they partner with structures for which esports is their core business and take advantage of their partners' access to better resources (Lahiri et al., 2022). However, marketing returns remain disappointing for all clubs. Indeed, the activity primarily attracts established fans of the clubs and fails to achieve its goal of diversification.

Conclusion, contribution and implication

This research combines analyses of strategic process and content to examine the impact of the decision-making process on a firm's performance (Durand et al., 2017). The findings of this empirical investigation further corroborate those of prior theoretical studies and underscore the importance of employing complementary theories in governance choice analysis (Medina Serrano et al., 2018). The study's results emphasise the significance of influential factors such as cost minimization and access to supplementary resources (Espino-Rodriguez and Rodriguez Diaz, 2017). Moreover, by shedding light on the influence of coercive isomorphism, our findings reaffirm the necessity of integrating diverse theories to comprehend actors' decision-making

regarding the Make or Buy dilemma. The findings of this research may also challenge the strategy adopted by the LFP, which aims to promote internalization for clubs. The additional resources do not offset the cost differential induced by outsourcing, and the low marketing returns do not motivate internally managed clubs to invest more resources.

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Technological, Individual, and Organizational Determinants of Sport Managers' Perception of Digital Technologies Degree of Innovativeness for Sport Organizations – A Quantitative Study

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Aim and Research Questions

Digital transformation, as the implementation and use of digital technology, is a significant societal phenomenon that can have a major influence on the field of sport (Vial, 2019). From the application of e-mails as a mode of digital exchange to the use of social media and customer relationship management tools or the implementation of artificial intelligence in the prediction of load management in athletes, digital technologies have manifold fields of application (Ehnold et al., 2021; Kennedy & Wanless, 2022; Sotiriadou, 2022). Current research in sport management has approached the implementation of digital technology by examining the use of digital technologies in voluntary sport clubs related to their organizational capacity (Ehnold et al., 2021), the consequences of digital transformation in sport federations (e.g., regarding organizational culture; cf. Merten et al., 2022) or its use in sport marketing (Stegmann et al., 2023). However, these studies remain rather superficial regarding the description of what digital transformation in their work encompasses and the extent to which specific digital technologies are perceived as innovative and might be transformative for sport organizations. Broadening this understanding seems to be valuable in further informing sport management practice, however, on how they can undergo a digital transformation.

Accordingly, this study aims to derive a typology of digital technologies in sport organizations and assess to what extent sport managers perceive these digital technologies

as innovative and potentially transformative for their sport organizations.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

In sport organizations, various digital technologies are implemented and used and thus, contribute to a certain degree to sport organizations' digital transformation. From reviewing previous literature, we have derived a digital technology typology comprising five categories: sport-related (e.g., performance measurement), organization-related (human resource management), marketing-related (e.g., communications), integrative (interface management), and supportive technologies (e.g., automation of work tasks) (cf. Naraine et al., 2022).

The implementation of these digital technologies and the degree to which they might be perceived as innovative or transformative for a sport organization depends on various technology-related as well as individual and organizational factors (e.g., Corthouts et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2017; Legner et al., 2017; Merten et al., 2022). First, the degree of novelty of a technology may influence its perception of innovativeness (Legner et al., 2017). In other words, implementing digital information storage was innovative in the 1950s, while doing so today might be perceived as less innovative. Second, individuals' attitudes or willingness to adapt (Kim et al., 2017) and digital capabilities (Merten et al., 2022) can influence sport managers' perception of digital technologies' innovativeness or transformativeness for sport organizations. In particular, the more likely individuals are willing to adopt digital technologies while also being capable of doing so, the more likely we expect them to perceive the technologies as less innovative and transformative. Finally, also on the organizational level, there are factors such as organizations' capacities and characteristics (e.g., financial, human resources, size, infrastructure; Thompson & Parent, 2021), degree of innovativeness (e.g., relative advantage; Corthouts et al., 2022) or maturity (Merten et al., 2022) that can influence sport managers perception of digital technologies degree of innovativeness or transformativeness for sport organizations.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

To explore the aforementioned aim, we apply a quantitative research design. To gather the respective information, we have developed a survey to be distributed among for-profit and non-profit sport clubs and sport federations in Belgium and Switzerland. In so doing, we aim to test the above-developed model on how different technological, individual, and organizational aspects influence sport managers' perception of digital technologies' innovativeness and potential transformativeness for sport organizations. Data collection is being prepared, and results will be presented at the EASM conference.

Results/Findings and Discussion

According to theoretical considerations, we expect that the perception of digital technologies' innovativeness is influenced by the degree of novelty of the technology, the sport managers' individual characteristics regarding the attitude towards digital technologies, and their own capabilities in using digital technologies as well as sport organizations' characteristics such as their capacities, characteristics, stages of maturity as well as degree of innovativeness.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The study results will provide a comprehensive overview of a digital technologies typology in sport organizations. Additionally, the study will offer indications of potential aspects on how technological, individual, and organizational aspects influence the perception of digital technologies' innovativeness. The study will contribute to future research on digital transformation in sport management by developing a more nuanced understanding of what digital transformation means and encompasses. Further, it will contribute to an increased understanding of how the perceived innovativeness of digital technologies is composed across different levels of consideration. Thus, it will contribute to sport management practice by informing sport managers of organizational, individual, and technological aspects that influence their perception of innovative digital technologies, which could guide their decisions related to digital transformation.

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ESMQ New Researcher Award

Track chair: Simon Shibli

Advancing the Global-Local Nexus: The Spatiotemporal Interface for the Effect of the Sport Industry on Community Resilience

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Aim and Research Questions

Over the past two decades, community resilience has gradually gained attention across a range of disciplines, including the behavioral, economic, social, and medical sciences. In a resilient community, the sport industry can be a critical resource for creating value in industry value chain linkages via place-specific externalities in the spatial and temporal dimensions. In this context, the sport industry exhibits prominent spatial dimensions characterized by an uneven distribution across and within regions, leading to diverse levels of localized impacts over time, which are known as spatiotemporal heterogeneity (Kim and Kim, 2023). Despite the importance of spatiotemporal heterogeneity, little is known about the heterogeneous spatiotemporal effects of the sport industry, and the nature and extent of community resilience are either assumed or uncertain. Accordingly, we aim to elucidate how and where the association of sport industry clusters with community resilience varies spatially and temporally.

Literature Review

Community resilience refers to a set of interconnected adaptive capacities to cope with disturbances in socioeconomic conditions derived from adverse events (Norris et al., 2008). In industry value chain linkages, such as the interlinkage of sport sectors with other business sectors (Nedelkoska & Russell, 2015), specialization in the sport industry and regional clusters can foster community resilience, assuming a socioeconomic function to support community sustainability rather than advancing economic growth alone (Runiewicz-Wardyn, 2017).

Within the geographic proximity of industry actors, a range of location-based externalities can arise, including knowledge spillover and socioeconomic benefit, learning-by-doing among specialized suppliers and consumers who interact in close intrasectoral networks, and human resource connections (Chikán et al., 2006). In this framework, externalities are based on the characteristics of the spatiotemporal context in which industry actors act (Arbia et al., 2014). Thus, this study conceptualizes, from a spatiotemporal perspective, the relationship between sport and community as a reflective structure through which the actions of a range of actors in sport industry clusters connect to community resilience.

Research Design and Data Analysis

In this study, 3,108 counties in the United States were selected as the study areas to assess the county-level spatiotemporally heterogeneous effects of the sport industry on community resilience. This study included spatially-lagged dependent and explanatory variables, using macro-geospatial data for community resilience (outcomes and baseline resilience indicators); key sport industry clusters (predictors and the location quotients of spectator sport, promoters, agents, and sport facilities); and social vulnerability (controls and socioeconomic status) from secondary sources.

To address spatiotemporal heterogeneity, a spatial difference-in-differences (SDID) was used to measure a spatial causal effect over time. As a follow-up analysis, geographically and temporally weighted regression (GTWR) was employed to capture spatiotemporal heterogeneity from a local spatial standpoint. Such dual-spatiotemporal modeling makes it possible to provide an extended interpretation and evidence for sport industry cluster and community resilience, considering both spatial and temporal features given in a region.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The findings reveal that from a global spatial perspective (SDID), the spatial effects of sport industry clusters on community resilience indicate temporal variation, which differs by the type of sport industry cluster. From a local spatial perspective (GTWR), sport industry clusters have a spatiotemporally heterogeneous effect on community resilience

across counties, with potential spatial spillover effects between neighboring counties, which is pronounced by spatial and temporal dependence. Thus, in terms of spatiotemporal dynamics, this study confirms that specific local environments can play a vital role in connecting sport industry clusters with community resilience over time.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The activation of specific sport industry sectors in a region could offer an effective strategy for enhancing comprehensive community resilience. The findings of this study serve as a platform for a better understanding of the spatiotemporal association of sport industry sectors with community resilience by considering regional differences and the sport industry as a tool for developing location-specific community resilience. Thus, this empirical interdisciplinary work, including sport management, geography, and community science, advances knowledge of sport industry and community resilience by demonstrating heterogeneous spatiotemporal interactions. Practically, the current study calls for spatial management planning and strategy in sport industry for enhancing community resilience, considering spatially and temporally varying patterns.

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Theorizing Non-Profit Sport Organization Board Decision Making

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Aim and Research Questions

Boards are the main decision-making (DM) body in non-profit sport organizations (NPSO). Decisions are central to fulfilling roles and responsibilities (Hoye et al., 2023). Independent examinations of internal (Zeimers et al., 2023) and external factors (Lachance & Parent, 2024b) influencing DM provide a strong foundation of knowledge. However, there is a dearth of applied theoretical constructs and empirical evidence in the form of statistical relationships to understand this phenomenon in sport boards (cf. Lachance & Parent, 2024a, 2024b).

Thus, this study explains the predictive relationships of internal and external factors on DM in NPSO boards. By doing so, contributions are aimed towards the theorization of NPSO board DM by uncovering operationalizable constructs (i.e., the what), relationships between constructs (i.e., the why), and the contextual boundary (i.e., the who, when, and where; Lachance et al., 2024).

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Previous sport governance research has examined facets of the board's role in DM (Hoye et al., 2023), and constructs like rent-seeking (McLeod et al., 2021), passion (Zeimers et al., 2023), or conflict (Kerwin et al., 2011). Findings emphasize the importance of internal and external factors on sport boards' DM. However, the theoretical foundation of these relationships from a quantitative standpoint remains unexplored.

This study's theoretical framework is informed by recent qualitative research related to the impact of multiple internal (i.e., composition, size, Chair collective leadership, Chair-CEO relationship, technology, and policies and procedures; Lachance & Parent, 2024a) and external factors (i.e., general

environment conditions, sport systems structure; Lachance & Parent, 2024b) on NPSO board DM. The present study adopts these identified factors to frame questionnaire items, thereby answering calls for quantitative research to assess the statistical significance of predictive relationships (Lachance & Parent, 2024a, 2024b). DM is conceptualized according to strategic DM theory's constructs: centrality, duration, flow, interaction, and scrutiny (Cray et al., 1988). These aforementioned constructs are relevant to examine DM, as demonstrated by prior empirical research in sport (Lachance & Parent, 2024a, 2024b).

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

This study features a mixed-method methodology and a two-phase sequential explanatory research design. First, the quantitative phase collected data via an online self-administered questionnaire (from January 9th to May 9th, 2024) comprised of four sections (i.e., socio-demographics, external factors, internal factors, and DM) and 117 items. 129 NPSO boards in Canada participated in the study where one individual board member per case completed the questionnaire. Data were analyzed in SPSS AMOS 29 via a two-step structural equation modeling (SEM) approach (Byrne, 2016).

Second, a qualitative phase is in progress (i.e., began January 2024) and features three data collection methods: overt non-participant board meeting observations, semi-structured interviews (i.e., CEO, Chair, additional board member), and documents. A single national NPSO board is included in the qualitative phase to provide a longitudinal, in-depth, and rich assessment of DM. Collection and analysis were guided by the statistical results within the quantitative phase. To date, six observations have been conducted, representing over 15 hours in the field and 94 documents (e.g., meeting agendas and minutes, emails, and organizational policies). Interviews, however, will be completed in June 2024 and conducted post-hoc for data triangulation. Data analysis, informed by a codebook thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022), is ongoing and will be completed by August 2024.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The first phase's analysis revealed a structural model ($\chi^2/df = 2.794$, $p = .100$; CFI = .946; TLI = .951; RMSEA = .075; SRMR = .683) with predictive relationships between the examined factors and DM. These relationships, however, are either positive (i.e., technology, general environment conditions, sport system structure) or negative (i.e., composition, size, Chair collective leadership, Chair-CEO relationship, and policies and procedures) as they relate to their statistical significance towards a DM construct (e.g., duration, flow, interaction, scrutiny). This result supports claims regarding the simultaneous impact of multiple internal and external factors on DM (Lachance & Parent, 2024a, 2024b). However, results advance prior claims by providing insights into the positive or negative statistical significance of internal and external factors. The second phase's preliminary results indicate the structural model is replicated in practice, though the qualitative data is providing a more in-depth and nuanced understanding specific to the relationships between the identified factors and DM.

Conclusion, Contributions, and Implications

This study contributes to the sport governance literature by developing novel insights of a sport management phenomenon. On one hand, new explanations are derived from predictive relationships within a developed model (the why), which yields insights into operationalizable constructs (the what) to understand internal factors, external factors, and DM in NPSO boards (the who, when, and where; Lachance et al., 2024). On the other hand, a challenge for NPSO boards is to make sound decisions in stakeholders' best interests. This study informs NPSO board practices by developing an awareness of and consideration for factors that can inhibit or benefit DM.

What Does a Network of Sports Fans Look Like? A Study on the Formation of Social Networks and Information Diffusion

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Aim

This study analysed how sports fans form social networks in online communities and how information spreads within these networks. Additionally, the influence of relationships and the attributes of fans within these social networks on the process of information dissemination were examined.

Research Questions

1. Will sports fans in online sports communities be influenced to register on the community by the invitation actions of other fans?
2. Will the homophilic characteristics among sports fans (e.g., number of mutual friends, level of team identification, motivation for community participation) influence the friend-adding and information-sharing behavior of sports fans?
3. Will there be differences in the frequency of information sharing among sports fans based on information attributes (positive vs. negative)?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

According to the Structural Balance Theory and Social Network Theory, sports fans influence each other (Centola & van de Rijt, 2015), leading to attitude or behavioural changes (Newson et al., 2023). These changes are exemplified by the phenomenon described by Cialdini et al. (1976), known as Basking in Reflected Glory (BIRG) and Cut-Off Reflected Failure (CORF). When their favourite team wins, fans tend to say, "we won"; when the team loses, fans say, "they lost." The identification of such phenomena transcends the conventional perception of sports fans as a homogeneous group, revealing that the attitudes of sports fans vary depending on match outcomes and that not all fans share

the same attributes. Additionally, fans tend to think positively about their favourite teams and players from a BIRG perspective, and thus may transmit positive information about the team to others to adopt a positive image of themselves. At the same time, from a CORF perspective, they may also refrain from actively spreading negative information to avoid damaging their image (Dalakas, et al., 2004). However, communication studies have reported that negative information is transmitted more quickly and frequently than positive information (Lee, et al., 2015). This may stem from research attempts to understand information dissemination solely at the individual level. Therefore, it is crucial to explore how sports fans' networks are formed and how interactions between individuals affect information dissemination for a deeper understanding of sports fan behaviour.

Methodology

We monitored behaviour in an experimental sports online community for 3 weeks, and recorded all actions, such as when participants created a profile, added friends, evaluated sports news and shared information. Then logistic regression, binomial tests, QAP (Quadratic Assignment Procedure) regression were used to explore how sports fans' homophilic traits (e.g., team identification and online community usage motivations) may have affected the formation of the network and behavioural diffusion. Additionally, independent samples t-tests were used to examine differences in news sharing frequency based on polarity (positive vs. negative). Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS 28 and UCINET 6.

Results

Sports fans were more likely to join new online sports communities when they received more invitation emails. Additionally, this research suggested that when a sports fan seeks to add friends or share news with others, the presence of mutual friends makes it relatively easier to initiate such actions. Furthermore, fans tended to share negative news more frequently than positive news and to share with people who supported the same team. Finally, news sharers preferred recipients with similar or higher levels of team identification or participation motivation.

Conclusion and Implications

This study comprehensively examined the strength and nodes of networks formed within online sports communities at individual level. This novel approach can advance the field of sports research by applying the network theory to experimental settings, potentially shaping the future theoretical landscape of sports network research. Furthermore, we effectively visualised intangible social networks by analysing data obtained using experimental systems, facilitating a deeper understanding of the unique behaviours of sports consumers at both micro and macro levels. Moreover, this longitudinal study aimed to address the gaps in evidence from previous cross-sectional studies examining sports consumer behaviour. Our results provide robust data and establish theoretical underpinnings for understanding the social networks of sports fans.

Our findings can facilitate the management of both offline and online community members associated with sports teams or leagues. In particular, when negative incidents involving players or organisations arise, the provision of crisis management tactics to spread pertinent messages among sports enthusiasts can mitigate losses. Furthermore, it can provide an empirical framework for businesses in the sports industry to utilise consumer databases, analyse individual consumer traits and social connections, and facilitate the development of effective marketing strategies.

Olympic and Paralympic Games

Track chair: Dikaia Chatziefstathiou

Developing Legacy-Oriented Local Strategies In a Mega-Sporting Event Ecosystem: An Exploratory Study of the Milano-Cortina 2026 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games

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Aim and Research Questions

In recent decades, there has been extensive debate about the attractiveness, sustainability, and suitability of mega-events for host communities (Müller et al., 2021). In the context of public management, such events are seen both as intangible services and as collective platforms for the creation of public value locally, in the short term, and as a legacy (Reis et al., 2023).

However, this value is determined individually, making it crucial to identify the best overall value and to formulate balanced strategies to meet different stakeholder needs (Foley et al., 2014). This research explores strategic practices for legacy building in the Milano-Cortina 2026 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, focusing on local stakeholders and their challenges.

Specifically, it aims to answer: What strategic practices are implemented by local stakeholders in an ecosystem of sports mega-events to create legacies?

How are these legacy-oriented practices implemented?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The theoretical background draws upon Public Management literature, focusing on the inter-organizational perspective and strategic management concepts for public value creation (Bryson & George, 2020). It also integrates literature on Public Service Ecosystems (PSE) (Osborne et al., 2021), which considers public services as dynamic systems of value co-creation influenced by complex interactions among actors at various levels (macro, meso, and micro). From this perspective, the value derived from the event arises from complex and dynamic interactions

among the multiple stakeholders involved in its organization, which develop around a «core» that is the sports event itself (Grohs et al., 2020). PSE can facilitate understanding these processes and how to balance different needs, expectations, and conflicting interests and create long-term public value (Mills et al., 2023).

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

The strategy-as-practice lens for collecting, analyzing, and categorizing data is employed, drawing on activity theory (Jarzabkowski & Wolf, 2010). Strategy practices are seen as mediators of interactions between the subject (the focal point of the analysis, the actor/group), the community, and the goal-directed activities they enact, describing how they do so. They are directed toward a higher-order goal, identified as legacy creation, and are shaped by various ecosystem factors. An embedded case study was conducted on the four clusters of the Olympic ecosystem (Bormio, Cortina, Val di Fiemme, and Anterselva) with interviews with key stakeholders and secondary documentary data to corroborate and extend the interview findings. This approach allowed for a detailed examination of the strategic practices involved and enabled triangulation of data sources.

Findings and Discussion

The findings highlight several specific multifaceted strategic practices implemented in a pluralistic context where a multitude of actors with different interests and needs coexist, which also extend to the perception of the meaning of legacy. They include decision-making, counseling, training and recruitment, and artifacts such as working tables, which mediate the interaction between the subject and local and supra-local communities in the implementation of activities aimed at pursuing goals such as land regeneration, human and economic capital development that contribute to the construction of legacy, whether tangible, intangible or financial. Emerging in this context is the importance of flexibility and strategic adaptability, including the influence of ecosystem factors at various levels (macro, meso, and micro), cultural, institutional, political, environmental, and relational factors shaping such practices, facilitating, or hindering them

that must be duly considered to assist their functioning.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The research contributes to the sport management literature by exploring from an ecosystem perspective how stakeholders interact strategically to create collective value (Grohs et al., 2020). It examines the practical application of strategic paradigms in a pluralistic and ecosystemic context, exploring how they intervene in the processes involved in creating public value, in terms of legacy. Within these processes, the research also explores the interaction between the actors involved and their roles. It thus contributes to strategic public management and the PSEs literature (Höglund et al., 2018; Osborne et al., 2021). The research also explores different perceptions of the significance of legacy as a public value, enriching the academic debate (Ojasalo & Kauppinen, 2024).

The study is exploratory, and its main limitation is its current inability to test the effectiveness of implemented practices in creating a legacy. However, the results provide a useful starting framework. Moreover, they can inform public managers and policymakers responsible for strategies that collaborate with multiple actors to create public value in the complex context of mega sports events.

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Who Still Wants the Olympic Flame? Analysing the Implementation of the Olympic Torch Relay of Paris 2024

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Aim and Research Questions

As the Olympic and Paralympic Games (OPG) model becomes increasingly contested, Paris 2024 aims to set a new standard for sustainable mega-events. To achieve these goals, organisers ran several programs, with the Olympic Torch Relay (OTR) being one of the most emblematic. Given its symbolic significance, the relay has often been subject to political instrumentalization (Chen, 2010 ; McGillivray and Frew 2013). However, few studies have focused on this 'event within the event' from a public policy analysis perspective, despite its numerous attributes suitable for such an approach. With French departments required to apply to host the OTR (having to pay a fee of 180,000€ and bear some of the logistical organisation in exchange of the promotion of local heritage), local elected officials were directly approached. How can we explain their attitudes toward the OTR? What are the hindrances and determinants to territories' participation? How does the implementation of an Olympic event shed light on political stakeholders' dynamics in the context of mega-events?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

A significant volume of literature is dedicated to Olympism and its symbols, including the Olympic Flame, yet the OTR has received less attention. Current literature tends to prioritise geopolitical symbol-related challenges over practical implementation determinants of the OTR. Understood as what happens between policy expectations and (perceived) policy results (DeLeon 1999), interpretative approach of implementation process (Hill and Hupe 2014) is particularly suited to the multiscale and multisectoral contexts inherent of the sport sector (Parent and Jurbala 2023). Based on classic frameworks like the advocacy coalition framework, our model also integrates

analytical prisms derived from our data in an 'evidence-based theory' logic due to the uniqueness of the Olympic context.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Employing an inductive approach, we documented the candidacy or rejection of the OTR by 101 French departments. Using a modular census table inspired by Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), we gathered and analyzed indicators to understand the socio-political context of each department's decision-making. Documentary research was primarily conducted by creating a press sources database through the online aggregator EuroPresse between June 2022 and May 2023. On average, three press articles were used for each case, supplemented by systematic analyses of council decision records bringing the total number of sources used to approximately 450. Subsequently, qualitative analysis was conducted through 14 semi-structured interviews to gain insights into stakeholder perspectives and dynamics.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Our findings converge towards an ideal-typical departmental configuration favouring enthusiastic OTR adoption: a right-leaning department located in a region with significant cultural heritage and/or dense population, fostering harmonious relations with its major city, led by a recently elected official facing minimal opposition in the department council, and demonstrating a personal affinity towards sport and Olympism. The revealed pattern emphasises an intentionalist model, highlighting the role of collective beliefs in the benefits of the Games and the concentration of power resources by a dominant coalition in a context where the general public remains passive. However, this intentionality is tempered by the actions of intermediary actors, such as major cities, sponsors, and resistant departments. This inclination towards negotiating with entities more conducive to contractual agreements results in a neocorporatist implementation model.

While mega-sport events (MSE) face increasing criticism, our findings may appear counterintuitive. Local officials' refusals primarily result from objections to the implementation modalities of the OTR, rather

than a complete rejection of the Games. This observation resonates with previous studies (Hiller and Wanner 2018), which suggest that the Olympics are often politically manipulated within unique local electoral contexts, transcending axiological logic.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

Our study perpetuates a paradox concerning the 'politics of symbolism', characterized by simultaneous efforts to de-politicize the Olympic project while exploiting it for political gains. Given the escalating controversies associated with MSE and the OPG, this study offers a novel lens through which one can evaluate local elected officials' relationship with Olympism. Our model provides a nuanced and adaptable approach suitable for limited timeframes and encompasses various layers of public territorial action within the sporting event context. Consequently, this contribution addresses a gap in the current literature, as there is limited research examining the practicalities of torch relay implementation to this extent and from this methodological perspective.

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The History Tracing And Influence Of The "People's Olympics"

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Research purpose

"People's Olympics" is one of the three concepts put forward by Beijing to hold the 2008 Olympic Games. It is the core and soul of the Olympic Games. The concept of "people's Olympics", unique, is the soul of the Beijing Olympic Games, is the core position of the three concepts, is also the most difficult to grasp of the three concepts.

Why can China, as an ancient civilization with more than 5,000 years of cultural tradition, accept the Olympic movement? This is because although there are great differences among the ethnic cultures in the world, there are also similarities. Although the Olympic movement with rich western humanities color, but its "higher, faster, stronger", the pursuit of the spirit of the best thought, and China's "day line, the gentleman with unyielding" thought is consistent, China's humanistic thought contains the people-oriented thought and peace thought and the Olympic spirit is consistent. These similarities enable China to accept the Olympic spirit and join in the Olympic movement. At the same time, it also reflects that the extensive and profound Chinese sports ethics is closely linked with the traditional cultural background. One of the important reasons why Beijing bid for the 2008 Olympic Games to put forward the slogan of the people's Olympic Games is that the traditional culture of the Chinese nation contains profound humanistic thoughts. As early as in the Western Zhou Dynasty, China's humanistic spirit had already sprouted. The word "humanity" was first seen in the *Book of Changes*. "View astronomy, to observe time change; view humanity, to become the world. "Confucianism has had an important influence on the formation of Chinese humanistic thought. The Confucian classics Mencius, The University, the Doctrine of the Mean and the Analects of Confucius, as well as Zhouyi, the Book of Songs, The Book of Shang, the Book of Rites, and the Spring and Autumn Annals, also known as the Four Books and Five Classics, are a systematic and complete

elaboration of Confucianism and Chinese humanistic spirit. Of course, Chinese Taoist culture and Buddhist culture also have a certain influence on the formation of Chinese humanistic spirit. China's humanistic spirit in discussing man and nature, man and society, god and gods and desire, not unchanged, but in the development and perfect, so he has a strong vitality, whether past or now or in the future, or will for people to solve people and nature, human and social problems provide wisdom and theoretical basis. The research of this paper is mainly to trace the ideological origin of the concept of "humanistic Olympics", so as to systematically sort out and comprehensively summarize, and deeply explore its significance of the new era.

Research method

This research mainly uses the literature and data method, logical analysis method and historical analysis method to systematically comb, analyze and comprehensively summarize the concept of «people's Olympics».(1) Literature and data method. Through the China network database retrieval of the Olympic as the theme of the relevant literature, but also retrieved the humanities Olympics as the theme of the related literature, from the retrieval of the number of literature, every year has more literature, the Olympic is a long-term topic, but for less humanities Olympic literature, and no to the historical review of the literature.(2) Logical analysis method. According to the retrieved literature, this study uses logical analysis to grasp the introduction and influence of the people's Olympics.(3) Historical analysis method. This study applied the historical analysis method. Analyze the background of the people's Olympics, the ideas related to the Olympics, and reveal the development and influence of the people's Olympics.

Conclusion

Organizing the Olympic Games today has since become a city and a symbol of a country's modernization. A sociologist said: "Organizing the Olympic Games is a rite of passage for a city." Looking back at history, Beijing, the host of the 29th Olympic Games, is the capital of China, a big eastern country, and a famous historical and cultural city. How to show the personality charm of the new era, the Olympic Games is an opportunity to carry forward the"

cultural Olympics "spirit is a kind of" cultural consciousness ".

The Beijing Olympic Games is a great handshake between the Olympic culture with a long history and the ancient Chinese civilization, and a grand blend of the Chinese culture and the cultures of various nationalities in the world. The «People's Olympics» of the Beijing Olympic Games can be understood as a «cultural Olympics», that is to say, the «Olympic culture» is an excellent achievement of the process of human civilization. As mentioned in the analysis, the return to its original spirit; on the other hand, we can develop and enrich the Chinese culture with the participation of Chinese people. China's contribution to the Olympic Movement lies not only in whether it can participate in the Olympic Games and its development, but more importantly, in whether it can promote the growth of the Olympic Movement. This is the significance of the concept of "People's Olympics".

Taking The Initiative: An Analysis Of Marketing Practices With Professional Athletes

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Over the past two decades, the influence of athlete marketing has reached new heights. Now, athletes are able to commoditize their athletic abilities, thereby establishing their own brand and captivating fans' attention on various platforms. An athlete brand is "a public persona of an individual athlete who has established their own symbolic meaning and value using their name, face and other brand elements in the market" (Arai et al., 2014, p. 98). This perceived connection with an athlete brand inspires the consumer, manifesting an indelible impression and memorable brand equity (Thomson, 2006).

While scholars have put forth a few conceptual frameworks concerning athlete brand management and the related consumer outcomes and marketing strategies (Arai et al., 2014), the athlete brand literature remains largely fragmented. The results of Na et al.'s (2020) investigation indicated that the source credibility of social media content could influence consumer engagement, while Kristiansen and Williams (2015) determined that telling a relatable story that changes the public perception is equally important. Further, athletes have a unique opportunity to brand themselves through their athletic ability, community initiatives, as well as their personalities (Taniyev & Gordon, 2019). Hodge and Walker (2015) investigated marketing strategies through athletes' (i.e., professional golfers) own perspectives, where their findings indicated the lack of time and differences in career stage as challenges in marketing their personal brands. More recently, research has suggested that an athlete's marketability may depend on their authenticity and relatability (Taniyev et al., 2022).

The current study sought to provide further insight into athletes' personas, and how they presented their own image and brand to build relationships with their fans. The following

research questions were developed to guide this investigation:

RQ1: How do athletes utilize their on-court athletic performances to construct a personal brand?

RQ2: How do athletes leverage their personalities in developing a memorable brand?

RQ3: What role does responsible community engagement play in athletes' marketability?

A qualitative research design was implemented to explore data on professional athletes' brand development strategies from multiple athletes representing a variety of sports including tennis, basketball, swimming, triathlon, bowling, spikeball, disc golf, and drag racing. In total, this study included ten purposively selected participants, who demonstrated their knowledge and experience regarding the inquiry through a series of preliminary discussions (Palinkas et al., 2015). Considering the lack of evidence regarding this topic, we employed a semi-structured interview approach (Patton, 2002). A total of eight interview questions were designed to elicit data on the marketing strategies aimed at promoting athletes' personal brands. Sample prompts that helped guide the interview included: a) What role do life story and community engagement play in an athlete's marketability? b) How does an athlete in your sport leverage on-court/on-field performance to secure endorsements?

The initial data analysis phase involved open coding to identify relevant concepts and categories within the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Further, we conducted deductive (using existing theory) and inductive, interpretative (analyzing emerging themes) analyses to draw accurate conclusions about the findings (Jones, 2022; Kyngas, 2020). Three prevalent themes emerged from the analysis of interview data including: community engagement, personality, and rivalries.

The findings highlight the efforts athletes must take to build their brand, which is especially important in today's sport industry where the mediums and ways in which athletes can connect to fans is much different than with past generations. While more is expected of today's athletes in order to connect with fans, there are also more avenues an athlete can utilize to connect with an array of sport consumers. In particular, an athlete needs to not only be engaged with their

community, but also have a personality that is congruent with their image on-and-off the field. The findings are especially prevalent for today's professional athletes, as well as those American high school and college athletes seeking to capitalize on their opportunities with name, image, and likeness opportunities in the United States.

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Knowledge Transfer from Organising Committee to Local Stakeholders: A Case Study of Beijing 2022 Winter Olympic Games

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Aims

Since the introduction of formal programmes for knowledge management (KM) in Sydney 2000, Organising Committees for Olympic Games (OCOGs) have paid increasing attention to the important role of knowledge transfer (KT). Whilst KT initiatives between different OCOGs are well established, KT between OCOGs and local stakeholders has received very little attention. Hence, the aim of this study was to investigate KT from Beijing 2022 OCOG (BOCWOG) to local external stakeholders by exploring how local internal stakeholders may have facilitated this.

Theoretical background

Qin et al. (2022) proposed that in the context of sport mega-events, KM can be understood as a strategy to effectively organize and host an event through a series of activities (e.g., knowledge transfer). In the context of sport mega-events, KT is defined as information and knowledge sharing, passing on personal knowledge, and transferring best practices and recommendations (Schenk, 2015). Within Olympic Games KM literature, the focus has been placed on stakeholders that can transfer knowledge from host to host (Parent et al., 2014). In the current investigation, we advance theory and practice by investigating how knowledge is transferred from OCOG to local external stakeholders (e.g. local sport organisations). We argue that key internal stakeholders need to be identified and heard as the knowledge they acquired whilst working for the Games is likely to be transferred to local stakeholders after the Games (Müller & Stewart, 2016; Parent, 2013).

Methods

This study adopted the interpretive paradigm. Qualitative methods for data collection were used, including document analysis and semi-structured interviews. Firstly, 14 official documents published by the IOC and the BOCWOG were content analysed (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008) to investigate which stakeholder groups were more likely to acquire knowledge from Beijing 2022 and to transfer such knowledge to local external stakeholders. Results of the document analysis showed that local OCOG staff and volunteers are key internal stakeholders in the KT process of the Beijing 2022. This led us to four research questions: what type of knowledge OCOG staff and volunteers acquired from Beijing 2022, how this was acquired, what shortcomings exist in the KT process, and how they have transferred the knowledge to external local stakeholders. Then, we interviewed 20 OCOG staff and 20 volunteers by phone in Chinese. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analysed via thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Results and Discussion

After analysing the documents, we found that there was an expectation from BWOCOG to transfer knowledge to future OCOGs as well as to local external stakeholders. Within the documents, five local stakeholder groups were identified as expected to learn or acquire knowledge from Beijing 2022: OCOG staff, volunteers, community residents, primary and secondary school students, and winter sport personnel. They have not made a distinction between internal and external stakeholders, as the literature has done (Parent et al., 2014; Qin et al., 2022). Thematic analysis of the interviews revealed that OCOG staff and volunteers acquired two types of knowledge: explicit and tacit. The former included winter sports knowledge, Olympic knowledge, English knowledge, and epidemic prevention and control knowledge. The latter included office skills and experience, cross-cultural communication skills, knowledge related to planning and staging large-scale events, professional knowledge in specific functional areas, and volunteer service skills. OCOG staff and volunteers acquired knowledge mainly through two kinds of training: theory-focused training and practice-focused training (Parent et al., 2013; Schenk et al., 2015). There were two shortcomings in the KT process: lack

of awareness of people's feelings and unsatisfactory training content or methods. Regarding whether OCOG staff and volunteers have transferred the knowledge to local external stakeholders, there were three instances: transfer to local sport-related organisations, transfer to local non sport-related organisation or individuals, and no transfer.

Conclusion

The IOC and the BOCWOG 2022 kept the traditional KM strategy (to facilitate KT from hosts to future host) but they did not have either official programmes or clear plans to support KT to local external stakeholders. We investigated how this might happen through internal stakeholders such as OCOG staff and volunteers. When transferring knowledge to local external stakeholders, OCOGs need to consider the requirements of different stakeholder groups and undertake knowledge tailoring (Parent et al., 2014). Although online learning can deal effectively with certain situations, face-to-face training and practical activities still play a more important role in helping local stakeholders to acquire knowledge. During the KT to local external stakeholders, OCOGs should not only enable internal stakeholders to acquire knowledge effectively but also make them aware of the importance of the knowledge they acquired, encouraging and guiding them to transfer the knowledge consciously and proactively to local external stakeholders. The study has some limitations (e.g., lack of direct access to external stakeholders) that will be discussed in the presentation.

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Investigating Administrative Legacies From The Rio 2016 Paralympic Games And The Impacts on National Parasport Organisations

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Aim and Research Questions

This study explored how the Paralympic Games can directly or indirectly produce enduring changes in the administrative processes of parasport NSOs, as well as the impacts of these changes on their administrative operations, creating administrative legacies.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Potential long-term legacies arising from sports mega-events have motivated host countries to stage these events. Researchers have proposed models, instruments, and methods to assess and categorise these legacies and their impacts on host countries (Chappelet, 2012; Preuss, 2007, 2019). Nonetheless, the legacy literature has mostly concentrated on economic, sports participation, and infrastructural effects, especially from the Olympic Games (Preuss & Hong, 2021; Thomson et al., 2020). In this context, very few have been studies paying attention to adjustments in the administrative processes of NSOs that arise through hosting sports mega-events, particularly from the Paralympic Games (Zardini Filho et al., 2023). Changes in administrative processes may lead to positive or negative impacts on the way NSOs implement elite parasport programs. Therefore, there is a need for more and deeper research regarding how hosting mega-events can impact organisational processes and produce administrative legacies for parasport NSOs. Since intangible legacies refer to value perceived by different stakeholders (Girginov & Preuss, 2022), this study explores administrative legacies from the perspective of NSO parasport managers.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

This qualitative research involved five parasport NSOs in Brazil (the Brazilian Paralympic Committee, the Brazilian Table Tennis Confederation, the Brazilian Canoeing Confederation, the Brazilian Confederation of Sports for Visually Impaired Athletes, and the Brazilian Wheelchair Basketball Confederation) and conducted twenty-six semi-structured interviews to garner insights into how parasport managers within the NSOs perceive the administrative legacies emerging from the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. An interview guide was prepared and structured in three main parts. This first, inductive, broadly asked managers about if and how the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games impacted the administrative processes used for the implementation of the elite programs in their NSOs. The second part concerned the planned and problematic sides of the enduring changes perceived by the managers, while the third part focused on perceived pressures that shaped the development of the administrative legacies in their NSOs. The collected data was analysed following a thematic analysis, drawing upon the six steps proposed by Braun and Clarke (2012). Moreover, a document analysis of NSO documents was conducted to explore the organisational contexts, policies, structures, and processes regarding the implementation of elite parasport programs in those NSOs for the Tokyo 2020-21 Paralympic cycle.

Findings and Discussion

Interview data revealed the unplanned nature of administrative legacies that arose from the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, as well as problematic administrative effects of the Games on the parasport NSOs. From the parasport managers' perspectives, key enduring administrative changes were explored in terms of workflows, deadlines, controlling tasks, risk management, actors involved, and formalisation of processes. The managers' perceptions not only introduced these changes related to existing process design, but also new administrative structures and processes, increasing controlling tasks and routines, and new event standards changing internal processes. In addition, the document analysis showed increased funding, new regulations, and tangible legacies that influenced the perceived administrative

legacies. For instance, the explored documents identified funding dependencies of parasport NSOs on public funding that significantly influenced the way the perceived administrative legacies emerged. Overall, parasport managers attributed several changes in their APs and operations to the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. The obtained perceptions of the parasport managers exposed the significance of the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games as a driver to create enduring changes in APs, which resulted in gains of professionalisation. Given these findings, this study contributed to bridging previous research gaps identified in the legacy literature. For instance, Misener (2017) stated that little was known about how the Paralympic Games could deliver legacies and impact host countries, with scholars failing to offer empirical evidence. Similarly, Pappous and Brown (2018) reinforced the lack of empirical evidence regarding Paralympic Games legacies, especially the need for more evidence-based and longitudinal studies. By exploring the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games case, this study explored perceived effects from the Paralympic Games that originated from 2009 (when Brazil won the 2016 Games bid) to 2021 (the end of the Tokyo cycle).

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The research findings provided empirical and conceptual contributions to advance knowledge related to sport mega-event legacies, particularly with regard to administrative processes and the specific context of the Paralympic Games. Furthermore, this study also offers valuable practical insights for parasport managers and policymakers regarding the administrative challenges and opportunities that may emerge from hosting mega-events such as the Paralympic Games.

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The Volunteer Legacy of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games: Is volunteering at the Tokyo 2020 just “Once-in-a-life time” Experience?

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Aim and Research Questions

The main aim of this paper is to investigate the volunteer legacy of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games (“Tokyo 2020”). In particular, the study tries to understand 1) how far the volunteers who experienced the Tokyo 2020 as “Field Cast” (the Games volunteers) and “City Cast” (City volunteers) are motivated to a post-event volunteer, 2) how a post-event volunteer is facilitated by stakeholders, and 3) what kind of challenges exist to create a volunteer legacy for the host community.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

In recent years, each edition of the Olympic and Paralympic Games has developed the volunteer programme for the delivery of the successful Games. At the same time, such programmes are often considered as one of the “legacies” of the Games as they may contribute to developing a post-event volunteer. Therefore, scholars continue to examine the volunteer legacy of the Games, from quantitative analysis of the motivation of the volunteers (Dickson & Benson, 2013; Koutrou & Pappous, 2016), qualitative analysis of the experience of the volunteers (Fairley et al., 2016; Nichols et al., 2017), and the perspective on planning and management of the volunteer programme (Blackman et al., 2017; Holmes et al., 2024).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

This paper adapted an exploratory research design. This study followed two phases of data collection. Firstly, secondary data about the volunteer programme for the Tokyo 2020 was collected and analysed. Secondary source includes official reports published by the organising committee, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government (“TMG”) and relevant

municipalities, and questionnaire surveys conducted by the organising committee, TMG, and the Nippon Foundation which involved in the volunteer training programme. Secondly, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted. In total, five participants (three from relevant municipalities and two from volunteer groups) were interviewed. These participants were selected based on the secondary data analysis, through which some “best practices” for encouraging a post-event volunteer were identified. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and thematically analysed through the qualitative template analysis.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Key findings of this study are as follows: Firstly, according to the questionnaire surveys, the volunteers who engaged in the Tokyo 2020 are highly motivated towards a post-event volunteer. This is probably because some of Field Cast and most of City Cast had fewer or no volunteering opportunities during the Games, due to the situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Secondly, the infrastructure to facilitate a post-event volunteer is developed as the volunteer legacy of the Tokyo 2020. For example, some volunteer groups like “TEAM 2020” are organised mainly by City Cast. In addition, online platforms, namely “Tokyo volunteer legacy network,” “TEAM CHIBA VOLUNTEER NETWORK,” and “TEAM FUJISAWA 2020,” are established by some relevant municipalities to provide the information about volunteering opportunities. Moreover, online communities like “Hello Volunteer” are created by the volunteers themselves to exchange and share the information and their experience. Thirdly, some common challenges are identified by the interviewees, for instance how to encourage sports volunteers to engage in volunteering in other areas, and how to recruit new (in particular, younger) volunteers.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This study found out the experience of the Tokyo 2020 volunteers is quite different from those engaged in previous Games, as the Tokyo 2020 was held not “in its complete form,” and consequently this “loss” seems to motivate them towards a post-event volunteer. Also, the infrastructure to facilitate a post-event volunteer is created as the “planned” or

“unplanned” legacy (Gratton & Preuss, 2008) of the Tokyo 2020 Games. This paper will contribute to the body of literature, namely the research on major sport event volunteer in general, and the study on the Olympic / Paralympic volunteer in particular. Besides, this study provides some insights into how to create a volunteer legacy from the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

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Sustainability of the Olympic and Paralympic Games 2024

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Statement that Abstract relates to professional practice (mandatory)

The presentation will demonstrate how modern Organizing Committees of the Olympic and Paralympic Games will govern and maximize the sustainability of their events. Other event organizers such as the next Games but also World Cups and multi sport events can learn from the way how Paris orchestrated its sustainability approach.

Aim

This presentation will delve into the social and economic sustainability of the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris 2024. The purpose of the presentation is to emphasize the novel approach Paris 2024 is using towards building sustainable Games. To do so, this presentation will unveil the latest insights regarding a governance structure tailored to align with the interests of the Olympic Movement, the city of Paris (Île-de-France), and the Organizing Committee.

Purpose and Background

Sustainable events are very important today. All major and mega events have sustainability officers and dedicated departments to ensure sustainable practices. This focus is crucial for promoting social responsibility and achieving economic benefits.

Incorporating sustainable practices enhances community engagement and well-being, ensuring that the social impacts are positive. Sustainable events also contribute to the long-term economic health of the host city by creating jobs, promoting tourism, and benefiting infrastructure investments.

Moreover, prioritizing sustainability in sports events fosters a sense of unity and pride within the community, supports local businesses, and ensures that the benefits of the event extend beyond its duration. This approach ensures that sports events leave a lasting, positive legacy for future generations.

Design and Implementation

An in-depth project analysis was conducted, complemented by interviews with the 'Evaluation Commission of Social and Economic Sustainability' and the authors of the sustainability report for Paris 2024 (Paris 2024). The evaluation is a meta-analysis of reports and evaluations across more than 50 projects, and it distinguishes between outputs and outcomes. The purpose of this effort is to shed some light into the many projects done. The data of the many projects were collected and conducted over a two-year period from CDES (Limoges) being the academic partner of Paris 2024. Internal data from the Paris 2024 Organizing Committee and other stakeholders (see, Preuss, 2019) are used.

Outputs/Outcomes, Reflections and Future Development

Despite numerous commendable projects undertaken by Paris 2024, including collaborations with the city of Paris, surrounding communities, the French government, and sponsors, we will present a meticulously orchestrated array of projects aimed at realizing the vision of Paris 2024 Organizing Committee. This marks the first instance of achieving such broad success. However, we will demonstrate how value co-creation enhances outcomes, the importance of thorough design and testing of initiatives before implementation, the enduring nature of projects beyond the duration of the Games necessitating follow-up governance, and the necessity of an endowment fund to bolster these initiatives. Shortcomings of several projects will be shown as well.

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Accessible Infrastructure and Social Inclusion: An Athletes' Perspective of the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games

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Aim and Research Questions

In recent years, cities have leaned on the rhetoric of legacy as a way to justify the need to host mega-events (Misener, 2017). In the case of Rio 2016 it was no different. When the Brazilian government put forward their bid to host the Rio 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games, their main legacy vision was to promote social inclusion and elite sport through the expansion of sport infrastructure (IOC, 2009, p. 46). However, since Rio de Janeiro hosted the Games in 2016, the majority of legacy examinations focused on the outcomes and impacts of the Olympic Games, while little to no attention is given to the long-term legacies left from the Paralympic Games. Yet, it is important to hear the opinions and expertise of those who represent the Brazilian Paralympic Committee because they are arguably the group of people most directly impacted by the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine Brazilian Paralympic athletes perspectives on the changes in social inclusion and accessible infrastructure of sports facilities as a result of hosting the 2016 Paralympic Games. To fulfill the purpose of this study, the following research questions were developed: How do Brazilian Paralympic athletes perceive the changes in accessible infrastructure of sports facilities as a result of hosting the 2016 Paralympic Games? How do Brazilian Paralympic athletes perceive the changes in social inclusion as a result of hosting the 2016 Paralympic Games?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

As noted by Misener (2017), the International Paralympic Committee supports and promote four types of Paralympic legacy outcomes. 1) accessible infrastructure in sports facilities and in the overall urban development; 2) development of sport structures and organizations from grassroots to elite level; 3)

attitudinal changes in the perception of the position and capabilities of people with disabilities; and 4) opportunities to become fully integrated in all aspects of life beyond sports (p. 97). Specifically, this analysis focuses on changes in social inclusion and accessible infrastructure in sports facilities. This examination leans on critical disabilities theory (CDT) to explore how infrastructural changes have impacted Paralympic athletes' participation, accessibility, and overall experiences in sports facilities, as well as examine whether these changes have truly promoted inclusivity and equality for elite athletes with disabilities (Pothier & Devlin, 2006).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

This study employs a qualitative research design comprising of twelve semi-structured interviews with Brazilian Paralympic athletes that participated at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. Data collection occurred between April and June of 2024. Interviews were conducted via phone and Zoom calls and lasted between 45 to 90 minutes. Participants were selected via purposive and snowball sampling. To protect interviewees testimonies, pseudonyms were placed in exchange for interviewees' real names. Data collected followed Patton's (2015) strategy for qualitative data analysis which includes: record, transcribe, code, and analyze interviews using a thematic analysis to allow for patterns and themes to emerge from the data. An inductive approach was used to code interviews on Dedoose. The first round comprised of in-vivo and concept coding, while the second round comprised of pattern coding. In total, 43 (N = 43) open codes were created.

Results/ Findings and Discussion

Four themes emerged from the codes of interviews with Brazilian Paralympic athletes around their perceptions on changes in social inclusion and accessible infrastructure of sports facilities as a result of hosting the 2016 Paralympic Games. These themes include: 1) increased awareness; 2) centralized significant positive changes in the southeast part of Brazil; 3) isolated accessible sport infrastructure; and 4) lack of investment and media attention post-games. In summary, results shows that significant but isolated strides were made for social inclusion and

venue accessibility for the 2016 Paralympic Games (e.g., Brazilian Paralympic Training Facility in Sao Paulo), but those efforts were concentrated mostly in the southeast part of Brazil (i.e., Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo) and decreased post-Games.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implications

This study seeks to address practical implication related to the inclusion of disabled athletes in sports facilities as a legacy construct of the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games (i.e., inform policymakers, provide insights to future hosts), as well as advance critical disabilities theory by providing empirical evidence of the impact hosting a Paralympic Games have on venue accessibility and social inclusion for athletes with disabilities. Based on the findings of this study, Brazilian Paralympic athletes perceived the changes in accessible infrastructure of sports facilities as being a positive stride towards inclusivity but pointed out that such legacy was not equitable distributed among different parts of the country, thus affecting perception of participation, accessibility, and overall experiences in sports facilities. This study seeks to contribute to the broader discourse of studies on disability rights, accessibility, and equality in the context of sports.

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User Motivations and Responses to Paralympic Content on Social Media: A Longitudinal Analysis Across Six Summer and Winter Games

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Aim and Research Questions

Research indicates a surge in the popularity of Paralympic sport coverage (IPC, 2021), and consumer preference for inclusion has grown in recent years (Nielsen, 2020). According to Nielsen Sports (n.d.), the PyeongChang 2018 Winter Paralympics shattered international broadcasting and online viewership records, reaching over 100 countries and attracting a cumulative audience of two billion. Despite the projected growth in Paralympic sport programming and viewership, there remains a limited understanding of online audiences' motivations for engaging with Paralympic content. This crucial aspect is often overlooked. Given that online environments, especially social media, offer opportunities for global audience engagement, these platforms become valuable tools for studying such motivations.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Motivation is generally defined as «the driving force within individuals that impels them to action» (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004, p. 87). Within sport, much focus has been placed on fan motivation, initially identified by Wann (1995) and further developed and extended by various scholars (Funk et al., 2004; Mahony et al., 2002; Trail & James, 2001). Key motivations for sport fans include aesthetics, drama, escapism, vicarious achievement, knowledge, physical skill, and social interaction (MSSC; Trail & James, 2001). Byon et al. (2010) adopted the MSSC framework in para-sport events. They found that vicarious achievement, knowledge, and physical skill positively influenced spectators' attitudinal and behavioral actions, such as online media consumption. Cottingham et al. (2014a) developed an instrument to explore para-sport consumer motivation and added

two unique factors: superhero image and inspiration.

While researchers have explored the motivations of fans and consumers who physically attend events like wheelchair rugby, basketball, or specific Olympic Games (Kim et al., 2023), there is a limited understanding of media users' motivation and responses toward Paralympic content. Prior studies examining social media users' motivations toward professional sport organizations have identified factors such as passion, hope, camaraderie, and esteem (Stavros et al., 2014). This study focuses on fans by selecting off-season social media participation as a proxy for studying fans. Two limitations exist to adopting Stavros et al. (2014) in Paralympic settings. Firstly, social media users may not necessarily be fans who have an interest and emotional connection with the sports property; they may include a heterogeneous group of stakeholders with diverse motivations. Secondly, unique motivational factors in para-sport have been found compared to the initial framework for MSSC, so directly adopting Stavros' (2014) model might be problematic as it does not fully capture the unique setting and context. Therefore, it is important to examine social media users' motivations for consuming Paralympic content and their responses to these motivations. Furthermore, longitudinal analysis is warranted to examine if motivations change over time, as this information provides valuable insights for managerial and marketing decisions for organizers and sponsors.

Katz et al. (1974) proposed that the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory explains why and how people use media to gratify their needs and identifies the consequences that result from fulfilling these needs. U&G suggests that individuals engage in communication behavior that is goal-directed, purposeful, and aligns with their preferences, wants, or expectations (Rubin, 2009). Drawing on Katz et al. (1974) theory, we propose the following research questions:

RQ1. What motivates social media users to engage with Paralympic content?

RQ2. Do users' motivations for engaging with Paralympic content on social media change over time? If yes, how do these motivations evolve?

RQ3. How does users' motivation for engaging with Paralympic content influence

engagement metrics, such as likes and retweets?

Methodology

Over eight Paralympic Games (2012–2022), encompassing both Summer and Winter events, we collected Twitter data containing individuals' comments and engagement metrics (i.e., like and retweet). We collected 77,026 tweets that are usable for analysis. A multi-method approach that triangulates quantitative and qualitative methodology is employed. For research RQ1, we will employ open coding by the second author, who has knowledge and research background in the area of disability and sport. Once the second author finishes the initial coding process, the third author reads each of the tweets and codes, and both authors engage in in-person dialogue about the richness, appropriateness, and completeness of the coding categories. For RQ2, a trend analysis method will be applied to coded tweets (i.e., motivations) across years. Finally, for RQ3, a negative binomial regression model will be employed due to the nature of engagement metrics as non-negative integer numbers resembling count data. These variables may exhibit overdispersion, such as a long-tailed distribution or high variability (Rietveld et al., 2020).

Results/Findings and Discussion

The study is currently ongoing, and the findings will be presented at the conference. We aim to contribute to the scholarly discussion with a comprehensive and nuanced analysis of social media users' motivations for engaging in the Paralympic Games.

A Critical Policy Discourse Analysis of Environmental Sustainability in the Olympic Games

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Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this study is to explore the environmental sustainability (ES) agenda of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) through detailed documentary analysis that also considers the implementation of this agenda, using Tokyo 2020 as an illustrative example.

RQ1. How does the IOC's documentary discourse provide evidence of leadership on ES?

RQ2. How was ES strategy interpreted and implemented in the Tokyo 2020 sustainability plans, processes and practices?

RQ3. What evidence is there of knowledge transfer in the interpretation and implementation of IOC policy discourse on ES?

Theoretical Background and Literature

Concerns over climate change and ES are increasingly apparent across multiple sports contexts including the Olympic Games (OG), which highlights the need for the IOC to leverage its influence in seeking impactful ES objectives from OG hosts and ensuring these are fulfilled (VanWynsberghe et al., 2021).

A multi-layered approach is appropriate for examining the complexities surrounding sport, the environment and sustainability (McCullough et al., 2016). Thus, this research takes an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on interrelating concepts such as isomorphism and power relations, together with the application of four key conceptual dimensions of figurational (or process) sociology: lengthening chains of interdependence, established-outsider relations, internalisation of social values, and unintended consequences (Cain, 2023; van Krieken, 2017).

Knowledge transfer is a cross-cutting concept that can be seen throughout these dimensions. Lengthening chains of interdependence are evident in the expansion of networks

(stakeholders) among whom knowledge is shared, the shifting balances of power between these (established-outsider relationships), and the internalisation of ES values that may arise through the process of knowledge transfer and its incorporation into policy and strategy. Unintended consequences occur as a result of implementation of transferred knowledge in varying contexts, with environmental discourse sometimes being disadvantageous to genuine long-term initiatives or strategies (Gaffney, 2013).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The IOC's ES agenda is conceptualised as encompassing the organisation's strategy around ES, as a plan of action to achieve a desired end, and its policies around ES, as matters of practice and principle to be enacted. A Critical Policy Discourse Analysis (CPDA) approach is used, which synergises theory and methodology into an analytical framework that can contribute to policy research through a conceptualisation of textual details in relation to the ways in which these details can affect the implementation of policy (Mulderigg et al., 2019). CPDA is applied to IOC strategy, policy and other documents pertaining to ES, and to documents relating to ES in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

Results and Discussion

Themes arising from the data include strategic planning, governance and compliance, collaboration, multidirectional knowledge transfer, reach and influence, and stakeholder involvement. Whilst the importance of stakeholders is apparent, the power relationships between these have the potential to either facilitate or inhibit ES objectives and there are inherent conflicts of interest that could result in greenwashing.

Despite an emphasis on sustainability principles and sport as an enabler of these, as well as proclaimed expectations of compliance, there is an implicit lack of accountability and commitment that is identified through the discourse used. Any ambiguity in policy discourse is open to subjective interpretations, which permits those enacting policy to shape it in line with their own interests and priorities. This highlights the importance of taking a CPDA approach to go beyond the

surface of the policy discourse and identify deeper complexities and contradictions.

Contribution and Implications

This research emphasises the importance of policy discourse in shaping interpretations and implementation of ES initiatives that are meaningful and measurable and that seek to minimise negative unintended consequences. In doing so, the roles of a range of stakeholders are acknowledged in terms of power relationships, commitment, and accountability. The work highlights existing ambiguities in the IOC agenda on ES, which need to be addressed for policy to be enacted that is congruent and consequential. Additionally, opportunities are identified for the IOC to harness its leadership position more convincingly to better address ES and the climate emergency.

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Critical Realism as a Lens for Analyzing Beijing 2022 Winter Sports Participation Legacy

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Aim and Research Questions

This paper aims to investigate whether Critical realism (CR) (Byers et al., 2019) could contribute to the analysis of China's winter sports participation legacy of Beijing 2022?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympics were the first Games to implement a legacy plan shaped by Olympic Agenda 2020/New Norm and the IOC Legacy Strategic Approach (BOCWOG et al., 2021). The cornerstone of this plan was the ambitious «300 million» goal, a hard push to increase winter sports participation in China. International scholars have questioned the origins and feasibility of this goal, likely due to limited supporting data, language barriers, and differing social and cultural contexts. Our PRISMA analysis reveals that current literature on legacy offers little empirical evidence on achieving sport participation goals, and rarely conceptualizes «Winter Sports Participation» distinctly. Critical Realism (CR), as a philosophy focused on uncovering underlying realities, could provide a fresh framework to analyze this process. We propose applying CR to study the legacy delivery of the Winter Olympics and Paralympics within non-Western contexts, offering a novel and objective perspective.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

This paper adopts a conceptual approach to explore the potential of Critical Realism (CR) in analyzing the winter sports participation legacy of the Beijing 2022 Games. We propose an integrated framework by combining CR with the «Three-Source Model» (Liu & Jiang, 2016) focusing on the Chinese context, a «Top-

down» non-Western sports development model. This framework is intended to provide a deeper understanding of the legacy delivery process, particularly within the context of the «Juguo Tizhi» system, the underlying mechanism behind China's «300 million» goal achievement. While not involving data collection or analysis, our conceptual exploration aims to identify potential challenges and opportunities for winter sports participation legacy within the «Juguo Tizhi» framework.

Results/Findings and Discussion

This paper demonstrates the potential of a new framework combining Critical Realism (CR) and the Chinese-originated «Three-Source Model» to deepen our understanding of winter sports participation legacy. Applying CR to the Beijing 2022 case proves both innovative and valuable, as it allows for analysis beyond surface appearances to uncover underlying mechanisms. However, it's crucial to acknowledge challenges stemming from cultural contexts, varying statistical systems, and the limited availability of data that accurately reflects both the ideal and social realities highlighted within the CR framework.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This paper advances the application of Critical Realism (CR) to the study of sport participation legacy within the Chinese context. Our proposed framework offers a systematic approach for analyzing legacy delivery, facilitating cross-contextual research with shared criteria. We contribute to existing knowledge by:

- Contextualizing CR: Providing a nuanced understanding of applying CR within China's unique top-down system, large population, and regional diversity.
- Bridging Gaps: Addressing knowledge transfer, enabling researchers to adopt CR for legacy studies in various settings.
- Global Relevance: Illustrating the interplay between elite and mass participation, offering insights for future winter sports mega-event legacy planning.

We believe this new conceptualization opens pathways for future investigation. Studies utilizing this framework can further address the challenges and opportunities posed by Beijing 2022's ambitious «300 million» goal,

aiding legacy analysis and participation strategy development for winter sports in diverse contexts.

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Paris 2024: The world's most sustainable Olympic Games? Beyond legacy, Assessing Perspective on Sustainability Efforts and its impact on intention to act

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Aim and Research Questions

The Olympic Games are the largest, highest-profile, and most expensive mega-event hosted by cities and nations (Flyvbjerg et al., 2021). The worldwide exposure of the Olympic Games has increased dramatically during recent decades primarily due to the advances in media coverage and technology (Judge et al., 2021). These games claim to be exemplars of sustainability, aiming to provide a unique platform to reach a global audience and serve as a model for cities, countries, and other events around the world (Müller et al., 2021).

In 2024, the Olympic and Paralympic Games will take place in Paris and other major cities across France. Paris 2024 has a target to halve its carbon footprint compared to previous Olympic and Paralympic Summer Games, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change call, with innovative solutions for energy, food, temporary venues, transport, and digital services.

While the International Olympic Committee (IOC) deserves recognition for its ongoing efforts to incorporate sustainability into the hosting of the Olympic Games (Koba et al., 2021), it is unclear if the general public is widely aware of this «industry trend» (Kellison & McCullough, 2020).

In this context, the aim of this study is to evaluate public perception of the sustainability efforts undertaken by the Paris Organizing Committee for the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games (COJOP 2024). The assessment will focus on the three classic dimensions of sustainability: economic, social, and ecological (Müller et al., 2021).

Specifically, we will examine public awareness and perceptions of the sustainability

initiatives implemented during the Olympics. We aim to determine the extent of their familiarity with these initiatives and identify any differences based on age, gender, or level of sports involvement (professional vs. non-professional).

It is important to note here the distinction between «actual» sustainability, which measures real environmental and social impacts, and «perceived» sustainability, which refers to the public's belief in the efficacy of these measures.

Additionally, we seek to explore how these initiatives might influence their intentions to engage in sustainable behaviors.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The scientific community has been interested in sustainability for over 200 years, but the topic of sustainability in sports hasn't been extensively researched (Hautbois & Desbordes, 2023). Recently, Müller et al. (2021) provide a specific definition of «sustainability in the Olympic Games» that involves balancing long-term well-being for both people and the planet (O'Neill et al., 2018). According to their conceptual model, sustainability in the Olympic Games assigns equal weight to three dimensions: ecological, social, and economic. (1) The ecological dimension focuses on minimizing the ecological footprint, incorporating indicators such as carbon emissions, water usage, energy consumption, and biodiversity conservation. (2) The social dimension emphasizes promoting social justice, equity, and well-being among stakeholders, with indicators including community engagement, inclusivity, cultural heritage preservation, and social benefits for host cities. (3) Lastly, the economic dimension aims to ensure cost efficiency, long-term financial viability, and positive economic impacts for host regions, with indicators such as assessments of cost overruns, revenue generation, job creation, infrastructure investments, and legacy benefits.

However, the sustainability of mega-events like the Olympics and cost overruns must be taken seriously by Müller's (2021) concerns. Despite the IOC's sustainability claims, the financial burden on host cities often escalates, leading to questions about the true economic benefits and long-term viability of such events.

These cost overruns can overshadow the intended positive impacts, prompting a critical evaluation of whether the ecological and social benefits genuinely outweigh the financial costs. This multi-faceted approach aims to balance ecological, social, and economic dimensions while addressing the critical issue of cost overruns and ensuring a positive legacy for the host city.

Besides, the Olympic Games are recognized as a tool of soft power in addition to their economic and tourist impacts (Kolotouchkina, 2018). For the Games to be deemed a success, they must leave behind a positive legacy. The Olympic Charter has recognized this imperative since 2004, with Rule 2.14 stipulating that one of the IOC's fundamental missions is «to promote a positive legacy from the Olympic Games to the host cities and host countries».

However, defining what constitutes «a positive legacy» remains unclear, as this can vary significantly among different stakeholders (Chappelet, 2019). In this research, we will adopt the definition provided by Scheu et al. (2019), which describes the Olympic legacy as «any action or practice in a given area (such as the host city), and over time, which results from the structural changes initiated by the organization of the Olympic Games».

As a result, sporting events can promote sustainability messages and explore ways to engage youth and positively influence their sustainable behaviors in everyday life (Müller et al., 2021; Hautbois & Desbordes, 2023).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The present study adopts a quantitative approach. We will employ a questionnaire-based survey, utilizing both the alumni platform of Ileps and various social media platforms. To ensure a representative sample, we will use a convenient sampling procedure tailored to the characteristics of French residents, as proposed by Collinet et al. (2020). The empirical quota sampling will consist of respondents aged between 18 and 65 years who have characteristics that correspond to national proportions according to INSEE data in 2023.

Our questionnaire is developed based on the study objectives, a comprehensive literature

review, and a list of evaluation items adapted from the 'Interim Evaluation Report on the Legacy & Sustainability Strategy of Paris 2024' published in November 2023. It includes three parts. The first part, inspired by Müller et al. (2021), explores the three dimensions of sustainability: economic, social, and ecological, asking respondents to rate their familiarity with each initiative on a Likert scale from 1 (not at all familiar) to 5 (extremely familiar). The economic dimension is assessed with six items; for example, «The Paris 2024 Olympic Games will create and support a significant number of jobs across various sectors». The social dimension includes seven items across three categories: (a) sport for education, (b) sport for health, and (c) sport for inclusion, equality, and solidarity; for example, «The Paris 2024 Olympic Games will significantly encourage greater equality between men and women and combat discrimination in sport». The environmental dimension is assessed with five items; for example, «The Paris 2024 Olympic Games use sport to fight against climate change and for the preservation of biodiversity». The second part evaluates respondent's intention to act sustainably using an 11-item scale adapted from previous studies by Tapia-Fonllem et al. (2013), with responses ranging from 1 (extremely disagree) to 5 (strongly agree); for example, « I intend to walk or use a bike instead of a car to reduce my carbon footprint». The final part collects socio-demographic information such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, place of residence, and income. It also includes questions about respondent's sports practices and their intention to participate in the Olympic Games as spectators or volunteers.

Our data collection is set to begin on June 14, 2024, with an expectation of a minimum of 200 respondents completing our questionnaire. Starting on June 25, we will perform an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) followed by a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using IBM-SPSS version 29.0.

Next, we will proceed with model estimation to deliver empirical measures of the relationships between the indicators and constructs (measurement models) as well as among the constructs themselves (structural model) (Hair et al., 2022:110). We will conduct a partial least squares (PLS) path analysis, a type of structural equation modeling, to examine the relationships between variables

using SmartPLS. Finally, we will assess the explanatory and predictive power of our proposed model.

The analysis and discussion will take place from July 1 to July 22 in order to prepare our presentation for the conference.

Results/Finding

Results are expected to reveal a low level of familiarity with the sustainability initiatives of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. The findings will likely show that individuals' awareness of these sustainability initiatives and their intentions to adopt sustainable behaviors correlate significantly.

Additionally, the study will help identify any socio-demographic differences in the perception of these sustainability initiatives, particularly focusing on variables such as age, gender, and level of sports involvement. This could highlight specific areas where targeted communication and engagement strategies might be needed.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of public perception towards the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. The survey will be conducted before, during, and after the event to better understand its long-term impact on public attitudes and behaviors related to sustainability. Ultimately, this research could provide a blueprint for leveraging sporting events to promote sustainable practices and engage the youth, positively influencing their behaviors in everyday life.

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Public Health and Physical Activity Management

Track chair : Karin Book

Effects Of Watching Professional Baseball Games On Mental Health Among University Students - Focusing On The Difference Between Watching The Games On site And Via Media

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Aim and Research Question

Although sport spectating has been described as having a positive relationship with spectators' mental health, there is a lack of research that has revealed a causal relationship between sport spectating and mental health. Therefore, this study aims to reveal whether the leisure activity of watching sport has an impact on spectators' mental health, such as subjective vitality (SVS) and Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS), and to show a causal relationship between sport spectating and mental health.

Theoretical background and literature review

To begin with, it has been shown that engaging in leisure activities is positively linked to people's well-being (Andreja Brajša-Žganec, Marina Merkaš & Iva Šverko 2011). In sports spectating, a study found that after two months of watching baseball games among older adults, the spectating group experienced lower depressive symptoms than before the intervention (Kawakami et al., 2019). Tsuji et al. also corroborated the results of Kawakami et al. (2019) through a questionnaire survey of older adults and further showed that depressive symptoms were lower in older adults who watched sports on TV or the internet, regardless of whether they exercised or not (Tsuji et al., 2021). One factor in these results is thought to be due to human's mirror neuron systems, which have been shown to cause spectators to receive brain stimulation similar to that of athletes and to be affected by influences such as increased heart rate (Rachael Brown, Ursula

Kemp&Vaughan Macefield, 2013, Yang-Tae Kim et al. 2011). Although the above mechanisms and previous studies suggest that watching sports has a positive impact on the mental health of spectators, Kawakami (2019)'s previous research has focused on older people and many cross-sectional studies and studies measuring temporary effects, the causal relationship between watching sports and mental health has not been fully elucidated.

Research design, methodology and data analysis

Based on these issues, this study will conduct research to analyse how mental health, such as Subjective Vitality Sensation (SVS) and Subjective Happiness Scale Sensation (SHS), of university students changes before and after two months of watching professional baseball games on site and via media. As gender, types of leisure activities and team ID are related to leisure activities and well-being (Andreja Brajša-Žganec, Marina Merkaš & Iva Šverko, 2011, Wann Daniel L. et al., 2011), these factors will be included and analyzed. The target group was university students aged 18 years and over who had never played baseball in a club and had no sports-watching habits. Fifty-four participants who met the conditions were randomly and evenly divided into three groups over a two-month period: 1) a group that watched professional baseball games on site, 2) a group that watched the games via media, and 3) a control group. The participants were on average 21.1 years old (maximum 29, minimum 18), 26 (48%) were male and 28 (52%) were female. They were then asked about their SVS, SHS, team ID, interest in professional baseball and leisure activities before watching the game. The same questionnaire is then administered after two months of game attendance. Using the results, statistical analyses such as chi-square analysis and Mann-Whitney U test will be conducted using SPSS 27 for the difference in scores on each item before and after joining the group and within the group, mainly using SVS and SHS as dependent variables.

Results and Discussion

The expected result is that the control group will not change any of the values, but the two intervention groups will have better SVS and SHS values after the intervention compared to before the intervention. In addition, we

consider that the rate of change before and after the intervention will be higher in the onsite group, which can feel the atmosphere of the stadium and a sense of togetherness with other spectators, than in the video group. We also consider that when all participants were divided into two groups, one with higher team ID scores and one without, only the group with higher team ID scores showed an improvement in SVS and SHS. It is possible that the attachment to the home team through watching sports, i.e. cheering for one's favourite team, is linked to SVS and SHS.

Conclusion, contribution and implication

This study confirmed whether there were changes in subjective vitality (SVS) and Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) among university students who were not habitual sports spectators after two months of watching sports on site and via media. We also consider that this study provides new insights into the relationship between sports spectating and the mental health of spectators. A limitation of this study is that the subjects were university students and baseball games only. Therefore, further research is needed in the future, taking into consideration different ages and types of sport.

The specific results of the analysis and discussion will be explained during the day's presentation.

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The Football Academy. A Good Schooling?

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Aim and research question

Young, talented footballers are often taken out of their everyday environment to an elite academy where they can concentrate on the game in a competitive environment. However, whilst all the players dream that they will one day become professional at top level, only very few fulfill their dream. This study deals with young academy players in one particular Norwegian top club academy, most of which were de-selected, and their retrospective reflections on the pros and cons of the academy schooling and how it affected their later lives and careers. Provided that almost all previous studies research players while living the academy life, this research addresses a gap in the field.

Analytical framework

Institutional logics are “the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time, and space, and provide meaning to their social reality” (Thornton and Ocasio, 2008, p. 101). We are interested in what institutional logic dominates in the football academy and how this prepares the players that are deselected for other careers. Is the football academy a good school in terms of developing good citizens, irrespective of later professional careers (Ronkainen, 2021)? To what extent does the logic of the academy incorporate and develop capabilities beyond those that are sport-specific? Is spending time in the football academy crowding out ordinary education (or apprenticeship) that for most players in the end might turn out as a better investment for their later careers than football, or is the academy logic accommodating a unique education regardless of whether the players succeed as professional players?

Research design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The study is based on structured interviews with former academy players (n=15) from one top Norwegian boys football academy, which enrolls talents from the age of 12-13, and providing the best with a scholarship or contract at 16. Participants were players that recently had failed to sign a professional contract, players that had failed to get a contract about 6 years ago, players that had made it to become professional footballers, plus parents, high school teachers, academy leaders and coaches. Several cohorts of players were approached, and participation was self-selective with the possibility of bias towards those that mastered the transition out of pro football. The interview guide was developed to capture the theoretical framework and literature rationale and the experiences and findings from a pilot study carried out in 2023. The interviews are transcribed verbatim before being exposed to content analysis.

Results/findings and discussions

A total of six themes have been subjects for scrutiny. The following preliminary findings are based on the player interviews:

1. The joy of playing football is put to the test as the pressure to perform increases. Some players seem to fit better to this environment by being triggered by rivalry and competition.
2. High focus on performance characterizes the learning environment. Signals of success are increasingly associated with who is selected to the team and the bench. Open feedback is infrequent. Coaches are gatekeepers, and players are supposed to prove that they are worthy of selection.
3. Performing at school and keeping up good attitudes and habits were communicated as important by academy representatives, yet selections to the team indicated that if you are good enough you will be on the team, nevertheless.
4. Increasingly education is overshadowed by the football effort. Parents are the main driver for the boys' taking further education seriously.
5. Identity and identity development: Although all players reported positive

experiences and lessons learned from their time in the academy, the way they tackled the move to “normality” differed. Most kept some football player identity, but gradually developed alternative identities through hanging out with friends outside the academy and as students.

Conclusion

Unsurprisingly, the academy logic revolves around an “all in” to sport attitude, in particular from the age of 16. Education is verbally acknowledged as important, but the responsibility is increasingly left to the players’ themselves. For those that are doing good at school and have parents that underline the importance of education, education is prioritized to the extent that they pass high school and can take up studies if they fail to get a professional contract. Several players keep playing amateur football or semi-professional besides taking higher education. Others seem to drop out of school before they achieve their diplomas, without any action from the academy. The study has limitations that will be discussed.

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How Daily Work Experiences Affect Employee Biometrics within the Sport Industry

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Aim and Research Questions

There is growing interest in how workplace dynamics are affecting employees. The interest from both employees and employers to improve the work experience, coupled with the rapidly changing workplace dynamics, means it is the optimal time to understand how daily work experiences are impacting employees’ health and wellness. Wearable technology has been utilized in sectors as a form of safety management or through the delivery of practical interventions (Patel et al., 2021), but there is a need to expand these. The purpose of this study is to examine how daily work experiences are affecting employee biometric health. Particularly, the researchers are looking at the sport organizational context and how positive and negative work experiences will influence the employee’s well-being through physical activity (total steps), sleep, and heart rate.

RQ1: How will daily, positive work experiences affect employee health?

RQ2: How will daily, negative work experiences affect employee health?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Wellness is known to enhance physical, psychological, and social well-being of individuals. Linked closely with health and productivity, employee well-being considers one’s ability to address normal stresses, work effectively, and realize their potential within the workplace (Adams, 2019). Workplace conditions have the potential to amplify and contribute to those health problems. Work-related factors, such as job demands and pressures, degree of flexibility, length of workday, etc., have been connected to employee well-being, which has sparked an interest in developing strategies to improve the workplace environment (Adams, 2019).

Wrist-worn wearable technology have emerged as powerful tools for collecting real-time feedback regarding a person's health. These devices can accurately measure heart rate, heart rate variability, daily steps, sleep, and other variables, depending on the wearable technology (FitBit, n.d.). Despite the plethora of potential applications in the workplace, previous studies primarily examined wearable technology from a safety management perspective including occupational risks and risk-mitigating interventions (Khakurel et al., 2018) and health benefits directly related to individual exercise (St. Fleur et al., 2021).

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

The study collected data from 28 college sport employees who logged 458 days of combined surveys and biometric data. The researchers applied a Day Reconstruction Method (DRM) approach for this study. This approach allows the participants to provide information about the events and associated feelings related to their daily work experience (Kahneman et al., 2004). Participants were sent a daily (during the work week) Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS). Biometric information was collected through a FitBit Charge 5. This is an advanced fitness and health tracker. Participants install the smart watch on their wrist and it collects biometric data as you perform work, leisure, and fitness-related activities. Data collected includes daily information on total steps, total steps, active exercise metrics, average heart rate, heart rate variability, sleep tracking, calories burned, and other metrics (FitBit, n.d.). Analysis assessed the relationship between the employee's daily work experience (PANAS) with biometric output (total steps, daily average heart rate, daily heart rate variability, sleep minutes, and sleep efficiency).

Results/Findings and Discussion

Our findings reported three, statistically significant Pearson correlations. P_PANAS was statistically significant with total steps ($p < .001$), sleep efficiency ($p = .018$), and daily heart rate average ($p = .005$). There was no statistical significance related to P_PANAS and sleep minutes ($p = .426$) and heart rate variability ($p = .341$). The analysis revealed one statistically significant Pearson

correlation to negative work experience, as N_PANAS was statistically correlated with daily heart rate average ($p = .046$). This significant correlation shows that as participants reported higher negative daily work experience, their average daily heart rate increased. There were no significant Pearson correlations between N_PANAS and total steps ($p = .197$), heart rate variability ($p = .938$), sleep efficiency ($p = .384$), and sleep minutes ($p = .345$).

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This study's findings establish an empirical link employee behavior concepts and physical health, including one of the first associations between positive work experiences and positive biometric employee health. These findings not only provide significant health benefits for the employee but also organizational benefits. The improved daily health of your labor force can help mitigate increased employee sickness, reduction in job performance, and increased employee insurance carrier costs (Ford et al., 2011). It is noteworthy to discuss the differences between positive and negative daily work experiences. This study provides evidence that employees and employers have more to gain from positive daily work experiences than they lose from negative daily work experiences. This could mean employees risk having a negative daily work experience (or two) if they believe the reward is more positive daily work experiences in the near future because of the excess benefits provided by the latter. Managers could seek out activity periods during work periods to motivate and present opportunities for employees to seek out physical activity.

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The Impact of Early Sports Specialization on Future Participation Intentions Among NCAA College Athletes

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Statement that Abstract relates to professional practice

The purpose of the study is to explore the professional practice implications of early sports specialization and its impact on the future participation intentions of NCAA intercollegiate athletes. The study will be significant because empirical data will be collected to educate coaches, sports organizations, and regulators concerning the long-term effects of young athletes' early specialization in a single sport—a trend that is only growing and shows no signs of slowing down.

Aim

This study seeks to provide empirical evidence that could influence the development of more balanced youth sports programs and inform coaching and policy decisions aimed at promoting healthier, sustainable athletic practices.

Purpose and Background

While specializing early can lead to higher levels of skill development and early athletic success, it also comes with potentially significant risks. These include burnout, overuse injuries, and a potentially diminished long-term engagement in sports. Such outcomes not only affect athletes' performance and health but may also influence their willingness to continue participating in sport after their collegiate careers. Initial findings from this study indicate that athletes who specialized early reported significantly higher levels of burnout and a greater incidence of overuse injuries compared to their peers who participated in multiple sports during their youth (Jayanthi et al., 2013; Myer et al., 2015). Moreover, there is a noticeable decline in the intention to continue participating in sports post-college among early specialists, highlighting concerns about long-term

engagement in physical activities (DiFiori et al., 2014; Post et al., 2017). Early specialists also exhibited higher levels of psychological stress and lower overall satisfaction with their sports experience, suggesting that the intense focus on a single sport might adversely affect their mental health (Brenner, 2016; Malina, 2010).

By understanding these nuances, this research could potentially recalibrate how sports programs are crafted and executed. It seeks to underscore the importance of a multi-sport approach in early training regimes, which could help in mitigating the risks associated with early specialization. Athletes who engaged in multiple sports reported better overall physical health and psychological well-being, along with a higher likelihood of remaining active in sports beyond their college years (Côté et al., 2009; Lloyd et al., 2016). This study will fill a critical gap in the literature by providing data-driven insights into how early sports specialization affects athletes' future participation intentions.

Design and Implementation

A cross-sectional survey design will be utilized to explore the long-term effects of early sports specialization among over 500 NCAA athletes in various sports across divisions. The survey incorporates validated constructs such as athletes' intentions to continue playing sports, their commitment to sports, and a measure of physical and mental burnout. These constructs, based on previous literature, aim to statistically assess the impact and prevalence of specialization. The survey's reliability will be confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.80, indicating strong reliability, and is refined based on feedback from a panel of sports psychology and education experts to ensure content validity. This quantitative methodology provides a structured analysis of the effects of early sports specialization, contributing empirical data to the discussion on its long-term impacts. Logistical regression will be used to analyze the data, focusing on correlations between early specialization and various outcomes such as ongoing participation and psychological impacts.

Outputs/Outcomes, Reflections, and Future Development

The recommendations provided will serve as a practical guide for sports educators, coaches, and program directors to create environments that not only foster athletic excellence but also ensure the long-term health and engagement of athletes. The findings will help in shaping future sports training ideologies and practices, ultimately contributing to the healthier development of athletes and more sustainable sports practices. The findings of this research will be of value to stakeholders involved in intercollegiate sports and athlete development, thus offering a foundation for future studies and policy formulations aimed at enhancing the well-being and performance of athletes across their lifespan.

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Sport Consumer Behaviour

Track chair: Daniel Lock

Exploring the Influence of Perceived Social Media Marketing Activities on the Premier League's Customer Relationship Quality and Word-of-Mouth Intention among Chinese Consumers

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Research Objectives

Given the Premier League's global market expansion efforts and the growing significance of China as a pivotal emerging sport market, understanding how the league cultivates customer relationship quality (CRQ) and its impact on consumers' behaviours within the Chinese market become imperative for its international marketing endeavours. However, these aspects remain inadequately explored in sport marketing literature. Currently, social media has emerged as a powerful communication channel in individuals' daily lives, providing a compelling avenue for fostering relationships between firms and consumers (Seo & Park, 2018). Consumers' perception about social media marketing activities (SMMA) has been empirically shown as a significant antecedent of CRQ in various industries (e.g., luxury industries, Kim & Ko, 2010), yet this path remains unexplored in the sport context. Furthermore, consumers' intention to generate word-of-mouth (WOM) plays a crucial role in expanding inexperienced consumers, thereby enhancing the prospects for international marketing expansions for sport organisations (Palmatier et al., 2006). Therefore, aiming to bridge the research gaps concerning the establishment and impact of CRQ in external sport markets, this study is designed to examine the mediation effect of the Premier League's CRQ in the relationship between perceived SMMA and WOM intention among Chinese consumers.

Literature Review

The stimulus-organism-response theory (Jacoby, 2002) serves as the theoretical underpinning for the structural framework, wherein perceived SMMA and WOM intention are considered as the antecedent and

consequence of CRQ, respectively. Palmatier et al. (2006) defined CRQ as "an overall assessment of the strength of a relationship and is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct that captures the many different facets of an exchange relationship" (p. 139). As proposed by Kim and Trail (2011), CRQ comprises trust, commitment, intimacy, identification, and reciprocity. Drawing upon Yadav and Rahman (2017), perceived SMMA can be defined as Chinese consumers' perceptions about various marketing activities on social media platforms generated by the Premier League, encompassing interactivity, informativeness, personalisation, and trendiness in this study. Grounded on empirical literature (e.g., Kim & Ko, 2010), the positive associations between perceived SMMA and the CRQ dimensions were hypothesised. Moreover, in alignment with Palmatier et al. (2006), WOM intention was identified as a consequence of CRQ, thus hypothesising relationships between the CRQ dimensions and WOM intention. Consequently, the hypothetical pathways linking perceived SMMA, five CRQ dimensions and WOM intention were developed, leading to the formulation of 10 hypotheses.

Method

The research population consisted of Chinese consumers with prior consumption experience of products affiliated with the league (e.g., streaming membership). A total of 502 respondents were recruited. The measurement items of perceived SMMA and CRQ were adapted from Yadav and Rahman (2017) and Kim and Trail (2011), respectively. The items measuring WOM intention were borrowed from Harrison-Walker (2001) and Hightower et al. (2002). A structural equation modelling (SEM) was employed for assessing the hypotheses, and the indirect effects were evaluated by the bootstrapping procedure.

Results

Five responses, exhibiting Mahalanobis distance p-values below .001, were identified as outliers and subsequently removed. The first extracted factor explained 34.42% of total variance, indicating absence of common method bias. The SEM exhibited acceptable model fit indices with $\chi^2/df = 1.32$, CFI = .98, TLI = .98, RMSEA = .03, and SRMR = .05. The composite reliability values of all constructs

fell within the range between .82 to .85, ensuring reliability of the measures. Convergent validity was also achieved; the AVE values ranging from .52 to .65 and the individual factor loadings ranging from .72 to .82 met their criteria of .50 and .70 cutoffs (Hair et al., 2019). Furthermore, the square root of each construct's AVE value exceeded its correlation with other constructs, confirming discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2019). The path analysis failed to support one hypothesis while supporting the remaining nine hypotheses at $p = .05$. Specifically, the SEM revealed the significant associations between perceived SMMA and all five CRQ dimensions. Among the CRQ dimensions, consumers' trust, commitment, intimacy, and reciprocity with the Premier League were positively linked to their WOM intention. However, the association between identification and WOM intention was found to be statistically insignificant. The indirect effects of perceived SMMA on WOM intention through trust, commitment, intimacy, and reciprocity were found to be significant as 95% confidence intervals did not include zero. The indirect effect through identification was insignificant.

Conclusions

This study emphasises the effectiveness of perceived SMMA as a viable strategy for nurturing the Premier League's CRQ in the Chinese market. Furthermore, Chinese consumers demonstrating higher levels of trust, commitment, intimacy, and reciprocity towards the activities are more likely to generate positive WOM communications. This study makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the factors surrounding the Premier League's CRQ among Chinese consumers. Practically, this study provides practitioners within the league with a comprehensive understanding to develop robust CRQ and drive further marketing expansion in the Chinese market.

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How to Foster the Premier League's Brand Equity in China? Unveiling Its Associations with Brand Communication and Consumers' Behavioural Responses

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Research Objectives

Despite the acknowledged pivotal role of brand equity for sport organisations, there remains an unexplored understanding of the Premier League's brand equity cultivation and its subsequent influence on consumers' behaviours in its overseas markets. Given the effectiveness of brand communication in shaping brand equity in international markets and the influence of brand equity on consumers' key behaviour responses, such as repeat purchase intention, word-of-mouth (WOM) intention, and willingness to pay premium price, this study endeavours to explore the mediation effect of the Premier League's brand equity in the relationships between its brand communication and the three consumers' behavioural responses in the Chinese market.

Literature Review

Grounded on the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) theory (Jacoby, 2002), this study identified brand communication as the stimulus and brand equity as the organism, with repeat purchase intention, WOM intention, and willingness to pay premium price representing the responses. Brand equity in this study refers to Chinese consumers' cognitive and affective responses toward the Premier League, incorporating four dimensions proposed by Cheng et al. (2023): brand awareness, social image, perceived customer orientation, and perceived player quality. Following Gunawan et al. (2023), brand communication is composed of one-way and two-way dimensions. Specifically, one-way communication refers to communications fully generated and controlled by the Premier League, aim at providing information without requiring additional interactions with Chinese

consumers. Two-way communication refers to interactive communications originating from the Premier League to foster interactions between the Premier League and Chinese consumers. In accordance with the SOR framework and relevant literature (e.g., Kim & Ko, 2012), both one-way and two-way brand communication were proposed as antecedents of brand equity, with hypothesised associations with brand equity dimensions. Furthermore, drawing upon empirical evidence across various contexts, such as athletes' brand (Park et al., 2019) and US college sport (Alexander & Kern, 2009), this study assumed the associations among brand equity dimensions and repeat purchase intention, WOM intention, and willingness to pay premium price. Consequently, a total of 20 hypothetical associations among brand communication, brand equity, and consumers' behavioural outcomes were developed.

Method

This research gathered data from 550 Chinese consumers of the Premier League. The measurement items for the constructs in the structural model were adapted from existing studies (e.g., Cheng et al., 2023; Kim & Ko, 2012; Park et al., 2019) and self-developed. Following Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step approach, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to confirm the psychometric properties of the measurement model, and structural equation modelling (SEM) was utilised to assess the hypotheses. Additionally, the indirect effects were evaluated by the bootstrapping procedure.

Results

A total of 37 responses with a Mahalanobis Distance p-value below .001 were identified as outliers and removed. Common method variance was assessed using Harman's (1976) single-factor test and Liang et al.'s (2007) common method factor technique. They did not reveal a significant concern. The CFA result showed the acceptable model fit of the model ($\chi^2/df = 1.77$, CFI = .95, TLI = .94, RMSEA = .04, SRMR = .04; Hair et al., 2019). The composite reliability values of all constructs ranged from .86 to .92 (> .70; Hair et al., 2019). Five items were removed due to the low factor loadings below .707 (Hair et al., 2019), leaving 46 items remained. The AVE values of constructs ranged from .53 to .68 (> .50; Hair et al., 2019), supporting convergent

validity. The correlations between any two constructs were lower than the square root of the AVE value of each construct, confirming discriminant validity. SEM also evidenced the good model fit ($\chi^2/df = 2.02$, CFI = .94, TLI = .93, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .06; Hair et al., 2019). A path analysis supported 17 out of 20 hypotheses at $p = .05$. Specifically, two-way communication presented significant associations with all four brand equity dimensions, while one-way communication was significantly associated with brand awareness, perceived customer orientation, and perceived player quality. For consequences, the associations between perceived customer orientation and WOM intention, and perceived player quality and willingness to pay premium price were found insignificant. Nonetheless, all the other relationships between brand equity dimensions and three behavioural consequences were significant. Additionally, 16 out of 24 indirect effects were statistically significant, with no zero between the 95% confidence intervals.

Conclusions

This study makes a substantial contribution by shedding light on the process of building the Premier League's brand equity through brand communication and elucidating its effects on Chinese consumers' various behaviours. This study holds theoretical significance by addressing the limitations in understanding the formation of the Premier League's brand equity through multiple brand communications and its subsequent impact on consumers' behaviours in the Chinese market. From a practical standpoint, this study provides practitioners with a comprehensive guidance for brand management and market expansion within the dynamic landscape of the Chinese sport market.

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The Impact of Hosting the Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup on Local Sport Consumption Behavior

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Sport mega-events (SMEs) serve as potent platforms, consistently impacting sport consumption behaviors, both directly and indirectly (Hahm et al., 2021). Studies show hosting SMEs leads to a marked increase in overall spectatorship behavior, especially game attendance. These events deepen the sport's appreciation and interest among both current and new fans. This effect is partly due to the establishment of new stadiums and experiencing sport mega-events (Feng et al., 2018; Hahm et al., 2021; Horne & Manzenreiter, 2006). Understanding individual and cultural determinants in shaping future consumption behavior is crucial, especially in non-Western and Asian contexts like the Middle East.

Despite heavy investments in sports facilities and events in Qatar, the local sports landscape presents an intriguing paradox. A significant discrepancy exists between the nation's massive investments in sport infrastructure and event production, and subsequent consumer behavior towards local sport events. This discrepancy prompts questions regarding the effectiveness of the current marketing strategies, cultural preferences, and the overall impact of these events on the local community's sport consumption behavior. As the Middle Eastern sport market grows, understanding the region's distinct psychological and behavioral patterns is essential (Ko et al., 2015). Studying this topic in the Middle East extends our knowledge by highlighting unique cultural influences on sport consumption behavior, which have been overlooked in previous research.

To date, there have been no studies related to hosting a SME, specifically a World Cup, and its impact on local spectatorship behavior in a Middle Eastern region. Additionally, the cumulative impact of hosting multiple SMEs within the same country on host residents' consumption behavior remains unexplored. This study aims to understand the influence of

hosting the FIFA World Cup 2022 on various types of future consumption behavior, specifically local sports events, to gain a comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior related to football events on a local scale. Also, this study will investigate the role of sport identification in this relationship. This research will focus on key dimensions such as the events' appeal, cultural alignment, the effectiveness of promotions, and perceived value. Findings will provide a deeper understanding of the role of hosting SMEs on consumer behaviors, particularly in a Middle Eastern context.

This study will be guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) framework (Ajzen, 1991). The TPB includes three key constructs: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. These components are crucial in shaping intentions and behaviors, especially for large-scale sporting events. The TPB framework incorporates cultural barriers and facilitators, providing insights into how Middle Eastern cultural characteristics influence sport consumption. The study will employ a quantitative approach, utilizing an online questionnaire administered to local community adults in Qatar (18 years and over), both males and females, who attended the FIFA World Cup events. Data collection will take place in July 2024. The TPB elements will be used as outcomes influenced by past local SME consumption, and the moderating effect of sport identification on the relationship between past SME experiences and future consumption intentions will be explored. The sample size will be determined to ensure statistical power, and the data will be analyzed using a correlational design to test the proposed relationships.

The variables of interest include attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control as independent variables, and future consumption intentions as the dependent variable. Attitudes will be assessed using four semantic differential scales. Subjective norms will be measured with three items regarding social approval and the engagement possibility of important people (e.g., spouses, family members, friends). Perceived behavioral control will be evaluated based on time and game importance. Intention to consume will be measured with three items regarding plans and efforts to watch or attend games. Reliability for all measures will be estimated using Cronbach's alpha.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) will be conducted to examine the psychometric properties of the measures, and discriminant validity will be assessed through correlations. SEM will be used to provide a holistic view of how these variables interact within the context of consumption behavior in Qatar. Also, this study will investigate the role of sport identification in this relationship by adapting the Points of Attachment Index (PAI) scales (Trail et al., 2003).

This study will provide valuable insights into the long-term impacts of SMEs on consumption behavior in the Middle East, specifically within Qatar's unique cultural context. Through an in-depth analysis of the interaction between SMEs and Qatar's unique culture, this study will highlight existing assumptions and explain the complex dynamics shaping residents' involvement with global sports phenomena. By contributing to the sport management and marketing literature, this research offers practical guidance for policymakers, event organizers, and marketers aiming to foster sustained interest in sporting events within the region.

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Conceptualising Perceived Sport Brand Globalness and Perceived Sport Brand Localness

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Aim and Research Questions

This study explores Chinese consumers' perceived sport brand globalness (PSBG) and perceived sport brand localness (PSBL) to help sport merchandise brands (SMBs) acquire consumers' preference. The existing measurements of PBG (Steenkamp et al., 2003) and PBL (Swoboda et al., 2012) fail to fully capture Chinese sport consumers' psychological path to SMBs' globalness and localness because of different cultural backgrounds. Thus, to address this gap, this study employs qualitative interviews to rebuild new conceptual models for PSBG and PSBL and provide a theoretical framework for researchers and practitioners. This study poses two research questions.

RQ1: How are PSBG/PSBL defined in the Chinese sport context?

RQ2: What are the dimensions representing each PSBG and PSBL?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

This study defines PSBG as a sport consumer's perception that a SMB emphasises product development and brand marketing aligned with global brand positioning. This perception leads consumers to believe that this SMB has a global presence and market for its products on a global scale, regardless of its actual global reach. On the other hand, this study defines PSBL as the extent to which individual consumers perceive that a SMB considers the specific demands of a particular local market, taking into account local political, economic, and cultural characteristics in product design, customer service, brand marketing, and other aspects. By reflecting local features, PSBL aims to stimulate local consumers' pride and attract non-local consumers' interest in SMBs. Drawing upon the global marketing strategy theory (Zou & Cavusgil, 2002) and other

relevant literature (e.g., Zou & Volz, 2010), this study designs interview questions for PSBG, including standardisation, configuration-coordination, and integration perspective. Moreover, this study adopts a brand culture approach (Schroeder et al., 2015) to generate interview questions for PSBL, primarily focusing on how SMBs co-create, disseminate, and adapt the existing meanings associated with SMBs and their cultures.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews to identify more pertinent dimensions of PSBG and PSBL. Ten Chinese sports consumers and eight SMBs managers were recruited. The interviews, averaging 60 minutes each but not exceeding 90 minutes, were recorded, transcribed, and returned to participants for verification and confirmation. This study utilised NVivo 14 to analyse the interview data. The data analysis process in this study comprised two stages, involving open coding and axial coding (Manouchehri et al., 2016).

Results and Discussion

Through the analysis of interview data, this study outlines three dimensions of PSBG (i.e., brand storytelling, global market reach, and brand innovation) as well as three dimensions of PSBL (i.e., cultural authenticity, local relationships, and place attachment). In the conceptual model of PSBG, firstly, brand storytelling refers to the use of storytelling techniques in SMBs' marketing, aimed at conveying the core values of the SMB to consumers (Williams & Heo, 2023). It is considered a powerful marketing tool that facilitates effective communication between SMBs and consumers (Chiu et al., 2012). The interviewees argued that having excellent brand storytelling ability could lead consumers to associate with SMBs' globalness. Secondly, global market reach is defined as a SMB not only having multiple markets but also possessing professional and well-known sport resources across various countries or regions, including top professional athletes and international sport events. These athletes and events have a good reputation in the global market and further enhance SMBs' global recognition. Lastly, brand innovation is conceptualised as the adoption of cutting-edge technology by SMBs to achieve product

innovation, encompassing both functional enhancement and marketing strategies. The interviewees addressed that global SMBs such as Nike have a competitive advantage in brand innovation. In the conceptual model of PSBL, firstly, cultural authenticity is defined as a subjective evaluation of a brand's demonstration and perpetuation of local culture. Secondly, local relationships refer to the active engagement and maintenance of positive relationships among SMBs, local government, and non-governmental stakeholders. The aim is to establish and uphold the legitimacy of SMBs within the local business environment, thus safeguarding their brand image and reputation. Lastly, place attachment is defined as the interaction between emotions, beliefs, and behaviours concerning a specific place during participating sport-related activities (e.g., sport event). Both local relationships and place attachment could lead consumers to perceive SMBs' specific focus and extra effort towards the local market, thereby improving consumers' PSBL.

Conclusion

This study develops two multidimensional concepts for PSBG and PSBL, based on interviews, thereby overcoming the limitations of their existing unidimensional concepts (Steenkamp et al., 2003; Swoboda et al., 2012). This approach provides multiple perspectives for researchers and practitioners to understand consumers' perceptions about globalness and localness towards SMBs and further establish their links to consumers' affective and behaviour responses. By empirically identifying their associations with relevant outcome variables, future studies can demonstrate the added value of global and local SMB positioning strategies, contributing to both theory and practice.

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Bravo! Leveraging the Luxury Brands and the Olympic Games of Consumers' Perceptions

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Aim and Research Question

The purposes of this study are to (1) analyze the differences in co-branding fit of a mega sports event and luxury brands and purchase intention based on luxury brand consumers' behavioral variables (e.g., a habit of watching sports events, the frequency of watching sports events), and (2) investigate the relationship between luxury brand consumers' perception of co-branding fit of a mega sports event and luxury brands and purchase intention.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Recently, the practice of brands sponsoring sports events has increased. Luxury brands sometimes attract more potential consumers by implementing co-branding strategies (Xue & Chawdhary, 2023). For example, LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton is the official sponsor of the 2024 Paris Olympics, which promises to be one of the most fashionable mega sports events in history. Through this cooperation, LVMH aims to increase brand exposure and ultimately promote consumers' purchase intention for luxury goods. The popularity of co-branding products is often influenced by the fit between the brands (Cornelis, 2010). When brand fit is high, perceptions of brands are enhanced, and consumers' purchase intention is increased (Aaker & Keller, 1990; Hsiao et al., 2017). Moreover, previous research has shown that the sponsor–event organizer fit plays a crucial role in influencing consumers' purchase intention, regardless of whether the context is related to sports (Bruhn & Holzer, 2015; Koo et al., 2006). Despite the demonstrated significant influence of co-branding fit on purchase intention (Van Tilburg et al., 2015), there are only a few studies investigating consumers' perceptions of co-branding fit and purchase intention in the context of collaboration between a mega sports event and

luxury brands. Considering that LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton has been investing substantial resources into the 2024 Paris Olympics as an official sponsor, this study aimed to understand whether enhancing consumers' perceptions of co-branding fit can increase their purchase intention towards luxury goods.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

To collect data, an online questionnaire link was distributed in luxury department stores in Taiwan. The researcher used purposive sampling and snowball sampling to survey consumers who previously purchased products from LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton. The online questionnaire included modified scales of co-branding fit and purchase intention (Bhat & Reddy, 2001; Hsiao et al., 2013), where participants were asked to state their agreement using a Likert five-point scale. Additionally, demographic questions were included. The final sample consisted of 185 participants (male = 65, female = 120). Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics, independent sample t-test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), Pearson correlation, and linear regression.

Results and Discussion

Co-branding fit of a mega sports event and luxury brands and purchase intention were found to have acceptable reliability Cronbach's α scores (Co-branding fit of a mega sports event and luxury brands = .76; purchase intention = .83). The results of this study showed that (1) There are significant differences between a habit of watching sports events on co-branding fit and purchase intention among consumers. Participants with a habit of watching sports events have higher co-branding fit and purchase intention compared to those without such a habit. (2) The frequency of watching sports events is associated with significant variation with respect to co-branding fit and purchase intention among consumers. Participants who frequently watch sports events tend to perceive a higher co-branding fit and have greater purchase intention compared to other groups. (3) The participants were found to perceive a significant correlation between co-branding fit and purchase intention. Furthermore, co-branding fit was found to have significant explanatory power on

purchase intention. The results of this study indicate that enhancing the co-branding fit between a mega sports event and luxury brands may enhance consumers' purchase intention. Therefore, increasing the co-branding fit between a mega sports event and luxury brands is a worthwhile endeavor.

Conclusion, Contribution and Implication

By way of conclusion, this study reveals the relationship between the co-branding fit of a mega sports event and luxury brands and purchase intention. There is, however, a limitation, as the participants were all luxury brand consumers, and thus, the results cannot be generalized to all consumers. Nevertheless, this study contributes to the understanding of a mega sports event and luxury brands from both theoretical and practical perspectives. In terms of theoretical contribution, our research reveals that an increased co-branding fit of a mega sports event and luxury brands may potentially enhance consumers' willingness to purchase luxury goods, thereby offering a new insight for research in the field. Practically, this study provides a basis for organizers of a mega sports event and sponsors of luxury brands to formulate cooperation and marketing strategies.

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Retro Logos and Sport Fans: Investigating the Genuine Influence of Nostalgia

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Sport teams and leagues in the United States rely heavily on retro marketing practices. Teams often use retro imagery on their merchandise and for their in-game jerseys. Many teams go as far as rebranding their primary logo with retro in mind, such as the Atlanta Hawks (2015) of the NBA and Milwaukee Brewers (2020) of the MLB. At the league level, the NHL created season-long reverse retro promotions where teams used imagery connected to a past season (Ledra, 2020). Relatedly, scholars have discovered nostalgia plays an influential role in sport fan's preference towards retro merchandise (Scola et al., 2022; Scola & Slavich, in press), but the extent of this influence has not been examined. Thus, the authors will examine three distinct types of nostalgia and their influence on retro preference while controlling for two important branding concepts. As these concepts are relatively new to the sport management literature, the study has two purposes:

1. Introduce PERVAL and SBC into the sport management literature (study one and two).
2. Examine personal, historical, and collective nostalgia's influence on retro preference while mediating PERVAL and SBC (study three).

Perceived value is a well-studied branding concept that is often examined using a simple 3-item measure in sport. However, the PERVAL scale examines perceived value across four constructs, emotion, social, quality/performance, and price/value (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). This construct demonstrated better fit and validity than the three-factor scales often used. Interestingly it has not been utilized in a sport branding or merchandise context. Therefore:

H1: PERVAL will demonstrate acceptable construct validity in the sport merchandise context.

H2: PERVAL will positively and significantly influence consumer purchase intentions and willingness to pay a price premium.

Self-brand connection (SBC) is considered the amount that consumers include their favorite brands in their self-concept (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). SBC is impactful on brand loyalty in traditional marketing (van der Westhuizen, 2018). Again, this concept has not been examined in the sport merchandise or branding contexts and deserves attention. Therefore:

H3: SBC will demonstrate acceptable construct validity in the sport merchandise context.

H4: SBC will positively and significantly influence consumer purchase intentions and willingness to pay a price premium.

Scola and Slavich (in press) examined retro preference with sport fans through sport merchandise using personal, historical, and collective nostalgia. This study found differences in how the type of nostalgia influenced fans' feelings towards their favorite team and purchase intentions. Therefore:

H5(a-c): (Personal/Historical/Collective) Nostalgia will significantly and positively impact sport fans behavioral intentions.

H6: The relationship between nostalgia and sport fans behavioral intentions will be mediated by both PERVAL and SBC.

Data to analyze H1-H4 were collected in two separate but nearly identical studies. Study one (n=489) examined PERVAL and other demographic characteristics of fans of the Milwaukee Bucks (NBA) and Milwaukee Brewers (MLB). Study two (n=466) examined SBC and other demographic characteristics of fans of the New England Patriots (NFL) and Cleveland Cavaliers (NBA). These four teams were selected due to their distinct but recognizable retro logos. Both studies were collected on online survey-taker platforms, with many member checks in place. Both SBC and PERVAL demonstrated acceptable construct validity in this context and each had a significant impact on consumer outcomes. Specifically, SBC had a positive, significant impact on purchase intentions ($b = .53$) and willingness to pay a price premium ($b = .57$). The social ($b = .35$), and price ($b = .20$) constructs of PERVAL had a positive and significant impact on fans' willingness to pay a price premium. This first examination of these important branding concepts with sport

fans proved influential toward team-branded merchandise.

Data for H5-H6 is currently being collected to execute study three. Five hundred sport fans are currently being recruited to complete a survey that will analyze their levels of nostalgia towards their favorite team's merchandise, as well as levels of PERVAL, SBC, and other demographic characteristics. Lastly, outcome variables such as purchase intentions and willingness to pay a premium will be measured. This study will be used to test H5(a-c) and H6. Kline's (2016) two-step approach will be used to analyze a hybrid model, whereas the measurement and structural models will be assessed. To examine the indirect effects of PERVAL and SBC in the model, bootstrapping will be utilized.

Study 1 and 2 introduced PERVAL and SBC into sport marketing research and both multi-dimensional concepts demonstrated acceptable construct validity in the sport merchandise context and positive impacts on consumer outcomes. Study 3 will be important as it furthers our understanding of nostalgia's impact on sport consumer behavioral intentions. This study will be important for practitioners as it will answer questions about how nostalgia operates with sport merchandise preference and for scholars this research will lead to multiple paths of future research regarding the influence of various nostalgia and their interactions with PERVAL and SBC.

Age and Overconfidence Among Sports Bettors

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Aim and Research Questions

Sports betting was an underground activity in the United States (US) for over a century, yet it suddenly became legal in several states in 2018. Not only have sports fans changed their viewership and consumption behavior but media providers now widely promote betting and organizations and teams now partner with sportsbooks. This represents a fundamental shift for the American sports market, as betting was seen for decades as the seedy underbelly of sports. Rarely does an industry receive such an economic shock; thus, it provides a context ripe for academic research.

Sports betting among young adults is one area that has received regular attention among Australian and Western European researchers (Garzola, 2024), as this population is at risk for problem behaviors parallel with betting. Several antecedents impact these behaviors, among them is overconfidence or the difference between perceived ability and actual ability. The purpose of the current study was to explore the impact of age on overconfidence and behavior among sports bettors. The following research questions were developed to guide the study:

RQ1: To what extent does age impact the relationship between self-efficacy, confirmation bias, and illusion of control among sports bettors?

RQ2: To what extent does age impact the relationship between a bettor's illusion of control and betting behavior?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Overconfidence, as a scholarly construct, includes the following three components: (a) the overestimation of performance, (b) the overplacement of ability, and (c) the overprecision in knowing the facts or truth (Moore & Healy, 2008). The current study

focused on bettors' overplacement of ability. In particular, Taylor and Brown's (1988) Positive Illusions of Mental Health was utilized as the framework for this study. Positive illusions are self-described attributes that range from self-enhancement to self-deception, and these illusions result in unrealistic assessment of one's abilities (self-efficacy) and an illusion of control in the face of uncontrollable risks. In addition, Collard et al. (2016) found an inverse relationship between positive illusions and age.

Sports betting marketing and advertising in the US is pervasive, yet research examining age as a factor among American sports bettors is still evolving (Garzola, 2024). Clemens et al. (2017) found marketing and advertising significantly impacted betting behavior for young adults in Australia. In addition, Torrance et al. (2021) found young UK sports bettors supported regulatory reform. Taken together, understanding the relationship between one's perceived ability and one's betting behavior in conjunction with one's age could help the regulation of sports betting advertising and marketing in the currently unregulated American market.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

The current study is a work in progress. However, data has been collected from 684 sports bettors from 24 of the 30 states with legalized sports wagering. Data were collected online through Qualtrics Panel Services and the collection is currently ongoing. It is anticipated that data collection will be completed in mid-June and analysis will be completed by the end of July. The online questionnaire included three scaled instruments and sports betting behavior measures developed by Wood and Williams (2007). To measure self-efficacy, Schwarzer and Jerusalem's (1995) Generalized Self-Efficacy scale was used. Rassin's (2008) Confirmation Inventory was utilized to measure confirmation bias, and Delfabbro et al.'s (2020) 12-item Everyday Illusion of Control inventory was included to assess illusion of control. Structural equation modeling will be conducted to answer both research questions.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

Regulated and easily accessible sports betting in 95% of American jurisdictions is a new phenomenon for sports fans. This increased access, however, does not come without risk especially for segments of the population with an established inability to regulate deviant behavior (young adult males). Through a scoping review, Garzola (2024) found the literature supports the actions of policymakers to reduce the exposure of sports betting advertising to young individuals. With evidence of age's impact on overconfidence and betting behavior, the current study's results will help with the messaging provided to young sports bettors.

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Investigating Football Fan's Second-Screening and Parallel-Screening Behaviour in a Real-World Setting

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Aim and Research Questions

Watching sport in the media as a form of leisure activity, can have a positive effect on the well-being of viewers (Kinoshita et al., 2024). However, this positive effect can be impaired by the simultaneous use of several screens (e. g. a smartphone), as a multitude of tasks may overwhelm individuals (Aagaard, 2018). Previous research has shown that this form of use can enhance viewers' perceived enjoyment of the sports experience if its related to the main content (e.g. Weimann-Saks et al., 2020). In contrast, there is a severe risk that the second device can also distract them (e.g. Kroon, 2017). The simultaneous use of multiple screens can therefore be categorized based on its actual content, differentiating between unrelated 'parallel use of television and internet' and the consumption of content that is related to the current broadcast, so-called 'second screening' (Busemann & Tippelt, 2014).

The aim of the project is to include smartphone usage statistics for the first time, instead of relying on biased self-reports, to investigate the effects of various types of smartphone usage (second-screening vs. parallel screening) on consumer's satisfaction with the sport broadcast experience. In addition, the social consumption setting (vs. isolated individual consumption) on consumer's smartphone usage is addressed.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Since digital transformation and social changes affect the world of sport and constantly pose new challenges for sports clubs, leagues and media broadcasters, the investigation of viewer behaviour is a central component of current research (Stegmann et al., 2021). Previous research has shown that

although cognitive needs are the reason for media-multitasking, these are not satisfied by parallel second device use. Limited cognitive capacities have a negative impact on attention and memory. Viewers are not able to carry out parallel processing due to information overload (Aagaard, 2018). Since the overstimulation can lead to dissatisfaction among users or viewers it is expected that the type of smartphone usage effects sport fans' perceptions of their media use and experience while 'watching' a sport broadcast. Formally:

Hypotheses 1a. Viewers who engage in parallel use (vs. second-screening) are significantly less satisfied with their media use.

Hypotheses 1b. Viewers who engage in parallel use (vs. second-screening) are significantly less satisfied with the sport broadcast experience.

One of the central motives for consuming sports content is social interaction. If possible, this can be achieved by sharing experiences in-person, making the use of a second device obsolete. Alternitavely, this can be shared virtually via social media on a second device (Geissler et al., 2024). Consequently, we hypothesize the following:

Hypotheses 2. Group consumption (vs. individual consumption) leads to significantly lower second-screen usage overall.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

An online questionnaire was used to collect data after two international football matches. Respondents (N1= 38, N2= 70) were recruited on relevant sports-related social media channels. The questionnaire recorded satisfaction with the personal media use and broadcast and the type of smartphone usage (match related or unrelated), as well as demographic data. At the end of the questionnaire, participants were asked to upload screenshots of their screen time and smartphone activations in an hourly overview anonymously, but assignable to the individual case.

Results

Contrary to H1a, satisfaction with personal media use during the broadcast did not differ significantly between viewers who use their smartphone exclusively for second-screening activities and those who use it in parallel

(Msecond-screening = 4.91, SD = 1.04, vs. Mparallel use = 4.0, SD = 1.53; $p = .76$). However, consumers who only consumed non-match-relevant content were significantly less satisfied with the sport broadcast experience than those who also consumed match-relevant content ($M = -1.11$, $SD = .34$, 95%-CI [-2.04, -.17], $p = .012$) or did not use their smartphone at all ($M = -1.47$, $SD = .50$, 95%-CI [-2.84, -.10], $p = .029$), supporting H1b.

In line with H2, the effect sizes indicate the average parallel screen time on the smartphone during the two-hour football broadcasts was higher for individual viewers ($M1 = 41.13$ minutes, $SD1 = 20.23$; $M2 = 38.41$ minutes, $SD2 = 32.16$) than for people who watched the match in groups ($M1 = 24.79$ minutes, $SD1 = 25.11$, $F(1,25) = 2.64$, $p = .117$, $\eta^2 = .096$; $M2 = 19.88$ minutes, $SD2 = 17.15$, $F(1,68) = 9.86$, $p < .005$, $\eta^2 = .127$).

Theoretical Contribution and Practical Implications

The studies shed light on the type of parallel use of a second device that negatively influences satisfaction with the match broadcast and uses unbiased real-usage data for the first time. Even if the samples are small, the results indicate that viewers should avoid exclusive «parallel use of television and internet» on their smartphones. A personalized offering of match-relevant content by sports media companies can minimize non-match secondary device usage and distraction and increase engagement, loyalty and associated satisfaction.

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How To Win (Back) The Hearts And Minds Of Young Sports Fans: An Assessment Of Gen Z And Gen Alpha

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“What we know is that if you don't acquire a fan by the time they're 18, you're most likely never going to get them.” – Tim Ellis, Chief Marketing Officer of the National Football League.

Introduction

Today, young people have never had more options organizing their leisure time and the number of options keeps increasing (Bassiouni & Hackley, 2014). This has remarkable effects on their active sports participation, but also on their behavior as a (sports) consumer: Recent studies and statistics indicate less interest in active sports participation and a declining attractiveness of (passive) sports consumption of children and young adults. If younger generations are less enthusiastic about sport, it is in the vital interest of sports organizations to identify strategic levers to win (back) future generations for sport and for their business. This study analyzes the general attitude of Generations (Gen) Y, Z and Alpha towards sports and identifies strategic levers for sports organizations to win (back) the hearts and minds of young sports fans.

Literature Review

There is indication of less active sport participation and different sport consumption habits of children and young adults. Abdourazakou, Deng and Abeza (2020) as well as Yim et al. (2021) find differences in behavior of younger generations consuming sports and suggest tailor-made formats to prevent losing tomorrow's supporters. Similarly, Koronios et al. (2020) analyzing motives of the audience of sport media find age-related differences in the media consumption of sports. This trend has been recognized by major sport events that intend to increase attractiveness of their offer to younger generations (Wheaton & Thorpe, 2019).

There is indication that younger generations are less likely to practice sport actively. Drape and Belson (2022) provide indication that 27% of Gen Zs dislike sport. Dorsch and Blazo (2021) find that 31% of 6-to10-year-olds are simply not interested in practicing or consuming sports. There are many indications that the reduced interest in sport is linked to a shift towards technology and digital applications such as gaming and eSports, especially for Gen Z (Bayindir & Kavanagh, 2019; McCrindle & Fell, 2020).

Methodology

This study compares the Gens Y, Z and Alpha along the five micro-gap dimensions traits, values, family, work and school, communication and media usage and technological affinity based on the framework introduced by Seemiller and Grace (2018). Each of these dimensions is evaluated separately for each generation regarding the effects on active and passive sports consumption using a survey distributed to members of the three generations in focus. In total, we were able to secure a sample size of 109 completed surveys; 31 answered by members of Gen Y, 71 by those of Gen Z and at least seven by those of Gen Alpha. We ran two kinds of ANOVAs: one with the age of the respondents as independent variable to explain interest in active sports participation and passive sports consumption and one with the three generations as factors for the same outcomes.

Active and passive sports consumption was operationalized twofold: First, by the importance the respondents assigned to these leisure activities (1-5 Likert scale) and, second, by practicing sports as well as watching sport at least once a week, respectively.

Results and Discussion

The results of this study indicate clear differences between Gen Y and Z as well as between Gen Y and Alpha when it comes to active, but also passive sports consumption. Simply put, Gen Y values sports in the traditional sense more than Gen Z and Alpha. Indeed, there is evidence that sports, is perceived as less important for Gen Z and Alpha. It is evident that there is a decrease of the identification as a sports fan the younger the respondents were. Fewer people of Gen Z

watch sports, a trend that is likely to continue with Gen Alpha, but there is an indication that electronic-sports and e-gaming are already important for younger generations and that they are increasing in relevance soon.

Conclusion and Implication

Based on our research, sports organizations seem in a more critical situation than assumed when it comes to future generations. Our study identifies calls for action: win (back) fans or cultivate more interested generations in sports. Also building a connection between traditional sports and gamification is essential for the future of sports. To stay relevant for future generations, sports organizations should consider additional second-screen offerings to their established products; promising approaches might also be child-friendly interactivity by using an application while watching a game that provides quizzes, polls and more.

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The Effectiveness of Sport Celebrity Endorsements on Social Media for Chinese Generation Z: A Case of Eileen Gu

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Aim and Research Question

How sport celebrity endorsements influence consumers' purchase intention has been a popular research topic in sport marketing. However, there is a lack of academic research on exploring a specific segment's consumption being affected by sport celebrity endorsements via social media. Thus, this study aims to explore factors influencing consumption behaviour of Generation Z in China, using a qualitative approach. By examining the case of the Winter Olympics world champion Eileen Gu, we investigate the impact of the traits she possesses as a sport star endorser on cognitive, affective and behavioural responses of this specific population. This objective aligns with our central research question: What characteristics of sport celebrity spokespersons influence consumption behaviours of Generation Z in China?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The stimulus-organism-response (SOR) model has been popular used as the main theoretical framework in existing research. For example, the model was extended to include impulse buying behaviour of online consumers, which had a positive impact in terms of pleasing consumers and enhancing the buying experience (Floh & Madlberger, 2013). The model has also been used by Djafarova and Bowes (2021), investigating impulse buying of Generation Z in the fashion industry. As evidenced in the past literature, the main advantage of this framework is that it enables researchers to examine the associations across external stimuli, affect and behavioural responses to better understand the process of consumer behaviour formation, predicting consumer responses to different stimuli to develop more effective marketing strategies.

Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012), the first generation to grow up with digital

communication, now represents 30% of the China's total population and is considered a consumer segment in the sport industry. Due to their unique nature such as a preference for communicating with images, a desire for timely results, and materialism (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021), these traits make this generation particularly notable in terms of impulse buying behaviour. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out research on this group with great potential.

According to Kunkel et al. (2020), sport celebrity is an important advertising platform due to high brand awareness, a strong connection with consumers, and emotional affinity (Casalo et al., 2020) Eileen Gu's unique cultural background is favoured by domestic and international brands in various fields, using sport ethnicity to promote consumer behaviour that resonates with the same cultural background (Jiang, 2022). Taking the above literature together, it is concluded that investigating how Generation Z consumers are influenced by sport stars' endorsements in their purchase behaviours is a worthwhile topic.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Qualitative semi-structured interviews (35 minutes on average) were conducted. Participants were first screened purposefully (to meet inclusion criteria) and then recruited in the «snowball» fashion until observations reached semantic saturation. The interviewees were Chinese students enrolled at one university in the East Midlands, UK. They indicated that they had prior purchase experience being influenced by sport celebrity endorsements. Following an inductive approach, a thematic analysis (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018) was carried out to analyse and categorise the data.

Results/Findings and Discussion

This research highlights the nuanced impact of sport celebrity endorsements. Gender differences affect engagement levels, with men more active and women more passive in their interactions with sports celebrities. These endorsements can greatly enhance a brand's legitimacy and customer appeal, thereby increasing both visibility and financial returns. However, the drawbacks like over-commercialization and excessive promotion

can negatively affect brand perception, making the sport celebrity's moral character a pivotal factor. Notably, perceptions of Eileen Gu—such as her unique nationality, athletic prowess, and moral standing—illustrate the traits valued in a successful brand spokesperson. Finally, it was found that Generation Z's purchasing decisions are particularly influenced by self-satisfaction, nationalism, and celebrity worship, suggesting that the image and public perception of celebrities play a crucial and decisive role in the effectiveness of endorsements.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This study expands on the examination of consumer behaviour by exploring the impact of sport celebrity endorsement features, guided by the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model. The model employs sport celebrity endorsements as a stimulus to influence consumer purchase intentions, views the psychological perceptions of Generation Z consumers as the organism, and assesses their effect on enhancing purchase intentions as the response. This framework helps clarify how external endorsements shape consumer behaviour, which is crucial for analysing further trends in consumer actions. Modern young consumers tend to value the spiritual and ethical qualities of sport celebrities more than their athletic success. Eileen Gu serves as a unique case study in this context, offering insights that can help scholars and brand marketers identify the most appealing traits of sport endorsers.

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Sport Fan Engagement on Social Media during Playoffs in Major League Baseball and the National Basketball Association: Natural Language Processing Approach

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Introduction

Today, sport fans actively engage on social media, creating content and sharing it across various platforms, thus contributing to a more dynamic and interactive online environment (Yu & Wang, 2015). Delving deep into the topics and sentiments that resonate with fans of different sport leagues is essential for fostering meaningful interactions and crafting effective marketing strategies (Karg & Funk, 2020; Ray et al., 2016).

The current study aimed to analyze fan engagement and sentiment on social media during the 2023 Major League Baseball (MLB) postseason and the National Basketball Association (NBA) playoffs, identifying key discussion topics and how fan sentiments evolved. The following research questions guide this study: (1) What topics of preference did sport fans discuss on social media during the playoffs? (2) How have sentiments evolved concerning sport fans' preferred topics during the playoffs? (3) What were the differences between what baseball and basketball fans discussed on social media during the playoffs?

Method

The authors collected a focused sample utilizing Twitter's API and web scraping during the 2023 MLB and NBA playoffs. Across all 41 MLB postseason games and 84 NBA playoffs games, we collected a total of 38,757 tweets (MLB: 20,148 tweets; NBA: 18,609 tweets). The extensive dataset of tweets was rigorously analyzed using the Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) topic modeling (Blei et al., 2003) in Python. The analysis delineated three distinct topics that reflected the diverse interests and conversational threads within the baseball and basketball fan communities.

Results

Textblob sentiment analysis (Diyasa et al., 2021) conducted on the MLB dataset revealed an overall sentiment score of .065, indicating a generally positive discourse across all topics. The most discussed topic was Fans' Responses toward Game Outcomes, comprising 51% of the dataset with a sentiment score of .052. Specifically, this topic was characterized by terms like "worldseries", "win", "lose", and "series", indicating a vigorous fan discourse centered on fans' emotional responses toward the immediate game results. Second, Fan Community Support, made up 28.3% of the corpus with a sentiment score of .079. The topic highlighted terms like "moment", "team", "game" and "record" showcasing the supportive discourse within the fan community, emphasizing their collective backing and passion for their teams during the high-intensity postseason period. Third, Memorabilia and Sport Cards, accounted for 20.7% of the analyzed tweets with a sentiment score of .078, featuring terms such as "ebay", "baseballcards", "thehobby", and "tradingcards", reflecting a robust collector's culture within the sport domain.

For the NBA dataset, sentiment analysis also revealed a generally positive sentiment, albeit with some variability. The overall sentiment score was .074, with emotional tones ranging from mild positivity to neutral. First, Fan Community Support, accounted for 42.30% of the analyzed tweets with a sentiment score of .082 and keywords such as "game", "win", "finals", and "fans", illustrating a vibrant discourse centered on real-time game reactions and fan interactions. Second, Fans' Responses toward Game Outcomes, making up approximately 33.29% of the dataset with a sentiment score of .026, focused on specific game outcomes and individual player metrics with terms like "playoffs", "points", "series", and "LeBron". This topic often captured the analytical and sometimes critical nature of sport commentary, reflecting fans' mixed reactions to performances and game results. Third, Sport Analytics and Betting comprised 24.41% of the dataset and emerged sentiment score of .128 as the most positive responses, revolving around betting odds, picks, and gambling strategies with terms like "gamblingtwitter", "betting", "live", and "bets", highlighting the engagement with the analytical side of sports.

Discussion

Both MLB and NBA datasets exhibit generally positive sentiments, underscoring an optimistic emotional tone in fan discussions. These findings reveal that sport fans engage in similar thematic discussions across different sports, particularly in topics such as "Game Outcomes toward Fans' Responses" and "Fan Community Support." These common topics demonstrate a universal passion for discussing game results and supporting teams, reflecting strong community ties and emotional investment. However, the discussions also show distinct differences between the two leagues, which suggests underlying divergences in fan tendencies between the sports. For example, NBA discussions often extend into areas like analytics and betting, indicating a proclivity among its fans towards predictive discussions with the sport. In contrast, MLB fans frequently engage more with topics related to historical aspects and collectibles.

These variations offer essential insights for marketers, indicating that while some strategies may be universally effective across sports, others should be specifically tailored to accommodate the unique tendencies of each sport's fan base (Doyle et al., 2022). The positive sentiment observed across each sport provides a promising landscape for community managers to foster brand loyalty and enhance fan engagement through social media analytics ensuring teams remain connected to their fan base (Chang, 2019). As digital interactions continue to evolve, these insights are invaluable for developing effective fan engagement strategies (Yu et al, 2013).

A Comparison Between National And International Satellite Fans In Terms Of Motivations For Social Media Engagement And Its Impact On Fan Loyalty

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Aim and Research Questions

Through social media geographically distant fans, referred to in the literature as satellite fans (Kerr & Gladden, 2008), can engage with their favourite sports team. However, satellite fans occur at a national (e.g. Vancouver Canucks fan living in Toronto) and international market (Vancouver Canucks fan living in Germany). To address sports fans more effectively via social media, the aim of this study is to understand whether and to what extent the digital behaviour of distinct fan groups differs from one another. While we compared local fans with international satellite fans at EASM 2022, this paper compares national with international satellite fans. Do they have different motivations for their social media engagement with their favourite sports team and are there differences in the impact of these social media activities on fan loyalty?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The reason to compare national and international satellite fans is based on the one hand on e. g. Li et al. (2019). They have identified motivational differences comparing US and Chinese NBA fans. On the other hand, Richelieu & Pons (2009) point out, that NHL teams only control marketing and branding within a 100 miles (160 km) radius, which is also labelled by NFL teams as their primary market (Collins et al., 2016). But as there are fans beyond this radius, national satellite fans exist and it needs to be assessed whether they are rather motivated and behave like local fans or like international satellite ones.

To investigate and compare the media usage of fans, the uses and gratifications (U&G)

theory can be applied. In this theory the main emphasis lies on media consumers. The most widely recognized classification of U&G differentiates the motivations for media use in entertainment, integration and social interaction, personal identity, and information. However, researchers revised the original U&G motivations for social media use and added remuneration and empowerment as additional motivations due to the interactive nature of social media (Buzeta, De Pelsmacker, & Dens, 2020; Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit, 2011). Muntinga et al. (2011) divided consumers' online brand-related activities (COBRAs) into the hierarchical levels of consuming, contributing, and creating. Since sports organizations are brands, the COBRAs framework types can be applied to social media research in sports (Vale & Fernandes, 2018).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

From April to June 2021, international NHL satellite fans residing in Germany and national NHL satellite fans living outside a 160 km / 100 miles radius of their favourite team's stadium but in the USA or Canada (both countries are home to the NHL) were surveyed. The sampling method used was snowball sampling via social media. Age, gender and education have been cross-checked with the respective fan population.

The survey began with filter questions focusing on Instagram usage and location of residence. This was followed by 24 items to explore the motivations entertainment, integration and social interaction, personal identity, information, remuneration and empowerment. After that, social media engagement levels consumption, contribution and creation were queried. The next section focused on fan loyalty. The item batteries were adopted from literature and are already validated. Every item battery provided seven-point Likert scales.

To compare the two samples, two SEMs have been conducted. Firstly, the collected data was cleaned by using various criterions (e.g., short response time based on pretest results; attention check questions have not been used due to the already extensive length of the questionnaire) and Mahalanobis distance test for multivariate outliers ($p = 0.001$). The final sample consists of 853 participants (388

national satellite fans; 465 international satellite fans). The data were tested for construct validity and model fit. Then, chi-square difference test was applied to identify differences between the samples and to test geographical distance as moderator.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The Cronbach's alpha of the individual constructs were acceptable in the samples. Furthermore, construct validity of the constructs were confirmed by face validity, content validity, convergent validity (AVE > 0,5; CR > 0,7) and discriminant validity. CFA confirmed model fit for the measurement model and SEM confirmed model fit for the structural model for national (CMIN/DF: 2,557; CFI: 0,901; RMSEA: 0,063) and international (CMIN/DF: 2,899; CFI: 0,912; RMSEA: 0,064) satellite fans.

Chi-square difference revealed in the conceptual model eight statistically significant different paths (from a total of 24) between both fan groups, e.g. the motive "need for information", which has a positive effect on national satellite fans social media contribution behavior, but a negative one on international fans.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This study extends the U&G theory by incorporating geographic distance as a moderator for motivations of social media engagement and its influence on fan loyalty. Consequently, this research expands previous research and identifies motivational differences. Based on the results, recommendations can be made on how national and international satellite fans can best be addressed.

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Analyzing the Impact of Inspiration Porn in Advertising Using Disabled Athletes

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The advertising industry has witnessed a significant increase in «inspiration porn,» which portrays individuals with disabilities using themes like «tragedy to triumph» or fitting into the 'in' crows (Shelton & Waddell, 2021). Inspiration porn often spotlights disability, emphasizes challenges, and sensationalizes exceptional stories, distancing them from everyday life (Grue, 2016). It tends to objectify people with disabilities for the benefit of those without disabilities. Some ads overemphasize hardship and frame disability as inherently tragic, which can be demoralizing for people with disabilities (Pulrang, 2019). However, research shows that ads with disabled models generate more positive emotions than those with able-bodied models (Shelton & Waddell, 2021) suggesting that inspiration porn indeed project positive sentiment. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to unravel the concept of inspiration porn by examining whether advertisers can achieve similar positive outcomes without emphasizing the suffering of the disabled athlete. Moreover, we aim to identify distinct mechanisms (pity vs. admiration) that underlie consumer response using non-exploitative advertisement toward the advertiser and individuals with disabilities.

We propose that communication messages emphasizing one's suffering and hardships (objectifying one's disability, or inspiration porn) will likely engender positive perceptions toward the advertiser through feelings of pity, which are rooted in sympathy or sorrow. On the other hand, messages that focus on a disabled athlete's achievements and recognize their individuality are expected to elicit positive reactions through feelings of admiration, which is an emotional state linked to motivation and encouragement. Moreover, we hypothesize that feelings of pity derived from inspiration porn are positively associated with discomfort and stigma toward people with disabilities. While pity can trigger

empathetic feelings, research showed that pity can also lead to negative perceptions toward disabled athletes (Bartsch et al., 2016).

First study (N = 163) used a single-factor, two-level experimental design. This experiment created two fictitious news messages featuring the same disabled athlete: an inspiration porn message highlighting the athlete's disability and position them as a source of inspiration, while a non-exploitative message emphasizing the athlete's achievements, accentuating their skills, dedication, and personal journey (Södergren & Vallström, 2022). Participants were randomly assigned to view one of the two message stimuli and responded to questionnaires, including items related to pity, admiration, attitudes toward the advertiser, behavioral intention to support the cause, and attitudes toward individuals with disabilities. Second study (N = 204) extended the first experiment by creating two fictitious print advertisements featuring hardship vs. achievement.

Interesting findings emerged from two studies: (1) a message touting the athlete's hardship as a source of inspiration increased feelings of pity, while did not increase feelings of admiration. (2) a non-exploitive message showed similar level of admiration compared to the inspiration porn condition, (3) feelings of pity had no influence on the attitude toward the advertiser or supportive behavior while admiration had positive associations with those outcome variables, (4) feelings of pity had a negative association with competence evaluation of the athlete.

Findings from two experimental studies indicate that while inspiration porn may effectively evoke feelings of pity, it fails to explain supportive behavior intentions towards the disabled community through the emotion of downward comparison. In other words, inspiration porn further distances the athlete in the message from the audience, failing to predict positive outcomes related to the advertiser and the cause (disabled sport). However, messages focusing on disabled athletes' achievements increased feelings of admiration, which had positive associations with these outcomes. Our findings contribute to the growing discourse on 'inspiration porn' (Haller & Preston, 2016) by providing clear evidence that highlighting disabled athletes' achievements (as opposed to their hardships) can actually create more desirable brand and

community outcomes. Greater detail in the methodology and results will be discussed in the presentation.

Study of Online Ticketing Behaviour of Premier League Spectators: Perspectives from the Stimulus-Organism-Response Theory and Technology Acceptance Model

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Aim and Research Question

As sport organisations seek to increase event entrance efficiency, ticketing is entering the digital age (Popp et al., 2020). This study aims to develop a model of online purchasing behaviour to address what factors influence spectators' choice to buy online tickets to watch the Premier League.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Under Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR), stimulus represents any environmental cue that triggers a consumer's emotional evaluation of that environment (Alam & Noor, 2020). E-service quality, as an element of environmental cues, indicates the extent to which a website facilitates efficient shopping and delivery (Parasuraman et al., 2005). Based on cognition, consumers develop psychological organisms such as usefulness, convenience, and potential risk in online purchasing. These psychological states can positively or negatively affect purchase intention, which is a behavioural response (Marquez et al., 2020). The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) argues that perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PE) are fundamental predictors of users' behavioural intentions (Davis, 1993). Apart from PU and PE, this study also considers perceived risk as a psychological organism. Perceived risk refers to the perception of loss and uncertainty that consumers face when purchasing online tickets. However, there is a lack of research examining perceived risk in sport consumption (Shapiro et al., 2019). Unlike other consumption patterns, the main motivation for sport consumption, especially

spectator sport consumption, comes from the emotional bond between spectators and teams or players (Kim et al., 2013). This unpredictability of emotional connection magnifies the extent to which perceived risk influences what consumers decide to buy (Trail et al., 2003). Thus, this study hypothesises the mediating role of PU, PE and perceived risk in the path from e-service quality to purchase intentions. This study also hypothesises that e-service quality has a positive effect on PU and PE while e-service quality has a negative effect on perceived risk. And this study hypothesises that PU and PE have a positive effect on ticket purchase intentions while perceived risk has a negative effect on intentions.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The research population is ticket-purchasing spectators of the Premier League. The study employed both online and offline surveys, resulting in a valid sample of 200 spectators (116 males and 84 females aged between 20 to 62 years old mainly support Manchester United, Liverpool and Manchester City football clubs). E-service quality was measured by four dimensions with 22 items (Parasuraman et al., 2005). Perceived risk was measured with three items (Ahn et al., 2014), PE was measured with three items (Davis, 1993), and PU was measured with three items (Marquez et al., 2020). Purchase intention was measured with four items (Zhao et al., 2016). This study used SPSS and AMOS to conduct confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), structural equation modelling (SEM) and mediation effect analysis using bootstrapping.

Results and Discussion

After removing the two items with factor loadings below .707 on the e-service quality scale, CFA for all latent variables showed an acceptable model fit ($X^2/df = 1.99$, CFI = .93, RMSEA = .06, IFI = .93, TFI = .91). The composite reliability values ranging from .88 to .93 showed internal consistency of the measures. The AVE values ranging from .70 to .83 supported convergent validity. The correlation coefficients across the variables were smaller than their respective squared root of AVEs, supporting discriminant validity. In SEM, the model showed a marginally acceptable fit ($X^2/df = 2.07$, CFI = .89, RMSEA = .05, IFI = .92, TFI = .90).

However, the effect of e-service quality on perceived risk is not statistically significant ($p > .05$). Except for this one hypothesis, the rest of the hypotheses are supported. The variance explained by PU (67%) was greater than that of PE (50%). And the variance explained by perceived risk (19%) was not significant. The mediating role of PU and PE in the path from e-service quality to purchase intentions was further tested using the bootstrapping test. The results showed that the relationship between e-service quality and purchase intention was mediated by PU ($\beta = .20$; $p < .01$; 95% CI = [.06, .35]) and PE ($\beta = .15$; $p < .05$; 95% CI = [.04, .20]).

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

Despite the limited sample size, the theoretical framework suggested in this research can serve as a basis for a deeper understanding of shaping online sport consumption behaviour. In particular, it enhances scholars' understanding of consumer concerns (e.g., perceived risk). This could help deepen scholars' knowledge of technology acceptance and psychological factors among sport consumers. Practically, sport managers would benefit from understanding what factors influence spectators' decisions to use digital ticketing, thereby supporting marketing efforts for new ticketing options and building stronger connections with sport consumers.

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Generative Artificial Intelligence and Its Association with Online Fan Engagement in Sports

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Aim and Research Questions

The existing body of research on customer engagement in sport management has concentrated on the dynamics of how sports fans collectively and actively participate in experiences with sports organizations (McDonald et al., 2022; Yoshida et al., 2014). This participation often occurs at various levels, encompassing both physical attendance at sporting events and interactions across digital platforms, particularly through social media (Filo et al., 2015). However, there has been scant attention to the role of emerging technologies in enhancing content creation and influencing fan interactions with content, especially content that is fan-generated within online sports communities. Among these, the development and integration of generative artificial intelligence (AI) technologies are beginning to reshape the landscape of how content is crafted, shared, and engaged with by fans in online communities. The purpose of the empirical study is to examine how the availability and use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) technologies affect fan engagement within the context of online fan communities.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Organizations recognize that customers are not passive observers but active participants in their interactions and the value co-creation process fundamental to customer engagement (Jaskkola & Alexander, 2014). The phenomenon is particularly salient within online fan communities in sports, where collective interaction experiences can catalyze emotional and social contagion of engagement facilitated by various technological intermediaries and design factors (Funk, 2017). Since its introduction in November 2022, ChatGPT, a leading example of advanced generative AI, has shown the potential to transform the dynamics of content

consumption, creation, and exchange within online sports fan communities (Steelberg, 2023). According to Social Learning Theory (Bandura & Walters, 1977), rather than engage in or interact with original human-created content posed in online forums, fans may turn instead to employ ChatGPT in idea exchange and information seeking without engaging in social interactions and connections with the fellow fan community members. However, empirical evidence addressing the role of generative AI, in fostering non-transactional activities of collective engagement remains limited.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

To address this research gap, we employ a rich dataset harvested from FanWide and utilize the introduction of ChatGPT to establish a natural experiment. As one of the largest online communities in sports, FanWide has facilitated 2,779,959 events across 15,691 fan clubs. We track fan interactions on this platform from October 2022 through September 2023, paralleled by a control sample drawn from the same timeframe in the preceding year, from October 2021 to September 2022. To enhance the robustness of our analysis, we also include data from Reddit, referencing a selection of sports-centered subreddits within the same period. Employing difference-in-differences regression models, we assess the influence of generative AI on fan contributions and engagement across these online platforms. Our focus sharpens on the evolving dynamics and sentiments within these digital sports communities both prior to and following the introduction of generative AI.

Results/Findings and Discussion

We are presently engaged in the process of data scraping. At this point, the results of our investigation remain pending and are not yet available for disclosure in this submission. Nonetheless, we are steadfast in our commitment to share the findings during the forthcoming conference. Contrary to the extant studies that primarily examine information exchange within non-sport contexts, our research hypothesizes minimal to negligible impacts of generative AI on both the quality and emotional responses to content circulated within two distinct online communities. This anticipation is grounded in

the distinctive dynamics of social attachment and emotional contagion, coupled with the intensity of fan allegiance observed within communal interactions among sports fans (Funk & James, 2006).

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

Our research aims to enrich the existing literature on customer engagement within the sports sector by delivering an in-depth analysis of the impact of generative AI on the social dynamics and sentiment within online fan communities. By harnessing empirical data from FanWide and Reddit, we will trace the longitudinal shifts in collective fan engagement both preceding and following the deployment of generative AI technologies. Moreover, our results will illuminate practical considerations for the management of these online communities. Specifically, our study will underscore the vital function that grassroots communal platforms occupy in safeguarding the authenticity and originality of shared experiences in online sport fandom, which is instrumental not only in sustaining robust and healthy fan engagement but also in ensuring the integrity of user-generated content.

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Game, Set, Event? Survey Evidence On German Tennis Spectators At Men's And Women's Tournaments

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Aim and Research Questions

Tennis as a social, economic and political phenomenon in the world of sports with an extraordinary dissemination across the globe exhibits unique characteristics. It is peculiar, however, that the body of research on tennis in the social and economic sciences is substantially falling short of the literature in movement sciences, sports medicine and sport psychology (Millet et al., 2021). Thus, the field is still wide open for original research in sport management. Given the lack of knowledge on tennis attendance demand, the aim of this research is to improve the basic understanding of consumption behaviour of tennis spectators based on a large survey (N=4,775) at ATP (men's tennis) and WTA (women's tennis) tournaments in Germany.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

In the pertinent international journal literature of sports economics and sport management, there are just a handful of (rather recent) papers on tennis spectators' demand and consumption behaviour. Only one study is found on TV demand for tennis broadcasts (Konjer et al., 2017). In contrast, it has to be noted that nearly all publications cover data on women's tennis (e.g., Barrutiabengoa et al., 2022; Özaydın & Könecke, 2024) and partly address gender issues (e.g., Kiefer & Scharfenkamp, 2018; Dietl et al., 2020). Likewise, only one study appeared on live attendance at tennis events. Farrag and Althawadi (2022) present results on a cluster analysis of live spectators at an ATP and a WTA tournament of the lower 250-rank-points category staged in Doha, Qatar. Yet, their sample of N=250 is too small and their study cases too specific to deduce generalisable insights. Therefore, the cases and sample of this study are indeed unique. First, the relevant German tennis market is analysed by a survey of spectators at

prestigious grass tournaments, an ATP 250 event in Stuttgart and a WTA 500 event in Berlin. Second, the large dataset spans over three competition issues, in June of 2021 through 2023. Thus, the theoretical approach of this study tends to be exploratory, following the broad demand concept of consumer culture of sport fans (e.g., Ma et al., 2022).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

This study applies the pertinent research design of standardised (online) surveys. Based on tested operationalisations of comparable previous studies on consumption culture in sports (Robinson et al., 2004; Trail & James, 2001), a questionnaire for tennis spectators was developed and implemented in LimeSurvey for online distribution and intercept sampling at the tennis tournaments via mobile devices (plus paper-pencil option if demanded). It comprised 24 numbered questions, seven of which being item batteries on attitude measurement of more comprehensive topics or constructs with four to eight items each (e.g., sport interest, consumption motives, tennis and event image), measured by 5-point Likert scales throughout. The overall sample size of $N=4,775$ is divided in $n=3,279$ gathered at the ATP event in Stuttgart and $n=1,496$ at the WTA event in Berlin. The lion's share of either events was yielded in 2023 ($n=2,926$ ATP Stuttgart; $n=990$ WTA Berlin) because of refined sampling procedures (esp., online and follow-up distribution). Still, the 2022 sample is sizable ($n=353$ ATP Stuttgart; $n=279$ WTA Berlin) whereas the tournament issues of 2021 suffered from restrictions because of the COVID-19 pandemic (only WTA Berlin sampled; $n=227$). The complex data analysis with the diverse subsamples is still work in progress. By the time of the conference, the full data set will be available and subject to ordered-logit regression analyses with more sophisticated results. The current findings used the 2022 sample ($n=632$), focusing on non-parametric methods such as factor and cluster analysis.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Cluster analyses on the described 2022 sample yield four comparable clusters of tennis live spectators each with the following share in the sample: (1) dedicated regional tennis fans (35-40%), (2) event and entertainment oriented

general sport fans (21-32%), (3) opportunity sport fans (19-21%) and (4) accompanying persons (11-19%). Striking is the high educational status of the visitors as well as the high share of females at the WTA event (50% versus 36% at the ATP event). In contrast, ATP spectators are more attracted by their specific interest for tennis and certain players. However, less than 10% are coming from outside of the hosting region whereas the WTA event in the capital draws more than 40% from other regions.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

At this early stage of the data analysis, it can be concluded that tennis spectators (in Germany) are less characterised by an emotional fan culture and high identification as in team sports. Yet, the 'cultivated' atmosphere at tennis events attracts a majority of less identified, but still interested sport and event fans. This specific consumption culture at tennis events of a (premium) 'social event' deserves more attention by event organisers and researchers alike.

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Analysis of the Match Between Team Support and Home Region Based on the Interaction of Professional Sports Fans' Place Attachment and Perceived Sports Knowledge and Exploration of Antecedent Variables of Team Preference

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Aim and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine the interaction between place attachment and perceived sports knowledge among professional sports fans in Korea to determine whether place attachment and rooting team are congruent or incongruent, and if not, what antecedent variables influence this congruence. To accomplish our research objectives, we make the following claims: (1) We want to understand whether the interaction between neighborhood attachment and perceived sports knowledge is associated with residence and team alignment. (2) We want to explore what factors lead to sports team support among those who do not have a match between their residence and their team.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The franchise format of professional sports leagues, which originated in the 1980s, is characterized by regional ties. Spectators tend to prefer following their local sports leagues (Branscombe & Wann, 1991), making franchises in professional sports leagues cultural symbols of the region and a means of promoting local pride. The proliferation of professional sports leagues around the world is evident in South Korea, where the Korea Baseball Organization (KBO) has projected a cumulative attendance of approximately 8 million in 2023. Most fans follow teams tied to their current residence or hometown, though some fans support teams outside their local area. Korean professional baseball adopts a franchise system based on regional affiliations, which is deeply connected to fans' team support tendencies. By analyzing

regional affiliations and fans' support tendencies, we can clearly understand how place attachment and perceived sports knowledge interact. In Korea, rural residents tend to prefer professional baseball teams based on regional ties more than urban residents (Kim & Lim, 2019). Therefore, it is important to analyze how these differences affect sports team support.

The elaboration likelihood model can explain the behavior of fans who support sports leagues with ties to regions that are not their own. The model predicts that high-perceived sports knowledge fans will root for a team due to intrinsic factors of the sporting event, while low-perceived sports knowledge fans will root for a team due to external factors such as place attachment (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Thus, this study sets the following research questions: first, does the interaction between place attachment and perceived sports knowledge moderate the relationship between residence and team support? Secondly, which variables influence the effect of residence and team alignment on perceived sports knowledge?

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

This study will recruit and analyze 300 Korean professional baseball fans through a professional survey agency. Participants will be selected based on their current interest in the Korean professional baseball league and their support for a specific team. This approach will include fans from various regions and with different levels of sports knowledge, ensuring the representativeness of the study. The measurement tools to be used have been validated in previous research, ensuring reliability and validity. To achieve the research aims, two studies will be conducted: (1) Study 1 will verify the alignment between fan support for a team and its location (match=1, mismatch=0) based on the interaction effect of place attachment and perceived sports knowledge, using logistic regression analysis (n=300). (2) Study 2 will examine the impact of various predictor variables (duration of team support, team attachment, player attachment, team characteristics, game outcomes) on fan retention intentions among individuals who do not exhibit alignment, utilizing multiple regression analysis grounded in prior research. Logistic regression analysis is

suitable for explaining binary dependent variables (such as the alignment between team support and location), while multiple regression analysis is advantageous for simultaneously examining the effects of multiple independent variables on a dependent variable (such as fan retention intention). These analytical methods enhance the accuracy of the study and facilitate a comprehensive understanding of fans' support tendencies. SPSS 26.0 and Amos 26.0 will be used.

Results/Findings and Discussion

This study will be completed before the conference, and the expected results are as follows. (1) According to the elaboration likelihood model, individuals with strong place attachment and low perceived sports knowledge are expected to have their supported team's location align with their own. This is because those with low perceived sports knowledge are more influenced by external factors via peripheral routes rather than the sports team itself. Conversely, individuals with high perceived sports knowledge and low place attachment are expected to have a mismatch between the supported team's location and their own. This is because individuals with low place attachment are more influenced by the team's performance via central routes and tend to support successful teams. (2) Based on the results of Study 1, a multiple regression analysis will be conducted to examine which predictor variables influence fan retention intentions when the supported team's location does not match the individual's own. Drawing from prior research, various factors affecting fan retention intentions (duration of team support, team attachment, player attachment, team characteristics, and game outcomes) will be analyzed. Subsequently, significant variables identified from the analysis will be examined to ascertain whether they mediate the influence of place attachment and perceived sports knowledge on fan retention intention.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This study is expected to provide new insights by examining how attachment to place interacts with perceived sports knowledge in the context of professional sports and sports fans. The hometown represents the local community and enhances residents' cohesion,

potentially influencing mechanisms through which fans support their professional sports teams. The findings of this research can confirm the sustainability of sports fans and serve as foundational data for understanding fan attitudes and behaviors. Additionally, identifying the precursor variables that influence fan retention intentions is significant for understanding the fundamental characteristics of fans in professional sports.

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The Effect Of Fan-oriented Trash-talk On Behavioral Engagements Of Other Fans: The Role Of Pre-existing Attitudes Towards The Teams And Psychological Reactance

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The purpose of this research is to incorporate fan-oriented trash-talk into the sport marketing literature, seeking to explore when (types of trash-talk) and why (social identity, psychological reactance) behavioral engagements of fans vary when exposed to the fan-oriented trash-talk.

Fan engagement has received attention in sport marketing as a promising factor to predict fan behaviors (McDonald et al., 2022). Social media has been considered as a key tool for enhancing fan engagement (Vale & Fernandes, 2018). Due to the ongoing digital transformation within the sport industry, sport fans can now interact with others beyond the temporal and geographical restrictions (Stegmann et al., 2023). However, despite the influence sport fans have in shaping other fans' behaviors (Urich et al., 2014), there remains a scarcity of research into the impact of fan-to-fan interactions on sport fans' behavioral engagement on social media.

One form of fan-to-fan interaction of particular interest for this study is trash-talking. Trash-talking refers to "boastful comments about the self or derogatory comments about an opponent that are delivered by a competitor typically before or during a game" (Yip et al., 2018, p.126). Trash-talking is considered a verbal aggression used to build a superior position in relation to rivals (Yip et al., 2018). Therefore, trash-talking occurs more often when competition is fierce or comparison with opponents takes place (Kniffin & Palacio, 2018). Spectator sports inherently evoke competitiveness, with fans identifying strongly with their favorite teams and deriving vicarious satisfaction from their success (Kim & James, 2022). Moreover, fans consider mutual derogation and aversion as a desired way to enjoy team sports consumption (Urich, 2014). As aggressive communication varies in its quality and influence cognition

and behavior toward both the target and the trash-talker (Yip et al., 2018), there is an opportunity to explore the role of fan-originated trash-talk within the context of spectator sport.

To investigate this phenomenon, this study applied psychological reactance theory (PRT) and social identity theory (SIT) as theoretical frameworks. According to PRT, when a person's freedom is threatened, a state of reactance is generated, and individuals are motivated to restore eliminated freedom (Brehm, 1966). Reactance to threats extends beyond just individual freedom to include challenges to pre-existing attitudes, social identity, and values (Kim et al., 2021). Therefore, trash talk from specific fans can threaten other fans' pre-existing attitudes or values, influencing their subsequent behavior. Reactions to such identity-threatening comments vary based on the content and strength of their identity (Kim et al., 2021). From a social identity perspective, sports fans not only identify with their favorite teams but also disidentify with rival teams. However, there is limited research that comprehensively examines both constructs, particularly regarding the psychological reactance to threats arising from fan-to-fan interactions.

This study will employ a 2 (trash-talk type: derogatory vs. boastful) x 2 (pre-existing attitude: inconsistent vs. consistent) between-subjects experimental design with two measured moderating variables (i.e., identification, disidentification). Process Macro Model 7 will be applied for the moderated mediation analysis (Hayes, 2017). The target population will be collegiate football fans and data collection will take place during June 2024 using panel data through Prolific. Before conducting the main study, trash-talk stimuli will be developed. Actual trash-talk comments from collegiate football fans have been selected through an expert panel review. Afterwards, pre-tests will be conducted using college students to determine their appropriateness and effectiveness. For the main study, participants will be randomly assigned to each experimental group which shows fictitious trash-talks. To manipulate the consistency between trash-talk and pre-existing attitude, participants will be randomly assigned to scenarios where their favorite/rival team is a target of trash-talk. Next, manipulation check, research variable,

and demographic questions will be measured sequentially.

The anticipated results of this study are as follows: When participants are exposed to trash-talk about a rival team, derogatory (boastful) trash-talk will lead to lesser (greater) behavioral engagement via an increase (a decrease) in psychological reactance to the trash-talk. Conversely, derogatory (boastful) trash-talk will lead to greater (lesser) behavioral engagement via an increase (a decrease) in psychological reactance when exposed to trash-talk about a favorite team. Furthermore, the degree of identification (disidentification) with the favorite team (rival team) will moderate the indirect effect of the interaction between trash-talk and pre-existing attitudes on behavioral engagement through psychological reactance.

Based on PRT and SIT, this study will provide comprehensive theoretical explanation of how and why active interactions between sport fans shape their subsequent behaviors on social media, where fans, favorite teams and rival teams are intricately linked. Furthermore, with the recent emphasis on the active role of sport consumers, this study can offer practical implications to practitioners on promoting or managing trash-talk among fans to enhance their behavioral engagements on social media.

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Exploring the Impact of Leadership Response Strategies on Athlete Brand Image and Fan Engagement in Professional Sports

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Aim and Research Questions

Athletes not only embody sports prowess but also powerful brands that resonate with fans' values, aspirations, and loyalty. Athlete brand images can be vulnerable to various influences, such as injuries or off-field controversies. One critical factor shaping fan reactions to these events is the leadership response strategy adopted by the athlete's team (Fink et al., 2009). When leadership response strategy is harmonized with other factors such as the type of spokesperson, its effectiveness can increase. However, despite research on leadership response strategies' effects on fans' perceptions and team connectedness, their specific impact on athlete brand image remains underexplored. Thus, this study investigates the influence of leadership response strategy (strong vs. weak), the type of spokesperson (team manager vs. athlete), and communication channel (press conference vs. social media) on athlete brand image and, in turn, fan game engagement. It also explores how team identification (high vs. low) moderates this relationship.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Balance theory suggests that individuals aim to maintain consistency in their beliefs and emotions (Heider, 1958). When a team member's actions conflict with fans' positive views of the team, fans may experience cognitive dissonance as they strive to uphold their positive perceptions. They may seek ways to restore harmony, such as by justifying the player's behavior or expecting strong leadership responses (Heider, 1958). A swift and firm response from team leaders can help fans perceive the player's behavior as an anomaly, restoring cognitive balance and reinforcing positive team sentiments (Fink et al., 2009). Social identity theory indicates that fans with strong team identification are more

likely to seek cognitive balance during negative events, focusing on positive aspects and strong leadership responses to maintain their positive connection with the team (Dietz-Uhler & Murrell, 1998). Research by Fink et al. (2009) suggests that strong leadership responses in controversial situations receive more positive reactions from both highly and lowly identified fans compared to weak responses. Additionally, studies by Hwang (2017a) and Hwang (2017b) indicate that athletes acting as spokespersons and addressing negative events through press conferences positively influence fans' perceptions of the team. Based on the literature review, we hypothesize that for both highly and lowly identified fans, a strong leadership response strategy, athletes as spokespersons, and responding via press conferences will produce favorable responses in athlete brand image and, in turn, purchase intention and game attendance.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

We will analyze a factorial design with a general linear model. Data will be collected through surveys from 400 fans of a professional soccer team in Major League Soccer (MLS). Participants will read fictional scenarios with different leadership responses, spokesperson types, and communication channels, and respond to manipulation check questions about these factors. They will then evaluate athlete brand image, purchase intention, and game attendance. We will adopt scales deemed valid and reliable from previous studies (Fink et al., 2009; Hwang, 2017a; Hwang, 2017b; James et al., 2019; Lohneiss & Hill, 2014; Ngan et al., 2011; Rai et al., 2023). SPSS 27 will be utilized for data analysis.

Results and Discussion

The abstract does not currently include the study's results. However, we assure that the results will be available by the time of the conference. The expected outcomes of this study may suggest that a strong leadership response, with an athlete as the spokesperson and delivered through a press conference, is the preferred coping strategy for controversial sports teams. Regardless of fans' levels of identification with the team, such a strong leadership response, with an athlete as the spokesperson in a press conference, can effectively uphold the athlete's overall brand

image, positively influencing fans' purchase intention and game attendance. These anticipated results can support and strengthen previous literature that discussed the importance of prompt and firm responses to negative events, the role of athletes as spokespersons, and the significance of responding via press conferences (Fink et al., 2009; Hwang, 2017a; Hwang, 2017b).

Conclusion, Contributions, and Implications

By integrating leadership response strategy, balance theory, and social identity theory, we can better understand how fans maintain cognitive balance by aligning their beliefs and feelings about the team, emphasizing the role of leadership responses in preserving fans' positive connection despite challenges. A strong and proactive response from team leadership can mitigate the negative impact of adverse events, reassuring fans and stakeholders and maintaining trust and loyalty, whereas a weak or passive response may exacerbate the situation, leading to further damage to the athlete's brand image and potentially affecting fan perceptions and behavior (Fink et al., 2009). Implications will be relevant for sports teams who must respond to controversies. The optimal approach to protecting athlete brand image and enhancing fans' purchase intentions and game attendance will be to focus on promptly and firmly addressing controversies, utilizing athletes as spokespersons, and responding via press conferences.

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The Effect of Attribution of Athlete Migration on Fans' Responses: The Cases of Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo

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Aim and Research Questions

In the major spectator sport industry, athletes' migration is inevitable with the internationalization of sports leagues. Meanwhile, sport fans constantly encounter challenging situations where they have to deal with the transfer of their favorite team players (Bostwick & Lookadoo, 2017). In particular, undesirably broken relationships can lead to identity threats among fans (Arai et al., 2023), which leads to negative behavioral responses (e.g., exiting and ignoring). Unfortunately, this research domain has not received scholarly attention in sport management field. It is essential to understand what specific aspects of athlete migration shape fans' emotions, brand perceptions, and behaviors and how to mitigate the negative emotional responses from fans and sustain a healthy fanbase.

Accordingly, the main purpose of the current study was to explore the differential impact of attribution type (i.e., internal and external) of athletes' transfer on fans' responses on a social media platform. Specifically, the current study aims 1) to identify salient topics discussed on social media regarding two players' migration and 2) to explore primary contributors of consumers' sentiment (i.e., positive and negative) on the players' migration. For these purposes, the authors carefully selected and explored the cases of Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo, two star athletes who recently relocated to leagues in other countries.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Behavioral norms are defined as a scope of behaviors perceived to be acceptable in group interaction (Sherif, 1961). Based on the norm violation theory, when an individual athlete acts in an inappropriate way that goes beyond

the acceptable range, a norm violation occurs. Specifically, the migration of their favorite player to another team can be perceived as a norm violation because it impairs the spirit and value of group membership, threatening their fan identities.

However, such a negative effect of norm violation can be mitigated based on how fans perceived the attribution of the athlete's migration. The main purpose of attribution is to understand and form meaningful viewpoints of witnessed situations (Kelly, 1973). Attribution theory demonstrates how people create and use attributions to comprehend an event or behaviors they observe (Kelly & Michela, 1980). According to Heider (1958), there are two types of attributions which are internal and external attributions. Internal attribution is made to the actor (athlete), while external attribution is made to the environment or situation. As the actor has less control in a case that is based on external attributions, people tend to justify behaviors that are considered the norm violation in this case (Weiner, 1985). In contrast, when norm violation occurs due to internal factors, people are more likely to have negative emotions toward the other party (Averill, 1983).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The authors carefully selected Messi and Ronaldo based on the following reasons: 1) they transferred to other leagues at a similar time, 2) their attributions of migration were described differently in news media, and 3) they are comparable top athletes mentioned together as a rivalry. Six news and interview videos related to Messi's migration to Inter Miami and four news videos related to Ronaldo's migration to Al-Nassr FC from YouTube were chosen for the analysis frame. Most of the videos were from official sports news channels (e.g., CBS Sports and ESPN FC). A total of 7,687 comments regarding Messi and 7,807 comments regarding Ronaldo were collected using YouTube's Application Programming Interface. The authors separately analyzed each athlete's data by performing topic modeling, a series of regression analyses, and sentiment analyses using Bing Lexicon through R.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The results of each athlete's topic modeling showed that both players' topics could be categorized into 1) Migration attribution, 2) Fans' emotions, 3) Players' personality, 4) Media description, 5) Players' performance, and 6) Players' expected impact on new teams. The authors explained each topic using attribution theory and norm violation theory.

Topic modeling suggests that attribution related topics were most prominent. In general, Messi has external attribution related topics, while Ronaldo has internal attribution related topics. The regression analysis results showed that people are more likely to press like for external attributions related topics (i.e., family and team condition for Messi) while less likely to press like for the internal attribution related topic (i.e., financial gain for Ronaldo). The results clearly supported the basic tenet of attribution theory (Kelly & Michela, 1980).

The sentiment analysis results offered rich information about topic 2 (Fan's emotion). The keywords contributing to Messi and Ronaldo's positive sentiment were considerably different. Messi's keywords were mainly related to fans' affection, admiration, and good personality, while Ronaldo's keywords were mainly related to his performance. On the other hand, keywords contributing to the negative sentiment look similar in both cases, such as sadness, disappointment, and anger, which shows fans' feeling of identity threat caused by norm violation. However, Ronaldo fans had more complex feelings, such as shame and feeling wrong about his decision, along with the abovementioned emotions. The reason why he has a more complicated negative sentiment is expected to be due to his attribution rather than mere norm violation, which further supports the attribution theory.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The current research achieves our research purposes and provides several meaningful theoretical implications in the sport fan behavior literature. First, we further extended attribution and norm violation theories in the underexplored context of athlete migration through empirical evidence from social media big data analysis. Specifically, we found that athletes' attribution is a significant topic in migration, and external attribution is likely to

mitigate the feeling of norm violation, resulting in more positive emotions and reactions. Moreover, the findings of the current study offer new insights for developing effective communication strategies in this context. For instance, when the athlete inevitably migrates to another team, they should emphasize the external attributions since it will help athletes to be protected from negative emotional responses from fans and maintain a sustainable fanbase. The suggestions for future research will be addressed in the presentation.

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Exploring the Relevance of UEFA EURO 2024 in the Indian Market: A Study of Fan Perceptions and Engagement

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The UEFA European Football Championship, commonly known as the EURO, garners immense global anticipation and attention, extending far beyond the borders of Europe. With the UEFA EURO 2024 on the horizon, this research aims to explore the relevance of the event for sports fans in India, a non-European market, focusing on how Indian sports consumers perceive it. The global reach of football, particularly European tournaments like UEFA EURO, has been widely studied in sports management and marketing literature. The globalization of sports has led to significant interest and viewership from non-traditional markets (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2004; Gupta, 2009). Previous research indicates that major international sporting events can capture the interest of diverse audiences, driving economic and cultural exchanges (Andreff, 2021; Nikolaou et al., 2023). India's enthusiasm for sports, particularly cricket, has been well-documented, but recent trends suggest a growing interest in football (Dhillon & Sharma, 2022). This study builds on the theoretical frameworks of consumer behavior in sports and the diffusion of sports fandom across different cultural contexts (Wann et al., 2001).

Through a comprehensive survey, consisted of 25 questions, covering demographics, awareness, anticipation, usage behavior, and spending intentions related to UEFA EURO 2024, this study explores the relevance of the tournament among 200 Indian sports enthusiasts. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to understand the general trends and segmentation among Indian football fans. The survey aimed to capture a broad spectrum of responses to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Indian football fan base's engagement with the upcoming event.

The survey results indicate varying levels of anticipation and awareness among Indian football fans. Approximately 55% of

respondents expressed moderate to severe anticipation for the event, while 29% showed no anticipation. A notable 26% of respondents identified as dedicated fans who follow every edition of the tournament. Awareness of the event varied, with 15% of respondents aware of all relevant details and 29% not aware of the event at all.

Interest in watching the event was significant, with 26% of respondents very interested and 12% extremely interested. The primary medium for following the event is live TV or streaming, chosen by 65% of respondents. Social media and YouTube highlights were also popular options. 44% of the respondents stated the desire to watch the matches live, with 42% using TV Subscription plans like JioTV or Tata Play rather than the official broadcasting partner SonyLIV. When asked about the number of matches they intend to watch live, 44% of respondents planned to watch 1-10 matches, and 22% did not plan to watch any matches.

Challenges in accessing live matches were minimal for most respondents, with 46% expecting it to be easily accessible and affordable. Regarding spending on merchandise, 93% of respondents indicated they would spend up to ₹5000 (€55). Only a small percentage of respondents (5%) considered traveling to Germany for the event. The study also found that 39% of respondents were eager to watch popular players like Kylian Mbappe, and close to 38% were interested in watching national teams such as England, Germany and France.

This study provides insights into the relevance and perception of UEFA EURO 2024 among Indian sports fans, highlighting the growing interest in football in a traditionally cricket-dominated market. The findings suggest that while there is significant interest and anticipation for the event, there are also segments of the population that remain disengaged. The results have implications for sports marketers and broadcasters aiming to expand their reach in India. Understanding the viewing preferences and spending behavior of Indian fans can help tailor marketing strategies and enhance fan engagement. This study contributes to the literature on global sports fandom and provides a basis for further research on the impact of major sporting events in non-traditional markets.

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The Impact Perceived Brand Community Character on Fan Loyalty through Organisational Citizenship Behaviour: A case of Shanghai Shenhua FC Fans

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Aim and Research Questions

Grounded on organisational commitment theory (Mowday et al., 1979) and social exchange theory (Bagozzi, 1975), this study aims to examine the relationships of perceived brand community character (PBCC), organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) and fan loyalty (FL) among Chinese football fans.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Brand community is defined as “a specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand” (Muñiz & O’Guinn 2001, p. 412). This study firstly introduces the perspective of brand community into football fans research in Chinese context to advance our understanding of Chinese football FL. This study adopts PBCC to examine brand community. PBCC refers to “individual brand community members’ perceptions of the interactions within the brand community, according to whether they exhibit key brand community characteristics: consciousness of kind, shared rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility” (Relling et al., 2016, p.108). Bettencourt (1997) defines customers’ OCB as “helpful, discretionary behaviours of customers that support the ability of the firm to deliver service quality” (p. 384). According to organisational commitment theory (Mowday et al., 1979), football fans in football community typically possess a strong belief in and acceptance of football community’s goals and values, and they also exhibit a high willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of their football community. Thus, PBCC is hypothesised to positively influence OCB. The positive PBCC not only makes fans to share happiness together, but also jointly

bears hardships, inspires FL among fans. Thus, PBCC is hypothesised to positively influence FL. Based on the exchange theory (Bagozzi, 1975), football fans with high PBCC can acquire the certain benefits from their participation in the community (Kim et al., 2008), and they are willing to implement more OCBs. Moreover, they have a strong desire to maintain their community memberships to acquire more benefits of the staying (Cohen, 2007). Both PBCC and OCB positively influence FL. Further, this study also proposes OCB plays a partial mediating role in the relationship between PBCC and FL. To further understand whether each dimension of PBCC plays a role, three research hypotheses are proposed: each dimension of PBCC plays a positive role in the process of PBCC→OCB→FL.

Method

The research population was Shanghai Shenhua FC fans who had joined the online communities. Using a convenience sampling technique, 532 valid samples were recruited. PBCC was measured with nine items (Relling, 2016), OCB was measured with fifteen items (Jiang & Xu, 2012) scale, and FL was measured with four items (Bauer, 2008). After testing the psychometric properties of the measures using the first data set, the hypotheses were tested with a path analysis with bootstrapping using the other data set.

Results and Discussion

In the first step (n = 222), CFA showed an acceptable model fit: $\chi^2(332) = 954.54$, $\chi^2/df = 2.88$, CFI = .89, IFI = .89, TLI = .88, RMSEA = .09, and SRMR = .06. Composite reliability values ranged from .93 to .95, meeting the .70 cut-off. Convergent validity was accepted given that the AVE values ranged from .73 to .87. Discriminant validity was also accepted as the AVE value for each construct was greater than the squared correlation between that construct and any other. In the second step (n = 310), The SEM results revealed an acceptable model fit ($\chi^2/df = 1.54$, CFI = .98, IFI = .98, TLI = .98, RMSEA = .04, and SRMR = .06). The path analysis supported three out of seven hypotheses. PBCC was positively related to OCB (b = .85, p < .001) and FL (b = .53, p < .001). However, OCB was not related to FL (b = .24) and didn’t play a partial mediating role in the relationship between PBCC and FL (b = .21, 95% CI [-.04 ~ .42].

Shared rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility didn't play a positive role. However, consciousness of kind was positively related to OCB and FL.

Conclusion

In theory, football fans within a football community possess a deep understanding of their community's consciousness of kind, are more inclined to adhere to shared rituals and traditions, and fulfil their responsibilities positively. However, factors such as the duration of membership in the community, community management practices, and the community atmosphere can all influence fans' OCB, thereby affecting FL. This study has not yet considered the impact of these factors, which may hinder the mediation effect of OCB. In summary, clubs should identify which consciousness of kind can gain fan recognition and adherence, and promote consciousness of kind through activities with shared rituals and traditions. This would deepen fans' understanding and support for the club, continuously cultivate fans' sense of moral responsibility towards the club, team, and community, emphasize the cultivation and strengthening of brand-community relationships, and thereby enhance FL.

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True Desire from Far Away: Exploring the Antecedents of Fandom, Team Identification, and Loyalty of Hungarian NFL Satellite Fans

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Aim and Research Questions

One of the main drivers of the globalised sports market is the so-called 'satellite fan', who lives in a different geographical area from that of the sport or team (Kerr & Gladden, 2008). These fans sometimes live in a completely different cultural environment, but they are still emotionally (Kerr & Emery, 2011) and psychologically connected to a particular athlete, sport or team (Monaghan & Read, 2022) and their consumption of various merchandising items is often even less influenced by the team's actual performance than that of local fans (Pu & James, 2017). The current study on the one hand seeks to understand the main antecedents of becoming the fan of an NFL football team, while on the other hand, it aims to explain how the level of identification affects their attitudinal loyalty.

Q1: What are the main reasons for domestic - in our case Hungarian - fans become emotionally committed followers of international sports teams, in our case, an international sports brand to which his or her country has no cultural connection?

Q2: What is the level of team identification among Hungarian NFL team fans, and how does this affect their attitudinal loyalty towards their team?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Emerging from social identity theory, which proposes that individuals derive their sense of self, value and emotional significance from belonging to social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 2004) team identification is "the extent to which a fan feels psychologically connected to a team" (Wann et al., 2001, p.3) Using these Monaghan and Reid (2022) aimed to understand the antecedents and drivers of UK satellite fans' identification with NFL teams, and to assess their stability towards their teams (and a possible relocation). However,

the question of why satellite fans become supporters of a sport and sports teams that are culturally distant from them, and how the level of their identification affects their team and brand loyalty is still under studied. In the context of the NFL, the extent to which identification is linked to the team or the league brand remains uncertain. Oliver (1997) argues that attitudinal loyalty comprises various dimensions, including cognitive, affective, and conative aspects. Affective loyalty refers to the emotional attachment and positive associations towards a particular brand, while cognitive loyalty encompasses the knowledge and beliefs about it, and conative loyalty is associated with the intention and dedication to partake in actions that uphold the brand.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

In order to answer the first research questions, our first step was to create an open-ended questionnaire to find out why fans started following an international league and their favourite team (the first version of which was completed for the NFL with a total of 444 respondents). In order to answer the second research question we applied the Hungarian version of the Team Identification Scale and also created a scale for measure the three dimensions of brand loyalty towards the team. The questionnaire was also used for the a validation of the previous two scales (in order for further use in another questionnaire).

The targeted population for the sampling of this questionnaire is the community of football and American football fans based in Hungary. The questionnaire was completed by a total of 734 participants; however, only 444 individuals provided responses to at least one of the open-ended questions. Consequently, to avoid biases, only these respondents were included in the final sample. The data collection took place within Hungarian social media groups related to NFL fandom. Of the sample, 91.7% are male and 8.3% are female, reflecting the distribution of Hungarian fans well. The average age of respondents is 39.11 years, and they have been following NFL matches for an average of 14.18 years.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Using the open-ended questionnaire, a total of 22 sources (antecedents) were identified that

influenced the selection of a favourite team. The 444 respondents provided a total of 553 antecedents, identified as primary and secondary sources. The most common response was one of the team's players or stars (30.6%), followed by the answer that the team which is now their favourite was one of the teams in the first match the supporter watched (19.8%). The third most common antecedent was the strength and playing style of the team (15.8%). 8.6% of the respondents became fans of a team following a Super Bowl victory, while most interestingly 5.5% chose their favourite team because of a pop culture product (e.g., a film or series). The average level of team identification was 5.31 on a seven-point scale, which is lower than usually found in similar questionnaire surveys. The most interesting result was obtained in the case of loyalty. While the value of affective loyalty was 6.41, cognitive loyalty was 4.84, and conative loyalty was only 2.94.

The level of identification with the team has a significant positive effect on affective ($\beta=0.60$), cognitive ($\beta=0.65$), and conative ($\beta=0.71$) loyalty. The variances of these latent variables are explained by 36%, 43%, and 50%, respectively.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The first Hungarian-language NFL broadcast hit Hungary in 2004. This proved to be significant in the spread of the sport and the teams, as evidenced by the results obtained. Among the 22 antecedents identified, 13 elements were also mentioned by the study of Monaghan and Read (2022) as antecedents of identification, but we found additional sources beyond these.

Our results demonstrate that even in the era of streaming services, broadcasts in the target country's language by knowledgeable commentators, as well as the spread of pop culture products, can still be of great importance. All these contribute to the formation of a dedicated fan base 8000 kilometres away from the origins of NFL. Fans, who are emotionally attached to their team and participate in the consumption of merchandising products.

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The Impact of BIRFing and CORFing on Reviewing and Switching Intentions: Mediating Effects of Hope and Anger and Moderating Effects of Sport Type

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Aim and Research Questions

This study aims to compare how traditional sports fans and e-Sports fans respond to failure situations, examining emotional mediation through BIRFing (Basking in Reflected Failure) and CORFing (Cutting Off Reflected Failure). The research questions are:

- 1) Do emotions (hope, anger) mediate the effects of BIRFing and CORFing on continuous watching and switching intentions?
- 2) Does the type of sport (traditional sports vs. e-Sports) moderate the effect of BIRFing and CORFing on re-viewing and switching intentions?

Theoretical Background

BIRFing signifies loyal fans supporting their team regardless of performance, linked to re-viewing intentions (Campbell et al., 2004). CORFing reflects fans distancing themselves from a failing team, linked to switching intentions (Wann et al., 1990). Traditional sports foster strong team attachments, whereas e-Sports have shorter player durations but greater player-fan interaction, likely leading to higher CORFing during team failure (Kim, 2022).

Emotions are important mediators that can influence the relationship between sports teams and fans. Anger can promote distancing from the team and switching behaviors, while hope can promote continuous engagement and support (Lazarus, 1991). Hope and anger can mediate the effects of BIRFing and CORFing, shaping fans' behavioral intentions (Kessler & Hollbach, 2005). However, most research has focused on traditional sports, with a gap in understanding these dynamics in e-Sports. This study aims to delineate how BIRFing and CORFing, along with emotions, uniquely

influence re-viewing and switching intentions in the contexts of both traditional sports and e-Sports.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

456 questionnaires were collected from Korean fans of professional sports and e-Sports, administered online. The sample included a balanced mix of genders and an age range predominantly in their 20s and 30s. Measures included items for BIRFing, CORFing, hope, anger, re-viewing intention, and switching intention, validated through prior research. Participants were asked about their experiences following their favorite team's losses to control for the effect of defeat.

No variables showed a high correlation of .80 or higher, confirming that multicollinearity and confounding effects between constructs did not appear. The internal consistency of the items was checked through Cronbach's α coefficient, and it was more than .70 (.926~.948), ensuring reliability. The confirmatory factor analysis shows that the model fit is $\chi^2 = 726.629$, $df = 260$, normed $\chi^2 = 2.933$, SRMR = .040, CFI = .959, RMSEA = .065, which meets the criteria. Each variable has standardized factor loadings above .707 (.724~.949), mean variance extracted above .50 (.778~.894), and concept reliability above .70 (.990~.993), indicating good convergent validity. As for discriminant validity, the squared correlation coefficients between the factors (0.006~0.723) are smaller than the AVE values (0.778~0.894), so it can be said that the independence of the variables is secured.

Results and Discussion

The structural model's goodness-of-fit indices were $\chi^2 = 803.725$, $df = 262$, normed $\chi^2 = 2.987$, SRMR = .040, CFI = .955, RMSEA = .067, confirming the model's good fit. Path analysis showed that CORFing did not have a significant effect on re-viewing intention ($\beta = -.01$, $t = -.389$, $p = .697$), so this path was rejected. All other paths had significant effects and were adopted.

The bootstrap technique was used to test the mediating effect. Hope significantly mediated the effect of BIRFing on re-viewing intention (direct effect = .241, $p < .001$; indirect effect = .467, $p < .001$; total effect = .708, $p < .001$), but

not on switching intention (direct effect = .180, $p < .007$; indirect effect = -.217, $p < .004$; total effect = -.037, $p = .476$). Anger partially mediated the effect of CORFing on switching intention (direct effect = .561, $p < .001$; indirect effect = .033, $p < .001$; total effect = .534, $p < .001$), but not on re-viewing intention (direct effect = -.015, $p = .002$; indirect effect = -.078, $p = .941$; total effect = -.144, $p = .641$).

Moderated mediation tests identified differences between sports fans and e-Sports fans. Results showed a moderating effect of sports fans and e-Sports fans on the mediating effect of anger ($df = 8$, $CMIN = 17.339$, $p < .027$), but no moderating effect on the mediating effect of hope.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This study expands BIRFing and CORFing research from traditional sports to e-Sports fans, comparing their effects on re-viewing and switching intentions through emotional mediation. BIRFing and CORFing significantly predict fans' emotions, which in turn influence re-viewing and switching intentions. This highlights the role of hope and anger as mediators in shaping these behavioral intentions after post-game disappointment. Strategies eliciting hopeful emotions can mitigate fan churn, so it may be in the interest of management to foster such sentiment. This study focused on people in their 20s and 30s to reflect the characteristics of e-Sports fans, but future studies should consider a wider age distribution.

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Time to Say Goodbye? - An Analysis of German Football Fans' Exit Tendencies

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Aim and Research Questions

Fans invest time, money, and passion in their relationship with their favourite teams, and are essential stakeholders for the future success of European football in general and in Germany as one of the key markets in particular (Senaux, 2008; Winell et al., 2023). A current market and advertising media analysis, according to which more than half of the German population can be described as football fans due to a general interest, underlines this relevance once again (Statista Research Department, 2023). Against this backdrop, various media reports and research from the recent past appear to be extremely worrying, as they repeatedly address the alienation, eroding loyalty, and exit of fans (Kaden et al., 2023). The present study is intended to shed light on this important issue by investigating the central research question of whether there are tendencies for German football fans to move away from their favourite teams.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

This study is based on Hirschman's (1970) Exit-Voice-Loyalty-Framework which provides two basic response options for customers of a company or members of an organisation in case of dissatisfaction: They can either stop buying a company's products or leave the organisation (Exit) or address the management of the company/organisation directly, for example by initiating protest campaigns or submitting complaints (Voice). Loyalty, as a «special attachment» (Hirschman, 1970, p. 77) to a company/organisation, intervenes between these two response options by preventing or

delaying an exit, thus giving customers/members the opportunity to articulate voice more strongly.

Previous research on the exit of football fans has been extremely discontinuous in this regard, as it is generally and simply assumed that fans support their favourite teams unconditionally and loyally (Tapp, 2004). Furthermore, although various studies show that fans are quite capable of turning their backs on their favourite teams, the reasons and extent of such an exit sometimes differ greatly (Kaden et al., 2023). The topic is also repeatedly addressed in a wide range of renowned studies, which once again underlines the need for in-depth scientific analysis. Uhrich (2021), for example, defines the feeling of estrangement as the psychological distance that fans feel from the club; Tinson et al. (2021) deal with the disruption of values in football fandom and the subsequent reactions, and Cocieru et al. (2019) explain how, among other things, growing dissatisfaction among fans can result in a loss of support.

In summary, there is an almost complete lack of scientific work that allows for a comprehensive understanding of the exit of football fans. The present study addresses the identified research desideratum by taking a comprehensive look at the topic of a fan exit in the context of German football.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

This study builds on our previous qualitative investigation by including representatives of football clubs and associations as well as representatives of fan initiatives as further appropriate stakeholder groups of German professional football and relevant sources in the research process (Senaux, 2008). From April to May 2024, heterogeneously composed focus groups, consisting of various representatives of the stakeholder groups listed, will be held on the topic. Thereby, the aim is to stimulate discussions and to identify diverging as well as common opinions (Vogl, 2014). The planned implementation of three focus groups of four to five participants each also promises a profound insight into the topic, as well as a comprehensive analysis and expansion of existing findings. The resulting research material is analysed qualitatively and inductively according to the

methodological approach of Thematic Analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006).

Results/Findings and Discussion

Data collection and analysis of the study is currently underway but will be completed by the time of the conference. Initial impressions of the data already available indicate strongly differing opinions on the topic of fan exit, with a clear contrast to the results of preceding studies (Kaden et al., 2023). The existence of a fan exit is sometimes strongly doubted, which is also noted by the participants as surprising to a certain extent, considering the various problems fans are currently confronted with (e.g. more difficult stadium access due to increased costs or political restrictions). In this context, the participants also repeatedly point out the future challenges for German football, insofar as a change or even exit of parts of the fans, as in other countries, is to be avoided.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The present study underlines the brisance and relevance of the topic of the exit tendencies of German football fans for the future and demonstrates beyond doubt the need for further scientific examination of the topic. Particular importance should be attached to recurring surveys over time, as previous qualitative findings sometimes show strong divergences from one another. A certain latency in the exit tendencies of German football fans can also be recognised, which makes further research indispensable.

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A Conceptual Framework for Enhancing Sport Fans' Cultural Intelligence

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Aim and Research Questions

Professional sport is a global phenomenon, serving as a powerful catalyst for intertwining diverse cultures and shaping societal norms. Despite the advantages of sporting events, they also pose challenges, such as ethnocentrism, that necessitate stakeholder understanding and sensitization (Thibault, 2009). To mitigate domestic market saturation, professional sport organizations often prioritize expanding their fan base internationally (Kerr & Gladden, 2008). From a managerial perspective, adopting international strategies is imperative to build global fan communities and strengthen brand identity, ultimately generating more revenue (Baena, 2019). However, some domestic fans resist globalization strategies due to rising ticket prices and international fans' dilution of local identities (Magowan, 2015). For example, domestic Premier League fans (e.g., Tottenham Hotspurs) labelled international supporters as plastic fans, prompting Australian head coach Ange Postecoglou to criticize this as harsh behavior (Chambers, 2024). Enhancing cultural intelligence (CQ) among fans is one potential solution to bridge these divergent perspectives of domestic and international fans.

CQ refers to the capability to operate proficiently in culturally diverse environments (Earley & Ang, 2003). The abbreviation stands for cultural quotient, like IQ (i.e., intelligence quotient) and EQ (i.e., emotional quotient), highlighting its measure of cultural adaptability. Increased CQ helps understand different cultural situations, communicate with others from diverse cultures, and mitigate conflicts (Earley & Ang, 2003), making it essential for sport consumers. Numerous sport organizations have diversified interactive sporting events (e.g., overseas pre-season tours, world tour series,

and cultural theme nights) to engage both international and domestic fans. However, limited research has identified feasible ways to enhance fans' CQ and its consequences. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to develop a conceptual framework for sport fan's CQ by addressing two primary research questions: (1) What are the potential antecedents of fans' CQ at micro, meso, and macro levels and (2) What are the anticipated aligning outcomes of higher levels of fans' CQ?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Drawing from Sternberg and Detterman's (1986) multi-loci intelligence theory, CQ is delineated as a multifaceted and state-like construct comprising four distinct facets: cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral CQ (Earley & Ang, 2003). The proposed conceptual model details three main aspects: (1) factors contributing to CQ in sport marketing contexts, (2) potential moderators of CQ, and (3) outcomes of sport fans' CQ. The model explores avenues for enhancing sport fans' CQ, considering individual characteristics (e.g., openness to experience, media consumption habits), team-level actions (e.g., disciplinary measures, social events), and league-level practices (e.g., cross-cultural training) (Propositions 1-3). Second, it identifies moderators (e.g., game-watching frequency and media usage) that affect the relationship between the antecedents and the level of sport fans' CQ (Proposition 4). Lastly, the model proposes that sport fans' CQ influences individual-level outcomes (e.g., intercultural communication effectiveness), team-level outcomes (e.g., participation intention), and broader league-level outcomes (e.g., reduced ethnocentrism) (Propositions 5-7). In essence, sports fans' CQ is anticipated to positively influence their attitudes and behaviours by fostering individual development, improving engagement intentions, and enhancing understanding of cultural disparities.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This research contributes to the theoretical and practical aspects of sport marketing. The developed framework offers a comprehensive understanding of how sport fans' CQ can be cultivated in professional sport settings. Identifying potential antecedents, moderators, and outcomes of fans' CQ advances existing

CQ literature and guides sport organizations in expanding their global fan base and promoting inclusivity. By integrating cross-cultural psychology and sport marketing, this study lays the groundwork for future empirical research and managerial interventions to enhance fans' CQ in sport fandom. As for limitations, it is essential to recognize that emotional factors, such as strong team identification and loyalty, may sometimes conflict with the principles of CQ, potentially limiting its effectiveness. This interplay between emotional attachment and cultural adaptability should be acknowledged and developed further in future studies.

The practical implications of this research for sport industry professionals are significant. By recognizing fans' CQ and tailoring strategies to engage diverse fan bases, promote cross-cultural interactions, and mitigate cultural conflicts, professionals can effectively manage and promote sport events, teams, and leagues. The proposed framework underlines the necessity of investing in cross-cultural training and fan engagement initiatives to enhance fans' CQ. Cultivating a culturally intelligent fan base not only expands market reach and drives revenue growth but also fosters tolerance and multiculturalism, aligning with broader societal goals. This presentation will provide empirical applications of the proposed model and suggest future research directions for sport management scholars.

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Football Clubs as Facilitators of Regional Equity

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Aim and Research Question

Public entities, such as city governments, often subsidize local professional team sports clubs (PTSCs) particularly by maintenance of their stadia or arenas (Crompton 2004). The regional economic impact of the facilities has, however, often observed to be poor, questioning the legitimacy of public spending on professional sports (Bradbury et al. 2023). Moreover, public subsidies on PTSCs have been advocated by stating the positive psychic income of the local clubs, such as civic pride (Crompton 2004). In this study, we aim to advance the knowledge on societal impacts of PTSCs by assessing the role of fans' identification with the club (team identification, hereafter TI) on their response towards local, non-sport-related brands. More closely, this study provides an answer to the following research question: "does identification with a professional club strengthen the local consumers positive response to local brands?".

Theoretical Background

Based on social identity theory, people can develop social identities based on different social groups they consider themselves belonging to, such as geographic, professional and academic entities or hobby groups (Hogg und Smith 2007). As people tend to engage themselves into group behavior potentially enhancing the comparative status of the groups they identify with (Turner und Oakes 1986), the social identity often leads to favorable consequences for those groups. National identity, for instance, leads to positive judgment and willingness-to-buy domestic products (Zeugner-Roth et al. 2015). Furthermore, TI, which can be understood as a social identification with a sports team, advances fans' loyalty to the team (Woratschek et al. 2020). Among the local fans, i.e., the fans supporting a team in the geographic region in which they reside, the TI seems to be also strongly connected to hometown identification (Collins et al. 2016), which suggest that local PTSCs might provide

a way to demonstrate a feeling of belongingness to a certain geographic region (Heere und James 2007a).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

We developed a structural equation model including three multilevel constructs: regional identity, TI and regional equity. TI was measured by utilizing a two-level "sport spectator identification scale" (Heere und James 2007b), which we also adapted to measure the regional identity. Regional equity, i.e., the consumers' responses on regional brands, was measured by a two-level scale developed and validated by Zeugner-Roth et al. (2008).

For data collection, we developed an online questionnaire, which was distributed to the supporters of Italian Serie B club FC Südtirol through club's e-mail newsletter. After removing the missing, incomplete and obviously unengaged responses, the number of usable responses was 471.

Findings

CFA showed a good model fit ($\chi^2(797) = 1600.23$, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .03). Composite reliability values ranged between .89 and .97 and AVE between .72 and .93. Moreover, the correlations between variables were smaller than squared root of AVE for each variable, indicating no discriminant validity issues. Likewise, the structural model showed a good fit ($\chi^2(884) = 2182.88$, CFI = .94, RMSEA = .06, SRMR = .07). Positive relationship was found between regional identification and regional equity ($\beta = .73$, $p < .05$). The mediating role of TI was tested by using a bootstrapping (5,000 samples) method. The results showed that TI mediated the relationship between regional identification and regional equity ($\beta = .06$, $p < .05$, 95% CI = [.01, .11]).

Conclusion, Contribution and Implications

Our findings suggest that the people identifying with both, their local PTSC and their home region, tend to demonstrate a more positive consumer response towards local brands compared to those who identify strongly with the region but weakly with the PTSC.

The findings provide a number of important theoretical contributions and managerial implications. From theoretical perspective, the results suggest that among the local fans the identification with the PTSC is to some extent nested within the regional identity, and as a partial or full constitute of the regional identity, it contributes to the positive outcomes from regional perspective: that is, for instance, to higher preference of local brands in consumption decisions.

From the perspective of the management of PTSCs, the results offer a powerful message to the regional politics: the people identifying with the club are likely to show a more positive response towards local brands and, hence, a higher contribution to the regional development. Moreover, the findings could offer an opportunity for PTSCs in strengthening their sponsorship collaboration with the local companies.

Further research should be conducted in order to find out whether, and to what extent, TI also actually influences the fans' regional identity. In this attempt, we strongly suggest using a longitudinal data in order to avoid the obvious pitfall of bidirectional causation. Moreover, understanding on the impacts of TI on regional equity could be deepened by a study involving non-fans as a control group.

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The impact of the Alcohol Prohibition Policy in El Salvador's Football League and its Impact on Fan Satisfaction and Fan Consumerism

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Aim and Research Questions

El Salvador's culture is inextricably related to alcohol and football, but unfortunately its football took an international spotlight through a fatal crush in 2023. Subsequently, its federation approved regulations to ban alcohol in its totality on all first division football matches. The ban created controversy in the country, which originated the research idea. The project aims at understanding the impact of banning alcohol on fan satisfaction and fan consumerism, whilst identifying the repercussions of prohibiting alcohol in Salvadoran football. The study is of a unique exploratory nature as previous literature has focused on the effectiveness of alcohol bans, but no studies have focused on the impacts such bans have on fan consumerism and its football leagues.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Alcohol is embedded to football as studies have linked football with carnivalesque aspects, in which Pearson and Sale (2011) explain that the social aspect of consuming football encourages fans to drink, as a result, alcohol is deeply connected to fan satisfaction. Subsequently, football in Latin America is known to have intrinsic ludic properties, which serves as a distraction of political and economic constrains for fans (Bar-On, 1997). As a result, football became a quest for excitement which started inciting violence, in which leagues decided to ban alcohol as a mean to reduce violence in football scenarios (Lenk et al, 2010). Studies of alcohol prohibition policies come mainly conducted in the UK, in which Maughan (2006) and Pearson and Sale (2011) reinforce each other studies by explaining that banning alcohol does not reduce the intoxication level of fans. Hence, scholars have mainly focused on

analysing fan behaviour from the alcohol policy instead of impacts the policy has on fans and the league.

Furthermore, Crompton (1993) explains the importance of alcohol sponsors in football, in which he theorizes that if alcohol sponsors are removed there would be negative economic repercussions towards the league and its clubs. In addition, literature demonstrates that fan satisfaction is a crucial factor which further motivates fan consumerism. Santana and Garcia-Santillan (2023) supports this by explaining that Latin American fans attend matches due to their feeling of satisfaction. Moreover, fans consume due to the social aspects of football, fortifying the carnivalesque concept in Latin American football. Lastly, the social factors and carnivalesque concept have been attributed to have a strong link with alcohol consumption and fan consumerism (Bandura et al, 2023).

Research design, Methodology and Data Analysis

A qualitative analysis was done, encompassed of semi-structured interviews; two team presidents and eight Salvadoran fans. Then, the data was coded to complete a thematic analysis. Firstly, the team presidents interview focused on understanding the repercussions of banning alcohol in the Salvadoran football league. Secondly, the fan interviews were based on identifying how fans consumerism and satisfaction is affected by the alcohol ban. Throughout the two data collections, the study explored potential issues arising from the new alcohol policy and aimed to provide suggestions. This study used a convenience sample to highlight issues from the alcohol policy. All interviews were recorded and transcribed, before being coded on NVivo and analysed.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The interviews emerged four themes (1) Economic implications of the alcohol ban; (2) Salvadoran Fans Consumerism and Satisfaction; (3) Alcohol and Salvadoran football; (4) Restructuring the alcohol ban. The first theme showed that teams are negatively impacted by the ban, which puts their survival at risk, supporting Crompton (1993) paper on alcohol sponsorship dependency of football teams. The second theme shows that fans consume football because of social reasons,

supporting the carnivalesque theory. However, fans satisfaction is dependent on safety inside the stadium, and now there is less violence inside the stadium. Therefore, fans feel more satisfied which makes them more motivated to consume as their feeling of satisfaction increases through the creation of a family-friendly atmosphere.

Consequently, the violence has been transferred to outside the stadium, creating another expense for teams as they got to double the police force. This third them suggests that fans drinking and violence shifted to outside the stadium. Also, fans enter the match right before it starts, which without the necessary regulations, this can lead to another crush. Overall, while fan satisfaction has increased due to improved safety inside the stadium, violence outside the stadium has escalated. Consequently, the league's survival is jeopardized by the economic repercussions. As a result, the negative impacts give rise to the final theme: restructuring the alcohol ban.

Conclusion/Contribution/Implication

This study contributes literature in a unique way by demonstrating the impacts of banning alcohol in a football league. The impacts are explained throughout two data collections; administrative and fans' perspectives, which ultimately, with both positive and negative impacts, the results call for the restructuring of the alcohol ban by recommending methods of controlled alcohol consumption.

Robots 'Talking' Over the World? Sports Commentary and Artificial Intelligence

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Aim and Research Questions

Sports commentary is an omnipresent feature of professional sports presentation and consumption. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has already started to revolutionise several areas of sports, including commentary. For instance, tournaments such as Wimbledon and The Masters have started using AI-powered commentary for highlights' clips. This study aims to explore the role of commentary in consumers' game experience and how AI affects this relationship.

RQ1: How does sports commentary influence consumer experience?

RQ2: How does this experience change when AI commentary is employed?

RQ3: What are the opportunities and challenges for AI commentary?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) provides a useful framework to understand the socio-cultural experiences consumers derive from commentary (Hannerz, 1992; Hungara & Nobre, 2021). How consumers negotiate the marketplace using the cultural meanings of their actions and possessions is of interest to CCT. Sport commentators not only provide them with factual information but also elicit emotional responses by highlighting the dramatic moments of a game (Lee et al., 2016), thereby improving their experience (Bryant et al., 1977).

Aligning with relevant social issues, scholarship on sports commentary has focused on portrayals of race (Denham et al., 2002), gender and sexualisation (Bissell & Duke, 2007), and national stereotypes or rhetoric (Desmarais & Wallace, 2018). Moreover, these themes emerge from the analysis of

commentary as a content-carrier. There is a lack of evidence about how sport consumers experience and relate to commentary in general and AI's involvement in it in particular.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

We used an exploratory and inductive research design to explore reactions to AI commentary in two tennis forums and articles published in *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph* newspapers. Using a snowball sampling approach, we also conducted five in-depth interviews with regular TV viewers of the Wimbledon tournament. This combination helped us to understand the discourse surrounding AI commentary in social media but also to gather their thoughts on personal experiences and socio-cultural interpretations related to commentary. Sample questions included “Do you think commentary is a useful tool for enhancing your enjoyment?” and “How does AI commentary compare to human commentary?” We used thematic analysis to develop our interpretations of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Results/Findings and Discussion

Our preliminary findings are organised around the following broad themes: identification with sports commentators, a lack of emotion, and commercialisation of sport.

The ability of rich narration that fans can relate to or the feel of “oh, I felt the same” is found to be a major contributor to their identification with commentators. Consumers derive cultural meanings from the emotional engagement provided by human commentators, which differentiates it from AI commentary. Many discovered AI's delivery as robotic with “no change in tone, no connection at all” and devoid of emotions. Aligning with the CCT's position on symbolic consumption, our findings show that the value of commentary goes beyond its functional use (e.g., providing statistics) and underscores the deeper cultural and social meanings of it.

Most of our interviewees did not anticipate AI commentary replacing humans for the time being. Some suggested the technology could help human commentators, for example, by bringing up the most relevant statistics to add

depth to their analysis. At the same time, this needs to be read in the context of consumer resistance or acceptance of sport's commercialisation. Relatedly, technology's other ethical implications, such as the possibility of biases creeping in from the existing data corpus which the AI algorithms use to generate its content, are not lost on them.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

While past research has extensively studied fans' identification with athletes and teams (Lee et al., 2016; Lock & Heere, 2017), our research found that they identify with commentators also. In addition, we provide insights into how AI's involvement motivates them to think about social and cultural meanings of sport commentary. Overall, we contribute to the scarce literature on consumption of human commentary.

Although AI's application in sports commentary is in its early stages, the importance of giving customizable options allowing consumers to tailor the experience cannot be overlooked. A hybrid model that combines emotional engagement, made possible for fans only by having a human behind the microphone, with the data capabilities of AI could be a best of both worlds scenario. The main limitation of the study arises from the fact that AI commentary was available only in the online highlights' clips and not in the full-fledged coverage of matches.

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Moderation of Identification with the Driver in the Influence of Motives on Word of Mouth: An Analysis of Brazilian Formula 1 Fans

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Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this study was to analyse the moderating role of identification with the driver in the influence of motives for watching Formula 1 on Word of Mouth (WoM).

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Understanding the motives that lead people to consume sports is fundamental for marketing's practices in the sport industry. However, motivations often explain little variance of future consumptions (Trail & Kim, 2011). Due to aspects associated with globalization, technological advances and consequently brand expansion, this discussion has been expanded to fans who do not have face-to-face contact with their team (Pu & James, 2017). Social media has also helped athletes becoming important points of contact for fans (Abeza, 2023; Arai et al., 2014; Carlson & Donavan, 2012). Despite the knowledge about the importance of team identification, little is known about how identification with an athlete affect the relationship between fan motivations and future behavioural intentions. More specifically, positive WoM has been considered to be fundamental for sports organizations, to save on investments in traditional media and attract new consumers. Formula 1 has seen a considerable increase in its audience and online presence in recent years, thanks to a series of changes to make the league more attractive (Formula 1, 2022). This underscores the importance of understand how identification with athletes can moderate the impact of motives on positive WoM. Given that identification often favours fan behaviours, we propose the following hypothesis: identification with the driver moderates the

relationship between fan motivations and WoM.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

A survey study was conducted, employing a quantitative approach. Data were collected using a scale comprising eight motives, adapted from Pu and James (2017), namely: Vicarious Achievement, Escape, Aesthetics, Physical skill of the athletes, Interest in Formula 1, Acquisition of Knowledge, Social Interaction, and Drama. The instrument was adapted to the Brazilian context by translating from English to Portuguese. Additionally, four items were added to measure WoM from distant Formula 1 fans, along with three items to measure identification with the driver as a moderating variable. Each dimension was measured by at least three items and operationalized using a 7-point Likert scale. Sociodemographic questions regarding individuals and Formula 1 consumption were also included. The scale was administered via Google Forms and distributed through social media from March to April 2021, generating a non-probabilistic sample of 3,131 Brazilian fans. Subsequently, based on exclusion criteria, one individual declined to consent to the study (TCLE); 1.50% did not consider themselves Formula 1 fans; 15.96% had attended a Grand Prix event either in Brazil or elsewhere; and 11.08% were under 18 years old. Thus, the final sample comprised 2,278 fans. Moderation analysis was conducted using Macro PROCESS v4.2 for SPSS (Hayes, 2018). The reliability of the dimensions was assessed using Cronbach's alpha ($> .60$) (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988), followed by calculation of the mean for each dimension for subsequent moderation analysis. The conditioning values considered in the PROCESS were $-1SD$, mean, $+1SD$, to analyse the difference between groups, with a significance level established at $p < .05$.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The sample consisted mostly of males (62.1%), with an average age of 25.26 years (± 7.258) and completed higher education (43.9%). The majority were single (83.2%) and watched Formula 1 on free-to-air TV (62.7%). Although not established through probabilistic methods, the sample included consumers from all Brazilian states. All dimensions exhibited alpha values above the established threshold,

ranging from .660 (Drama) to .886 (Word of Mouth). Among all the motives analysed, a statistically significant interaction was observed between Identification with the driver and Vicarious Achievement (interaction coefficient = .027), Acquisition of Knowledge ($-.036$), and Drama ($-.053$). In the analysis of conditional effects of motives on WoM, the effect was statistically significant for all groups established for Identification with the driver, across the interactions, supporting the study hypothesis. The results indicate that Drama and Acquisition of Knowledge more strongly influence Formula 1 WoM among fans less identified. Conversely, Vicarious Achievement has a greater influence on WoM among fans who are more identified. This demonstrates, on one hand, the relevance of the driver as a point of identification, considering that consumers increasingly tend to relate closely to sports athletes (Nielsen Sports, 2019). On the other hand, strategies to make Formula 1 more competitive and consequently increase associated drama, such as technological changes to the cars, particularly starting from the 2022 season (Marr, 2023; Schneiders & Rocha, 2022), as well as the knowledge conveyed in broadcasts, are important for less identified fans to recommend Formula 1.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The study contributes to the existing literature by enhancing our understanding of how the influence of different motives on word-of-mouth can be modified based on identification with the driver, a dimension that has been relatively underexplored until now.

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Sport Development and Socio-Cultural Perspectives

Track chair: Claire Jenkin

Game on or Adventure Bound? Delving into Master Athletes' Travel Motivations

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Purpose

This research explores the motivational factors influencing master athletes intentions to travel to Qatar for competing in the World Aquatics Masters Championship Doha 2024 and their overall satisfaction with the event. The relationship between motivations and intention to revisit Qatar has also been investigated.

Research Design

Data collection involved an online survey administered to 175 athletes using a quota sampling method. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with Smart-PLS software was utilized (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2004; Chin, Marcolin, & Newsted, 2003) to explore the relationship between travel motivations and two key outcomes: the intention to visit Qatar and overall satisfaction with the event. The research methodology involved developing a series of hypothetical event packages based on an extensive assessment of relevant research and the practical importance of certain characteristics identified through expert consultation. These characteristics were integral to crafting the survey instrument, which was meticulously designed to elicit data effectively and ensure ease of response through a closed-ended format. The survey aimed to explore athletes' motivations and intentions regarding their participation in events in Qatar. It included a series of choice tasks to assess athletes' preferences and decision-making processes concerning the hypothetical travel packages (Hensher, Rose, and Greene (2005). Motivations of Masters Athletes have been measured using the Participant Motivation Questionnaire (PMQ) modified for swimmers (Hritz, N. M., & Ramos, W. D. (2008). Intention to revisit Qatar, motivations, satisfaction and support for hosting the event were all measured, using

a consistent five-point Likert-type scale to ensure accuracy in responses.

Findings

One of the significant findings from the research is that motivations such as the desire for stimulation, novelty, and escape (Deci & Ryan, 2000) significantly influenced athletes' intentions to re visit Qatar as well as their satisfaction with the event. In contrast, motivations rooted in competition for social development and the desire to win showed a varied impact, with the latter being less influential in determining travel intentions. The research highlights how different motivational factors impact athletes' overall satisfaction with their experience in Qatar, noting that competition and novelty-seeking have a more pronounced effect. Further analysis indicates that demographic factors like sex, age, and sporting experience play a secondary role compared to intrinsic motivations. This underscores the complex interplay between various motivational factors and travel intentions in the context of sporting events.

Athletes' travel intentions to Qatar for sporting events are driven by a blend of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Intrinsically, athletes are motivated by the thrill of competition and the personal satisfaction derived from participating at an international level. Externally, they are drawn by the opportunity for cultural exploration, the enjoyment of new experiences, and the social interactions that such events facilitate. These interactions not only enhance their immediate experience but also influence their future travel intentions. Significantly, the study reveals that the overall satisfaction with the event strongly correlates with athletes' intentions to revisit Qatar, highlighting the critical role of well-organized events in fostering repeat visits. This dynamic suggests that sports events extend beyond mere competitions, serving as catalysts for cultural exchange and tourism, thereby benefiting both the athletes and the host country.

Managerial Implications

The findings from this study offer valuable insights into the motivations propelling adult athletes to participate in sporting events in Qatar and highlight the importance of

understanding these motivations for event organizers and tourism agencies. It offers practical implications for event organizers and tourism agencies by emphasizing the importance of catering to the intrinsic motivations of athletes to enhance participation in sports events. By acknowledging the intricate interplay of social, competitive, and leisure-related elements, strategies can be crafted to entice participants and enrich their experiences, ultimately enhancing the attractiveness of Qatar as a sporting destination. Additionally, the study emphasizes the importance of well-organized sporting events in ensuring athletes' satisfaction and their intention to revisit a destination. The seamless integration of event logistics, hospitality, and local experiences can greatly enhance athletes' overall event satisfaction.

In conclusion, this comprehensive study not only contributes significantly to the existing body of knowledge on sports motivations but also provides actionable insights for enhancing the appeal and success of international sporting events. By carefully aligning event offerings with athletes' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, Qatar can continue to position itself as a premier destination for sports tourism, leveraging its world-class facilities and unique cultural attractions to attract a global audience of competitors.

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Digital Utilization in Sports Participation: Comparing Behavioral Intentions of the Older Adults Using the Technology Readiness and Acceptance Model (TRAM)

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Background

In rapidly aging societies worldwide, improving the health and quality of life of older adults is emerging as a critical public health issue. In this context, leisure sports are recognized as a key means of enhancing physical, social, and mental health among the elderly. However, various barriers, including the rapid development of digital technology and changes in information accessibility, present both new opportunities and challenges for this age group. Despite the significant barriers posed by information gaps and technology accessibility, existing research has not adequately addressed these issues. A thorough analysis is needed of how the active adoption of digital technology can enhance sports participation among older adults and reduce information disparities.

This study focuses on understanding technology acceptance among older adults in relation to leisure sports participation and identifying disparities between the older adult and Baby Boomer generations. It employs the Technology Readiness and Acceptance Model (TRAM), which integrates the Technology Readiness Index (TRI) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). The study examines how technology-related beliefs, perceived usefulness, and ease of use impact sports participation within these age groups.

In examining the factors that influence technology adoption, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) identifies perceived usefulness and ease of use as core determinants that are directly related to system-related measurements. The Technology Readiness Index (TRI), on the

other hand, assesses individuals' general beliefs about technology, which are influenced by an array of diverse systems and prior experiences. These beliefs significantly inform users' perceptions of a technology's usefulness and ease of use. Historically, Bettman (1979) noted that consumers typically engage in an internal evaluation to determine the practicality of new technology. Building on this foundation, Lin, Shih, and Sher (2007) expanded the discourse by correlating technology readiness with technology acceptance, leading to the development of the integrated Technology Readiness and Acceptance Model (TRAM). This model was the first to systematically examine how individual predispositions towards technology could predict user acceptance. Recent studies have refined this approach by segregating the positive and negative factors of technology readiness, addressing critiques that earlier models blended these factors too broadly, which obscured specific impacts on user acceptance (Kim & Chiu, 2019; Chiu & Cho, 2021). Such differentiation has proven essential in understanding and enhancing user engagement with technological innovations, particularly in an era where digital interfaces are becoming increasingly complex.

This study investigates the psychological and social factors related to technology acceptance among older adults and how these factors affect access to and participation in leisure sports. By applying TRI and TAM interactively, this research aims to systematically understand how older adults accept and utilize technology, thereby developing effective technology-based intervention strategies to enhance their sports participation. This research is expected to reduce digital exclusion among older adults and support a healthy life in later years.

Aim and Research Design

This study targeted individuals who have used online reservation services for sports participation within the last three years. Data collection occurred from January 14 to February 9, 2024, through visits to senior welfare organizations and community sports facilities to solicit survey participation. After explaining the study's purpose and methodology and obtaining consent, participants were given questionnaires to fill out using a self-assessment method.

Convenience sampling was employed, and following data cleaning, 400 questionnaires were analyzed. The analysis was conducted using SPSS and AMOS software for frequency analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, correlation analysis, structural equation modeling, and multigroup analysis. The hypotheses of this study are as follows:

- Hypothesis 1: Optimism will have a significant impact on perceived usefulness.
- Hypothesis 2: Optimism will have a significant impact on perceived ease of use.
- Hypothesis 3: Innovativeness will have a significant impact on perceived usefulness.
- Hypothesis 4: Innovativeness will have a significant impact on perceived ease of use.
- Hypothesis 5: Discomfort will have a significant impact on perceived usefulness.
- Hypothesis 6: Discomfort will have a significant impact on perceived ease of use.
- Hypothesis 7: Anxiety will have a significant impact on perceived usefulness.
- Hypothesis 8: Anxiety will have a significant impact on perceived ease of use.
- Hypothesis 9: Perceived ease of use will have a significant impact on perceived usefulness.
- Hypothesis 10: Perceived ease of use will have a significant impact on behavioral intention.
- Hypothesis 11: Perceived usefulness will have a significant impact on behavioral intention.
- Hypothesis 12: There will be differences in the significance of path coefficients between the Baby Boomer generation and the older adults in terms of technology readiness.

Results

The research results are as follows. First, optimism and innovativeness were found to have a significant impact on perceived usefulness. Second, discomfort and anxiety did not show a significant impact on perceived usefulness. Third, optimism and anxiety did not have a significant impact on perceived ease of use. Fourth, innovativeness and discomfort significantly affected perceived ease of use. Fifth, perceived ease of use did not significantly impact perceived usefulness. Sixth, both perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use had a significant impact on behavioral intention. Lastly, a multigroup analysis between the Baby Boomer generation and the existing older adult population revealed significant differences in some of the path coefficients between the groups.

Conclusions

This study underscores the significance of psychological factors in the adoption of sports technology by older adults and Baby Boomers. Using the Technology Readiness and Acceptance Model (TRAM), we found that optimism and innovativeness greatly enhance the perceived usefulness of digital technologies in sports. This emphasizes the critical role of a positive mindset in encouraging older adults to engage with sports technology. Our findings highlight the need for designing sports technology that is both accessible and appealing to older adults, enhancing their participation in leisure sports. Discomfort with technology significantly affects its ease of use, pointing to the necessity for user-friendly interfaces in sports applications and equipment. Policy initiatives should focus on integrating these technologies into the daily lives of older adults in Korea, including subsidies for technology acquisition and public campaigns promoting active aging through technology. These measures are essential for promoting an inclusive environment where older adults can lead active, healthy lives through enhanced participation in leisure sports.

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Youth Participation in Gaelic games: The Influence of Coach Autonomy on Young People's Experience of Gaelic games

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Aim & Research Questions

The main aim of this research was to examine which variables were most strongly related to self-rated past year experience of Gaelic games, using an existing dataset. The following questions guided the research:

1. How did young people rate their past year experience of Gaelic games?
2. How did that rating relate to variables such as gender, place of residence, age, and a range of other participation variables (e.g., playing extent, playing context)?
3. Was there a relationship between rating of Gaelic games experience and scores on a measure of coach autonomy, adjusting for these other variables?

Theoretical Background & Literature Review

Participation in sports has been consistently linked to a multitude of health and psychosocial benefits, as evidenced by various studies (Côté & Fraser-Thomas, 2007; Donnelly et al., 2023). These benefits stem from factors such as capturing the attention of young individuals, providing a nurturing environment, building self-confidence, and offering opportunities to navigate situations—both positive and negative—that mirror those encountered in adult life, including conflict, disappointment, failure, success, struggle, competition, and diversity (Holt et al., 2017). However, not all young people experience sports positively (Vella et al., 2016), and dropout rates from sports are notably high during adolescence (Eime et al., 2016; Lunn et al., 2013). In Ireland, the CSPPA study (Woods et al., 2018) revealed that 58% of post-primary school pupils participated in community sports at least once a week, down from 64% in 2010. Despite this, there has been no direct engagement with young players aged 13-18

years regarding their playing and coaching experiences in Gaelic games.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

Participants were among those involved in the Youth Participation Study and who had fully completed all measures of interest in the present study (N = 4594; 49.4% males). Data were analysed using multinomial logistic regression (categories of past 12-month rating).

Results/Findings & Discussion

Results show that when comparing those reporting their experience as very poor/poor, fair, or good against those reporting it as very good, the three variables that were consistent in their statistical significance were, age (being younger associated with a better experience), lower mean scores on the coaching autonomy measure, and a lower self-reported playing time. There were nuanced results depending on the nature of the comparison. At the most extreme comparison (very poor or poor versus very good), those reporting their experience as poor or very poor were also significantly more likely to report playing other sports and had a lower self-reported likelihood of continuing to play Gaelic games. Results in the comparison of fair and very good were slightly different. Here, rather than playing other sports being statistically significant, there was a lower likelihood of playing in multiple contexts (or viewed conversely, a higher likelihood of playing Club only), with other significant variables being the same. Finally, when comparing those reporting their experience as good versus very good, those reporting good were significantly more likely to be male, in addition to lower coach autonomy score, older age, playing in fewer contexts, and playing less game time.

Conclusion, Contribution & Implication

These findings can inform policy, strategy, and practice to increase young people's participation and retention in Gaelic games, particularly by targeting coach autonomy behaviours.

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Challenges in Digital Knowledge Management

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Aim and Research Question

The aim of this study is to identify challenges in digital KM of National Football Associations (NFA) by answering the question: What challenges NFA face when implementing digital knowledge management?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Sports organisations are facing an uncertain future due to digital disruptions in their environment, known as digital transformation (DT), which refers to “a process that aims to improve an entity by triggering significant changes to its properties through combinations of information, computing, communication, and connectivity technologies” (Vial, 2019, p.118). Although Knowledge Management (KM) does not present a panacea for challenges associated with DT, its components and their DT can provide approaches to address them effectively (Di Vaio et al., 2021; Doloriert & Whitworth, 2011; Merten, Schmidt, & Winand, 2022). KM encompasses four components: (1) generating or improving knowledge, (2) converting knowledge into explicit forms for storage, (3) sharing knowledge between organisational units, and (4) using existing knowledge to solve problems or make decisions (Haamann & Basten, 2018). The DT of KM in organisations involves the implementation and use of digital technologies (i.e., AI, tools, platforms, big data analytics) to effectively manage knowledge resulting in a positive impact on all four KM components.

Digital KM is therefore a crucial outcome of the successful DT of organisations, including improved decision-making and organisational performance to achieve competitive advantage (Bag et al., 2021; Buntak, Kovačić, & Martinčević, 2020; Di Vaio et al., 2021). Digital KM can help to better orchestrate and centralise the data and information gained through digital technologies and support the avoidance of isolated solutions (Merten et al., 2022). Therefore, digital KM is becoming increasingly important in the DT of sports organisations, as the inclusion and use of data has also a significant impact on both on-field outcomes and administrative processes (Patel, Shah, & Shah, 2020; Ratten, 2020). However, publications related to DT in sports management mostly refer to esports or social media, as selected aspects of digital change (Stegmann, Nagel, & Ströbel, 2021). The impact and requirements for sports organisations to successfully implement digital KM have been little researched to date.

Research Design and Methodology

As part of an exploratory qualitative study conducted between August 2020 and March 2021, a total of 82 semi-structured interviews were conducted with executives from 43 different NFA across five continents. The interviews were digitally recorded and ranged in duration from 40 to 103 minutes, with an average duration of 61 minutes. To increase the credibility and reliability of the study's findings, at least two staff members from different departments were interviewed per NFA, provided they had a comprehensive understanding of the digitalisation process in their organisation. Notably, 28 of the NFA were represented by multiple respondents, while 15 were represented by a single respondent.

Results

The results of this study show various aspects that hinder successful digital KM. These are divided into factors related to human resources (e.g. problems related to employee behaviour; lack of skills and knowledge); leadership (e.g. lack of strategy; lack of understanding of digital topics; issues linked to organisational culture); organisational structure (clear responsibilities; adapted organisational charts; project teams); data management (e.g. lack of standardisation; lack of centralisation; data overload; data security

and protection issues), and technology (e.g. lack of up-to-date technology; lack of interfaces and incompatible technologies). One of the major issues regarding digital KM in NFA is staff reluctance to share knowledge and an unwillingness to acquire new knowledge and skills which are crucial for DT and thus for digital KM in NFA. Also finding talents with the right skill set is an issue many NFA reported. Furthermore, NFA frequently lack a data strategy and struggle with data management, including consistency, centralisation, and interpretation. This an issue that is often linked to a lack of understanding of digital issues and their importance for future success at leadership level. Insufficient technological resources and inadequate staffing are further hampering digital KM efforts in some NFA.

Discussion & Implications

To achieve successful and sustainable digital KM, it is crucial to flexibly integrate new technologies and ensure consistent data quality. Collaboration and knowledge sharing with other institutions are important factors to improve the digital maturity of sports organisations. NFA starting their digital journey should collaborate with digitally competent partners to develop ideas and compensate for skills gaps. NFA with low digital maturity should prioritise to be open to digital solutions and create a foundational digital framework of infrastructure and the needed capabilities. More digitally mature NFA should focus on integrating interoperable technologies. However, the successful DT of KM requires more than just the implementation of technology; it involves the consideration of various aspects related to processes, structures and, above all, the human resources of organisations. Therefore, sports organisations need to carefully consider these factors to effectively address the challenges of DT and digital KM.

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“It’s not just another Indigenous Project”: An Evaluation of the Australian Olympic Indigenous Coaches Scholarship Program

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Aim and Research Question

The sport industry has recently focused on 'closing the gap' (Macniven et al., 2019) regarding the opportunities made available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia. Consequently, many sport organisations have created Reconciliation Action Plans (RAP) to outline their commitment to reconciliation and closing the gap and list the associated tasks requiring completion.

This research was commissioned to examine the Australian Olympic Indigenous Coaches Scholarship (AOICS) program established by the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) as part of their RAP. The program was designed to provide specialist training and specific opportunities to Indigenous coaches. Overarchingly, the research aimed to evaluate the program for cultural safety, the effectiveness of the coach education provided, the usefulness of the elite, community, and cultural experiences included in the program, and ongoing opportunities embedded in the sport development system for Indigenous coaches to potentially reach Olympic levels in the future.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

A strong link exists between sport and Indigenous communities throughout Australia (Bennie, et al., 2021; Spaaj, 2009). In fact, sport and recreational activities were part of Aboriginal ways of being before colonisation (Dalton, et al., 2015). Sport is often the vehicle through which socialisation occurs (Skinner, et al., 2008), and cultural barriers of inclusion can be mitigated. In contrast with many sectors of society where Indigenous people feel excluded and disempowered, sport provides Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders with an environment where they are included, and where a sense of purpose and belonging can exist (Tatz, 2012). Additionally, sport is one

segment of society where Aboriginal people have “occupied prominent places on the public stage” (Dalton, et al., 2015, p.59). In 2013, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs concluded that for Indigenous communities, “sport is much more than just a game – it can be a pathway to stronger communities and better opportunities” (Standing Committee, 2013), including reconciliation. Practice highlights a link between the recruitment and retention of Indigenous participants in sport where there is an Indigenous coach.

There is a clear link in the literature between coach development and 1) formal education and training, and 2) the value of interpersonal communication, also described as a community of practice (Bennie, et al., 2021). The Coaches Scholarship being examined aimed to include both formal education and communities of practice to develop the coaches' capabilities. There are minimal academic articles published on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander coaches and coach programs. On a larger scale, it has been argued that there is a lack of research into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sport (Dalton, et al., 2015). From an evaluation and research perspective, this leads to opportunities to contribute to the literature and conversations that should be happening nationally in the executive offices of sport organisations.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

This qualitative research occurred from May to December 2022 and adopted an action research style approach. Whilst not strictly action research, this method was chosen because the researcher has been actively involved in many parts of the scholarship program including the co-design process. There were three main data collection methods. First, yarning (one-on-one and small group interviews). Second, document review of education and program documents. Third, field notes from the researcher's experience in the program.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The results from this research informed a report that was handed to the AOC. In total, nine recommendations were made, and an

additional five considerations were raised. Overwhelmingly, the recommendations and considerations have been implemented in the second and expanded version of this scholarship program, which commenced in late 2023 and will continue into late 2024. Importantly, the AOICS program has gained the interest of several national sport bodies in Australia who have expressed interest in joining future iterations of the AOICS.

Significant findings from the research include the need for extensive community consultation and co-design when working with Indigenous coaches. The experiences, including barriers and facilitators to coach career progression and development, differed for all the participating coaches and their communities. Hence, a bespoke training and education package coupled with relevant high-performance and community engagements was recommended. It is advised that sport managers working with Indigenous populations interact with their participants and communities in an authentic manner to avoid tokenism and to show a genuine level of care – the AOC, as the administering body operating this program engaged authentically, and one participant noted “it did not feel like just another Indigenous Project”. It was also evident that the scholarship program had unforeseen ripple effects. The program’s impacts were felt beyond the coaches involved, and knowledge gained from the program impacted the communities to which the coaches were connected.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This research contributes to the literature as it begins to address the lack of research into the barriers and facilitators of Indigenous coach education and promotion. This is a significant gap to fill as it is clear that the presence of Indigenous coaches in development pathways dramatically assists in the recruitment and retention of Indigenous players.

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Exploring Perspectives and Experiences of Philippines Women's National Team Heritage-Players and Supporters

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Aim and Research Questions

In January of 2022, the Philippines Women's National Team (PWNT) secured their first-ever bid to the FIFA Women's World Cup (FWWC). One of the more popular story lines surrounding their success highlighted the overwhelming majority of players that were born outside the Philippines – with 18 out of 23 of those 'heritage players' born in the United States (U.S.). The research objectives are to address a dearth of literature on heritage players and the Filipino-American (Fil-Am) experience in sport (Arnaldo, 2015), as well as to understand the complexity and nuances of their experiences during their journey to the FWWC. Specifically, we answer the research question: What were distinct aspects of the Fil-Am experience (for players and supporters) in the PWNT's journey to and through the 2023 FWWC?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Heritage players have played an essential role in international football since the 1930 FIFA Men's World Cup. Due to the globalization of sport, a growing number of athletes try to represent countries they were not born in, by leveraging connections through blood ties and birth rights (Rehal, 2016); And coaches take advantage of these alternative markers to national belonging, as it helps increase their talent pool for roster selection (Oonk, 2021). As a result, questions about athlete's "citizenship, identity, and nationalism" (Rahel, 2016, p. 115) are often called to question and/or explicitly contested. Findings from Ponce de Leon (2018) showed that while some supporters viewed the Filipino identity as a dynamic and global identity (resulting from history of imperialism and migration), others believe that the Filipino identity is a fixed nationalism. As such, those who believe

the latter, feel that heritage players take away opportunities from homegrown athletes.

The roughly 4.5 million Filipino diaspora currently located in the United States makes Fil-Am's the third largest Asian group in the country. Despite their dominant presence in society, Fil-Am's experiences remain drastically understudied (Tuason et al., 2007). Evidence suggests that Fil-Ams born in the U.S. tend to have strong ties to Filipino values such as family, respect, and hospitality – as well as an appreciation for Filipino food and culture (Tuason et al., 2007). Filipino culture is rooted in a central value known as *Kapwa* (David et al., 2017), which refers to the "unity, connection, or oneness with other people – regardless of 'blood' connections..." (David et al., 2017, p. 48). *Kapwa* is the essence of what it means to be Filipino and is considered a key driver of Filipino culture (Enriquez, 1994). That said, Fil-Am's have struggled to find a sense of identity in the U.S. and demonstrate a desire and curiosity to explore the duality of their Fil-Am identity (Revilla, 1997).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

To address our aim of better holistic understanding of the experiences of PWNT heritage players and supporters, we utilized a descriptive case study approach (Hesse-Biber, 2017). The data set was comprised of three sources, including: (1) PWNT heritage-player journal entries in response to a series of prompts from March 2022 through December 2023 (n=5); (2) PWNT fan questionnaire data (n=126); and (3) the four episodes from the *Between Two Worlds* podcast (Reyes, 2023) on the teams' history and journey. Players were recruited for their longitudinal study participation via team Captain, Tahnai Annis. Fan survey responses were recruited through a variety of methods to disseminate the Qualtrics link, including in-person at the FWWC games, emailing Filipino sport organizations who shared the link with their members, and having players distribute the link to their social networks. Reflexive thematic analysis was used due to the methodological flexibility, to iteratively code the data and identify themes following the six phases outlined by Braun and Clarke (2022).

Results/Findings and Discussion

First, findings reveal that PWNT heritage players and supporters experience a variety of Challenges in Duality, because the reality of navigating multiple identities is inherently challenging. And, that complex intrapersonal and interpersonal tension is exacerbated by a global spotlight on the team's success. Second, the theme You're One of Us speaks to the essence of Kapwa, which is inclusion-oriented and focused on embracing people for who they are and their love of the Philippines – regardless of where they were born. Finally, this experience made individuals Feel More Connected to the Philippines, through a sense of subthemes, including: pride, (re)connecting with their roots, and their investment to impacting the current and future generations of young Filipinos and Filipinas.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

These themes provide novel scholarly insight to the lived experiences of (1) a underrepresented group of society, and (2) the heritage athlete experience. While there are privileges of holding multiple identities, there are also burdens and challenges that managers and coaches of international teams should be aware of and make adaptations for. Further scholarly and practical implications to be discussed further in the presentation.

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Using a Decolonial Intersectional Lens to Identity Work and The Use of Rhetoric by Batswana Female Social Entrepreneurs in Sport

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This study explored the institutional environment of social entrepreneurship in sport (SES) in Botswana. We used a decolonial intersectional critical lens to answer the questions: (a) What knowledge about SES, can we learn from a female Motswana perspective of SES? and (b) How does the institutional environment (IE) of SES in Botswana impact women's perceptions of SES? This research answers the call for scholars to study institutional theory phenomena from the critical perspectives of marginalized and less embedded actors in oppressive institutions (Lawrence et al., 2011; Mair & Martí, 2009; Martí & Fernández, 2013). It also answers the call to explore more institutional work (IW) in sport (Nite & Edwards, 2021).

IW is the purposive action of individuals and organizations aimed at creating, maintaining, and disrupting institutions (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). McSweeney's studies on IW in sport for development in a Global South context, reveal the importance of other types of IW, namely, relational, symbolic, and emotional work, that demonstrate various ways actors exercise agency when engaging in IW (McSweeney et al., 2023; McSweeney et al., 2019). Martí and Fernández (2013) argue that understanding these types of IW helps to elucidate the conditions and IE that precipitate the creation, maintenance, and disruption of institutions. However, there is still a dearth of studies on IW in sports from the critical perspective of marginalized and less embedded actors in oppressive institutions. In addition, this research also used structural violence as the theoretical framework for assessing oppressive institutions.

Using a decolonial Intersectional participatory action research approach (DIPAR), we explored the actions and practices of Batswana women in sport as they advocated for the use of SES to solve the safety issues they faced in the sports system. Combining IW and structural violence with DIPAR allowed

us to emphasize the emancipatory practices adopted by women in Botswana, in response to their experiences and perceptions of SES. The DIPAR methodology centers on the voices of women in Botswana, particularly the voices of the four research participants who acted as co-researchers on this project. The co-researchers all identified as women in Botswana sports. The co-researchers brought cultural and contextual knowledge to the research design; they determined the research questions, identified issues with the IE of SES that needed to be addressed and devised recommendations for a solution to these issues. The research consisted of document analysis and two participatory action workshops to determine the issues and propose solutions. The research culminated with a presentation of the issues and proposed solutions to various stakeholders of Botswana's sport system. The stakeholders were invited to provide feedback and comments to be considered in the write-up of the research and incorporated into recommendations for future research.

We were able to identify several instances of structural violence that women and girls in sport experienced when trying to practice SES. These included physical and psychological abuse/harassment and the threat thereof; financial insecurity; an inability to have their social and emotional needs met; and an inability to self-actualize through social and economic contributions to society. Structurally violent conditions, such as exclusionary organizational design and inadequate institutional support, led to marginalized female actors in the sport system desiring an institutional change that emphasized and advocated for a nuanced concept of social entrepreneurship in sports. This concept of SES identified 'the athlete' or 'woman in sport' as the enterprise. The co-researchers used two forms of symbolic work to justify this concept: identity work and rhetoric. SES was perceived as a tool for women in sports to claim autonomy, create their own pathways to contributing to the community/society/the economy, gain financial security, and circumvent other forms of structural violence. However, to have a significant influence on the institutional environment, the marginalized actors used combined identity work and collective desire to devise a plan that would influence other actors to engage in the necessary disruptive work and creation work needed for their

concept of SES to thrive. This plan recommends changes to mentorship, education, financial sustainability and branding for women in sports, with the overall objective of improving the environment for SES and increasing women's knowledge and skillsets for SES.

This research adds to the literature on IW in sport by adding a perspective from women in Botswana. Our work adds to the literature exploring the combination of IW with participatory action research and, therefore, helps to emphasize the actions and practices of actors in an institutional environment (Dover & Lawrence, 2010). By applying an IW and DIPAR approach, sports scholars and practitioners can identify areas for institutional change that marginalized and less embedded actors in a sports environment or organization, desire. Practitioners can use results from this type of research to inform strategies for institutional change that will center the desires of marginalized and less embedded actors in a system or organization.

Dance and Sense of Community in the Context of the City of Culture

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Aim and Research Questions

In an increasingly interconnected and diverse world, the positive contribution of arts and culture in fostering sense of community (SOC) has become a topic of profound interest and investigation. In this regard, the 'City of Culture' concept can enhance SOC by providing more platforms and opportunities for community involvement in arts and cultural activities (Cerisola & Panzera, 2022). Among various initiatives within the concept, community dance in particular can play a vital role in nurturing SOC while emphasising inclusivity, creativity, and collective expression in the community (Wise et al., 2020). Along with the research questions of how the concept of SOC is defined in the context of the City of Culture and what factors are embedded in this construct, this study is designed to conceptualise SOC among community dance participants in the City of Culture using a multidimensional approach.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

This study analysed numerous pieces of literature in relevant fields such as generic industries, sport and leisure, tourism, and arts and culture to accumulate theoretical knowledge about community dance and SOC. Based on its existing definitions (e.g., Buck, 2019), 'dance community' in this study was defined as a group of people within the City of Culture who share a cultural identity centred on a common interest in dance. Along with this definition, the term SOC was operationally defined as a feeling that members have of belonging and emotional connection and a belief that they can exert collective creativity with other members through participation in community dance in the City of Culture. Moreover, three main approaches to conceptualising and developing SOC models were identified. Firstly, SOC was considered unidimensional in a small number of studies (e.g., Dickinson et al., 2018). Secondly, most scholars viewed SOC as a multidimensional

concept, often borrowing ideas from the classic framework of McMillan and Chavis (1986) or adapting it to suit specific research contexts (e.g., Lizzo & Liechty, 2022). Finally, there were attempts to develop own models tailored to the research contexts (e.g., Warner et al., 2013). This study builds on the multidimensional framework of McMillan and Chavis (1986) by considering its primary factors as well as other conceptual frameworks derived from it.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

This exploratory conceptual study does not involve primary data collection and analysis but rather a critical evaluation of relevant existing research on the topic. Thus, this study employs an inductive approach, a systematic and exploratory procedure for analysing qualitative data, to conceptualise the construct of SOC among community dance participants in the City of Culture. Plus, a scoping literature review was conducted to generate a new definition and conceptual model of SOC among community dance participants in the City of Culture. Numerous studies were searched on Google Scholar with keywords such as 'sense of community' and 'psychological sense of community'. Through a thorough screening process ensuring the quality and relevance of the study, 36 papers were selected. Moreover, this study primarily takes a reflective approach based on the idea that SOC is affected by latent factors.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The study proposes a conceptual model with five main factors that effectively encapsulate the contextual characteristics of SOC among community dance participants in the City of Culture. Firstly, 'sense of belonging' refers to the feeling of being part of a dance community where citizens can actively participate in dance within the City of Culture. Secondly, 'cultural identity' is the communal identity rooted in the shared cultural background of community dance participants. Thirdly, 'community dance interest' is defined as the shared feeling of wanting to give attention to community dance and discover more about it, and the communal desire to share common goals and values with other community members. Fourthly, 'collective creativity' captures the collaborative skills, fostered by social interactions in dance participation, to

solve common problems by producing or using original and unconventional ideas. Finally, emotional connection refers to the feeling and bonding of being emotionally connected with other community members through the interaction in dance participation. These findings provide guidance for the collection and interpretation of empirical data on SOC within this specific population.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This study contributes to the understanding of the multidimensional construct of SOC, by defining and specifying SOC and its factors in the unique socio-cultural contexts. It also establishes the first step in the SOC measurement development process. In future research, the SOC measurement model can be completed by developing measurement items for each factor, followed by rigorous statistics analyses to test its psychometric properties. This series of research processes on SOC from conceptualising to developing and validating the model can lay the foundation for future work on broader social contributions of community dance, especially exploring the more intricate relationships across SOC and its potential antecedents (e.g., dance participation) and consequences (e.g., social cohesion and wellbeing) within the context of the City of Culture.

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Everyday Experiences Of Volunteer Board Members In Rural Sports Clubs

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The explorative study aims to reconstruct the collective knowledge, orientations and conjunctive spaces of experience of voluntary board members of sports clubs in rural areas. The presentation will address the following questions: How do committed board members deal with their socio-spatial and organizational conditions and challenges? Which experiences strengthen or weaken their commitment?

As a heuristic, the actor-theoretical model of sports club development (Nagel 2007) is used and it is assumed that "social action and social structures are interrelated over historical time» (Nagel 2007, p. 191). Sports clubs are interest organizations and corporative actors that are embedded in environmental structures and have grassroots democratic structures in which executive boards exert a major influence on the development of the clubs.

European sports club officials perceive major problems in recruiting and retaining volunteers (Seippel et. al., 2023). In fact, the number of volunteers in organized club sports declined significantly between 2014 and 2019 in Germany (Braun et al., 2022), especially in rural areas (Burrmann et al. 2023). At the same time volunteers are confronted with new tasks, changed role expectations and trends towards professionalization. At the macro level, the welfare state is reducing services of general interest, which consequently are increasingly to be (co-)produced by volunteers (BMWSB, 2023). In this context, the club board must interact with local politics, administration or sports federations and its objectives are thus influenced by national and local governance and funding structures (Seippel, 2019). Therefore, strategic planning skills and competencies for building and maintaining relationships and networks are becoming more important for boards (O'Boyle, 2019). In addition, conflicts can arise within the club between the board and club members if common interests are no longer pursued (Renfree & Kohe, 2019). These developments

are likely to pose challenges for sports clubs in rural areas with their weak infrastructures and resources.

From a praxeological perspective, voluntary engagement is understood as an idiosyncratic (collective) social practice in everyday life (Schäfer, 2016). The behaviour of actors is based on implicit knowledge, which is structured and pre-reflective; it is the *modus operandi* of everyday practice. Both levels of knowledge, the implicit and the theoretical, are embedded in conjunctive spaces of experience. Those who have biographic experience in common have commonalities in their socialization, and therefore share conjunctive spaces of experiences, e.g., generation, life course, place of residence in rural areas, sports club or club board.

To gain access to conjunctive spaces of experience with its theoretical and implicit knowledge, 18 group discussions with 3-6 (former) board members were conducted in 16 clubs and analysed with documentary method (Bohnsack, 2021). The advantages of the selected methods are that the participants can develop their own topics and based on shared experiences, a climate of trust and openness is likely to develop. Furthermore, group interactions and processes for the constitution of social reality become a subject of analysis. The data is evaluated by the following steps: a) formulating interpretation: Paraphrasing of the content, b) reflective interpretation: Reconstruction of orientations using sequential analysis and c) type formation: First, reconstruction of typical orientation patterns based on comparative case analysis and second, reconstruction of their genesis in conjunctive spaces of experience.

The data for this qualitative study was collected as part of the BMEL-funded project «Civic Engagement in Peripheral - Rural Areas of the New Federal States», which was conducted in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Saxony-Anhalt, and Thuringia/Germany. The heterogeneous sample covers a) different club characteristics, that means divisions and club size, b) municipalities with different socio-spatial conditions, that are the degrees of rurality, municipal tax capacity and net migration and c) different board group characteristics like age, generational succession in the organization (predecessor/successor), multiple engagement

in the municipality and homogenous and mixed gender.

The results initially show that sports club board members perform a variety of informal tasks and are involved in different roles in the club or in the community, which they rarely distinguish in practice. Relationships and networks influence the acceptance, retention or termination of commitments. The analysis shows disruptions to the coordination of actions at various levels: external disruptions, disruptions within the club or within the board group. There are four patterns of orientations that document the dealing with disruptions: a) adaptations to demands and conditions, b) impulsive counterstrategies, c) elaborated strategic actions to assert own interests and d) a creeping or offensive withdrawal. Especially the relationship to the full-time municipal administration becomes a burden when the board must invest a lot of time and effort to assert their interests. Full time staff should be sensitive to these mechanisms and actively facilitate communication and negotiation with volunteers. However, these negative experiences are no reason for termination. The friendships within the group can compensate for any disruptions and bind the volunteers despite negative experiences in other networks. Exits occur because of disruptions within the board group.

Antecedents of Organizational Capacity in Sport for Development

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Aim and Research Questions

A growing body of research has examined organizational capacity across different types of nonprofit sport organizations (e.g., Cohen et al., 2021; Doherty et al., 2014; Svensson et al., 2018). Most of the studies to date have been limited to benchmark studies identifying current capacity levels or exploratory studies of the most critical elements within different capacity dimensions across different sport contexts. A lot less is known, however, about what influences organizational capacity levels. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the antecedents of organizational capacity in an international sample of SDP organizations. More specifically, we test a set of hypotheses developed from extant literature in related disciplines.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Organizational capacity refers to the ability of a nonprofit to mobilize and deploy the resources necessary for achieving desired goals related to serving their mission (Nordin et al., 2024). Almost all prior capacity research in sport management were grounded in Hall et al.'s (2003) multidimensional framework of nonprofit capacity frameworks although many others exist in related disciplines. It is of critical importance for sport management scholars to engage more with testing the applicability of different frameworks for advancing knowledge on organizational capacity in sport (Svensson et al., 2021). We therefore intentionally draw on Shumate et al.'s (2017) Nonprofit Capacities Framework. In short, whilst there is a greater understanding of organizational capacity within SDP, there remains a gap in our knowledge of what influences an organization's capacity levels. Research from

related disciplines suggest several organizational variables may play a significant role including the level of slack resources, level of tolerance for risk-taking, and the ability of organizations to tolerate ambiguity. In the context of SDP, the level of environmental turbulence may also play a significant role.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

A quantitative research design will be utilized for this study to gain a more robust understanding of organizational capacity within the context of SDP. More specifically, an electronic survey is being distributed to an international sample of SDP nonprofits to illicit greater insight from SDP leaders regarding the factors that may influence organizational capacity, including: (1) slack resource availability, (2) environmental turbulence, (3) ambiguity, and (4) risk taking. A sampling frame is currently being established through online organizational directories (e.g., sportanddev, Beyond Sport, Women Win) since there is no centralized index or database for SDP organizations. Participants will be recruited via email in May, 2024 and shared a link to a Qualtrics survey that provides all the information for informed consent, as well as information regarding a raffle incentive for participation. There is a budget of \$2,000 USD allocated for 20, \$100 gift cards that will be raffled out to SDP leaders who elect to complete the survey.

Organizational capacity is measured using the 28-item version of The Nonprofit Capacities Instrument (Fu & Shumate, 2020; Shumate et al., 2017). Slack resources are measured using the three-item Discretionary Slack Scale. The 13-item Multiple Stimulus Types Ambiguity Tolerance Scale-II is used to measure level of tolerance for ambiguity. Environmental turbulence is measured using an established four-item scale. Finally, risk-taking is measured using Hock-Doepgen et al.'s (2021) 4-item Organizational Risk-Taking Tolerance Scale. A set of descriptive variables will also be collected including geographical location, budget size, age, network membership, among others. Data will be analyzed using multiple regression analysis and Hayes' PROCESS macro for mediation analysis to test the hypothesized relationships.

Results/Findings and Discussion

We expect our analysis to reveal several significant relationships between the variables of interest. First, we hypothesize that slack resource availability, tolerance for ambiguity, and risk-taking will have a significant positive effect on organizational capacity beyond what is explained by a set of descriptive variables. Second, we expect that environmental turbulence will have a significant direct negative relationship with organizational capacity. Third, we hypothesize that environmental turbulence will also mediate the relationships between capacity and the three others main variables (slack resources, risk-taking, and ambiguity tolerance).

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The results of this study will extend the existing body of scholarship on capacity in SDP (Cohen et al., 2021; Svensson et al., 2018) as well as within sport management more broadly. Welty Peachey and colleagues (2020) have called on researchers to engage more directly with and we expect the results of our study to generate theoretical advancements regarding capacity in SDP. From a practical standpoint, the results of our study are expected to help inform how resource providers, consultants, and organizational leaders can better build their capacity.

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Player Perceptions On The Sense Of Community At Grassroots Football Clubs

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Aim and Research Question

This research aims to explore the conditions that make up the sense of community in the context of grassroots football environments amongst participants.

Hence, the research question, how do players perceive the sense of community at the community football club they play for in London?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Across England, 13.5million people are regularly participating in grassroots football with a social contribution of £10.16million through economic value, healthcare savings and social value (The FA, 2021). The same report identifies that playing football provides 1.45billion hours of social interactions for adults, helping them feel less isolated and more socially connected. It is these social connections that can be the catalyst for young people to participate in a wide range of community sports initiatives (Warner, Kerwin and Walker, 2013). Therefore, it is understood that community sports initiatives can create a sense of belonging and interdependence, as per McMillan and Chavis (1986) definition on a sense of community, which describes a sense of community being fostered when members of community feel like they belong there. Similar to many community environments, understanding the management of sport remains pivotal community building (Warner, Dixon, and Chalip, 2012).

When measuring the sense of belonging to an archery club, Warner, Kerwin and Walker (2013) found that using a 6-factor scale to measure a sense of community in sport is appropriate. These 6-factors include; administrative consideration, common

interest, equity in administrative decisions, leadership opportunities, social spaces and competition. Similarly, suggestions have been made when considering the sense of community volunteers in local level sports events highlights the belonging they feel too (Kerwin et al., 2016). Elsewhere, Mastromartino et al. (2020) indicate 5 key factors highlights a sense of community amongst sports fans; collective unity, positivity, inclusivity, social opportunities, and knowledgeable members. Compare this to McMillan and Chavis (1986) 4 key elements in their definition of a sense of community; membership, influence, integration and fulfilment of needs. It is clear that similarities exist from both the sporting and non-sporting context on the sense of belonging, but where does the benefit of understanding the sense of belonging felt by community members sit for grassroots football clubs? Further research is required to understand how sport can promote and develop value systems that engage communities to feel connected and as a collected (Edwards, 2015).

Where Warner, Kerwin and Walker (2013) indicate leadership opportunities being one of the 6 key factors of measuring a sense of community, the importance of leadership as a part of individual and social development has also been highlighted by The FA (2021) in grassroots football. The FA (2021) have also identified that since Covid-19 it is clear that grassroots football participation enhances levels of trust amongst the playing community.

Existing sport-specific measures have empirically captured the social phenomenon that is a sense of belonging (Warner, Kerwin and Walker, 2013). Hence, scales like the Sense of Community in Sport Scale provide a vital measurement for managers involved in sport (Doherty, 2013). This and other similar scales have been used to measure the sense of belonging certain sports groups would have to their community, including; older adults playing pickleball, event volunteering, refugee communities and sports fans to name a few (Kerwin et al., 2016; Mauro, 2018; Kim et al., 2020; Mastromartino et al, 2020). So the factors that make up a sense of belonging have been explored in depth, but there is a need for further exploration in the settings of grassroots football. Given the huge economic, healthcare and social value this level of football provides, there is an opportunity to

explore the conditions that make up this community's sense of belonging to clubs operating in grassroots football.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Given the potential for further understanding of the sense of community in grassroots football the initial steps in this research would be to explore stakeholder perceptions, using semi-structured interviews to explore the constructs that make up a sense of belonging from prior research. As there is a wide range of grassroots football clubs that operate in this country, the research will primarily focus on amateur level Saturday and Sunday league football clubs in London. 20 interviews will be sought with players that are currently playing at community football clubs. To get a best understanding of the sense of community players across different age ranges between 18-35 will be sought for interview. From the 20, the research will also interview a range of players who have been at the same club for between 1-10 years, offering a different perspective of community based on longevity with a club or playing grassroots football.

Upon completion, semi-structured interview data will undergo thematic analysis to understand the sense of community themes emerging from the perspective of players at community football clubs in London. From the thematic analysis, themes will emerge that highlight the key constructs from the sense of community perceived by players at community football clubs in London.

Results/Findings and Discussion

As of yet the data and analysis has not been conducted but the study and research will be complete by the time of the conference.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

Whilst there is no conclusion to offer just yet, this research will add to the understanding of sport and its role in fostering a sense of community, particularly within the grassroots football setting. The FA (2021) recognised the economic, health and social value of grassroots football in a post-covid England. By understanding player perceptions on the sense of community the sustained participation of players can be strengthened as a practical implication from this research.

In term of academic implications, as an understanding of sense of community amongst grassroots football players in London is further understood, a sense of community survey could be developed based on the themes emerging from this research. This survey can be administered to a wider pool of grassroots football players to measure if such a survey is accurate in its implementation through factor analysis. Furthermore, the research can go onto understand what conditions best fit to foster a sense of community across grassroots football beyond London, into national and international fields of study on the topic.

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Kick-Starting Desistance and Rehabilitation Processes Through Harnessing The Power Of Football

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Aim and Research Question

There has been growing attention which examines the use of sport and physical activity in promoting positive outcomes, including improved quality of life and improved rehabilitative potential, for incarcerated people (Meek and Lewis, 2014, Meek, 2012, Meek, 2014). The Twinning Project is a partnership between Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Services which "twins" Premier League and Football League clubs with local prisons in order to offer coaching and education to incarcerated offenders with the longer-term aspiration to improve their mental and physical health, wellbeing and to enhance the employability of offenders post-release. Building on the success of The Twinning Project, the Twinning Literacy Pilot (TLP) sought to use the power of football as a vehicle for engaging incarcerated people in literacy education in recognition of poor literacy skills being a significant barrier to rehabilitation. This research aimed to understand the ways in which a football-based intervention delivered by a professional football club can be harnessed effectively as a vehicle for engagement in literacy learning and as a catalyst for change within desistance journeys. Specifically, it addressed the research question: How can football be used effectively within prison settings to support desistance processes?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Desistance from crime relates to the underlying processes which support the maintenance of a crime free life after a period of offending (Kay, 2016). It is thought to involve both the termination of offending and transformation of self-identity and self-worth (Farrall and Maruna, 2004). However, there is limited insight regarding the initial, transitional stages of desistance where offenders make tentative steps towards

becoming an ex-offender. Effective education in prison a key pillar of rehabilitation through building social capital and enhancing well-being despite concerns around the lack of access to, and engagement in, high quality education within the custodial setting (Coates, 2016).

Tackling low levels of literacy which create a barrier to education and to desistance processes is a complex challenge. Research indicates that 59% of prisoners regularly played truant from school, 63% had been suspended or temporarily excluded, and 42% had been permanently excluded or expelled from school (MoJ, 2012). The TLP provided an opportunity to examine how sport-based education can address some of the challenges inherent within traditional education opportunities and thereby contribute to a better understanding of how sport can be effectively harnessed to support desistance processes.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Rooted in an interpretivist paradigm qualitative data was collated through semi-structured interviews (n=31) in five settings which involved ‘Twinning’ between a prison and a professional football club based in England (n=4) and Wales (n=1). Interviews were conducted between September 2023 - February 2024 inclusive with Football Club Representatives (n=7), Prison Physical Education Instructors (n=9), Learners engaged in the TLP (n=18) and one Peer Learner Mentor. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analysed thematically using Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-stage approach.

Results/ findings and discussion

The findings indicate that several benefits aligned to desistance processes were evident within the TLP and these included peer support, building relationships, developing confidence, looking to the future (hope) which is instrumental in supporting identity and behaviour change. The TLP was also shown to have the potential to be effective in supporting the development of literacy, revealed through a positive correlation between those completing the course and achieving the associated literacy qualification. Importantly, learning in both literacy and football elements

was valued by learners. Learners also highly valued the efforts of the football club representatives in accommodating their needs and maintaining their involvement and engagement in the TLP.

Conclusion, Contribution and Implication

Prison education can be transformative for those that take part and for the communities that benefit from reduced offending through reduced social and financial costs - estimated to be £18.1 billion in the UK (MoJ, 2019). At a time when the prison population is approaching record levels this study contributes to better understanding the opportunities to utilise football to provide a catalyst for change to address the “revolving door” of offending (Padfield and Maruna, 2006). Consideration is also given to the ways in which the learning from this programme can inform broader strategies for enhancing prison education and rehabilitation.

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Success Against All Odds? Organizational And Performance Development In Scandinavian Elite Football

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Aim and Research Questions

The commercialization of football has increased the relationship between access to financial, technological and human capital, and sport performances. Financial resources set limitations for sporting progress, creating a divide between those who have considerable financial capabilities to reinvest into performance development, and those who do not (Iorwerth, 2018). Despite this, some manage to break free from their hierarchical constraints, exceeding expectations and perform beyond what their resources would dictate. The aim of this study is to investigate how sport organizations create success 'against all odds' and which organizational and cultural factors contribute to this. The following research question is examined: Which organizational and cultural attributes are pivotal for football clubs that consistently exceed expectations, and how do internal tensions manifest in their pursuit of success?

Theoretical background and Literature Review

Commercialization has led to substantial revenues among the biggest football clubs in Europe (Barnes, 2022). This is reinvested in organizational expansion and development, with an increasing number of qualified people taking care of central functions (Iorwerth et al, 2018). This provides major competitive advantages, as it is well established within elite sports that players' and teams' capacity for success is largely dependent on how they are organised, administered and led (Hansen et al., 2021). However, little research has been aimed at the organizations consistently exceeding expectations, and the organizational and cultural attributes that are vital to them achieving success despite limited resources compared to their competitors. With that, there is a lack of empirical studies regarding how sport organizations create success 'against all odds'.

Theoretically, the study applies a combination of Weberian rationalization and Weick's sensemaking as a framework to analyse the interplay between organizational and cultural attributes vital to the success of these organizations. Rationalization speaks to attributes in modern sport's quest to identify the most effective available method to achieve a goal, such as maximizing the athletes' performances, and the organization's profit (Giulianotti, 2015). Sensemaking allows for the investigations of these occurrences as a social process where such attributes are created and maintained socially (Weick, 1995). Taken together, this contributes to a nuanced perspective on the organizational and cultural features of football clubs overachieving against all odds.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The study investigates two Scandinavian elite football clubs as cases. The criteria to identify the cases was based on sporting performance and economic resources. Both cases constitute elite football clubs which over the span of 3 years went from competing at the second tier nationally, to performing at the top of European football, despite having limited economic revenue and resources compared to the clubs they compete with. Data consists of 19 interviews with players (N=8), coaches (N=5) and leaders (N=6) within these two clubs. The Interviews were transcribed verbatim, pseudo-anonymized and analyzed using collective qualitative analysis.

Results and Discussion

The findings show how leaders, coaches and players all attribute their success to a strong culture consisting of a shared sense of loyalty and belief regarding the strategy of the organization. While the strategies vary somewhat between the two clubs, a strong perception of influence over decisions and accountability towards the realization of the organizational strategy is described as highly significant for the performance enhancement that both clubs have achieved. Differences however were identified regarding how accountability is facilitated in the two clubs. One prefers frequent meetings, while the other relies on informal interactions. Yet, both clubs emphasize closeness and frequent interactions between all levels (leaders, coaches, players).

The findings however also uncover significant tensions in the backlash of the success. Leaders in particular describe 'growing pains', whereby rapid expansion of the organization provides new challenges regarding how cooperation and interactions within the organization unfolds, as well as how, and by whom, decisions are to be made. Furthermore, commercial logics are described as becoming more important as a result of the clubs' recent growth in success. Consequently, tensions are described where leaders are concerned with capitulating on current success by creating financial profit through selling coveted players, while coaches and players describe this as inhibiting chances of sporting success.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The study contributes with insights into how organizational and cultural attributes influence football clubs' abilities to overachieve and perform against all odds, despite limited economic resources. The insights into the perspectives of leaders, coaches and players provide detailed knowledge of the cultural patterns of action within and across the various roles central to the sporting and organizational performances. Furthermore, the study provides important knowledge about how smaller clubs' pursuit of success may also lead to increased presence of commercial logics and professionalization, creating significant tensions and challenges within organizations and thus affecting their work towards performance development.

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The Career Work of Sport for Development and Peace Practitioners

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Aim and Research Questions

The sport-for-development and peace (SDP) field has grown since the early 2000s, transforming from a social movement into an institutionalized sector (Darnell et al., 2019; McSweeney et al., 2021). Given this transformation, there are various people who have made a career in SDP (e.g., social entrepreneurs, staff members). Yet, there remains limited insight into how people have constructed their careers and what a career in SDP looks like. Given that fields become more globally recognized through professionalization and development into an occupation, increased understanding of SDP careers is critical to further its legitimacy. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to utilize a social-symbolic perspective (Lawrence & Phillips, 2019) to respond to the research question of: How do individuals within the SDP field undertake purposeful and reflexive efforts to construct their careers?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The social-symbolic work perspective by Lawrence and Phillips (2019, p. 24) focuses on the way people are intentional and reflexive in their actions to shape social-symbolic objects, such as a career, which “constitute a meaningful pattern in a social system” (p. 24). Humans undertake purposeful efforts to affect their careers, such as training and education, thus engaging in career work, defined as “the social construction of people’s careers” (Lawrence & Phillips, 2019, p. 108). Studies have shown that SDP staff have sought specific professional training (Shin et al., 2020); have invested personal time, energy, and money into social initiatives (McSweeney et al., 2022); and hold strong motivations to use sport as a tool for social change (Welty Peachey et al., 2018), all of which indicate the existence of career work. However, no existing studies have examined the specific way

careers are developed in the SDP field, other than some which comment on aspects of a career such as employee engagement (e.g., Svensson et al., 2021).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

A qualitative research design was used for this study to prioritize the lived experiences of SDP practitioners related to their career work. Data collection methods included semi-structured interviews with 14 individuals from varied SDP organizations in both the Global North and Global South. While analysis is still ongoing, the findings of this study will be available at the time of the conference. Data analysis will take place over two phases. First, initial open coding will take place followed by codes being refined and further developed based on Lawrence and Phillips (2019) process model for social-symbolic work. Data will be deductively coded to identify career work using the components of the model, including: (1) motivations; (2) practices, and the resources needed for and situatedness of such practices; and (3) effects.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Based on preliminary analysis, individual’s motivations to construct a career in SDP were related to a multitude of factors, including their life experiences, sport background, and an interest to help others. Such findings build on existing literature into the motivations of SDP practitioners (Welty Peachey et al., 2018). In addition, for career work, individuals require an abundance of resources such as time, money, space, and sport equipment. Practices of career work include: professional training and education, gathering further knowledge on target populations, and gaining SDP-related certifications. However, given the situatedness of most study participants, resources remain scarce and thus in some cases inhibit potential to construct a clear SDP career, echoing the resource constrained environment of SDP (Andersson et al., 2023; Welty Peachey et al., 2020). A key aspect of the effect of career work seen in this study was the way personal agency of participants added meaning to their career choices. Though objective career outcomes such as income were not as prevalent, practitioners intentional work and the effects they have on others is more powerful as they construct their careers.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This study contributes to existing literature in several ways. First, investigating the career work of SDP practitioners from varied geographical locations responds to Welty Peachey et al.'s (2018) call to see how motivations differ across organizational and cultural contexts. Specifically, the findings of our study demonstrate how such motivations are similar and different according to the individual's location within a community. Second, this study advances new insights into the social-symbolic perspective, particularly career work, which remains understudied in sport management and organizational studies. By applying Lawrence and Phillips (2019) process model, we demonstrate how careers are affected by much more than the individual themselves, but also the context in which they work and resources they have at their disposal. Practically speaking, by understanding how individuals within the SDP field have made a career for themselves, aspiring professionals can gain knowledge about the pathways, strategies, and challenges involved. Insights from this study can also help SDP organizations to better structure and implement a professional development scheme to support their employees.

Corporate Social Responsibility Within Professional Football: Brand Image Or Community Driven Objectives?

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Aim

Establishing a charitable organisation attached to a professional sport club in the form of a trust or foundation is a popular model for professional sport clubs to engage with their local community and attempt to positively impact social outcomes. A football club community trust (FCCT) within a UK setting is a charitable organisation that is attached to a professional football club. The FCCT is its own entity, entirely separate from the professional football club in terms of legal status, leadership, organisational objectives and finance. The purpose of the FCCT is to leverage the brand of the attached professional football club to improve social outcomes within the communities that the football club and FCCT is based.

Previous academic research has predominately focused on professional sports club implementation and rationale of engaging in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Therefore, the purpose of this research is to examine the determinants of 'success'/impact across charitable organisations of professional football clubs and understand the process behind setting their strategic objectives. The study has three research questions:

RQ1 - Understand what 'success' looks like at FCCTs attached to professional football clubs?

RQ2 - How do FCCTs measure 'impact' and 'success'?

RQ3 - What are the business objectives and operations of an FCCT?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Previous literature has explored the motivations behind professional sports clubs participating in community-based activities and the benefits they gain from engaging in

CSR (Rowe, et al., 2018; Trendafiova, et al., 2017; Walters, 2009). Another body of research has focused on understanding the nature of community-based activities and the importance of measuring the impact of their development programmes within community sports settings (Coalter, 2007; Houlihan & Green, 2010; Dowling et al., 2021). Brazier et al. (2024) have applied a similar monitoring and evaluation (M&E) approach to analyse CSR activities of professional sports clubs, drawing on secondary data.

Smith and Westerbeek (2007) developed a 7-point framework to understand how professional sports clubs implement CSR activities and due to the high-profile nature of professional sport, this provides a unique environment to engage hard to reach stakeholders (e.g., organisations and participants).

Elkington and Rowlands (1999) developed the framework triple bottom line, that provided a measure of corporate performance beyond just measuring economic factors. This framework introduced the notion that organisations should consider environmental factors (e.g., the planet) and social performance (e.g., the people) in equal measurement to economic performance (e.g., the profit). Triple bottom line develops Carroll's (2016) pyramid whereby economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities need to be considered within organisational performance.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Qualitative data was sourced from 23 FCCTs from across the English Premier League and English Football League at the time of writing. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with one individual from each FCCT, and the interviewee roles were CEO / Head of FCCT (20 interviews) or senior manager within the FCCT (three interviews). It was decided to only select these roles for an interview as this would provide the necessary data to gain an overview of the FCCT and meet the RQs. Each interview was conducted on Microsoft Teams, with the shortest interview being 31 minutes long and longest interview lasting 76 minutes. The average length of each interview was 42 minutes. After recording, each interview was fully transcribed and imported into Qirkos

software to conduct thematic analysis corresponding to each of the RQs.

Results and Discussion

Overall, there were four key themes that emerged from the qualitative data:

1. Governance framework between FCCT and professional football club is critical to the successful implementation and deployment of CSR activities.
2. FCCTs employing a strategic approach to tackling specific social outcomes amplifies results.
3. Considerable variance in the operational objectives and capabilities of the FCCTs, which informs the FCCTs ability to grow sustainably.
4. Professional football club ownership influences the CSR agenda within the FCCT.

Overall from the qualitative data, there was no universal definition of what 'success looks like' from an FCCT perspective, but rather an acknowledgement that success for the FCCTs is improving social outcomes within their local communities from activities they have created and manage. Relevant to all the RQs is the relationship between FCCT and professional football club and how this is a considerable driver in the success and impact of FCCTs activities. This relationship goes beyond 'informal' and regular communication but both the FCCT and professional football club having representation on each organisation's board. In addition, each having the alignment on common organisational vision, goals and objectives. Covid-19 was a positive driver for FCCTs as the pandemic provided additional financial support, increased profile, and the opportunity to build relationships with new stakeholders that lacked awareness of the FCCTs. This has resulted in some FCCTs strategically focusing resources on specific social outcomes that are aligned to their local needs and objectives. These findings inform RQs 1 and 3 specifically.

In terms of RQ 3, the data found that the variance of operational capacity (e.g., number of staff) and expertise within the FCCTs is stark. Developed FCCTs were found to have a staff count of over 200 FTE, departments aligned to specific outcome areas (e.g., health, education or community cohesion) and business development staff to support growth in restricted and unrestricted revenue.

Conclusion, Contribution and Implications

The FCCTs are the CSR arm of professional football clubs and have the clear objective of using the power of sport and the brand image of their attached professional football club to positively influence social outcomes. From this research professional football clubs and the FCCTs perceive themselves to have a corporate responsibility to support their local communities. Professional football clubs have a cultural importance to the local communities they are embedded in. The hyper commercialisation of football has resulted in the globalisation of professional football clubs and they have developed their brand image to become commercially focused. Professional football clubs believed they always had philanthropic responsibility, in some instances it was seen as a luxury and CSR activities were 'bolted on'. Whereas there has been a shift to implement a triple bottom line approach and 'bolt in' CSR to organisational objectives.

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Cultural Differences and Global Migration in Professional Football

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Aim, Research Questions

An important issue in cross-cultural management is how colleagues from different cultures can work together and how open employees are to working in a country where there is a large cultural distance from their home. Cultural distance can cause culture shock and can negatively affect performance, so management needs to address the integration issue. The first step is to address cultural differences and their openness to migration.

Cultural world models provide a way of measuring cultural distance. Hofstede's 6D model (Hofstede, 1980), Trompenaars, and Hampden-Turner's model, or the GLOBE model have assigned values to countries along different dimensions. The research endeavours to establish a correlation between cultural distance and international migration by employing world cultural models. The study presents novel viewpoints and empirical investigations about the global movement of highly qualified workers, especially in case of professional football players.

In this research, we answer the following research questions: How can cultural models be applied to football? What do the different models show about the global mobility of footballers - how does cultural distance influence the choice of a new country?

Theoretical background, literature review

The use of cultural world models in sports and football is well established. Szymanski et al. (2021) provide an excellent summary of how sport can be used in international business. Multicultural environments and performance have been studied in football. The observation of official languages and the grouping of footballers according to their skills were also used to investigate cultural differences. Due to the global nature of sport and football, there is a high mobility of athletes worldwide.

Hofstede's model has been used in several areas of cross-cultural management: cross-cultural competencies, know-how flows (Girginov et al., 2010), cultural diversity, and team performance (Maderer et al.; 2014) or cultural dimensions/values. The Trompenaars – Hampden-Turner model is also applied to professional footballers, professional referees, sports managers and fans. Examples of the application of the GLOBE model can be found in Russian football, football coaches, and the American NFL.

Research design, Methodology

An advantage of labour market analysis in football is that all transfers are transparent, so we can work with a complete database like a laboratory. A crucial benefit of our work is its foundation on a rigorous quantitative analysis. The dataset is sourced from the website Transfermarkt.de and includes all the worldwide football player transfers between 2000 and 2022, providing more than 84,000 transfers. Since the research focuses on the cultural distance regarding the players' careers, only the first international transfers were considered. The final dataset also depends on the cultural world models selected to apply: While Hofstede's 6 dimensions model includes the data from 122 countries, the 7 Dimensions of Culture model and the GLOBE provide the data from 125 and 63 countries. Since the significant impact of cultural distance on players' migration has been proven before (Jarjabka et al., 2024) by applying the Hofstede model, this research aims to investigate whether the involvement of other world models leads to a different result. During the research, multiple regression models were applied with the dependent variables of the player migration and the regressors of the 3 cultural world models. To avoid omitted variable bias, control variables have been also included: an economical (GDP per capita), a professional (FIFA World Ranking), and the geographical distance (distance between two countries in km). The economic variable assumes that a club in a more developed country can usually pay the player a higher salary.

Results and Discussions

Our results show that all three models are suitable for analysing player migration, but the interpretations may differ. Overall, a significant negative correlation between players' choice of destination country and cultural distance can be identified, but the strength of this relationship varies across models: the parameters associated with the cultural distance range between -0.1 and -0.5. However, it is also worth mentioning, that this may arise from the different sample sizes due to the different world models. The parameter related to the individualism-collectivism has represented with the value of -0.145 in the case of the Hofstede's model, suggesting that the larger cultural distance reduces the number of migrations.

Conclusions

Aside from making theoretical contributions, we also offer practical advice to individuals such as professional footballers and agents, as well as organizations like football clubs and federations. We advise football organizations to prioritize their very precious human resources and ensure they give them careful attention. We suggest that if a new player is expected to perform well in a short period of time, it can be risky to sign players who come from a distant culture and have no experience of expatriate life abroad. On the other hand, our own young players who we want to sell to a country with a distant culture should be prepared for this (language learning, cultural openness, etc.).

RAE at Womens Football in the BIG 5 Professional European Leagues

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Aim and Research Questions

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of female football players (FIFA, 2023). Specifically, this increase has been notable in some European countries. In England, Spain, and France, the number of players has increased by 45.03%, 66.7%, and 17.36% respectively, solely within the period between 2019 and 2023 (FIFA, 2023). Similarly, in recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of scientific publications about women's football, and undoubtedly, one of the underestimated research lines in women's football has been the effect of relative age, studied in greater detail in the case of its male counterparts (de la Rubia et al., 2020).

That led the research team to seek answer to the following research questions:

Do the overall players of Europe's five major women's football leagues present statistically significant RAE?

Do each of the five major European women's football leagues have statistically significant RAE?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The relative age effect in sports, particularly in football, can be understood as the consequences on performance stemming from differences between athletes' chronological and biological ages (Musch and Grondin, 2001). In the case of women's football, several authors have investigated the influence of this effect, although the results found are often contradictory. One of the first studies (Vincent & Glamser, 2006) on women's football was conducted in the United States and aimed to demonstrate the occurrence of this selection bias in players from the US Olympic

Development Program. These authors showed a slight bias toward the overrepresentation of players born in the first half of the year compared to the second. However, this effect was not observed when the analysis was conducted based on the quarter of birth (Vincent & Glamser, 2006).

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

The sample (n=1634) is represented by players from the 5 highest football women's leagues in the world: Women's Super League from England, Liga F from Spain, Frauen-Bundesliga from Germany, Serie A Femminile from Italy and Division 1 from France. We obtained the information on the web pages of the clubs concerned and on the specialized platform Livefutbol (2024). The cut-off date is 1 January for all players, with the exception of England players whose cut-off date is 1 September.

The Relative Age Effect (RAE) was detected through Poisson regression (Doyle & Bottomley, 2019). The Poisson regression formula $y = e^{(b_0 + b_1x)}$ serves to explain the frequency count of an event (y) by an explanatory variable x. The data used for Poisson regression were week of birth (WB) whereby the first week in January was designated WB 1, and time period of birth (Tb) describing how far from the beginning of the year a player was born.

Results/Findings and Discussion

There is a greater presence of players in the first semester for the sum of 5 women's leagues, an overall RAE representation on the five biggest leagues in Europe.

If we analyze individually, we could confirm that all the leagues statistically show RAE effect as an overall league analysis, but also when a club analysis was performed:

- At Women's Super League-England league. In addition, RAE by clubs with 9 of the 12 participating teams was detected.
- Liga F Spain league. With RAE effect at 14 of 16 clubs.
- Frauen-Bundesliga Germany presented RAE, as well as 6 of the 12 clubs that conformed the league.
- Serie A Femminile Italy league. Furthermore, RAE was founded at 8 of the 10 league clubs.

- Division 1 France league. With a presence of RAE effect in 10 of their 12 clubs.

Previous literature agreed that the Relative Age Effect could be always present at professional elite sports, although it was more evident in lower categories and almost did not occur in adult players, as for example the case of Delorme et al. (2010) with French players. This aligns with results of male studies where the RAE effect it's present at the vast majority of youth categories competitions and most elite professional leagues/clubs (Pérez-González, 2021).

For example, a recent study (Pedersen et al., 2022) conducted on the FIFA Women's World Cup championships held since 2007 in the absolute, U20, and U17 categories observed that the relative age effect in the U17 and U20 samples was not significant until the years 2016 and 2018, respectively, when the effect was observed. Furthermore, no effect was observed in the 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019 editions of the FIFA Women's World Cup (Pedersen et al., 2022) which contrasts with the results of the present investigation and the presence of RAE at the adult level.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

In the top five professional European female football leagues, the RAE effect it's been confirmed, by analyzing them either individually or collectively.

Relative Age Effect was considered predominantly a phenomenon affecting the youth categories, however, the present investigation and other recent more with adulthood samples suggested that further research is needed it, since the RAE effect has been detected more and more in studies conducted at the senior female player stage.

Measures to avoid the effect of RAE to provide equal opportunities to all players must be implemented by the sport government bodies.

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What Works And Why In Place-Based Sport And Physical Activity Development: A Realist-Informed Evaluation Of ‘Active Through Football’

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Aim and Research questions

Active Through Football (ATF) is a national five year £15m investment by Sport England, funded by the National Lottery, and delivered by The Football Foundation. The purpose of ATF is to reduce inequalities in physical activity participation in areas of deprivation, whilst also contributing to local defined wider social outcomes. The programme is managed nationally by The Football Foundation, but with community engagement and delivery the responsibility of local consortia in each of the 25 locations. This presentation explores findings from the work of the national evaluation and learning partner for the first two years of ATF. This presentation will focus on findings from the following two research questions: 1) what are the key mechanisms for the development and implementation of place-based physical activity interventions, and 2) how can such knowledge generated throughout the evaluation be disseminated during programme implementation to inform future practice.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The research adopts a realist-informed evaluation methodology (Pawson & Tilley, 1997), enabling the evaluation team to explore how ATF programmes work, for whom, why, and in what circumstances. Realist evaluation in sport for development is premised on the understanding that supposedly novel interventions can share common underlying mechanisms of change, and that programmes only have outcomes insofar as they introduce appropriate ideas and opportunities to groups in the appropriate social and cultural conditions (Coalter, 2013). The role of the evaluation and learning partner was therefore to identify the underlying social and cognitive processes which operate in particular contexts to generate outcomes of interest. This

approach reflects calls in the wider sport for development literature for more robust understandings of how and why programmes generate outcomes and impact (Adams & Harris, 2023; Brazier et al., 2024; Giulianotti et al., 2019). Crucially, the evaluation methodology ensures that, whilst it may not be possible for future provision to replicate all aspects of the ATF programme, if the essential mechanisms for delivery remain then practitioners can make adaptations to their delivery without fear of losing the key components that make place-based interventions effective.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The research presented here was conducted with 12 of the 25 programmes through three accumulative stages of data collection and analysis. The evaluation began with a review of the existing sport for development and public health evidence base to identify indicative programme mechanisms, in combination with an initial ‘theory gleaming’ (Manzano, 2016) workshop with each of the 12 programmes. This enabled the construction of a template theory of change, accounted for the uniqueness of each programme whilst moving towards a generic programme theory. A ‘theory refinement’ (Manzano, 2016) phase consisted of extensive interview and observational work with programme staff, managers, and participants over an 18-month period with each of the 12 programmes. A final ‘theory consolidation’ (Manzano, 2016) stage consisted of five online workshops with all 25 ATF programmes. These workshops were used to rigourise the interpretation of programme mechanisms and the general accuracy of findings. Crucially our role as the evaluation and partner was to ‘learn with’, not conduct ‘research on’, the ATF programmes as they developed and adapted their place-based delivery.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Findings over the first two years of this evaluation are consistent with existing literature that indicates “social relationships experienced during involvement in physical activity programmes are the most significant factor in effecting behavioural change” (Sandford et al., 2006). The evaluation captured several key programme mechanisms central to the development and

implementation of sport and physical activity interventions in deprived communities. This presentation provides empirical insights into these key factors, whilst highlighting a crucial mechanism: the importance of trust throughout programme development and implementation. Participants’ ‘decision to trust’ is identified as a fundamental programme mechanism central to successfully engaging physically inactive socially excluded groups in deprived communities. The presentation provides empirical insights into how different ATF programmes built and maintained trust within their specific community context.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implications

This research bolsters our understanding of the effective implementation of place-based physical activity interventions to engage physically inactive groups in deprived communities. This was achieved through the development of a novel realist-informed framework to guide evaluation and learning across a national physical activity programme. The research findings advance our theoretical and empirical understanding of change mechanisms within place-based work and highlight the fundamental importance of trust within sport for development practice. The presentation situates these advances within wider calls in the academic and policy literature to develop and implement more robust evaluation frameworks within sport for development (Coalter, 2013; Harris, 2018; Lindsey & Chapman, 2017), and specifically within community health programmes delivered through professional sport club foundations (Brazier et al., 2024; Pringle et al., 2014). Findings will be of interest to those engaged in the delivery, evaluation, and study of sport for development and community health programmes.

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Understanding University-Club Player Transitions: A Case Study on Female Rugby Union Players In England

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This presentation will provide a summary of the findings of a research project undertaken on behalf of the Rugby Football Union (RFU) in England between May-July 2024. The project focused on developing an enhanced understanding of the factors that influence university to club transition for female rugby union players. Anecdotal evidence from the RFU suggests that less than 50% of players within university programmes continue playing rugby union post-graduation. Therefore, the study specifically aimed to analyse the motivations for participation in university programmes, the desire to continue playing post-university and the key influences on this, and to better understand the rugby union 'offer' within universities. The findings from the study will be utilised by the Rugby Football Union to inform the implementation of their Legacy 2025 strategy. This focuses on harnessing the impact of the Women's Rugby World Cup due to be held in England in 2025, with club transition one element of the playing and volunteering strand of the strategy.

Research highlights that 'tracking' of participation in sport is a challenge for governing bodies, yet this data remains crucial to their ability to understand key transition points such as from age group into adult categories, from university into community provision, and from adult into masters' opportunities. van Houten et al. (2019) highlight five major life-events that are significant on sport participation with the transition out of full-time education into employment recognised as a key event. These 'transition events' change an individual's roles and responsibilities therefore impacting upon their leisure time and preferences (Bell & Lee, 2005; Wolman & Fraser-Thomas, 2017). Steveson and Clegg (2011) recognised that engagement in extra-curricular activities such as sport whilst at university can be a way of students orientating themselves towards their future imagined selves – therefore a key focus of this research was to develop a better

understanding of the motivations behind student engagement with rugby programmes. And whilst the study does not seek to compare the experiences of male and female students, it was cognisant of the different motivations female students may have for playing sport at university compared to male students, and the different experiences they may have whilst doing so with recognition that this may impact on sporting transitions after graduation (Rintaugu & Ngetich, 2012; Phipps, 2021; Sáez, Solabarrieta & Rubio, 2021).

At present, much of the research on the experiences of athletes within university sport settings tends to focus on elite athletes – those who are engaged with performance pathways, not necessarily those playing at lower competitive levels or who are participating in social or recreational programmes (see; Brown et al, 2015; Mateu et al, 2020). Research by Mateu et al. (2020) on elite athletes within university sport settings identified tensions between training and study time. Although many students playing rugby at university are not on elite pathways, they are still likely to experience competing demands on their time, particularly if they are also engaged in part time work, something that has become a necessity recently for many students in the UK due to cost of living increases (ONS, 2023). This combination of pressures may result in dropout from sport whilst studying – this being an important consideration for those responsible for rugby programmes within universities and for governing bodies hoping to foster lifelong participation and connections with their sport. Furthermore, whilst Wolman and Fraser-Thomas (2017) identified strategies used by community clubs to support players to transition from age group programmes into senior teams such as gradual introduction to the senior (adult) level, a focus on skill development, fitness, and health, flexibility in programming, and providing opportunities for leadership roles, very little is known about how attending university disrupts or impacts upon these strategies.

Research on career transition for student athletes also offer useful insights for this study. Many of these studies tend to be based within North America and/or focus on elite athlete career transitions (see: Knights, Sherry & Ruddock-Hudson, 2016; Stokowski, Paule-Koba & Kaunert, 2019; Stambulova, Ryba & Henriksen, 2021) with limited studies focusing on transitions from university into

broader physical activity or community sport (see: Bjornsen-Ramig et al., 2020; Smith & Hardin, 2020). Smith and Hardin's (2020) study identify different phases within an athlete's journey through university namely, moving in - compatibility, moving through - identity directly tied to sport, and moving out - redefining oneself. Using this framework, key considerations in this research involve exploring; how and why female students decide to participate in rugby whilst at university, how this connects to their self-identity, and what influences their decision to either continue playing post-graduation or reach what Park, Lavallee and Todd (2013) describe as a 'retirement point'. Other studies also emphasise the psychological aspects of transition such as the emotional preparedness of students to 'move on' (Bjornsen-Ramig et al., 2020; Mateu et al., 2020). Findings suggest that those students who planned for or attained career-related experiences were more likely to maintain a physically active lifestyle once they had graduated. Meanwhile, broader studies on university-career transitions (see for example: Donald, Ashleigh & Baruch, 2018) suggest that career advice received whilst studying is influential on graduate destinations. There are clear parallels here with sporting transitions, particularly the importance of students receiving social support and mentoring from lecturers, coaches, and sporting administrators to support university-club transitions (particularly to support the 'moving out-redefining oneself' phase) (Stokowski, Paule-Koba & Kaunert, 2019; Bjornsen-Ramig et al., 2020; Smith & Hardin, 2020; Stambulova, Ryba & Henriksen, 2021). Therefore, a further aspect of this research involved exploring how universities support sporting transitions.

The study used a two-phase survey-based approach to generate insights into the factors that influence university-club transition. This involved capturing data from female players currently studying and playing rugby at English Universities plus recent graduates, and secondly from club or university administrators responsible for managing rugby union programmes within universities. The survey targeting female players was distributed via university rugby clubs/programmes, relevant social media sites, personal networks of the research team and RFU staff, and networks connected to other relevant sport organisations such as British Universities and College Sport

(BUCS). There are currently 6 women's leagues for full contact 15-a-side rugby union within the British Universities and Colleges competitions with many universities also offering opportunities for female students to play sevens rugby or engage with social/recreational opportunities such as Touch Rugby. The research aimed to achieve 500 survey responses from current and past students representing a range of playing abilities and levels – with the RFU particularly interested in exploring the experiences of non-elite players. The survey targeting university administrators was distributed directly to relevant personnel within universities (a total sample of 139 universities across England) via existing professional connections. Both surveys went 'live' at the end of May 2024 with a four-week window for completion. The surveys used predominantly closed questions with a limited number of open questions used to seek additional explanations/detail. Data from female players was analysed using cluster and latent profile analysis to develop different player profiles based on their desire to play, motivations and playing history. Analysis was also conducted to identify reasons for drop-out or 'retirement' and to explore how career transition impacted on continued participation in rugby. Data from the university clubs was analysed to highlight key characteristics of rugby programmes – specifically focusing on how players were recruited, supported, and enabled to transition into community rugby opportunities.

As the research is currently 'live' – findings from the study were not available at the point of abstract submission but will be available and presented at the conference. The findings of the study will be used by the RFU to develop strategies to enhance player recruitment and retention within university rugby clubs, support players to transition into community clubs (thus maintaining their participation in the sport) and to provide improved support to university sport administrators responsible for delivery of sport provision for students. The insight generated from the research is also likely to be of interest to other governing bodies of sport seeking to maintain and support their 'core market' (existing players) as well as grow their sport. It will also add value to the existing knowledge base around sporting transitions, and contribute to an gap

in knowledge around transitions from university into community sport.

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Leaders beyond sport: A comparative analysis of international and domestic National Collegiate Athletic Association athletes' leadership competencies

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Among the 400,000 athletes currently competing in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), international athletes comprise more than 25,000 (6%). Unlike any other college sport organization in the world, the NCAA provides an opportunity for athletes to simultaneously pursue athletic and academic careers. Accordingly, many international athletes are attracted to the opportunity cultivated by and within NCAA athletics competition (Popp et al., 2011; Stokowski et al., 2013). Although the NCAA states they are committed to holistic athlete development, catering to the diverse needs of both domestic and international athletes presents challenges. Given the various transitional and adjustment difficulties unique to international college athletes (e.g., language, cultural, familial) (Jolly et al., 2022), international college athletes may be reluctant to seek leadership opportunities (e.g., student-athlete advisory committee [SAAC]) from the onset of, and throughout, their NCAA career. As leadership skills cultivated through sport and athletics participation are transferrable in the context of personal and professional career competency, the need for programmatic initiatives to assist college athletes – both domestic and international – in developing leadership competencies has been deemed of vital importance in actualizing the holistic development central to the NCAA's stated mission.

While extant research has examined the experiential satisfaction and value of NCAA

athletics participation (Trendafilova et al., 2010), research exploring the leadership competencies of college athletes remains scarce. Considering the NCAA's emphasis on leadership development (Kruse, 2021), research seeking to identify the actualized outcomes of such leadership competencies among college athletes is of unique value in contextualizing the role of NCAA athletics participation on leadership-development and -competency. While research has focused on both athlete development, and specifically leadership development, the unique needs of international athletes competing in NCAA athletics are often overlooked. Considering the growing number of international athletes competing in NCAA athletics, the needs and leadership characteristics of domestic and international college athletes should be considered when formulating athlete development and leadership programming. Accordingly, and given current programmatic initiatives, the present exploratory study sought to assess the existent differences between leadership competencies of domestic and international athletes currently competing in NCAA athletics. The researchers employed a quantitative methodological approach utilizing the following research questions to guide data collection and analysis:

1. What are the critical leadership competencies exhibited by domestic and international NCAA athletes?
2. Is there a significant difference in leadership competencies between domestic and international NCAA athletes?

The researchers contacted every NCAA member institution via email to distribute the survey among their respective student-athletes. However, the vast majority of athletic departments failed to respond to this communication or indicated they were unwilling to distribute the survey. Subsequently, the researchers recruited current NCAA student-athletes using purposeful and snowball sampling to participate in a survey. Purposive sampling was selected to choose a specific population with the needed characteristics for the proposed study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The sample included current NCAA international and domestic student-athletes across all member institutions. Additionally, snowball sampling supports purposive sampling in reaching a more significant number of participants.

The survey included demographic questions with two previously developed scales: the Leadership Learning Agility Scale (LLAS; Bouland-van Dam et al., 2022) and the Student Leadership Behavior Scale (SLBS; Kimura et al., 2022). Bouland-van Dam et al. (2022) developed a LLAS scale, measuring learning agility (e.g., achievement motivation, extraversion, conscientiousness). Kimura et al.'s (2022) SLBS measures students' leadership behaviors. It includes 30 items with six leadership constructs: taking initiative and modeling the way, challenging the process, sharing goals, managing goals and tasks, task-oriented support, and people-oriented support. A Welch's t-test was utilized given it is particularly suited when group sizes are unequal, which was the case among domestic and international student-athletes in this study. The means of leadership competency scores between domestic and international student-athletes were compared.

An analysis of 233 current college athletes ($n = 204$ domestic; $n = 39$ international) utilizing a modified LLAS and the SLBS revealed significant differences between the leadership competencies of domestic and international student-athletes. Domestic student-athletes scored significantly higher than internationals on each leadership factor measured by the research instrument. Given the cultural constraints affecting the transition to college in the United States among the international athlete population, the findings of this study are indicative of the lack of programmatic leadership development of international athletes compared to domestic athletes. While such programming may not be surprising considering that 94% of NCAA athletes are domestic athletes, the failure for NCAA and athletic department programming to cultivate leadership competencies is noteworthy in the context of international athlete development through their participation in NCAA athletics in the United States. While many international athletes matriculate to the United States for college athletics and find employment in the United States post-graduation, the under-development of leadership competencies compared to their domestic peers has a cascading effect as international athletes transition out of athletics and into the workforce. As many European countries seek to retain domestic students and college athletics participation serves as a significant motivator for

international athletes to matriculate to the United States, the lack of personal and professional development of international athletes compared to their domestic peers is noteworthy and warrants future research to examine the value transfer of competing in college athletics in the United States as an international athlete.

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The College Choice Process of NCAA International Student-Athletes

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Aim and Research Question

The objective of this study is to examine the factors influencing the college choice process of NCAA Division I International Student-Athletes. The results of this study may benefit International Student-Athletes in their college choice and NCAA coaches in understanding the needs of International Student-Athletes in the recruiting process. The primary research study question under investigation is: What are the factors that influence the college choice decisions of NCAA International Student-Athletes?

Literature Review

Prospective student-athletes are drawn to colleges and universities for a variety of reasons. There is a complexity of influences present in a student-athlete's college selection process. The overall body of published literature regarding factors influencing a student-athlete's college selection process is limited but continues to grow. Factors that appear to have the most influence in an athlete's choice of which college or university to attend include (a) academics (Letawsky, Schneider, Pedersen, & Palmer, 2003; Mathes & Gurney, 1985; Pauline, 2010); (b) the opportunity to play (Bouldin, Stahura, & Greenwood, 2004); (c) amount of financial aid (e.g., athletic scholarship, cost to attend college, amount of scholarship, and availability for extra aid;

Kankey & Quarterman, 2007; Pauline, 2012); and (d) head coach (Letawsky et al., 2003). Multiple research studies collaboratively revealed that the most influential factor in the college selection process of student-athletes is the degree program offered (Kankey & Quarterman, 2007; Letawsky, Palmer, & Schneider, 2005; Letawsky et al., 2003). However, other studies have found athletic factors to be the most important factor in the

college selection process (Bouldin et al., 2004; Pauline, 2010).

A theoretical framework regarding the decision-making process of college student-athletes by specific sport teams has not yet been established. As a result, the conceptual framework for this investigation will be guided by a decision-making model developed by Hossler and Gallagher (1987). Hossler and Gallagher's model is composed of three stages that individuals progress through during the college selection process (predisposition, search, and choice).

Methods

The participants of this study will be a minimum of 8 NCAA International Student-Athletes. This qualitative study will identify factors influencing the college choice decisions of international student athletes. Each international student-athlete will participate in a semi-structured, one-on-one interview to determine factors involved in their college choice decision. Interviews will be transcribed and themes will be identified by the researchers using a decision-making model developed by Hossler and Gallagher (1987). Data triangulation and eliciting examples of interviewee accounts will be conducted for validity purposes (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013).

Results and Discussion

The results of this study may provide insight into the factors that influence the decision-making process of International Student-Athletes as they select a NCAA institution in the United States. Some factors may include, academic major, scholarship offerings, athletic facilities, location, academic supports, coaches, opportunity to compete, and campus life.

Conclusion

International student-athletes may benefit from this study by having a better understanding of important factors when choosing an NCAA institution. It may also help international student-athletes who are from countries that are not culturally or geographically like the USA. This study may allow coaches to understand the needs of International Student-Athletes, which may assist them in the recruiting process.

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Exploring Shared Experiences As Citizen Sport Diplomats: A Collaborative Self-Ethnography

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Aim and Research Questions

Sport diplomacy has seen significant growth in the inclusion of citizen diplomats (European Commission, 2018; Murray, 2018). While research investigating the conceptual and theoretical levels of this phenomenon is growing (Geis et al., 2022; Rofe, 2021), research focused on the grassroots level of citizen-driven programs could illuminate the experiences of participants, expand future opportunities and anticipate potential challenges (Garamvölgyi et al., 2022). This study expands the knowledge base, both by exploring the experiences of citizen sport diplomats and using a unique methodology underrepresented in extant literature. Specifically, we use a critical analysis of the lived experience of three American university professors serving as volunteer citizen diplomats in an U.S. State Department sport exchange with North Macedonia.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

An alternative, or complement, to traditional state-centered diplomacy is one that includes non-state organizations and citizen diplomats (Rolf, 2021). Within this approach, sport is viewed as holding unique possibilities (Murray, 2018). Although sport has been used sporadically throughout history for its diplomatic potential, it is becoming more central to governmental efforts, as is exemplified in Australia's Sports Diplomacy 2030 policy (Murray et al., 2019) and the EU Work Plan for Sport 2017-2020 (European Commission, 2018).

Research on individuals in sport diplomacy has provided important insights focused on the processes and outcomes of administrators, athletes, or coaches participating in international sport events (Baker et al., 2018; Murray, 2018). To date, much of this research has been quantitative in nature, with calls

from within the literature for more qualitative study (Baker et al., 2018; Rofe, 2021). Given that citizen diplomacy's outcomes include both expected benefits and unintended consequences, influenced significantly by participants' constant negotiation and navigation of the environment (Nygård & Gates, 2013), utilizing methods which investigate the lived experience of participants in these programs from their perspectives would provide richness, depth, and nuance.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

In March 2024, the authors served as sport diplomats in an exchange with North Macedonian volleyball coaches. With the aim of capturing the experience of being citizen sport diplomats, this research utilized a collaborative self-ethnography approach (Kerwin & Hoeber, 2015). The method was used because it acknowledges there is no one reality and it recognizes that researchers' social positionality influences both how data are collected and interpreted. Each created daily journal entries about their experiences, followed by daily discussion of entries and developing themes. Collaborative self-ethnography uses a constant comparison method whereby the researchers share and critique one another's entries. This process requires vulnerability and collective trust as it demands deep levels of open and honest self-reflection. During these iterative discussions, which were recorded and transcribed, new themes emerged along with the continued development of previous themes. This process was repeated nine times. Further analysis of the journal entries and recorded narratives yielded three emergent themes.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The three themes included: Odyssey, Border Straddling, and Throwing Seeds/Planting Rows. Elements of the experience that made up Odyssey included the physical demands of the journey as well as the "cast of characters" encountered throughout. From welcoming hosts to indifferent airport employees, these people occupied varying levels of importance, vastly different amounts of contact time, and provoked a wide range of emotional reactions. Border Straddling encompassed not only the experience of different cultural traditions, but also a range of insider/outsider relationships.

This simultaneous feeling of being both familiar and stranger was dynamic throughout the excursion, shifting in either direction depending on developing history with other delegates and events of the moment. Finally, Throwing Seeds/Planting Rows encompassed aspects of intentionality and preparation. Discussions about the practice of extensively preparing for events focused on whether doing so would lead to predetermined outcomes rather than experiencing events as they occurred. The benefits and pitfalls of allowing for serendipity (throwing seeds) contrasted with acting to make predetermined goals materialize (planting rows). This conflict was never fully resolved in the minds of the authors, causing them to question the overall efficacy of their work as citizen sport diplomats (Geis et al., 2022).

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implications

This study serves to understand the experience of those heeding the call of citizen sport diplomacy. The themes demonstrate a range of experiences stretching from practical problems to broader fundamental and conceptual questions about their positionality as true diplomats, their role as instruments simply reifying governmental objectives, the opportunities and challenges of grassroots efforts, and the ambiguity about the overall efficacy of their work. The findings of this research provide an expanded picture of the possibilities and challenges for future citizen sport diplomats and how they might advance diplomatic core values with intentionality to support diplomatic core values such as human dignity, peace, development and human rights (Parrish, et al., 2021).

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He Comes From A Family Where Abuse And Drugs Was Just The Norm’: Shared Experiences As Cultural Capital For Mentors Working At Sport For Development Programmes In Underserved Communities

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Aim and Research question

Mentoring, often viewed as an effective, low-cost intervention for diverting young people from youth offending (DuBois & Karcher, 2005), is increasingly used for sport for development (Sfd) programmes working with vulnerable young people in underserved communities to prevent and reduce youth involvement in crime. However, little is known about the qualities required by a mentor even though Van der Veken et al. (2021) highlight that practitioners are at the heart of Sfd programmes. This research examines cultural capital as a quality required by mentors which will contribute to better understanding by sports managers about workforce competencies.

The research question is:

‘What is the significance of cultural capital as a quality for mentors working in Sport for Development Programmes aiming to prevent and reduce youth crime?’

Theoretical background and literature review

Drawing on academic insight from youthwork, mentoring is defined as providing support for a young person to develop important assets such as self-esteem and resilience (DuBois et al., 2002). As the mentoring relationship underpins the effectiveness of mentoring programmes (Higley et al., 2016), understanding qualities required by mentors is important. Although workforce competencies of mentors are well documented for general interventions (e.g. Buck, 2018), less is known about mentors at Sfd programmes. This is significant as the complexity of Sfd programmes means they

deliver both sport and personal development work (Svensson et al., 2021).

In terms of the mentoring relationship, shared personal experiences have been highlighted as important for building trust and authenticity (Rubin et al., 2021). However, less is known in the context of SfD programmes aiming to prevent and reduce youth crime which involves engagement with vulnerable young people with experiences including Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) such as emotional, physical neglect and abuse, domestic violence and a family member in prison (Fox et al., 2015). This study draws on Bourdieu's (1990) concept of cultural capital defined as having similarities through lived experience and shared knowledge of language, lifestyle and taste to investigate its significance.

Research design, methodology and data analysis

Guided by an interpretivist research paradigm, this study adopted a qualitative research methodology utilising online semi-structured interviews. A purposive sampling strategy was used to identify mentors (n=12) working in SfD programmes. StreetGames, a national charity, acted as the gatekeeper for recruitment. Ethical consent was obtained from all interviewees. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed and the data were analysed thematically using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phase approach.

Results/ findings and discussion

The study identified that sharing personal experiences with young people was important for the mentoring relationship. Sharing a passion for sports was complemented by mentors' own lived experiences: living in the same communities; sharing vulnerabilities such as self-excluding from school; multiple ACEs and offending. Mentors often mirrored the diversity of young people in multicultural communities, becoming 'relevant' role models. These shared experiences and vulnerabilities acted as a form of shared cultural capital, significant for the mentor-mentee relationship for building trust, engagement, empathy and being non-judgemental. However, as a result of the shared lived experiences underpinning their personal commitment to the young people, some mentors went beyond their professional role. One example involved the

mentor intervening after a stabbing to reconcile two young people without involving the police, suggesting blurred professional boundaries and a lack of formal training and guidance.

Conclusion, Contribution and Implication

This paper makes a theoretical contribution to the literature around Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital by extending it to include shared vulnerabilities, often otherwise viewed negatively, as a positive form of shared lived experience. The findings add to the extant literature around the properties and significance of shared cultural capital as a key competency for mentors not solely in the SfD sector but also transferable to the youth work and criminal justice sectors.

In terms of implications for sport managers, the findings indicate that shared lived experience as a form of cultural competency should be embedded at the recruitment stage with endeavours to recruit a mentoring team that reflect the diversity of young people's lived experiences whilst recognising that perfect matches of shared cultural capital are challenging. It is recommended that sport managers develop a mentoring framework supported by policies and training to create professional boundaries to help mentors balance their professional and personal commitment to their work with vulnerable young people at risk of or involved in youth crime. As this study is based on the views of mentors, future research should be conducted with young people to investigate which aspects of lived experience are most important to share with mentors.

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Public Experiences, Capital Building, and Support for Sport Events – The Case of the Asian Men's Handball Qualification for Paris 2024 Olympic Games

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Aim

Expectations around sport events hosted in the Middle East have reached high bars, but little has been investigated about how residents experienced events in the region and the consequences of such experiences. The study uses the case of the Asian Men's Handball Qualification for Paris 2024 Olympic Games in Qatar to explore how experiences of residents during an international sport event may have led to human and social capital building and how capital building may affect residents' intentions to support future sport events.

Theoretical Background

The study rationale was based on the argument that hosting international events can help individuals to build human and social capital, which are indicators of capacity building in communities and organisations (Girginov et al., 2017). The study combines human capital (Becker, 1962) and social capital (Coleman, 1988) theories with social exchange theory (Blau & Scott, 1962) to investigate the relationship between capital building and intentions to support future events. According to the social exchange theory, residents should support the use of public money to host international events if they can build some capital from such events. Support from residents is a key element to win bids, particularly where international events are public funded (Beissel & Kohe, 2022).

Research Design, Methodology, Data Analysis

We collected data from a large pool of residents (n = 306), from different nationalities (11.1% Qatari, 40.8% Arab expats, and 48% other

expats), genders (39.2% female), and age groups (42.9% were 36 y-o or older). The sample demographic statistics resemble the population parameters of Qatar (World Population Review, 2023). Most of the respondents have been living in Qatar for more than 6 years (60.8%).

Based on the literature (Taks & Rocha, 2022), we created items to measure three types of experiences: cognitive, affective, and conative. Individual impact items were created based on the definition of human capital (Becker, 1962) and social impact items, as a second-order latent variable represented by three first-order latent variables: bonding, bridging and linking social capital (Ager & Strang, 2008). Data were collected from event attendees during the event in Doha in October 2023. To analyse the data, we tested a model through covariance-based structural equation modelling, following the two step-approach (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

Results and Discussion

Measurement model showed close fit (RMSEA [90% CI] = .057 [.048; .065]; CFI = .972). CFA results indicate that scales have very good psychometric properties – internal consistency and convergent and divergent validity. On average, respondents had positive cognitive and affective experiences (means above 4, in a 5-point Likert scale). They also reported that event had positive individual impacts on them (M = 4.01; SD = 1.06). Social impacts in all three dimensions of social capital were close but still below the agreement point: bonding (M = 3.86; SD = 1.14), bridging (M = 3.78; SD = 1.20) and linking social capital (M = 3.15; SD = 1.38). On average, respondents would support new events like the Asian Men's Handball Qualification for Paris 2024 (M = 4.21; SD = 1.05). The structural model also fits the data closely (RMSEA [90% CI] = .063 [.057; .070]; CFI = .945). Path coefficients indicate that cognitive experiences are antecedents of affective experiences ($\gamma = .935$; $p < .001$) which in turn can explain large portions of individual impacts ($\beta = .933$; $p < .001$) and social impacts ($\beta = .822$; $p < .001$). Individual impacts ($\beta = .755$; $p < .001$) can explain intentions of support for similar events in the future, but social impacts ($\beta = .007$; $p < .001$) cannot. Conative experiences were entered as a control variable, not explaining significant variance in support.

Conclusion, Contribution, Implication

Findings suggest that cognitive and affective experiences can help residents to build human and social capital, indicating a possibility of capacity building for the community. Although the literature has proposed this in theory (e.g., Girginov et al., 2017), it has not been investigated before, highlighting an important contribution of the current study. Another contribution is the relationship between human and social capital and support for future events. The literature has focused on the relationship between hosting events and the development of social capital (e.g., Gibson et al., 2014), but it had not explored whether perceptions of human and social capital could lead to support intentions. Results show that, against the current trend of the literature to focus on social capital (e.g., Zhou et al., 2021), more attention needs to be given to human capital, which was a predictor of support. Results have implications for theory and practice that will be discussed in the presentation. As an example of practical implication, we highlight the importance of local organising committees to interact with local communities in pre-event stages to understand how to improve experiences that may lead to human and social capital building.

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Understanding the factors influencing participation and/or non-participation of adult male Rugby Union Players in England

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Aim and Research Questions

This study aims to understand the factors influencing the participation and non-participation of adult male Rugby Union Players in England. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

What are the motivations and barriers for participation among current and lapsed adult male Rugby Union Players?

What are the lived experiences of lapsed players and club officials in managing player lapse?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Sport participation is widely acknowledged for its positive impact on health and social well-being for children and adolescent (Kim et al., 2020). Despite the known contribution of sport to health and well-being, sport participation declines with age (Stenner et al., 2020). There is limited evidence detailing the factors that influence sport participation and or non-participation for adult males. Previous research that examines sport participation within adults tends to focus on understanding the lived experiences of adult women and/or older adults, as these demographics are recognized as an underrepresented in sports participation. While ongoing examination of these underrepresented demographics remains crucial, there exists a notable gap in research concerning sport participation and non-participation among adult males. This study endeavours to fill this void by examining the patterns of participation and non-participation within the context of Rugby Union in England.

Following the Rugby World Cup hosted in the United Kingdom in 2015, adult participation in England has been dwindling. Sport England's Active Lives Survey (2024a; 2024b)

has revealed the severity of the decline in rugby players. It reports 297,700 fewer adult rugby players (male and female combined) playing between the 2015/16 season and 2021/22 season, reducing from 655,700 players to 358,000 players. Male participation has witnessed a sharp decline in playing numbers during this same period, falling from 560,600 adult male players in 2015/16 to 291,300 in the 2021/22, a loss of 269,300 adult male players. This trend is concerning for the adult male game, as the sport is losing adult male players faster than it can retain and/or attract new players.

Leisure constraints research aims to “investigate factors that are assumed by researchers and/or perceived or experienced by individuals to limit the formation of leisure preferences and/or to inhibit or prohibit participation and enjoyment of leisure” (Jackson, 2000, p. 62). The first and most used classification of constraints was developed by Crawford and Godbey (1987), who divided constraints into intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural. In the 1993 hierarchical model of leisure constraints, Crawford et al. proposed a sequential hierarchy of constraints. They argued that structural constraints are the least important in shaping leisure behaviour, while intrapersonal and interpersonal constraints are more proximal and likely more important in influencing leisure. The study uses the Leisure Constraints Model (LCM) as a foundation to investigate the leisure constraints that exist within adult male rugby participation in England.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

A mixed-methods design was selected to answer the research questions drawing on quantitative and qualitative data. This study is currently in the data collection process with the intention that the data will be fully collected and analysed before the conference.

Survey-based data is being collected via a nationwide online survey. The survey samples current and lapsed adult male Rugby Union Players to understand motivations and barriers for participation. Survey data is being supplemented by an interview-based data collection phase. Semi-structured interviews are being conducted with twenty club officials and lapsed players to document lived

experiences and strategies for managing adult male player lapse.

Deductive themes based on the LCM will be used to explore data and be open to new inductive themes emerging. The study is interested in understanding i) Intrapersonal Factors (e.g. ability/competency; enjoyment/interest; professional commitments; lifestyle and life cycle; and perceived alternatives), ii) Interpersonal Factors (e.g. relationship dynamics with the coach; club management, or teammates; availability of social support within and outside the sport; team relationship quality or atmosphere; influence of friends and family members who play rugby; and historical, heritage, and cultural influences) and iii) environmental/structural factors (e.g. training and game schedules and their demands on time; effects of burnout and training loads on physical well-being; perception of governing bodies and clubs; and compliance with rules and regulations).

Data analysis will involve thematic analysis of survey and interview responses to identify common reasons for lapsed playing and effective strategies for retention.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Analysis is ongoing, but we guarantee findings for the EASM conference. Findings will be presented and will highlight common reasons for player lapse as reported by club officials and lapsed players. As the data collection process is ongoing, findings will be contextualised using the LCM in the context of Rugby Union and report the key factors which may influence participation and non-participation in Rugby Union.

Conclusion, Contribution and Implications

The insights offered by this present presentation will be necessary to begin to explore the factors influencing participation and non-participation among adult male Rugby Union Players in England. The adaption of the leisure constraints model to a rugby context will help to emphasise the ongoing relevance of constraints on both lapsed and current players. Understanding these constraints is vital for developing targeted strategies to enhance player retention in Rugby Union

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Olympic Career Development: Strategic Approaches to Post-Sport Transitions in Europe and South America

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Aim and Research Questions

Extensive research has examined career change after sports for a long time, with most studies conducted in Europe (Alfermann, 2000, 2005; Ceci et al., 2004; Lavallee, 2000; Stambulova, 1994; Wylleman et al., 2000 and others), but with limited comparison to the South American context. Torregrosa et al. (2004) point out that elite sports have become a specialized field where athletes must focus almost exclusively on training and competitions. But, after the sports career, what? (González et al., 2008). Most studies have focused on the social and psychological impacts of elite athletes' career transition (Conzelmann & Nagel, 2000; González & Bedoya, 2008). However, limited research has been undertaken from a sports management perspective (Stambulova, 2000). Cruz (2021) stated that sports organizations lack the expertise and skills to provide career transition support to athletes. There is a clear need to improve the conditions for managing career transition programs in the national elite sports system (Defruyt et al., 2018); this study will fill this research gap by looking into the planning methods that European and South American Olympic athletes use to transition to life after sports within the discipline of athletics and volleyball.

1. What key components of career transition programs are present in the national elite sports systems across different countries?
2. Which organizational characteristics contribute to the quality of career transitions for elite athletes within sports organizations?
3. How can best practices in program management from national sports systems be adopted to enhance the conditions of career transition programs?

Both qualitative and quantitative data were used to address all three questions.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Sowa et al. (2004) and Eydi (2015) state that for an organization to be effective, it must take a multidimensional approach. Thus, the competing values approach (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1981, 1983) helps us analyze the conditions of the national elite sports organizations' career transition programs for elite athletes in two disciplines across two continents.

Aquilina & Henry (2010) aimed to create a cooperative network between the participating partners to improve athletes' opportunities to combine athletic activities and academic demands and to define a European approach to dealing with the education of athletes. Many countries that make financial investments in sports nowadays aim for national and international success, which is impossible without a well-organized and capable national sports organization (Eydi, 2015). Some EU Member States support programs for elite-level athletes, these programs offer financial support, advice on education, training, career planning, and services such as medical support (European Parliament, 2013). As the awareness of the importance of career transitions increased over the years, so did the need for interventions for athletes in transition (Wylleman et al., 2004).

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

The multiple case-study design is applied to gain deeper insights into operational management (Yin, 2009). Mixed methods, involving qualitative and quantitative approaches, are used in this study.

Study 1: For the qualitative method, a purposive and snowball sampling technique is utilized. Sixteen participants from sports organizations such as INSEP, FFvolley, FFA, COB, CBV, and Cbat (Technical directors, vice presidents, and pre-and post-career managers) were chosen based on their relevance to the research questions and ability to provide in-depth information. These participants are involved in the development, management, and execution of career transition programs. The data is collected through semi-structured interviews. The interviews are analyzed deductively

(determined codes in management and program effectiveness) and inductively via Nvivo v. 10 software.

Study 2: Cluster sampling is used as a quantitative method. One hundred former elite athletes or para-athletes who meet the requirements were invited to participate in the disciplines of volleyball and athletics across France and Brazil. These athletes come from an Olympic/Paralympic background and have direct experience with the transition programs. The quantitative online survey aimed at former elite athletes measured several aspects to analyze the conditions of career transition programs, such as satisfaction with transition programs (using Likert scales), outcomes effectiveness (measuring the outcomes of transition programs in terms of employment, education attainment, and well-being post-retirement), support accessibility (evaluating how accessible the support service was, including career counseling, job placement services, and educational opportunities), perceive impact (athletes rated the perceived effect of the career transition programs on their post-career) The surveys were analyzed via JASP (correlation analysis).

The sports organization members' insights help understand these programs' structural and operational aspects. At the same time, the experiences of former athletes provide a practical perspective on the actual benefits and areas for improvement.

Results/findings and Discussion

The study is currently at the data analysis stage; therefore, the results and discussion will be presented during the Conference.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The study is currently at the data analysis stage; therefore, the conclusion, contribution, and implication will be presented during the Conference.

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Role Models in Motion: Daiane dos Santos' Impact on Gymnastics and Youth Development in Brazil

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Aim and Research Questions

Daiane dos Santos is a fourth-time Olympian and celebrated as the first black gymnast to win a gold medal at the World Championships in artistic gymnastics in 2003. Renowned for her eponymous complex skills, dos Santos has elevated Brazilian gymnastics on the global stage. In 2017, she founded the Brasileirinhos Project in São Paulo to provide gymnastics opportunities for underprivileged children, leveraging her inspirational legacy to promote engagement and motivation among youth. This study investigates the enduring effects of dos Santos' contributions on participants of this project, comparing their outcomes with those from other programs lacking her direct involvement. The research addresses two key questions: 1. How do role models like dos Santos influence physical activity and health outcomes among youth? 2. How do outcomes differ between athlete-led and non-athlete-led programs in sustaining youth motivation and sports engagement?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Daiane dos Santos has made a lasting mark on Brazilian sports, embodying extraordinary achievement and success (Sanfelice, 2011). Role Model Theory argues that role models have significant impacts on individual aspirations and behaviors (Merton, 1968). This study further investigates the motivational theory of role modeling (Morgenroth et al., 2015) to understand how dos Santos' achievements might foster a long-term commitment to physical activity among inspired youth. Eccles and Wigfield (2002) discuss how motivational beliefs, values, and goals shape individual engagement, providing a framework for analyzing how dos Santos' role influences youth in sports. Existing literature suggests that participation in sports significantly benefits youth development, particularly in underprivileged areas

(Reverdito et al., 2017). Research indicates that role models positively influence sports participation, motivation, and long-term engagement (Lockwood & Kunda, 1997; Gibson, 2004). Additionally, Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory highlights the importance of observational learning and imitation in the development of behaviors, which is relevant to understanding the influence of dos Santos on young athletes.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine adults who were active in gymnastics during their adolescence before 2020. Three participants were involved in the Brasileirinhos Project, and six participated in other initiatives across São Paulo. Participants were selected based on their involvement in these programs and their willingness to share their experiences. Thematic analysis was used to interpret the data (Clarke & Braun, 2017), focusing on initial motivations, the influence of role models on health and physical activity, and current physical activity levels. The sample, though small, was purposefully selected to provide in-depth insights into the lived experiences of those influenced by dos Santos' legacy.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Preliminary findings revealed the extensive influence of Daiane dos Santos as a motivational catalyst for participants in the Brasileirinhos Project and other gymnastics initiatives throughout São Paulo. Themes of inspiration, representativeness, and resilience were strongly evident during the interviews. Participants reported that seeing dos Santos' success sparked their interest in gymnastics and inspired a lasting commitment to an active lifestyle, providing evidence for answering research question one. All participants continue to engage in regular physical activity, supporting their long-term health and well-being. For those from disadvantaged backgrounds, involvement in gymnastics has been particularly transformative, providing opportunities for travel, personal growth, and a long-term alternative to potential criminal activities. This sustained involvement provided data to support the second research question, underscoring the transformative potential of

role models in shaping lives well beyond initial sports participation. Additionally, the comparison between athlete-led and non-athlete-led programs highlighted the unique motivational impact of having a high-profile athlete directly involved, with participants in the Brasileirinhos Project showing higher levels of sustained engagement and motivation.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

Daiane dos Santos' status as a world-class athlete and the first black gymnastic world champion has led to significant lifestyle changes among the youth involved in the Brasileirinhos Project and similar programs. Her influence as a role model has catalyzed their initial involvement in sports and inspired others in different programs to pursue gymnastics, fostering a sustained dedication to physical health and holistic personal development. This study underscores the powerful role of sports figures like dos Santos in promoting community development and enhancing individual well-being, suggesting that such influences can extend into broader public health initiatives and role model-driven projects. The findings contribute to understanding how athlete-led programs can offer unique benefits in sustaining youth motivation and engagement, providing a compelling case for incorporating high-profile athletes into youth development initiatives.

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The Way of Harmony: A Study of the Regional Image of the Opening Ceremony of the 4th Asian Para Games Hangzhou, China

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People's Republic of

Aim and Research Questions

In the context of global integration and the coexistence of diversified world cultures, exploring the opening ceremony of the 4th Asian Para Games Hangzhou, China, which is characterized by the Way of Harmony, is not only conducive to enhancing China's international discourse on sports, but also provides Chinese wisdom for building a global sports community of exchanges and mutual understanding. Based on this, this study explores the opening ceremony of the Hangzhou Asian Para Games as an example of a large-scale sports event, so as to better establish the image of national sports diplomacy from large-scale international sports events. Questions to be solved: (1) What cultural theme network was constructed in the opening ceremony of the Asian Para Games in Hangzhou, China? (2) What characteristics does the opening ceremony present in terms of symbol selection, program setting and narrative logic? (3) How can the image of the region be better optimized?

Theoretical Background

Modern semiotics argues that the world is made up of symbols, and that sport, as an embodied cultural symbol, enables transnational communication and interaction. The Symbolic Convergence Theory (SCT) developed by Bormann, Shields et al, argues that the respective interpretations of symbols shared by people in interaction sometimes converge, and that group members construct a symbolic reality of group identity through the discursive repetition [1]. Its basic concept is the fantasy motif, a creative or imaginative interpretation that satisfies the psychological and rhetorical needs of the event [2]. With the continuous evolution of human sports forms, large-scale sports events involving special populations, such as the Hangzhou Asian Para Games, have also become a field for transnational

communication, where people share fantasy themes through symbolic interactions to establish rhetorical horizons or to maintain a group's common consciousness and gain a sense of identity [3]. Ultimately, people from different countries are united in a «bond of heart» [4] through sports events.

Research Design and Methodology

This study utilizes web crawler technology to search for the keyword "the 4th Asian Para Games Hangzhou, China" on Bilibili, Baidu, and TikTok platforms, and manually captures the video text of the Opening Ceremony, interviews with personalities, reports of the Opening Ceremony in the mainstream media, and the interactive text of topics related to the short videos. On the basis of text data collection, the case study method and content analysis method are adopted to examine the four fantasy themes of scene theme, character theme, action theme and legitimization mechanism as the dimensions, and to study the content links such as "shape, sound and emotion" conveyance, character story presentation, mascot design, and cultural and artistic performance in the process of the opening ceremony of the Hangzhou Asian Para Games, and to analyze the results. In the process of the opening ceremony of the Hangzhou Asian Para Games, the "shape, sound, emotion" communication, character story presentation, mascot design, cultural and artistic performances, etc. are studied to analyze the meta-narrative logic and fantasy theme of the graphic and video texts.

Results and Discussion

The study found that the opening ceremony of the 4th Asian Para Games Hangzhou, China constructed the scene theme of fusion of history and reality, the role theme of integration of the disabled and the able-bodied, and the action theme of harmony and difference, and constructed a cultural communication matrix, which constructed the fantasy theme of China's harmony and coexistence through the meta-narrative logic of the Way of Harmony. Overseas people perceive and identify with the culture of harmony through the material symbols, behavioral rules and spiritual values of the culture, which demonstrates the applicability of the idea of the culture of harmony in sports events for special people and the value of sports public diplomacy. In order to optimize

China's regional image, the following paths should be taken: (1) Build a spiritual and cultural performance space and time, and optimize the ritual context. (2) Accessibility modification to repair public space and build a harmonious environment. (3) Convey the concept of "integration of the disabled and the healthy" to build a global identity. (4) To build a global sports community through the concept of "harmony".

Contribution and Implication

This study provides a cultural theoretical perspective for countries around the world to construct a national image, which helps to enhance the media attention of sports for the disabled, and also provides a logical rationale for reaching a global consensus and constructing a global sports community. In the technologically constructed synthetic society [5], in the future, researchers should pay attention to the development of sports and cultural content production under the synergistic model of human and Chat-GPT, Sora, and examine its effect on the construction of regional image by combining fieldwork and online fieldwork.

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Sport Governance, Sport Policy and Sport Law

Track chair: Johan Norberg

Governance and Performance of Sports Organizations: A Systematic Review of the Literature

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Aim and Research Questions

In this study, we conduct a bibliometric analysis and systematic literature review to investigate the correlation between governance and the performance of sports organizations and to explore the importance of corporate governance of sport organizations on different performance levels. At the heart of this study rests a fundamental question: How does the governance model impact the performance of a sports organization?

From this problematic, the following questions arise:

- What are the most effective and relevant governance models concerning sports organizations?
- What is the relationship between governance and performance in sports organizations?
- To what extent could the results of this research enhance decision-making for managers on this subject?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The relationship between corporate governance and organizational performance has been extensively studied in various industries, including sports. Effective corporate governance can have a significant impact on an organization's performance by aligning the interests of management and shareholders, reducing agency costs, and ensuring efficient use of resources. To comprehend this connection, some theories including resource dependence theory and institutional theory have been used. In the context of sports organizations, governance models play a crucial role in shaping their operations and success. Recent studies highlight the importance of governance in sports organizations, particularly in developed countries, where there is a lack of qualitative research on National Sports Organizations' (NSOs) performance. Researchers have introduced measurement methods to evaluate

democracy, participation, ethics, and integrity within sports governance bodies (SGBs) to provide insights into their organizational performance.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The study employs a bibliometric analysis using the Web of Science and Scopus databases to cover the scientific literature across various fields. Specific search criteria were defined to select the most relevant and significant articles. The extracted data were then imported into Zotero software for management and organization. This methodological approach enabled us to identify the most relevant articles, which were subsequently imported into NVivo for in-depth analysis and a perspective on existing work. Then, we conducted a systematic review with PRISMA protocols focusing on governance in sports organizations and its correlation with organizational performance. The main objective is to evaluate the current understanding in this domain and pinpoint areas requiring further exploration. This approach will enable us to structure and organize the key information from the articles, highlighting the issues addressed, methods employed, identified gaps, and obtained results. Through the article coding process, we have been able to synthesize the information more effectively with the aim of developing a condensed matrix.

Results/Findings and Discussion

In this overview, I present key findings from relevant articles in my research. Kasale et al. (2023) address the lack of qualitative studies on NSOs performance in developed countries, utilizing methods like document analysis and interviews to understand NSOs' adaptive practices. Muñoz et al. (2023) introduce a measurement method for evaluating democracy, participation, ethics, and integrity within SGBs to provide insights into their organizational performance. Parent et al. (2018) underscore the need for studies on governance principles' impact on sports organizations' performance. They examine non-profit sports organizations' board performance factors to identify effective governance principles. Additionally, Parent et al. (2023) analyze organizational design archetypes to assess Canadian NSOs' operational environment, emphasizing the

need for contemporary design criteria. By observing current trends, we could note an increase in research in the sports domain reflecting the growing interest in this topic.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The study examines the relationship between governance and performance in sports organizations through a bibliometric analysis and systematic literature review. Effective corporate governance can significantly impact an organization's performance by aligning interests, reducing agency costs, and ensuring efficient resource utilization. Recent studies highlight the importance of governance in sports organizations, particularly in developed countries, where there is a lack of qualitative research on NSOs performance. Researchers have introduced measurement methods to evaluate democracy, participation, ethics, and integrity within SGBs to provide insights into their organizational performance. Overall, this research contributes to the broader understanding of governance dynamics within sports organizations, underscoring the imperative for continued exploration in this evolving field to inform effective decision-making practices among managers.

Role Ambiguity and Actorhood of Youth Committees in Sport Governance

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Aim and Research Question

The involvement of young people in decision-making processes of organised sports has gained increased attention by sport politicians and sport governance researchers (Lindsey et al. 2023, Waldahl & Skille 2016; White et al., 2019). In Europe, one can observe the establishment of youth committees within sport systems aiming at making young people's voices heard in sport organizations. The aim of this study is to examine the role of youth committees within sport organisations, including how expectations and perception surrounding their role shape actorhood of youth committees. Furthermore, the study seeks to discuss the impact of the youth committee role on established institutional orders, as well its implications for broader issues of governance, power, democracy, and organisational legitimacy.

Theoretical background and Literature Review

The theoretical framework applied in this study combines the concept of institutional roles (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), the five dimensions of role ambiguity (Kahn et al., 1964), and the concept of actorhood (Bromley, 2021). Institutional role is defined as normative typifications that prescribe the appropriate links between actors and activities, the interactions between roles, and the various roles' relative positions in an organisational hierarchy (Berger & Luckmann 1966). Roles are influenced by different forces: 1) role expectations, 2) other role sets; 3) role pressures. Pressures on role where members of role set attempt to prescribe the role incumbents to act according to role set's expectation can lead to role ambiguity (Kahn et al., 1964; Schulz & Auld, 2006; Sakires et al., 2009). While role ambiguity has previously been mainly connected to organizational design, communication and tenure (Schulz & Auld, 2006), this study connects role ambiguity to cultural principles within the sport governance system. While sport management research has mainly focused on

the role of the board and executive committees (Yeh et al., 2009; Ferkins, et al., 2005; Hoye & Cuskelly 2007), this study extends the sport management literature providing insights on committees that have less formal power, but are supposed to serve the powerful. Following Bromley (2021), the centre of authority resides primarily in the underlying cultural principles that constitute actors rather than placing authority within or between actors themselves (p. 166-167). Thus, the theoretical framework serves as analytical tool to shed light on better understanding how the role of the youth committee shape actorhood within sport governance systems.

Research Design and Methodology

A qualitative research design has been employed. Data is drawn from a questionnaire with open-ended questions centred on the experiences of young people in sport governance (n=51). Informants were 28 women and 23 men aged between 15 and 26 years who are involved as young leaders in Norwegian sport organizations. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 youth committee members in Norwegian sport organizations on different levels: national and regional sport federations, regional sport confederations and sport clubs. The interviewees were between 16 and 27 years. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed in a six-step procedure following Braun and Clarke (2006) allowing an inductive and theory-driven analysis to identify themes within the data.

Results / Findings and Discussion

Five distinct but interrelated roles of the youth committee were identified: 1) political role 2) activity role, 3) education and recruitment role, 4) innovative role and 5) symbolic role. The understanding of the role of youth committees varies from organization to organization and at many instances as well within the same organization. There is high ambiguity concerning the role of youth committees in Norwegian sports. This ambiguity derives from cultural principles and ideologies prevailing in the sport governance system. Actorhood of youth committees is influenced by this ambiguity and the degree of their autonomy. Furthermore, the position of the youth committee within the organizational structure and the relation of the committee

with the board of directors in the organization shape actorhood.

Conclusion, Contribution and Implications

While committees often are establishment with little reflection on how they are structurally anchored in an organization. Thus, the study contributes to insights for sport managers on how to strengthen the position of committees within the governance of sporting systems in order to avoid a decoupling between policy and practice and between means and ends (see also Bromley, 2021). In addition, the study provides insights on the relationship between dominant cultural rules and actual practices within the governance of sport organizations. The impact of role ambiguity among (youth) committees and organizational performance in a longitudinal study are recommended for further research.

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Governance of Action Sports from Local to National

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Aim and Research Question

Action sports, characterized by excitement, individualism, and risk, have been increasing in popularity as leisure activity for both children, young people as well as adults in the past decades. For the participants, action sports provide flexibility according to needs and desires of those that practice the sports. Practicing action sports thus often happens in spontaneous, self-organized or loosely controlled contexts far different than structured traditional team sports. Especially among young people and generations Y and Z, loosely organized action sports contexts are appealing and from a certain age preferred by many over practicing sports in a traditional organized sport context, e.g. in a team or in a sports club (Säfvenbom et al., 2023). Despite lack of governmental support (Jeanes et al., 2019), commitment-based, peer-oriented, and self-organized action sport contexts thrive as alternatives to traditional competitive sports that are highly organized and supported by large well-resourced NGBs. With the addition of surfing, skateboarding, and climbing into the Olympic Games, these typically self-governed sports by the participants themselves have had to adapt to the traditional and institutionalized sports structures of the Olympic movement (Strittmatter et al., 2018). At the same time, existing traditional NGBs have tried to recruit existing local action sports clubs as members. While the existing literature argues is clear that the addition action sports into the Olympics has disrupted action sports on international and national level, hence macro-level (Batuev & Robinson, 2022; Strittmatter et al., 2018; Wheaton & Thorpe, 2021), less is known about how the local grassroots level and a diverse cohort of stakeholders support the sport governance of action sports and the athletics themselves, hence meso- and micro-level. Thus, employing the traditional sports governance action sports does directly translate to success. Therefore, the purpose of our study it to understand how action sports are governed from the grassroots community

level all way to national representation from the perspective of diverse group stakeholders supporting the sport and the athletes themselves.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Sports organizations typically rely on collaboration between sport-internal and non-traditional sport entities (Harris & Philipps, 2019). Thus, multiple stakeholders deliver services to the sporting community (Shilbury & Ferkins, 2016). To map which stakeholders are involved in the governance of action sports at the micro-level, we employ a theoretical framework that combines stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984), collaborative governance theory (Shilbury et al., 2016) as well as dual governance structure approach of action sports developed by Strittmatter et al. (2018). Stakeholder theory is used to identify the most salient stakeholders in the governance of action sports. While collaborative governance theory is applied to better understand how the different stakeholders work with the development of actions sport by collaborating in a network under two logics : industry-based and traditional-based (Strittmatter et al., 2018). Following Shilbury and colleagues (2016) we understand a collaborative network as a culture of governance through cooperation and collaborations between actors in a system / sporting environment. Literature on governance of sports clubs mainly exists in the context of traditional organized sports e.g. non-profit sports clubs (Gammelsaeter, 2010). However, studies on sport clubs that account for the unique cultural contexts of actions sport are largely neglected.

Research Design and Methodology

As part of a larger comprehensive research project on the governance of action sports, a qualitative multiple-case study research design (Yin, 2009) is currently being undertaken. The cases under scrutiny are the new Olympic and growing sports of climbing and skateboarding. The study is being undertaken in Australia and Scandinavia as they both have large grassroots participation and limited national level support. Data is generated by document analysis of policy documents and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders affiliated with the local action sports environments. Questions include who the stakeholders collaborate with, why

and how the collaboration contributes to action sports development, and how they view their own role and other stakeholder' s role in supporting the sport.

Results / Findings and Discussion

The study is still in data collection phase; however, we guarantee to present results at the EASM 2024 conference in Paris. We will discuss our findings in light of collaborative governance and the different roles of stakeholders within the action sports governance and the development of the sports on different levels.

Conclusion, Contribution and Implications

Providing insights on the governance structures of local action sports clubs is relevant for several reasons: We extend the sport governance literature by advancing knowledge on sports clubs in the specific context of action sports, which to date are not yet researched on to our knowledge. Drawing on the cultural specifics and institutional logics prevailing in action sports, we aim at advancing theory within network and collaborative governance frameworks that can help to analyse and map governance structures on local level within specific cultural and industry-based contexts, as opposed to traditional organized sports context. Furthermore, local sports clubs are sport policy implementers not only sport-for-all and health policies, but also are important actors in the development of elite sports through talent identification and provision of high-quality training facilities and training sessions. Shedding lights on issues and potential collaborations in the governance network of action sports, might help sports clubs improve the elite sport development of action sport on national level.

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Exploring Athlete Perceptions of National Sport Federations' Good Governance Practices

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Aim and Research Questions

Over the past decade, there has been growing interest in national sport federations' (NSFs) good governance practices as a result of governance issues including financial mismanagement and corruption (Parent & Hoyer, 2018). As such, sport stakeholders have called for increased ethical standards in how NSFs are governed (i.e., good governance; Thompson et al., 2023). The rising interest in good governance practices has led to the development of many frameworks or codes from academics and practitioners, including government and independent agencies like Sport Canada, the Australian Sports Commission, and Play the Game.

Despite their importance, the development of these frameworks has been predominantly top-down (i.e., focused at the NSF/organization level); little attention has been given to how stakeholders – particularly athletes – perceive and are impacted by the adoption of good governance practices in NSFs. In a supposed athlete-centred system (Kihl & Schull, 2020; Thibault, 2021), this is problematic as athletes – particularly those competing on national teams – are directly impacted by NSF services, policies, performance, and (good) governance practices. As such, it becomes important to understand their perspective to better inform system-wide good governance practices.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore how athletes perceive their NSFs' good governance practices. The study is guided by four research questions: (1) What do athletes know about their NSF's good governance practices? (2) How do athletes assess their NSF's good governance practices? (3) How relevant or important are NSFs' good governance practices for athletes? and (4) How

do NSF good governance practices impact athletes?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Thompson et al.'s (2023) systematic review identified a plethora of existing good governance frameworks, each of which conceptualizes good governance in different ways. As such, this study's framework incorporated transparency, accountability, democratic processes, and responsibility, as they were found to be the most frequently used principles by both academics and practitioners (see Thompson et al., 2023). In addition, given the focus on athletes as stakeholders, stakeholder theory will be used to complement the above principles. Stakeholder theory focuses on understanding the relationship between a focal organization and its stakeholders (Freeman, 1984), in this case, athletes. Specifically, athletes can be considered as stakeowners (Fassin, 2012) due to their increasingly active and sometimes internal roles in sport organizations (Kihl & Schull, 2020). We argue that athletes are legitimate stakeholders with certain rights, moral duties, and responsibilities (Bowen et al., 2017; Fassin, 2012).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

An exploratory qualitative research methodology was used to guide the study (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Semi-structured interviews are currently being conducted with current and former Canadian national team athletes. At the time of abstract submission, interviews are ongoing; data collection and analysis will be completed by the conference start date. It is anticipated that approximately 20 athletes will be interviewed, with the final number determined through theoretical saturation (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Given the difficulty in accessing this participant group (due to potential gatekeeping by NSFs), athletes were recruited by email via AthletesCAN, an independent nonprofit organization whose role is to advocate for Canada's national team athletes. Interviews will be transcribed verbatim, sent back to participants for member-checking, and analyzed thematically following six iterative phases (Braun & Clarke, 2022): (1) data familiarization; (2) data coding; (3) initial theme generation; (4) theme development and

review; (5) theme refining, defining, and naming; and (6) writing up the themes.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Preliminary results suggest that most athletes have limited knowledge of their NSFs' current good governance practices. Moreover, the data will be analyzed to unpack athletes' perceptions of what "NSF good governance" means and examine how their views contrast with the existing good governance practices espoused by researchers, regulatory bodies, and NSFs.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The study includes both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, the findings highlight the various ways athletes conceptualize and assess good governance practices in NSFs. This contribution allows researchers to extend their existing good governance frameworks by incorporating the perspective of one key stakeholder group, which is especially relevant for athlete-centred systems (Thibault, 2021). Such findings will emphasize the ways in which good governance practices impact athletes, demonstrating the need for holistic approaches to creating and implementing good governance frameworks. Practically, the findings will provide tangible strategies for athletes – especially those directly involved in their NSFs' governance (e.g., via Board positions, athlete commissions) – seeking to advocate for the development of relevant good governance practices, which could positively impact athlete well-being and performance.

Towards an Understanding of Organizational-Systemic Governance Issues in National Sport Organizations

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Aim and Research Questions

Since its inception in the mid-1990s, sport governance has gained considerable attention from sport management scholars around the world (Shilbury & Ferkins, 2020). The breadth of sport governance scholarship is vast, with scholars examining a plethora of research areas ranging from micro-level (e.g., Board governance) to macro-level (collaborative governance) topics (e.g., Dowling et al., 2018; Shilbury & Ferkins, 2020). Despite the importance of this body of research, Dowling et al. (2018) conducted a scoping review assessing the state of the sport governance literature and identified several key research gaps. In particular, the review highlighted how sport governance research has predominantly centred at the organizational and systemic levels, respectively. There is a need to build on this existing work and examine the interplay between organizational and systemic level governance (Dowling et al., 2018); this is particularly important in the case of national sport organizations as they operate in a complex and interdependent system, where multilevel (systemic) governance issues could impact their effectiveness. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between organizational and systemic governance in NSOs.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The amateur sport system in Canada operates as a federated model where sport is governed at the national, provincial/territorial (state), and community levels (Thibault, 2017). Designated amateur sport organizations at each level – called national sport organizations (NSOs), provincial/territorial sport organizations (P/TSOs), and community sport organizations (CSOs) – are responsible for governing all aspects of their sport, including high-performance and participation-based programming. These organizations are

legislated by their respective government levels and thus are subject to unique sport policies, laws, and regulations set out by federal or provincial/territorial governments. Even though these organizations are legally autonomous entities (Shilbury et al., 2013), they remain co-dependent as they must work together to deliver high-performance and participation-based programming nationwide. Amateur sport organizations are predominantly funded via public funding, such as federal and provincial/territorial grants (Parent et al., 2023; Thibault, 2017). For instance, Parent et al. (2023) found that nearly 50% of NSOs' funding came from public sources – which have been stagnant for the past decade.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

Guided by a qualitative research methodology (Braun & Clarke, 2013), data was collected via semi-structured interviews with 49 staff and Board members of five Canadian NSOs. The breadth of participants interviewed provided an opportunity to explore governance issues and their impact on the functioning of NSOs via the perspective of various levels in the organization (i.e., from low-level staff members to Board members), thus, moving beyond the traditional and limited Board-management focus (Dowling et al., 2018). Interviews were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim, and returned to participants for member-checking. At the time of abstract writing, data analysis is ongoing but will be completed by the conference. Data is being analyzed thematically via Braun and Clarke (2022)'s six iterative phases: (1) data familiarization; (2) data coding; (3) initial theme generation; (4) theme development and review; (5) theme refining, defining, and naming; and (6) writing up the themes.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Preliminary findings demonstrate four main themes or governance issues in NSOs: financial, structural, human resource, and strategy issues. While these issues manifested at the organizational level, participants noted how they were deeply systemic, rooted in the way the sport system is structured and ultimately governed (i.e., systemic governance; Henry & Lee, 2004). In particular, within the four main governance issues, the results indicate key governance challenges

impacting NSOs' effectiveness within their organizations but also across the system, including the duplication of financial and human resources, the lack of alignment between NSOs and P/TSOs, poor NSO-P/TSO relationships, unsustainable funding models due to a lack of diversified revenue sources, and significant turnover in both staff and Board members.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The findings address recent calls to better understand the interplay between organizational and systemic level governance (Dowling et al., 2018). In doing so, the study demonstrates the close connection between organizational and systemic level governance issues. Practically, the results will provide key strategies for sport practitioners seeking to improve their sport's governance across the system. Future research should consider further unpacking these organizational-systemic governance issues by including the perspective of various stakeholders in the system, such as NSOs, P/TSO, CSO, and funding partners. In addition, comparing the organizational-systemic governance issues across different sport systems (i.e., countries) could provide fruitful opportunities for developing novel strategies.

Cascading Good Governance: Implementing the Football Association's Code of Governance for County Football Associations in the East of England

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Aims and Research Question

This study investigates the interpretation and implementation the Football Associations (FA) Code of Governance by County Football Associations (CFAs) in the FA's Eastern region. Three research questions informed the study: (i) What were the initial responses by County Football Associations to the creation of the county code of governance? (ii) What are the opportunities and challenges of implementing the county code of governance within County Football Associations? (iii) What is the perceived impact of the county code for governing County Football Associations.

Theoretical Background

A growing trend in sport is the adoption of codes of 'good' governance (Geeraert & van Eekeren, 2022; Girginov, 2022; Parent et al., 2018; Walters & Tacon, 2018). Governance codes have proliferated across many countries (Girginov, 2022; Geeraert & van Eekeren, 2021), in part, due to high profile failures in governance and the deficiencies in corporate and legal governance systems, but also due the diffusion of practice and institutional pressures to conform (Aguilera & Cuervo-Cazurra, 2004).

Despite the proliferation of these codes, there remains limited research examining their impact on sport organisations and how they are interpreted and implemented (Tacon & Walters, 2018, Parent & Hoye, 2018). Furthermore, existing research has focused on internal rather than publicly developed codes within national and international sporting contexts with limited research examining how codes have been interpreted and implemented at a community level.

Drawing on social norm theory, we theorise sport governance codes as social and cultural norms defined as “rules and standards that are understood by members of a group, and that guide and/or constrain social behavior” (Cialdini & Trost, 1998, p. 152). Sport governance codes can be understood as standards of conduct and expectations of acceptable and unacceptable practice within sport organisations.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Informed by critical realism, the study employed semi-structured interviews (n=15) with executive directors and governing board members (n=8), FA national and regional managers (n=3), and steering/working group members (n=4). Participants were purposefully selected based upon their knowledge of the governance code and its implementation within CFAs. Interviews were conducted via face to face and Microsoft teams and focused on the initial reactions to the code, code implementation, and the code’s perceived impact on organisational practices.

Data collection occurred between December 2023 and May 2024. Interviews were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim, producing 243 pages of single-spaced text. Data were analysed utilising the ‘Gioia method’ (Gioia, 1994) involving a four-stage analytical approach: (i) stakeholder identification, (ii) open coding, (iii) re-ordering and (iv) axial coding.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Preliminary findings reveal an initial mixed response to code creation and identified both external (access to funding and legitimacy) and internal motivations for code adoption. The findings explicate several opportunities (e.g. increased transparency, enhanced trust amongst stakeholders, and clearer lines of accountability) and challenges (e.g. additional workload, lack of buy in from select staff/board members, and loss of experienced volunteers) with implementing the code. Finally, many stakeholders felt the code had a positive impact on the decision-making and quality of the governing board, but identified inconsistencies in the standards for evidencing code compliance.

Conclusion, Contribution and Implication

The study contributes in-depth case of the implementation process within regional associations and is the first of its kind to examine the implementation of governance codes regionally. The study reveals how sport governance codes are being used as vehicles or conduits for attempting fundamental organisational and systemic change, rather than soft legal or regulatory instruments for improving governing boards or enhancing board-executive relationships. We emphasize the need for more consideration of who creates governance codes, how they are being used, and to what ends.

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Youth Sports Policy, Talent Identification, and Talent Development Systems: A Comparative Case Study Across Sports

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Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this study is to identify the determinants of youth sports policies and talent identification and development (TID) systems across various Olympic sports. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following research questions: What are the key components of youth sports policies in a talent pathway? What policy factors shape TID systems? How do these factors vary or converge across different sports?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Long-term development frameworks, such as the Foundation, Talent, Elite, and Mastery Model (FTEM) (Gulbin et al., 2013), typically describe multiple sporting pathways to account for different outcomes such as an active lifestyle, regular sports participation, or sporting excellence. Similarly, elite sports federations (national governing bodies, NGBs) in Flanders have two objectives: (a) to increase participation numbers and (b) to enhance international elite success. To achieve these objectives, NGBs develop programs for young (talented) athletes. However, to align with each sport's unique characteristics, the components and processes are different in each sport (Cobley et al., 2020). These differences make it difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of policies throughout the sporting pathway across multiple sports.

International research on the Sports Policy factors Leading to International Sporting Success (SPLISS) identified nine 'pillars' that define the effectiveness of national elite sports policies (De Bosscher et al., 2015). At a national level, the SPLISS study found no statistically significant correlation between

sports participation and TID strategies, and the success achieved by that country in elite sport. Therefore, it highlighted the necessity for investigations at a sport-specific level. Moreover, Pankhurst et al. (2013) noticed that research concerning the role of NGBs as "system controllers" in TID remains limited.

Recognising those research gaps, this study aims to investigate sport-specific developmental pathways. Employing systems theory (Chelladurai, 1987), the research conceptualises the sporting pathway as a dynamic, interconnected system characterised by input, throughput, and output factors and influenced by the environment. A detailed analysis of policy factors within each sport is necessary to explain the differences and to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of the policies.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

This study adopted a comparative case study design. Data were collected through document analysis and in-depth interviews with elite sports performance directors from 12 Olympic Summer sports in Flanders. The nine SPLISS pillars, implemented at the NGB level, guided the interviews. The sporting pathway was structured according to the FTEM phases.

The transcripts and documents were analysed to identify sporting pathway policies in each sport by using an inductive-deductive thematic analysis. These different systems were compared, enabling the factors that explain differences between sports to be identified.

Results and Discussion

Preliminary findings show the positive value of integrating the SPLISS and FTEM frameworks with systems theory to compare sporting pathway policies across different sports. While input and output factors are easily comparable across federations, the analysis of throughput and environmental factors requires a holistic view of the development system.

The differences between sports stem from several factors, including the diverse organisations responsible for TID (such as sports clubs, federations, and elite sports schools), the inherent culture of each sport

(e.g., the emphasis on fun versus performance), and the unique sport-specific requirements such as coaching and infrastructure necessities.

Despite the study results being valuable for policy and research, it is essential to acknowledge that these pathways are not rigid frameworks, and alternative pathway policies may exist. The interviews highlight that the results cannot be generalised internationally because of cultural differences between each nation.

Conclusion, Contribution and Implication

Results show that while the pathway from youth participation to elite performance shares similarities across sports, each sport's unique characteristics have resulted in remarkable divergences in sporting pathway policies. Theoretically, the findings offer a comprehensive model that outlines essential policy factors in the developmental pathway and enhances opportunities for international research. From a practical standpoint, this model has the potential to guide policymakers in implementing more effective and sport-specific athlete development policies.

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Elite Sports Under Pressure: Challenges In Upholding A Sound Elite Sport System

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Aim and research question

The aim of the study was to see how the elite sport system is changing in the Netherlands, and what possibilities and challenges these changes pose for sport-organizations and local and national government. The accompanying research questions is: what changes occur in the organization and financing of elite sports in the Netherlands, and what possibilities and challenges arise from these changes?

Background

In the Netherlands, elite sports has been developing rapidly and strongly over the past decades (Dijk et al. 2018). As a result, Dutch athletes have done well at international competitions, the Netherlands has developed itself as an event-organizing country, and the public in generally seems to value elite sports and enjoy watching elite sport events in the media. Funds for elite-sports have been expanding gradually over the past decades.

However, the elite sport system is developing quickly (Bosscher et al. 2008). Private companies – sponsors, media companies, the gambling industry - have come to consider elite sports as a profitable market. Countries and athletes compete globally for gaining medals and attracting events. Views within society on social relations are changing, with increased sensitivity to issues of abusive behavior. Governments find themselves in greater need to explain how society profits from elite sports.

Methodology

For this study, we draw on two data-sources: one, a nation-wide all-encompassing review of the data and figures on elite-sports, focusing on the organizational and financial aspects of elite sports (KPMG 2023); and second, 20 group-interviews with in total 168 stakeholders, ranging from athletes and coaches to managing directors of sport-federations, municipalities, event-organizers, sport-marketeters, policy-makers and

representatives from the media-industries. In addition, a small number of 1 on 1 interviews were conducted. Interviewees were approached through our network and reacted upon an open call for collaboration. All interviews were conducted between January and July 2023. These were semi-structured interviews that followed the same format and set of questions (with some space to elaborate on details where necessary). All interviews were recorded and transcribed. A summary report of the interviews (2-4 pages) was sent to all interviewees for confirmation (Nederlandse Sportraad 2023).

Results

The outcomes of the study indicate that the existing elite sports system in the Netherlands is under pressure. Private funding, from companies and private investors, provides a new and very welcome stream of income for elite sports, but one that appears to be uncertain and that only reaches a small profitable segment of the elite sport system (cherry picking). Integrity issues have risen to the surface and challenge the way that elite sports is currently organized. Gambling is rapidly spreading its tentacles over the sport world, raising concerns over gambling-addiction and match-fixing. Athletes and coaches experience pressure to perform, and increasing claims on their private lives (and their health) to keep up. Elite sport-organizations find themselves confronted with new issues and demands, but experience difficulty keeping up and acting as a reliable partner to the sport industry. Governments face difficulties legitimizing money being spent on elite sports, and clarifying both their role and the contribution of elite sports to society.

Conclusion and implication

On a theoretical level, the study offers insights in how a sportsystem, in this case the Netherlands, is organized and financed, and how that organization and financial structure is developing and thereby affecting elite sports (athletes, trainers, organizations). On a more practical level, sportorganizations and local and national governments are taught valuable lessons about the changing elite sport system, and how that affects their organization and their policies. The study raises the important question of how to combine a growing interest from commerce and business in elite sport,

with upholding values like level playing field, equal opportunities, equal rights and democratic control.

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Why Are They The Favourites? Public Perceptions On Elite Athlete Role Model Characteristics And Behaviours

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Aim and Research Questions

This research aims to develop insights into European citizens' expectations regarding the characteristics and behaviours of elite athletes as role models. Three research questions guided this study: (1) Which characteristics do Europeans ascribe to popular athletes?, (2) Which behaviours should athletes display to be considered as good role models?, and (3) To what extent are the ascribed characteristics to athletes influenced by Europeans' own sporting behaviour and socio-demographic variables? Study results might provide insights to sport stakeholders about which types of role models could be leveraged to increase the societal outcomes of elite sport within specific target groups.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Research suggests that leveraging athletes as role models can be an inspiring context for creating societal outcomes through sport (De Rycke & De Bosscher, 2019). A role model can be defined as "someone who motivates, inspires or assists others to engage in similar behaviour" (MacCallum & Beltman, 2002, p. 19). It is crucial to understand athlete role models from the perspective of the general public as, according to the social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), individuals will notice and learn or imitate behaviours, values, and attitudes by observing their favourite athletes. When athletes grasp one's attention, an individual can imitate or learn the particular behaviour. If athletes want to leverage their role model status, they have to "embody the elements that a society holds most dear" (Maguire, 2009, p. 1261). Nevertheless, there remains a noticeable research gap concerning which characteristics and behaviours individuals' ascribe to athlete role models.

Methodology

This research was conducted as part of the Erasmus+ Sport project 'Athletes4society'. Study procedures have been approved by the ethics committee of the university that coordinated this project. Data were collected through a population survey in seven European countries (N = 10,400) including Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Poland, Portugal, and The Netherlands. The survey was back-to-back translated into six languages and distributed through a research service company to obtain a representative sample (based on age, language, sex, and social class). The survey instrument was created following an extensive literature review (e.g., Arai et al., 2013; Dixon & Flynn, 2008). Participants were asked (a) how well characteristics described their favourite athletes on a seven-point Likert Scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree), and (b) what behaviours they found important for athletes as role models to display (binary response option: yes/no). Questions regarding citizens' sporting behaviour and socio-demographic information were included. Factor analysis and descriptive analysis were carried out with R. Cluster analysis will be performed to answer the third research question in the upcoming months.

Results

Preliminary results indicated that Europeans ascribed following characteristics to their favourite athletes: (a) having a good physical condition (M=6.13; SD=1.15), (b) being a positive example to others (M=6.13; SD=1.13), (c) showing fair play and respect (M=6.1; SD=1.15), (d) being the world's best (M=6.08; SD=1.21), and (e) delivering exciting top matches (M=5.99; SD=1.2). Hence, characteristics regarding 'athletic performance', 'appearance', and 'exemplary behaviour' are primarily ascribed to favourite athletes. Demonstrating exemplary behaviour during (M=0.44; SD=0.5) and outside of sporting competitions (M =.33; SD=0.47), and maintaining a healthy lifestyle (M =0.37; SD=0.48) are considered by Europeans as crucial behaviours for athletes to display to be considered as "good" role models. Further results will be discussed during the presentation.

Conclusion, Contribution and Implications

This study contributes to the development of a broader understanding of athlete role models and lays the groundwork for future research endeavours on how elite sport can generate societal outcomes by leveraging athlete role models. Additionally, study results might provide guidelines to various sport stakeholders collaborating with athletes (e.g., policymakers, sport organisations, etc.) on how to interact with and guide their athletes in becoming attractive athletes and “good” role models. Moreover, given that athlete role models can have an impact on the broader societal context (e.g., increasing sports participation, tackling discrimination, etc.), results might guide stakeholders in finding the most suitable athlete to increase societal outcomes within a particular target audience.

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Semi-Professional Sports Clubs as Hybrids – An Institutional Logics View on the Professionalisation Process

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Aim and Research Questions

Sports clubs with competitive ambitions in (inter-)national elite sport often shift their focus from an amateur to a more elite sport logic. The process “on the field” is usually accompanied by organisational professionalisation “off-the-field”, defined as “a transformation from a volunteer-driven to an increasingly business-like phenomenon” (Dowling et al., 2014, p. 527). If being subject to multiple logics, the sports clubs are transforming into “hybrid” organisations. Here, the following questions arise: What are the consequences of a shift from an amateur to a more elite sports logic for the professionalisation of sports clubs?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

For investigating elite sports clubs’ institutional logic, the concept of hybridity and hybrid organisation strategies through the institutional logic lens seems helpful (Thornton et al., 2012; Battilana et al., 2017). The consequences of changing logics for the professionalisation of sports clubs are analysed according to Nagel et al.’s (2015) multi-level framework of professionalisation. Scholars identified, among others, amateur, professional and commercial logics which can coexist in a sports club but simultaneously raise conflicts (e.g. Gammelsæter, 2010; Rasmussen et al., 2024; Skirstad & Challadurai, 2011). However, it has not been sufficiently investigated to what extent institutional logics can explain organisational challenges and consequences of professionalisation processes (Rasmussen et al., 2024). Therefore, this study follows Dowling et al.’s (2024) call to combine institutional theory and professionalisation.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

This study is part of an international project (funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation & the “Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft”) analysing the professionalisation of sports clubs in Switzerland and Germany. For this multiple-case study (Yin, 2018), ten sports clubs engaging in both elite as well as amateur sports were analysed. These sports clubs vary in size and sports. Data from each case were collected through document analysis, three to five expert interviews with key actors and decision-makers and one focus group interview with club members. Data were analysed using deductive and inductive coding according qualitative content analysis and visualisation techniques (Miles et al., 2020).

A handball club in the tier 2 Swiss national league will serve as a single case for presenting preliminary results. The club employs semi-professional players and is led by voluntary staff. The complete results of the multi-case study will be available by the time of the conference.

Results/Findings and Discussion

There were many consequences following this shift to a more elite sports logic for the professionalisation of the sports club. The elite sports logic was included in the formulation of a strategy and vision document by highlighting the goal to reach national league handball. Further, a commercial market logic entered the club when players started to get remuneration and contracts, while the home games were turned into events, and marketing efforts increased significantly. From an on-field perspective, the elite team increased its sporting success by moving up a league. However, the youth sports were neglected. Additionally, due to the powerful tensions of the conflicting logics of the elite team and the rest of the club, the club chose to separate their elite sports team into a limited liability company. Consequently, there was a further decrease in identification between the elite section and the rest of the club as the sporting gap between the elite team players and other members increased and more players were brought in from external clubs. Here, the club responded by fostering community logic by organising joined activities, emphasising a shared identity and highlighting the benefits

of the new athletics room available for the whole club. Further, in the separated section, multiple logics still exist, as the staff works as professional volunteers, combining the professional logic with the voluntary community logic. Lastly, a new executive group for the elite section was created. While there were conflicts between the club board and executive group initially, a clear definition of roles, responsibilities, and trust between the board president and the CEO of the elite section was crucial for successful coexistence. Consequently, there was a strengthening in both strategic and operational capability in both parts of the club.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

To conclude, professionalisation in the sense of becoming more business-like, caused by a shift from amateur to elite sports logic, may bring up uncertainties and multiple tensions, like a decrease in identification. We observed challenges and possible solutions that can guide sports managers in this transition. For instance, sports managers are advised to communicate proactively and be aware of logic shifts. By creating shared events already during the process sport managers can foster the community logic of the club.

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Sport Policy Analysis in the Province of Quebec, Canada

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Aim and Research Questions

In this study, we examine sport-related policy in the province of Quebec. The following research questions guided our work: (1) what ideas and beliefs are discussed in Quebec sport-related policies?; and (2) how do these ideas and beliefs translate into policy choices, outputs, and impacts in the province of Quebec?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Policy can be understood as any “course of action or inaction chosen by public authorities” (Pal, 1992, p. 2). Formal government policies (i.e., rules and regulations that regulate, direct, and control institutions in a given system) are a foundational phenomenon within sport governance (Chalip, 1995). However, sport policy research continues to lack attention (Houlihan et al., 2009). Although some recent work has addressed sport policy (e.g., Fahlén & Stenling, 2016; Jedlicka et al., 2022; Lachance & Parent, 2023), it is vital to understand the various components of policy landscapes, given the complex ways that government and non-governmental actors and their behaviours are able to influence sport governance practices and processes (Chalip, 1995; Jedlicka et al., 2022). Within this context, little research has focused on regional governments' role in sport policy processes (Rich et al., 2023).

We draw on institutional theory (Robertson et al., 2022) and critical policy analysis (Jedlicka et al., 2022) to examine sport policy implementation within multi-level governance structures (Thibault & Harvey, 2013). In Canada, most policy research has focused on national-level policies in government or non-governmental sport organizations, with much less attention focused on the implications of lower (i.e., provincial) levels of government within federated governance systems (e.g., Rich et al., 2023). As such, we seek to address this gap.

Specifically, we used Jedlicka et al.'s (2022) framework for sport policy analysis in which five components (i.e., ideas and beliefs, institutions, key actors, networks and administrative arrangements, and context and key events) are posited to influence policy choices, output(s), and impact(s). In this presentation, we focus specifically on ideas and beliefs, which refer to "the fundamental set of ideas that shapes definitions of policy problems and potential solutions" (Jedlicka et al., 2022, p. 521). We focus here to provide a more nuanced and in-depth interpretation of this component's ability to influence policy choices, outputs, and impacts, which have implications for broader institutional structures.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

A qualitative case study methodology (Stake, 1995) was used to examine provincial sport policy in Quebec, Canada. Data were collected through two methods.

First, we used document analysis. During this phase, the first author manually collected sport-related policy documents from government archives and publicly available material from relevant stakeholders (e.g., government, sport governing bodies, etc.). In total, 273 sport-related documents were collected.

Second, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with key informants (e.g., civil servants, policy makers, or stakeholders with extensive experience in the sport sector) identified in the documents collected. This allowed us to triangulate findings from the collected documents and gather more nuanced understanding of the ideas and beliefs that underpinned policy choices, outputs, and impacts in Quebec. At the time of writing, three interviews have been completed, with additional data collection underway.

Only data from the documents are presented as results, considering interviews are still in progress and will be subsequently analyzed. All documents were analyzed using NVivo 14. A codebook thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022) was conducted using Jedlicka et al.'s (2022) framework. Documents were analyzed from January to March 2024, while

the interview data analysis will be completed by June 2024.

Results/Findings and Discussion

A variety of ideas and beliefs were identified. However, security and integrity was a dominant belief attributed to the policy choices of government legislation titled: "Loi sur la sécurité dans les sports." This legislation led to multiple outputs in the form of commissioned reports (e.g., related to violence in ice hockey, injury and death rates), policies (e.g., governance codes), and additional legislation (e.g., projet de loi no 45 modifiant la Loi sur la sécurité dans les sports) to govern sport in Quebec. Four additional beliefs are specific to: accessibility, quality of experiences, promotion (e.g., information diffusion), and leadership and consultation. These beliefs are demonstrated by the government ministry's choice to develop a provincial sport policy, thereby leading to various outputs (e.g., *Au Québec, On Bouge!*) and impacts (e.g., allocation of funding) for sport in Quebec.

Conclusion, Contributions, and Implications

Collectively, our analysis illustrates how ideas and beliefs underpinning provincial policy shapes sport policy implementation within multi-level governance structures. We demonstrate how the prominence of ideas and beliefs related to security and integrity informed legislation with sweeping implications within the provincial sport sector. In turn, the four foundational ideas and beliefs analyzed within the provincial sport policy demonstrate their influence on choices, outputs, and impacts. These findings have implications for theorizing institutional structures and policy implementation within multi-level governance systems.

Local Level Response to Institutional Change in SafeSport Programming: A Case Study of US Figure Skating

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Aim and Research Questions

The US SafeSport Center plays a pivotal role in protecting youth athletes from abuse within local sport clubs in the United States (Parent & Demers, 2011; Stirling, 2009). Since 2012, substantial institutional level changes (i.e., normative-national governing body (NGB) SafeSport program creation, regulatory-SafeSport code, & cultural cognitive-prevention training) were implemented in to enhance the safeguarding of youth athletes. Despite this mandates, maltreatments such as sexual harassment and body shaming persist, particularly in figure skating—a sport predominant with female participation—highlighting a vulnerability specific to this demographic (Voelker & Reel, 2019). The U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC) has mandated all NGB affiliated local sport clubs adopt the SafeSport program, including USA figure skating. Much of the research on sport organizations' responses to institutional change has focused on the national level (Heinze & Lu, 2017). Limited research has investigated grassroots' adoption of institutional change. The purpose of this study is to explore experiences of US local figure skating clubs' actors who faced with the institutional changes introduced by national SafeSport programming and NGB. The following research question was posed. In what ways did local figure skating club actors respond to the normative, regulatory, and cultural cognitive institutional changes mandated by US SafeSport?

Theoretical background and literature review

Institutions consist of three pillars where institutional level change can happen (Scott, 1995), including the Regulative Pillar (e.g., laws, rules, and sanctions), the Normative Pillar: (e.g., norms, values, and certifications), and the Cognitive-Cultural Pillar (e.g., shared conceptions, frames of reference, and shared «taken-for-granted» beliefs). Institutional

change encompasses the processes through which established norms, practices, rules, and beliefs within organizations are fundamentally altered (Scott, 1995), often in response to shifts in external pressures such as legislative changes, societal values, or technological advancements, or through internal factors like leadership transitions or strategic redirections. As organizations strive to adapt to these changes, they must balance the need to maintain legitimacy and operational effectiveness within their respective fields (Filgueiras & Aranha, 2019). Responses to these institutional pressures can vary widely, ranging from adaptation, where organizations align their internal practices to meet new norms, to resistance, where they might maintain established routines or subtly decouple official commitments from actual practices to mitigate the impacts of disruptive changes (Raymond et al, 2014).

Research shows organizations can use several macro-level strategic responses when faced with institutional changes (Oliver, 1991). For example, acquiescence, where the organization conforms to external expectations; compromise, which involves balancing conflicting demands; avoidance, characterized by dodging the imposed changes; defiance, which is the outright rejection of external pressures; and manipulation, where the organization attempts to reshape the rules to its advantage (Heinze & Lu, 2017). Research on local-level responses to institutional changes is critical yet an underexplored phenomena, highlighting the need to enhance understandings of how changes around macro level policies are perceived and applied within different localized settings.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

To gain an understanding of local club actors' responses to US figure skating SafeSport institutional changes, a narrative inquiry will guide design decisions. Approximately 30 semi-structured interviews with a purposeful sample of key actors (i.e., administrators, coaches, and parents) from different local figure skating clubs will be conducted. Criteria for sampling is a) directly experienced the institutional changes associated with 'SafeSport', and b) had been a club member since 2012. Secondary data will be collected including policies, website information, and

club communications. The data collection process is ongoing. All data will be thematically analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2022) five stage technique to identify categories and patterns of local club actors' understandings and experiences with normative, regulator, and cultural cognitive institutional changes related to SafeSport programming mandates.

Results/Findings and Discussion

This research aims to deepen our understanding of how the institutional level change around 'SafeSport' is perceived and implemented at the local level, shedding light on the micro-level responses to national policy changes within the sport management discipline. By exploring these localized responses, the study intends to identify gaps in the current practices of SafeSport programming and suggest ways to enhance the protective measures for youth athletes. The findings could offer critical insights into the effectiveness of SafeSport implementations, potentially influencing policy adjustments and targeted interventions to better safeguard young athletes.

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Unravelling Democracy in National Sport Federations in Portugal

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Aim

Democracy is a key principle within the governance of sport organisations (Chappelet & Mrkonjic, 2019). Given the significance that sport organisations adopt good governance practices, it is essential to understand how democracy takes place within sport organisations. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine how different dimensions of democracy unfolds and impact the governance of national sport federations (NSFs) in Portugal.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Democracy is a term that is typically understood as «rule by the people.» However, this concept is accompanied by several elements that complicate discussions about what democracy truly entails. Identifying a universally accepted definition has proven challenging. While no single model has garnered consensus as the best measure, Coppedge et al.'s (2011) Varieties of Democracy Project has proven particularly effective for this purpose.

Research on democracy within sports organisations has taken various paths. One of them involves the representation of athletes and their involvement in decision-making. Using deliberative democracy as a framework, Kihl and Schull (2020) explored this trend in American university sports. Minikim (2015) identified possible manipulations in democratic processes in different sports organisations by using the competitive, participatory, and deliberative democracy concepts developed by Allern and Pedersen (2007). Although several studies have contributed to our understanding of how democracy functions within sports organisations, there is still a need for a more

comprehensive model that can evaluate this phenomenon in a more holistic manner.

Research Design, Methodology, Data Analysis

This study draws on Coppedge et al.'s (2011) model which includes five dimensions of democracy: Electoral, Liberal, Participatory, Deliberative, and Egalitarian. In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 18 representatives from two NSFs in Portugal, one NSF from an individual sport and one NSF from a team sport. In each NSF, nine participants were interviewed, including the president and eight delegates to the general assembly. The eight delegates comprised of two club and regional association representatives, two athletes, two coaches, and two referees. The interview guide consisted of 15 questions that were adapted from Coppedge et al. (2011). Following the interviews, recordings were transcribed, and thematic analysis was conducted alongside a deductive analysis to process the data.

Results and Discussion

Regarding electoral democracy, participants stated they were confident on the electoral processes, mostly because of the existence of a strong legislation in Portugal which guarantees that NSFs must comply with predetermined rules to be eligible to receive public funds. On the other hand, electoral democracy was perceived to have minimal level of competitiveness in both the elections of governing bodies and the elections to choose delegates to the general assembly. As to liberal democracy, participants felt board members were in control of the governance process, particularly the justice and tax committees and the general assembly itself. However, participants questioned this control since, in many cases, the low electoral competitiveness means that members of the same group make up all the vacancies in the control bodies. Regarding deliberative democracy, the focus was on the proper functioning of the general assembly, which, despite having representatives from all groups (guaranteed by Portuguese law), interviewees expressed concern about the low participation of some elected delegates, particularly with athletes. In terms of participatory democracy, participants expressed the difficulties in guaranteeing direct democracy they perceived that the deliberative democracy fulfils this role. Finally, regarding egalitarian democracy,

participants noted the importance of a more equal distribution of seats in the general assembly. They noted a lack of female representation, and a lack of seats for representatives of adapted sports.

Conclusion

Research into the democratic processes of sports organizations is gaining widespread popularity. However, most studies have adopted a narrow approach when examining democracy inside sport organizations. This study aimed to fill this gap by using a more comprehensive model of democracy as well as examining the perspectives from various groups involved in the governance of NSFs in Portugal. Results indicated that, while there is still a significant focus on the electoral dimension of democracy, electoral processes can also be used to address issues in other dimensions, such as ensuring a more equitable distribution of representatives.

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A Comparative Analysis Of Sports Event Hosting Policies in 17 European Countries

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Aim and Research Questions

This study is a comparative sports event policy analysis of 17 European countries. The research questions are: (1) To what extent are sports event hosting policies developed? (2) What components of the policy process, policy content, and policy outcomes are mostly considered during policy-making? (3) What similarities and differences can be observed between countries' policy documents?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

A well-planned sports event hosting policy can facilitate collaboration between public authorities and stakeholders involved in hosting events (Leopkey, Mutter, & Parent, 2010). Although positive outcomes from sports events are being scrutinized (Maharaj, 2015), cities and countries continue to bid for and organize such events (Walters, 2011). As bid processes become more sophisticated, governments are developing frameworks to regulate event hosting, by identifying selection and funding criteria and involvement procedures.

These elements are included in the sports event hosting policy framework, developed by Leopkey et al. (2010), which covers three components: policy process, content and outcomes. The policy process describes, for example, the context and the stakeholders involved, whereas the policy content includes eligibility and funding criteria, instruments and type of sports events. Policy outcomes refer to the strategic goals and desired impacts. For this study, the sports event hosting policy framework (Leopkey et al., 2010) was applied and modified to include hosting strategy from Chappelet and Lee (2016).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The study includes a qualitative document analysis (Altheide, 1996). A total of 34 policy documents were collected from 17 European countries with experience in organizing major sports events (BE, CH, DK, DE, FI, FR, IE, IT, LU, NL, NO, AT, PL, PT, ES, UK,SE). A systematic online search was executed in the public domain to collect policy documents authored by ministries and NGB's. Quality assessment procedures were implemented and individuals working at ministries and NGBs were contacted. The analysis used a deductive-inductive coding approach to categorize the data into the components of policy process, content and outcomes. After coding, a unified framework was created for all countries. Preliminary results are presented in the abstract.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Based on the policy documents that were publicly available, we found that out of 17 countries, seven have no specific sports event hosting policy document but mention sports events in their sports or tourism policies. In addition, 10 countries have a strategic document for hosting major events: 3 countries have a general event hosting policy, and 7 countries have a sports event hosting policy (RQ1). Various policy components have been considerate during policy-making, in particular policy process and policy outcomes (RQ2). Governments formulate policy actions and departments work with sports stakeholders to devise strategies to attract and organize events. In some countries, also tourism and culture sectors contribute to this process. The selection criteria, instruments,

and type of sports events are relevant elements. Countries aim to attract international sports events that align with their resources to ensure that the desired impacts would be met. The strategic goals and related impacts are observed to be similar, with promoting sports and the country being frequently cited as having a positive social impact and boosting tourism. The strategy to achieve these goals and impacts, however, is developed to a far lesser extent (RQ2). Further comparative analysis will be developed for the conference (RQ3).

Conclusion, Contribution and Implication

The findings confirm that not all governments have a specific sports event hosting policy document (Leopkey et al., 2010), and not all policies are developed to the same extent. Although each country has defined goals and impacts, there are differences in policy components. By conducting a comparative analysis, we can identify missing points and good practices. The proposed sports event hosting policy framework can guide policy-makers, sports event managers, and sports federations to further develop their policies and formulate consistent strategies.

Although many countries aspire to host major sports events, not all of them are willing to share their strategies transparently. As a result, some countries may be further along in their strategies than they publicly disclose in their policy documents.

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Establishing An Executive Office In Voluntary Sports Clubs – Causes, Forms And Consequences From A Governance Perspective

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Aim and Research Questions

Voluntary sports clubs (VSCs) face increasing expectations and challenges from the internal and external environment (e.g., Bürgi et al., 2023). Therefore, more and more sports clubs that usually rely on voluntary work (Nagel et al., 2020) professionalise their structures and processes. Among others, they establish an executive office with (part-time) employees. This professionalisation process is closely related to a governance perspective, for example, regarding the organisational structures, roles and responsibilities or decision-making (Dowling et al., 2018). Since there is little knowledge about this change process in the sports management literature, this study focuses on the following research questions: Why and how do VSCs establish an executive office? What are the consequences of establishing an executive office for the VSCs' governance?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

This study focuses on organisational professionalisation, which can be described as a transformative process “from a volunteer driven to an increasingly business like phenomenon” (Dowling et al., 2014, p. 527). A broad understanding of professionalisation is used to not focus only on the employment of paid staff (Ruoranen et al., 2016). Nagel et al.'s (2015) multi-level framework can be used to analyse the causes, forms and consequences of professionalisation in sports organisations. Although the process of establishing an executive office is neglected in the current sports management literature, Meyer and Grösser (2017) analysed the concept and benefits of an executive office(r) in a semi-professional Swiss football club. They identified different options regarding the

organisational structures and financing. They also examined the involvement of members in the change process. Because professionalisation can lead to changes in governance structures (e.g., Nagel et al., 2015), this study focuses also on organisational governance. According to Dowling et al. (2018), the following subthemes of organisational governance are used to theoretically frame the analysis of establishing an executive office: board conflict, decision-making, performance, board-executive relationships, strategic capability and structure (roles and responsibilities).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

This study is part of an SNSF- and DFG-funded project that analyses the professionalisation of VSCs in Switzerland and Germany. For this multiple case study (Yin, 2018), nine Swiss VSCs that established an executive office were analysed. These sports clubs vary in size and sports. Data from each case were collected through document analysis, three to five expert interviews with decision-makers and one focus group interview with club members. Data were analysed using coding and visualisation techniques (Miles et al., 2020).

Results/Findings and Discussion

Preliminary findings show different causes for establishing an executive office. The main reason is to relieve volunteer board members. There are also various options regarding the organisational structures, roles and responsibilities. The executive office is mostly responsible for administrative tasks but, in some cases, also for sponsorship. This explains why some VSCs did not have to increase the membership fees to finance the executive office, as they could increase their sponsorship revenue. The executive office personnel are paid in all cases. However, the volume of work varies, and in some sports clubs, the executive office personnel work more than agreed upon. Regarding the organisational structures, the executive office personnel are also board members with voting rights in some cases, whereas this is strictly separated in other cases. There are different opinions in practice about what is appropriate.

Regarding the consequences for the VSCs' governance, decision-making may change in

nature, depending on the role and participation of the executive office personnel. In this regard, low formalisation bears the potential for board conflicts. In general, the new board-executive relationships face some challenges, e.g., discussing how volunteers and paid staff work best together or what tasks must be done voluntarily vs. on a paid basis. Besides, the board is now responsible for overseeing the work of the executive office. However, boards are still strongly involved in the clubs' operative business. So, the strategic capabilities of boards do not seem to change much. Furthermore, the extent to which establishing an executive office influences the board performance is difficult to assess for practitioners.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This study showed different options for establishing an executive office, which comes with various opportunities and challenges. Therefore, it is suggested that VSCs wanting to establish an executive office should systematically approach this change process (e.g., Nagel & Schlesinger, 2012). There are also several implications for future research. Since there are different executive office models to choose from, future research might examine what models fit best for what types of sports clubs. Other changes regarding the organisational structures and processes should also be considered for a more holistic picture, such as establishing an executive/management board. Furthermore, whether or not the executive office personnel should act as CEOs needs to be discussed. Another question is whether establishing an executive office leads to more efficient management in VSCs.

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How Virtual Sports Became Sports: A Case Study Of World Triathlon's And UCI's Legitimation Strategies Of Virtual Cycling As Disruptive Sport Innovation

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Introduction

Sports have become increasingly intertwined with technology. The IOC aims to leverage this intertwining of sport and technology, with one of the fifteen recommendations for their Olympic Agenda 2020+5 being to “Encourage the development of virtual sports and further engage with video gaming communities” (IOC, 2021, p. 21). Technological sport innovations are thus already being utilised to enable new competition formats, mass participation events or spectating formats (Cranmer et al., 2021; Tjønndal, 2017). Building on the increasing interest in virtual sports, our study examines sport governing bodies' legitimation strategies of new 'virtual' sports disciplines.

Virtual sports are mixed reality games that are intertwined with physical sports, made possible through interactive peripheral sport equipment. Virtual sports' potential can be leveraged to bring a novel mix of performance criteria in leisure and competitive sports (e.g. opportunity of improved spectating experiences, social inclusion and training experience). More precisely, our study aims to understand the mechanisms employed by sport organisations' to either promote or resist the legitimacy of virtual sports and how they alter the institutional logics used to evaluate these performance criteria (i.e. evaluation schemes) (Das & Van de Ven, 2000). We examine the following research question: how do governing bodies in cycling and triathlon give meaning to virtual cycling and in what ways do they employ mechanisms to (de)legitimise virtual cycling? For this purpose, we combine the concepts of altering

performance criteria and their evaluation schemes (i.e. rules used to evaluate performance) based on disruptive innovation theory (Christensen & Bower, 1996), and approach these concepts as changing institutional logics to develop legitimacy based on institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Theory

Theoretically, we understand virtual cycling as a form of disruptive innovation, i.e., a low performance product aimed at a niche market that “can redefine what performance means” (Christensen & Bower, 1996, p. 202). Disruptive innovation theory outlines how various actors (in our case sport governing bodies, sport organisations, game developers and tech companies) either (1) work to develop disruptive innovations in the market (entrants) or (2) work to marginally improve services that mainstream customers value while neglecting attributes valued by low-end or new customer (incumbents). A key principle here is that incumbents are constrained by their established business models and are unmotivated to pursue disruptive innovations that seem inferior at first sight, leaving opportunities for entrants. The disruptive innovations developed by entrants are inferior on mainstream performance attributes but offer a novel mix of attributes that appeals to new or peripheral customers (e.g. accessibility, conveniency) (Christensen & Bower, 1996).

Disruptive innovation theory enables us to analyse how sport governing bodies give meaning to virtual cycling. In order to examine the mechanisms these organisations employ to (de)legitimise virtual sport, we combine disruptive innovation theory with (neo)institutional theory, specifically the concept of legitimacy. In (neo)institutional theory, legitimacy refers to the perception and social acceptance of organisational practices and forms which organisations themselves proactively shape (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Methods

Methodologically, the study is based on qualitative interviews with representatives of sports governing bodies of cycling and triathlon at the international, national and regional level (e.g. UCI, World Triathlon, Belgian Cycling). The interviews focus on the meaning of virtual cycling as a sport and

central concepts of disruptive innovation such as giving meaning, performance criteria and evaluation schemes. The data is analysed following Braun & Clark's (2021) thematic analysis.

Findings and Discussion

Data collection and analysis is ongoing. Preliminary results will be ready to present by the time of the conference. Since virtual sports fit the definition of disruptive innovation, i.e. they represent a novel yet inferior mix of performance attributes (e.g. not possible outdoors possibility for virtual cycling) compared to mainstream sports, we expect the interviews to demonstrate how virtual sports such as virtual cycling can disrupt notions of how leisure and competitive sports are practiced, organised, and consumed by reshaping existing performance criteria such as customisation performance (e.g. specialisation or training focus) or ecological performance (e.g. compete in or attend sports events).

Based on previous research (Ben-Slimane et al., 2020) we hypothesise that our findings will show multiple legitimisation strategies. For example, one strategy we expect to identify relates to organisations that legitimise virtual cycling through performance criteria where virtual sports outperforms traditional sports on customisation, spectating, convenience or safety aspects.

Conclusion and Implications

Our study presents how meaning is given to virtual sports, and how its performance criteria are addressed, constructed and reevaluated. Our contribution lies in the use of a process-based rather than variance-based view of the diffusion of disruptive innovation, which allows a thorough understanding of sports governing bodies' legitimisation strategies. First, we contribute to theory by showcasing how the theorization (Greenwood et al., 2002) of new performance criteria results in the legitimisation of virtual sports, such as the framing of issues or the gradual introduction of virtual cycling's solutions as new performance criteria. Second, we contribute to practice by showcasing an understanding of the mechanisms underpinning virtual sports legitimisation and we identify legitimisation strategies that may be used by federations in sports besides

cycling to shape their external environment and seizing both social and commercial opportunities of adopting new virtual sports services. At the conference, we will further go into implications of legitimising virtual sports.

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Legitimacy Of Competing Golf Tournament Series: An Interview Study On Fan Perspectives

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Aim and Research Questions

Fans are recognized as key stakeholder in sports, influencing broadcasting, sponsors and the competition itself (Biscaia et al., 2018). Sport organizations aim to gain fan acceptance and must effectively convey their legitimacy to them. This is crucial in situations where multiple organizations compete for demand and legitimacy in the same product segment of professional spectator sports. Such a close market rivalry may occur both at the highest levels of a sport and on a regional scale. While competitive market structures are common outside the sport industry, in a specific sport, fans are used to monopoly leagues and tournament series. New contestants challenging established suppliers may be perceived as controversial and illegitimate.

Golf provides an insightful case study of oligopolistic competition dynamics, following the market entrance of the LIV Tour as a direct competitor to the long-standing PGA and DP World Tours in 2021. Financed by the Saudi Arabian Public Investment Fund, the LIV Tour achieved significant success by recruiting top athletes from the PGA, prompting the latter to prohibit these players from participating in their competitions (DiMarco, 2023; Jephson, 2023). With LIV and PGA, two sport organizations compete for legitimacy. This competition provides the opportunity to study fan perceptions of this rivalry. In particular, the study aims to understand how fans' perceptions of organizational legitimacy are formed and develop. The results offer novel insights in fan perceptions on legitimacy of sports competition structures.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Within institutional theory, the notion of legitimacy holds significant importance in comprehending how organizations navigate their existence within a social framework. Meyer and Rowan (1977) assert that

organizations actively pursue legitimacy, which can be defined as “the perceived appropriateness of an organization to a social system in terms of rules, values, norms, and definitions” (Deephouse et al., 2017, p. 32). In the context of the PGA’s quest for legitimacy, Nite et al. (2024) studied how actors within the PGA strategically frame messages to influence legitimacy perceptions. Their findings reveal three framing strategies: firstly, emphasizing the sacredness of PGA traditions and heritage; secondly, portraying the LIV as a threat to the sport; and thirdly, highlighting the value of PGA golf’s meritocratic structures. In contrast, our study aims to explore which framing strategies fans employ in shaping legitimacy perceptions of the PGA and LIV Tour.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

We carried out 17 semi-structured online interviews in Germany, utilizing a selective and snowball sampling technique. All of them were golf enthusiasts and amateur players, aged between 23 and 60. Three of them are working for local golf clubs, two as golf journalists. Interviews ranged from 22 minutes to 1 hour and 19 minutes, covering a wide array of topics including background information, consumption habits, perceptions of PGA versus LIV, and opinions on the potential merger. For data analysis, we employed a thematic approach, following Braun and Clarke (2022).

Results/Findings and Discussion

The initial findings indicate that legitimizing and delegitimizing narratives exist for both tours. Several themes identified by Nite et al (2024) are also found in the perceptions of interviewees on both tours. While some fans praise PGA’s tradition, others perceive it as outdated. While some legitimize the PGA and its meritocratic prize money structures, others delegitimize it as it ignores the interests of athletes. While some fans legitimize LIV as growing the game by attracting new fans and sponsors, others delegitimize the LIV as threatening the game as the best players are no longer competing against each other. In addition to the results of Nite et al (2024), the LIV is delegitimized as a sportswashing project including several negative attitudes towards Saudi Arabia and people from the Arabian Peninsula. These contradictory

statements of interviewees highlight the complexity of fan perspectives, showcasing a nuanced interaction between institutional framing and varied interpretations by fans.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The results indicate that the LIV Tour could address needs that the PGA Tour failed to satisfy for some fans, thereby legitimizing the tournament series. Fans' different needs reflect diverse expectations and values among golf fans. This result suggests that a potential merger will struggle to reconcile these conflicting perceptions. From a theoretical angle the example of sportswashing demonstrates that fans develop legitimizations and delegitimizations independently of the organization's framing. They also refer to existing beliefs and public discourses beyond the influence of the two organisations.

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Towards A More Differentiated Understanding Of Organisational Change – A Conceptual Framework For Cross-Case Processual Analysis Of Voluntary Sports Organisations

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Aim

This paper describes a comprehensive conceptual framework for cross-case processual analysis of organisational change (e.g. professionalisation, digitalisation) within voluntary sports organizations (VSOs). Such transformative processes often yield not only desired but also undesired outcomes, possibly influenced by the unique characteristics of VSOs as interest organisations, such as democratic decision-making and voluntary work. The reasons behind these outcomes are typically multifaceted, making accurate reconstruction challenging. Processual analysis helps unravel the complexities of these processes, shedding light on contexts and actions that either foster or impede change. Cross-case processual analysis (Langley, 1999) aims at revealing recurring mechanisms behind both positive and negative outcomes by comparing interrelationships among contexts, actions and outcomes of change processes across cases.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

In the field of general management, processual analysis is widely recognised as a research approach to organisational change, extensively documented in methodological literature and employed in numerous empirical studies, primarily focusing on for-profit enterprises (Langley & Tsoukas, 2017). However, its application in sport management research remains relatively limited, with only a few studies adopting this approach (e.g. Girginov & Sandanski, 2008; Lang et al.,

2020), but without conducting cross-case analyses.

The proposed conceptual framework draws upon fundamental work on process research (Pettigrew, 1990; Langley, 1999), a sport-specific conceptualisation of organisational change in the context of professionalisation (Nagel et al., 2015) and insights from more recent literature on process research (e.g. Langley & Tsoukas, 2017).

Conceptual Framework

The framework comprises premises regarding the following key elements:

1) Theoretical framework: We have developed a customised theoretical framework that unifies Pettigrew's (1990) conceptualisation of process research with Nagel et al.'s (2015) sport-specific multi-level framework of organisational change, serving as a foundation for cross-case processual analysis (see also Lang et al., 2020). This theoretical framework encompasses the process parts of context, action, content and outcome, which are observed on the sport organisation, external environment (e.g. umbrella organisation, sponsors) and internal environment (e.g. individual members, member organisations) levels.

2) Case selection: After defining the targeted content of the change process (e.g. the implementation of an executive office staffed with paid personnel within a sports club), it is necessary to identify cases exhibiting maximum variety regarding this change process, including both successful and unsuccessful cases.

3) Data collection: Given our retrospective approach to cross-case processual analysis, recommended data collection methods include document analysis (e.g. organigram, strategic concepts) and expert interviews with key actors that were directly involved in the process. Additionally, integrating the perspectives from both the internal and external environments can be achieved through focus groups.

4) Data analysis: Events occurring within a change process are systematically categorized into context, action and outcome through deductive coding. Inductive coding techniques are then applied within these predefined

categories to capture the specific content of each event. Utilizing visual mapping techniques, as outlined by Langley (1999), facilitates the reconstruction of the interplay among contextual factors, actions taken and resulting outcomes. The cross-case analysis involves a comparative examination of coded data and visual maps across multiple cases to identify recurring process mechanisms.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

We have developed and applied this conceptual framework in our current research project focusing on the professionalisation processes of sports clubs. The primary findings from cross-case processual analyses indicate that (1) change processes proceed if promoting contexts and actions outweigh hindering ones and that (2) hindering contexts (e.g. limited time resources) and actions (e.g. resisting board members) are related to negative outcomes (e.g. unclear allocation of tasks, board members leaving the organisation). The conference presentation will include specific results from both the case studies and cross-case analyses, accompanied by visual maps of the processes. By providing a structured approach for comprehending the mechanisms underlying organisational change within VSOs, this framework holds the potential to advance processual research within the field of sport management. The empirical findings garnered from using this framework may equip practitioners with valuable guidance for navigating the complexities of organisational change within VSOs and effectively managing such transitions.

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Perceptions of Safe Sport Practices and Decision-Making in Canadian Community Sport Organizations

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Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this research is to examine the capacity and decision-making of community sport organizations (CSOs) related to the implementation of safe sport practices and the prevention of maltreatment. Much of the research on safe sport has been conducted within the high performance/elite context. Yet, locally-based CSOs are the entry point to organized sport participation for many Canadians and offer opportunities for participation in both recreational and competitive sport. It is therefore essential that we critically examine how CSOs practice and make decisions related to safe and abuse-free sport. Specifically, this study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What practices are currently being implemented to manage safe sport in CSOs and how are these influenced by sport governing bodies?
2. What factors impact club leaders' ability to make decisions about safe sport policies and practices (e.g., awareness, attitude, previous experience)?

The outcomes of this research will inform best practices by highlighting what CSOs are doing to prevent and address maltreatment, and the factors that facilitate – and deter – them from such engagement.

Literature Review

Safe sport has been identified as paramount to the health and well-being of all community sport participants stakeholders (Parnell & Krustup, 2018). There is a growing need to focus on safe community sport practices to ensure that everyone can participate in a healthy sport environment without threat of harm or any form of maltreatment or violence (Forsdike & Fullagar, 2021). To support this, research has identified various aspects of safe sport management in the CSO context. For example, Vertommen et al. (2016) examined

the feasibility of different reporting systems to prevent maltreatment. McCullough and Safai (2022) have explored the impact of organizational culture on maltreatment for youth athletes noting that how an organization expresses care towards those participants is paramount to athlete retention and wellbeing. Forsdike and Fullagar (2021) examined the key gaps and challenges for sport organizations' responses to violence against women in community sport and found that further research and organizational change is needed in areas such as cultural norms, capacity to respond, and the physical and digital environment of sport. In addition to these focused studies, further research is needed to uncover the specific practices that are currently being implemented in Canadian CSOs and the factors influencing leader decision-making in order to prevent and address maltreatment in community sport.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

The research involves semi-structured interviews (N = 16) with CSO Presidents across different team and individual sports in Canada. The interviews were conducted online via Zoom and transcribed verbatim. Data collection is now complete and analysis is currently underway using reflexive thematic analysis techniques (Braun & Clarke, 2021) to generate inductive themes and identify relationships between themes. Data analysis is anticipated to be complete by June 2024.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Preliminary analysis demonstrates that CSOs are taking on a wide variety of safe sport practices including promoting parent and coach education, policy development and implementation (e.g., «rule of two»), tracking tools, and reporting mechanisms to address incidents and promote environments that are free from harm. The findings indicate that the degree of support CSOs receive from their provincial and national sport organizations is a key factor in their ability to advance safe sport practices. For example, when clubs are able to readily draw on policy and guidelines prepared by their governing bodies, they are more confident in their decision-making processes and responsive to the needs of their stakeholders in promoting a harm-free sport environment. The presentation will share examples of how CSOs have undertaken

decision-making processes related to safe sport and discuss the potential for improved practices in the future.

Conclusion, Contribution and Implications

The research program provides important new insight on the landscape of safe sport practices in Canadian CSOs through the voices of community sport leaders. The research will address a significant knowledge gap related to what CSOs are currently doing related to safe sport practices, and how their decision-making processes can be enhanced to support a community sport culture that delivers «quality, inclusive, accessible, welcoming, and safe sport experiences» (UCCMS, 2022, p. 1). The study provides an important foundation for a systematic investigation on a Canada-wide scale.

Organizational Change in Hockey Canada: A Quantitative Analysis of Policy Impact?

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Aim and Research Questions

This study employs a quantitative approach to analyze patterns of maltreatment within Hockey Canada. It aims to unpack the dynamics of organizational change through the lens of deinstitutionalization—a process where long-established norms, values, and practices are dismantled or significantly altered within an organization (Gilmore & Sillince, 2013; Newman, 2000; O'Brien & Slack, 1996). Specifically, this research investigates how Hockey Canada responded to increasing concerns about maltreatment by implementing various organizational changes throughout 2022-2023. These changes are examined in the context of their scope and depth, focusing on modifications to policy (Burke, 2022).

The research questions are formulated to: (1) Identify the prevailing patterns of maltreatment incidents within Hockey Canada; (2) Examine how organizational characteristics influence the frequency and severity of these incidents; and (3) Assess the effectiveness of current organizational strategies in mitigating maltreatment.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Within the literature on organizational change, the concept of deinstitutionalization refers to the process where established beliefs and practices either weaken or disappear entirely. This transformation often results from a combination of political, functional, and social pressures originating both within and outside the organization (Gilmore & Sillince, 2013, p.315; O'Brien & Slack, 1999). These pressures can prompt changes that are either revolutionary, involving dramatic shifts, or evolutionary, entailing gradual modifications (Greenwood & Hining, 1996).

In the specific context of Hockey Canada, these pressures have arisen from various sectors including government, business, and the public that have to contribute to pressures

for organizations to change (see Feddersen et al., 2020). These environmental pressures necessitated significant alterations in management practices within Hockey Canada, particularly in how maltreatment issues are governed and managed.

Our study documents these changes by analyzing governance structures, policy adaptations, and management practices through quantitative organizational data. By doing so, it extends the body of knowledge established by recent research on maltreatment in sports organizations, such as the studies by Roberts et al. (2020) and Willson et al. (2022), with a particular focus on hockey within the Canadian context. This approach not only highlights the specific organizational responses to external and internal pressures but also assesses their effectiveness in addressing the challenges of maltreatment in sports.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

The research employs a quantitative approach, utilizing descriptive and segmented data analysis to delineate the patterns and trends of maltreatment incidents reported within Hockey Canada over three seasons (2021-2024). The independent third party data captures anonymous complaints of maltreatment for adjudication, while the suspensions data records observed infractions resulting in penalties, both providing critical insights into the patterns and management of maltreatment within Hockey Canada.

To further explore the impact of organizational variables on these patterns, multivariate regression and hierarchical linear modeling will be conducted. The hierarchical model will account for nested data structures—such as incidents nested within divisions, which are further nested within regional organizations—to accurately assess the impact at multiple levels of organizational influence.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Results will be comprehensively available at the time of the EASM 2024 conference, offering a robust analysis of maltreatment trends. We anticipate that the findings will demonstrate clear correlations between various organizational aspects—such as

policies, structures, and communication practices—and the prevalence of maltreatment within Hockey Canada. This analysis aims to deepen our understanding of how specific organizational elements contribute to or deter maltreatment incidents, with a particular focus on the implications for athlete welfare. The findings from this study may offer valuable insights into the broader dynamics of organizational change and maltreatment mitigation strategies applicable across various sports organizations facing similar challenges.

The discussion will integrate these findings into a broader theoretical framework of organizational change (e.g., evolutionary, revolutionary) while offering insight into the deinstitutionalization process. A critical examination of organizational changes will be featured, providing quantitative evidence regarding maltreatment. Hence, this study will offer insights into the changes, policy impact assessment, and governance mechanisms, as well as the meaningful interactions that reveal the underlying mechanisms and dynamics within organizations. These dynamics significantly impact the occurrence and management of maltreatment, providing valuable information for both practitioners and scholars interested in enhancing athlete safety through organizational strategies.

The study will contribute to the discourse in organizational change by delineating how specific organizational variables influenced maltreatment within a major national sports organization. It will offer practical implications for policymakers and administrators to implement structural and policy reforms, enhancing the effectiveness of strategies to combat maltreatment within Hockey Canada.

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Drivers and Barriers for HRM Gender DEI Policies in Sport Governing Bodies

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Aim and Research Questions

Given women's underrepresentation in sport leadership positions (e.g., Lesch et al., 2023; Wicker & Kerwin, 2022), the design and implementation of human resource management (HRM) gender diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies are considered an effective approach to change institutionalized habits (Yang & Konrad, 2011) of sport governing bodies (SGBs). The aim of this study is to explore the design and implementation process of HRM gender DEI policies in Canadian and German SGBs. The following research questions were addressed: How are HRM gender DEI policies designed and implemented in SGBs? What is the role of institutional pressures as drivers or barriers in the policy development and implementation process? The study provides insights on HRM gender DEI policies in SGBs in two countries that share some similarities (e.g., federated system) but also differences with regard to governmental influence on policy design and implementation (Scheerder et al., 2017), and also regarding women's representation on the boards of SGBs, reflected by a share of 35% women in Canadian SGBs (Wicker & Kerwin, 2022) and 20.1% women in German SGBs (Lesch et al., 2023).

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Formalized HRM gender DEI policies could be an effective approach to increasing gender diversity and changing traditional management practices (Yang & Konrad, 2011). Institutional theory states that organizations are shaped by institutions, potentially resulting in decreased unquestioned habits (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Organizational policy modifications result from coercive (i.e., formal rules), mimetic (i.e., adoption to other organizations), and normative (i.e., professionalization) pressures (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Coercive pressure is used by Sport Canada (2011) for SGBs to have HRM gender DEI policies, while such a practice does not exist for German SGBs. A precondition for the perception of mimetic pressure is awareness of gender issues. However, German leaders do not consider HRM gender DEI policies as relevant (German Olympic Sports Confederation [DOSB], 2022). Furthermore, normative pressure could be a driver for policy design and implementation, since SGBs become increasingly professional to cope with increasing expectations (Ruoranen et al., 2016)

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Data were collected from June 2023 to April 2024 using semi-structured interviews with 16 leaders (eight per country; e.g., board member, managing director) of German and Canadian SGBs. To ensure a heterogeneous sample, SGBs with different shares of women board members were selected. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed thematically following the six-step procedure described by Braun and Clarke (2022).

Results/Findings and Discussion

The key themes emphasize the role of the board and other key actors within the SGBs in shaping design and implementation of HRM DEI policies. Moreover, the themes outline the role of coercive, mimetic, and normative pressures in relation to the way in which design and implementation of HRM policy is taken up in these SGBs. The findings suggest that HRM gender DEI policies are scarce in German SGBs and more prevalent in Canadian SGBs. In both countries, the board and its gender composition play a subordinate role in the process. The German data do not reveal individuals who perceive coercive or mimetic pressure. The consideration of HRM gender DEI policies is seen as something that would complicate recruitment processes. Canadian participants emphasize coercive pressures from Sport Canada and describe mimetic pressures according to the use of other SGBs and non-sport organizations to develop and implement policies. Normative pressures from higher sport authorities were perceived by participants from both countries.

The findings suggest that coercive pressures are an important driver towards the

development and implementation of HRM gender DEI policies. In Canada, (sports) political pressure and incentives exist to implement HRM gender DEI policies in SGBs (Sport Canada, 2011). In contrast, Germany is an example of low pressure since there is only a non-binding recommendation for the implementation of a gender quota for leadership positions by the DOSB (2022). The missing implementation processes within German SGBs underline that a lack of pressure can result in individuals reverting to or relying on traditional management structures, characterized by the reproduction of habitual actions (Spaaij et al., 2020).

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The results provide evidence that pressures imposed on institutions are important for understanding the (non-)development and implementation of HRM gender DEI policies in SGBs. Based on institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), the findings suggest that differences in women's representation on the board of SGBs between countries may be explained by the different pressures of institutions in the SGBs' environment. Limitations of the study should be considered in future studies, for example by investigating HRM gender DEI policies in other countries and by conducting interviews with more than one board member from each SGB. The implementation of policies in response to pressures might take time, and longitudinal data could contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of SGBs' behavior.

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Organisational Change Within Sport Governing Bodies: The Role of Trust and Organisational Culture in Merger Decision-Making

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Aim and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine a merger as a radical change of sport governing bodies (SGBs). The research aims to understand the role of trust and organisational culture for processing and implementing the decision to merge. The study investigates the following research questions: (1) Which critical situations and conflicting issues were evident during the merger negotiations? (2) How did SGBs' leaders foster trust between the negotiators? (3) What are the regulatory and procedural characteristics of the new SGB? (4) How do the SGB's leaders foster a shared organisational culture?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

According to Epstein (2005), a merger involves, first, the creation of a merger vision and rationale. Second, merger-related actions need to be negotiated by the organisations. Third, planned measures for implementing the merger must be executed. On each of these stages, a shared understanding is required – within and between the organisations involved. This requirement is a challenge for the leadership, assuming different priorities pursued by the potentially merging partners, and specific organisational procedures. In addition, voluntary SGBs are characterised by rather weak formal decision-making conditions (Thiel & Mayer, 2009). The resulting personalisation of procedures mainly follows informal regulations of organisational culture which are broadly accepted but have never been subject to formal approval (Schein, 2016). In the context of radical change, trust has an outstanding relevance for interaction and cooperation (Fahrner, 2024), for example when developing amendments to the SGBs' statutes and a majority at the SGBs' annual general meeting. Once a merger is agreed and

decided, setting up the joint SGB means not only implementing the amended statutes – but primarily building up a distinct organisational culture. Related informal regulations initially remain unaffected by efforts to change formal decision premises (Barnhill et al., 2021). Rather, it is up to the decision-makers to create a corresponding (revised) culture by joint leadership and cooperation (Schroeder, 2010).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The study relates to the merger process of two German state-level SGBs. Both SGBs officially agreed to merge in summer 2023, and are currently taking first steps for implementing this decision. To ensure in-depth insights into the issues of interest, the study comprises data from organisational documents (e.g. statutes, code of ethics) and semi-structured interviews with both former presidents and actual board members of the merged SGB. Eight interviews were conducted between February 2024 and April 2024 via online video conferencing (60 minutes duration on average). The data is analysed by content analysis following a deductive-inductive approach (Mayring, 2021).

Results and Discussion

The data indicates that the decision to merge is marking a milestone after more than five years of negotiations. The resolution of asset and financing issues, and the harmonisation of league-based competition are named as the most conflicting issues. Progress and success of this endeavour primarily relied on the volunteer leaders involved and their shared vision. To harmonise key issues, working groups with mixed representation of both SGBs were established. Here, trust was mentioned as a crucial success factor, actively fostered between the negotiating parties through: (1) Shared experiences of successful cooperation in a joint organisation for sporting operations; (2) filling of working group positions on a parity basis; and (3) decisions on SGB board members at the very end of the process. Contrary to an ideal procedure (Epstein, 2005), regulatory specifications of the merged SGB are not yet fully in place. Rather, they need to be defined in parallel to the ongoing implementation process. Moreover, different organisational cultures of the former SGBs permeate the merged SGB.

Although obviously different in both organisations, informal regulations, for example on the functioning of the boards, were not discussed in advance (Schein, 2016). The board members' different habits of interaction and decision-making still need to be consolidated. Here, the president plays a key role as both leader and moderator within the board. Team events are intended to develop a shared organisational culture within the leadership.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The study investigates a SGB merger as a particular setting of radical change, enabling a fine-grained view into the role of trust and organisational culture for processing and implementing this decision. The analysis provides theoretical implications. For example, the merger is primarily based on informal agreements between the leaders and their shared understanding of cooperation. Thus, informal agreements on quasi-formal conditions and trusting personal relationships constitute key factors and preconditions (Fahrner, 2024). From managerial perspectives, getting to understand the respective counterparts in shared working groups and establishing a joint forerunner organisation seems to be a beneficial governance set-up. However, actively and purposefully establishing a distinct organisational culture is a major challenge, but a crucial success factor. When failing in this respect, the merger can also end in failure – even after the legal decision has been made (Carleton & Lineberry, 2004).

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Managing Ethical Behavior in Sports Organizations: An Exploration of Implementation Processes Defined in the Codes of Ethics of Leading Sports Organizations

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Aim and Research Question

The introduction of the International Olympics Committee's independent Ethics Commission in 1999 opened the path to formal governance and controlling structures of ethical behavior in all sports organizations. In 2009, the Olympic Congress then approved the Basic Universal Principles of Good Governance within the Olympic Movement requiring all connected sport governing bodies to adopt ethical principles and rules in the form of an ethical code.

A key question that arises in the context of the introduction of ethical codes is how these are actually implemented in the organization. From a managerial perspective, a successful implementation relies on clear processes and standards that allow for a comparison with actual performance and, furthermore, generate insights for corrective measures (Hoye et al., 2015). This paper aims to provide insights into the current state of affairs of managing ethical behavior in leading sports organizations by analyzing the processes and structures stated in their codes of ethics. The research questions are: Which structures and processes to implement ethical behavior are present in the codes of ethics of the 76 international sports federations recognized by IOC? How do these structures and processes differ between them?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Stead et al. (1990) identified various strategies for managing ethical behavior in organizations including open discussions about ethics, whistleblowing systems, training, ethics units, and rewarding and sanctioning behaviors. The few studies undertaken on sports organizations and their

management of ethics focus on the perceptions of the ethical climate through surveys of employees. For instance, Constandt et al. (2019) examine amateur football organizations in the Flemish region, while Riivari and Heikkinen (2024) perform a similar analysis on Finnish top sports organizations.

Regarding other industries, the research studying ethical codes has developed tools and mechanisms to categorize and analyze code characteristics. Kaptein and Schwartz (2008) summarized the different strategies and methodological approaches present in the literature to understand code effectiveness. The approach selected to guide our study is that by Garegnani et al. (2015) in which 248 companies' ethical codes were codified for a quantitative analysis.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

This study considers the IOC and 76 international sports federations recognized by it. To answer the research questions, we analyze the publicly available code of ethics of each organization using the analytical framework for conducting content analyses developed by Mayring (2000). Its framework outlines the categorization process which is used to group codes with similar processes and structures to implement ethical behavior. The initial categories are based on the strategies for managing ethical behavior proposed by Stead et al. (1990). If needed, new categories will also be developed in a deductive procedure. Following the example of Garegnani et al. (2015), we eventually develop a scoring model to quantitatively assess the ethical codes.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Results will be ready for presentation at the conference. Preliminary insights show a low presence of implementation structures and processes in ethical codes and some meaningful differences have already been identified. The latter applies to the actions under scrutiny, persons covered, organizational procedures, and sanctions. For instance, in terms of coverage, the reach of the code can be limited to employees in management positions, all officials, or all officials and athletes in the organization.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This study is the first to examine the ethical codes of the IOC and international sport governing bodies regarding structures and processes to implement ethical behavior. The developed scoring system allows a comparison of the codes and an analysis of best practices. This is important because better ethical practices in international federations should have a spillover effect into lower levels in the sport pyramid given the exemplary function of the international federations within the sport system.

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Analysis Of The Summer Olympic Games - A Cluster Analysis Of Hungary And Its Competitors 1996-2016

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As sport and business have become more deeply intertwined, and with it the increasingly intense competition for success in international sporting events between nations, community resources for elite sport have increased significantly over the past decade (De Bosscher, Shibli, Westerbeek, & van Bottenburg, 2015). While the demand for sporting success has increased, the number of medals that can be awarded in sporting events is roughly given, with only three places on the podium, and as a consequence the return on investment for each additional resource and, with it, the amount of extra output that can be generated is diminishing (Shibli & Bingham, 2007). Unlike economic competition, sport is a zero-sum game; the only way to get ahead is to get behind someone by beating someone. The number of medals that can be awarded at the Olympics is a given, with only three places on the podium, but at the same time these successes are important for the national consciousness and self-esteem of all countries. In the history of the Summer Olympics, Hungary has almost always been among the top ten nations in the medal table, but our country's success has been on the decline in recent decades, despite a steady increase in resources. The assumption underlying the macro-analysis is that sporting talent is uniformly distributed evenly around the world, which means that all countries have an equal chance to produce world-class athletes (Grimes, Kelly, & Rubin, 1974; Levine, 1974; Kiviaho & Mäkelä, 1978; Morton, 2002; Coyle, 2009; Bale, 2003; Baker, Schorer, Cogley, Schimmer, & Wattie, 2009). However, several authors have rejected this, citing two independent macroeconomic variables, the gross national income (per capita) of countries and population size have consistently explained more than 50% of international sporting success (De Bosscher, De Knop, & Heyndels, 2003b; Jokl, Karvonen, Kihlberg, Koskela, & Noro, 1958; Johnson & Ali, 2004; Kiviaho & Mäkelä, 1978; Levine, 1974; Morton, 2002; Novikov & Maximenko, 1972;

Lui & Suen, 2008). These earlier studies used different methods to measure Olympic success, such as the number of medals or their size in points, while the most recent recent papers use the market share of the country as an explanatory variable. De Bosscher et al. (2008) have created a standardised measure, which is based on the number of points gained as a percentage of the total number of points won. Since the number of points awarded for a given medals in a given sport and the number of events in each game has changed over time (and, to a lesser extent, the number of points per event), the number of points available per event has also changed. This indicator is not only to give a more nuanced approximation of performance between countries, but also to highlight differences between sports and to identify the impact of sport policy (De Bosscher, Heyndel, De Knop, van Bottenburg, & Shibli, 2008).

The aim of this research is to investigate whether, over the past decades, patterns can be identified in the variation of countries' Summer Olympic performance.

Several databases were used for the analysis. One is the public dataset available on Kaggle, which contains the starters and medal winners of all Summer and Winter Olympic Games (kaggle.com, n.d.). The database contains all the athletes and medal winners of the Summer and Winter Games 1896-2016. In addition to the results, the database contains additional basic data on the athletes (e.g. height and weight) that are not relevant for the present research. This was supplemented with data on countries' per capita gross domestic product and population from the World Bank's public application (The World Bank, n.d.), and the Wikipedia Summer Olympics glossary was used to quantify the popularity of the sports (Wikipedia, 2024). To distinguish between countries' elite sport strategies, we created different indicators that can be classified into 4 groups: indicators of effectiveness, indicators of country size, indicators of balance between athletes and sports, and sport characteristics. A non-parametric K-means cluster analysis was performed on the 15 indicators using the «kml3d» package of the «R» program. In the cluster analysis, we only included countries that won at least one medal in every Summer Olympics between 1996 and 2016, but were/will not be a host country between 1988 and 2024. Countries that have previously

hosted or will host an Olympic Games had to be excluded from the analysis because the fact of hosting an Olympic Games significantly determines the performance of a given country, typically their performance peaks at a domestic event, rises significantly 4-8 years before and falls in the year after the event - this would significantly distort the clustering results. To interpret the results, we ran a regression model for each indicator with ('cluster model') and without the cluster effect ('null model') and calculated the difference in explanatory power of the two models with R². As a result of the clustering, three groups of countries were formed: Underdog, Declining powers and Runners. The primary clustering variables for these country groups were found to be the indicators of concentration (by sport), start rate, medalists by sport-population, competition (by country), concentration (by athlete) by sport-population, and participation (%).

The members of the «Declining powers» had an outstanding initial performance, but the trend shows a strong decline; a common feature is that sport concentration shows a variable increasing trend over the period analysed, i.e. their performance is increasingly dependent on the performance of a narrow group of sports.

For the «underdog» group of countries, both their sport and athlete concentrations have been decreasing, i.e. they have been able to perform in an increasing number of sports and with an increasing number of athletes.

The «Runners» cluster typically includes African countries that have achieved outstanding success in athletics in the running events during the period analysed. This is where the concentration of sports is highest, as these countries medal in one or two sports.

For nations that aim to achieve sustained success in elite sport, a necessary precondition is long-term investment in elite sport (De Bosscher, Shibli, & Weber, 2019). If a country designs its elite sport funding system to exclude sports that do not meet expected standards (e.g., performance), it may eventually yield diminishing returns (Shibli and Bingham, 2008) and nations become path dependent.

Our study can help nations to recognise which high-performance sport strategies, taking into account their geographical, economic and historical circumstances, will help them to achieve sustainable sporting success.

Exploring the Relation between Ethics Cultures and Fraud Occurrence in Community Sport Organizations

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Aims and research question

Organizational fraud, defined as “those practices that violate organizational rules and norms for personal or group gain” (Kihl et al., 2018), is detrimental to the functioning of non-profit community sport organizations (CSOs) (Archambeault et al., 2015). This research explores manifestations and perceived severance of organizational fraud in CSOs, as well as the role of ethical culture. Our research questions are:

RQ1: What are the predominant types of fraud observed within CSOs, and how does ethical culture within these CSOs relates to the occurrence of fraud?

RQ2: How do severity perceptions relate to the occurrence of illicit proceeds within CSOs?

Theoretical background and literature review

Sport management research has provided insights on organizational fraud antecedents in CSOs (Misener et al., 2023; Souvenir et al., 2023; Wicker et al., 2022). However, it is less apparent how widespread specific types of sport fraud are and to what extent stakeholders in CSOs perceive different types of organizational fraud as a severe threat to the CSO. Its hidden nature makes it difficult to accurately map its occurrence and consequences (Archambeault et al., 2015). This study differentiates two categories of fraud, including asset misappropriation and financial statement fraud. Regarding organizational fraud antecedents, ethical culture is considered an important element that can either inhibit or facilitate fraud. Ethical culture represents the collective perceptions held by people about the conditions within the CSOs that stimulate ethical conduct (Kaptein, 2020). The

Corporate Ethical Virtues model (CEV-32), as conceptualized by Kaptein (2008), distinguishes three dimensions to ethical culture, constituted by so-called virtues. These dimensions are 1) self-regulating capacity (incl., clarity of rules and congruency of leaders), 2) self-correcting capacity (incl., transparency, the ability to sanction and the openness to discuss ethical issues), and 3) self-sufficient capacity (incl. mutual support and feasibility of goals).

Research design, methodology and data analysis

Two focus groups were conducted to develop a questionnaire on fraud in CSOs. The first focus group (n=6) consisted of academics (i.e., sport management, sport pedagogy, criminology). The second focus group (n=7) consisted of practitioners (i.e., sport practitioners, law enforcement). A total of 15 items were formulated to cover two main types of fraud: asset misappropriation and financial statement fraud (ACFE, 2022). The Corporate Ethical Virtues Model (CEV-32) (Kaptein, 2008) was used to measure ethical culture and its subdimensions. A series of CSOs in Belgium were asked to participate in a study on (un)ethical behavior. CSOs were contacted by email, phone, during trainings or events, and through federations’ newsletters to participate in a study on (un)ethical behavior. Active CSO members (e.g., athletes, coaches, and board members) were asked to assess the occurrence and the perception of severity of different types of fraud within their club, as well as to evaluate their club’s ethical culture.

Results, findings and discussion

The dataset consisted of 373 respondents from 99 CSOs and 27 sports. Misleading of sponsors, and theft (i.e., asset misappropriation), and payments in illicit funds and manipulation of invoices (i.e., financial statement fraud) were the most common types of fraud. Ethical culture – including its subdimensions (Kaptein, 2008) – showed significant negative relationships with all fraud items, ranging from $-.169(p<.001)$ to $-.528(p<.001)$ for asset misappropriation items and $-.330(p<.001)$ to $-.463(p<.001)$ for financial statement fraud items. When asked about the severity of asset misappropriation, only 2% said they did not consider it serious, while 43.5% did not consider financial statement fraud serious. Severity perceptions had a

mediating role in the relationship between ethical culture and fraud types, suggesting that individual perceptions account for some of the relationships found.

Conclusion, contribution and implications

This research investigated the types of fraud CSOs are generally confronted with, and highlights how ethical culture and severity perceptions influence the reported occurrence of CSO fraud. Contrary to existing literature (ACFE, 2022), our findings suggest that that financial statement fraud may be more common than asset misappropriation. One explanation could be that the latter is generally done to benefit the club, while asset misappropriation implies taking resources away from the club. This study advocates for more research on stakeholders in CSOs' perceptions of the acceptance of organizational fraud in CSOs, either because of personal beliefs of the severity of fraud or of perceived virtues in the ethical culture of the CSO.

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Will Puma Steal Olympic Gold? A Case Study of Rule 40 Implementation for Paris 2024

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This is a practitioner-focused abstract.

Aim

The researchers aim to provide legal insights as well as practical guidance for sport practitioners advising athletes and brands about the legal and marketing dynamics of ambush marketing at the Olympic Games in Paris.

Background

Ambush marketing continues to evolve and proliferate around mega-sporting events, particularly at the Olympic Games, where it poses a significant commercial threat to event delivery and to the interests of official sponsors (Abeza, 2020). Despite more sophisticated ambush prevention strategies, solving this issue remains challenging from both legal and brand protection standpoints. Olympic organizers have deployed an array of legal and marketing tools, including special trademark legislation, social media policies, and regulation of athlete marketing to curb the practice (Grady, 2023). Rule 40 of the Olympic Charter has proven to be the most effective tool in their arsenal, particularly for managing social media impacts by restricting the use and commercialization of athletes' images and performances during the Olympic marketing period by unaffiliated brands (Ellis, Parent, & Séguin, 2016). More recently, adjustments to Rule 40 have granted athletes limited commercial leeway to be featured in generic advertising from non-official sponsors during the Olympics, provided these advertisements do not make a connection to the Olympics and must not escalate during the Games (Meyers, 2024).

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the legal and marketing challenges anticipated with the implementation of Rule 40 at the

Paris Olympics, particularly concerning Team USA and the USOPC's published guidance. By analyzing potential marketing scenarios for Paris 2024 and anticipated organizer responses, the research seeks to enhance understanding among sport practitioners and scholars about how athletes and brands can strategically navigate the commercial landscape of the Olympics. The study also considers global sponsorship strategies, like those of Puma, to illustrate potential legal and marketing issues that could arise during the Olympic marketing period and have impact in major domestic markets.

Design and Implementation

This analysis uses a case study approach to examine the anticipated legal and marketing maneuvers by key stakeholders for Paris 2024 and considers these actions considering ambush marketing at previous recent Olympics. The study reviews published documents about Rule 40 guidance for athletes from the US Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) and considers marketing campaigns announced by major global brands such as Puma. These sources provide a foundation for predicting and analyzing potential legal challenges and marketing strategies that may play out during the Games.

Reflections, Practical implications, and Future Development

As an Olympic bylaw, Rule 40 mandates that all competitors must adhere to its regulations under threat of sanctions, including disqualification. This creates a quasi-legal framework where the regulations have the effect of laws on those impacted, specifically athletes. For Team USA athletes, Rule 40 allows marketing engagements with non-official Olympic sponsors in two specific ways: through generic advertising that omits any Olympic references or intellectual property, and via limited social media posts where personal brands can congratulate athletes on their performance (Team USA, 2023). These activities must be registered with Team USA along with entering into a Personal Sponsor Commitment (PSC), a contractual agreement that ensures adherence to Rule 40. Puma's marketing strategies for Paris 2024, which include using high-profile athletes like LeBron James as brand ambassadors and installing large, branded statues near central Paris,

exemplify the ongoing challenges posed by ambush marketing. Despite not being an official event sponsor, Puma's approach, which likely would be characterized as classic ambushing by the IOC, leverages the relaxed regulations of Rule 40 to maximize brand visibility without direct Olympic association or infringement of Olympic trademarks (Stewart, 2024).

Puma's planned marketing activities highlight the nuanced ways non-official sponsors may navigate the restrictions imposed by Rule 40. By avoiding the use of protected Olympic marks and strategically planning their marketing activities, Puma exemplifies how brands can creatively penetrate the Olympic marketing arena while adhering to the letter of the rule. This approach raises questions about the effectiveness of Rule 40 in its current form and suggests that commercial rather than legal responses are increasingly favored to address the complex issues involving Olympic stakeholders. This requires clear guidance, so athletes understand their marketing rights while also safeguarding the exclusivity of official sponsors to preserve the commercial integrity of the Olympics.

The case analysis exploring the application of Rule 40 to prevent ambush marketing at the Paris 2024 Olympics underscores the complex interplay between legal provisions and marketing strategies in the sports industry. This analysis contributes to the broader academic discourse on whether ambush marketing should primarily be addressed through legal mechanisms or commercial strategies (Ellis et al., 2011). As stakeholders continue to adapt to the evolving commercial landscape surrounding the Olympics, this presentation will offer keen industry insights and scholarly debate to analysing potential outcomes and effectiveness of current regulatory frameworks being relied upon to safeguard Olympic sponsorship rights.

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Ready or Not, AI is Coming to the Olympics: Legal and Marketing Considerations

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This abstract relates to professional practice.

Aim

The steadfast advancement of digital development, particularly the introduction of artificial intelligence (AI), is causing significant transformation across various sectors including the sport industry. This technological evolution has unlocked new opportunities for sport marketers to implement innovative sponsorship activation strategies during mega sport events (Minardi, 2023). As AI continues to reshape sport event sponsorship, it opens a plethora of legal challenges for sport event stakeholders to safeguard their commercial interests (Najjar, 2023). For example, recent events like the Los Angeles Chargers game against Miami Dolphins featured an unconventional presence in the stands – AI robots actively cheering on the Chargers. This intriguing spectacle was initially part of a movie promotion and revealed the potential for creative marketing approaches during the game (Woodroof, 2023). As such, while marketing using AI presents new opportunities for novel marketing and promotions, it may also introduce potential challenges, particularly in the form of ambush marketing by rival brands aimed at sport fans.

Background and Purpose

As major sporting events progressively attract large global audience, they often stand out as coveted arenas for ambush marketing. More recently, ambush marketing has become more sophisticated with the integration of innovative campaigns in an ever-changing technological environment and through new media channels, including social media (Grady, 2023). Despite advanced research on ambush marketing in social media (Grady, 2023), the scholarly discourse on the intersection of AI and ambush marketing is notably absent from existing literature and anti-ambush marketing initiatives. This underscores the imperative for a thorough exploration to capture the multifaceted

nuances of this evolving landscape that demands both scholarly and practical attention. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the potential challenges of AI within the realm of ambush marketing, particularly as it pertains to sport event sponsorship. This research also focuses on the emerging intellectual property challenges facing sport event stakeholders resulting from the increased use of AI. As AI algorithms are programmed on preexisting materials including existing trademarks, the increase of AI-generated content can lead inadvertently lead to trademark infringement and trademark dilution. Given AI's advancing capabilities and its potential impact on sport event sponsorship, it is crucial to determine how to minimize the potential challenges of AI-generated content within the context of ambush marketing, especially at this summer's Olympics.

Design and Implementation

This study employed traditional legal methodology to investigate the theoretical ways and legal bases to navigate the intersection of AI and ambush marketing prevention, focusing on the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) efforts to safeguard the Olympic intellectual property. The researchers analysed the legal mechanisms employed by the IOC to address emerging challenges of ambush marketing activities driven by AI technology. For example, the IOC has traditionally protected the Olympic intellectual property from ambush marketing activities not only through its own bylaws, but through anti-ambush marketing legislations enacted by host countries (IOC, 2023). Additionally, the pervasive nature of social media has led the IOC to regulate athletes' social media engagement during the Olympic Games as athletes can become associated with ambush marketing by endorsing their personal sponsors (Grady, 2023). In response to the evolving marketing landscape caused by AI-generated content, the IOC announced the social and digital media guidelines for Paris 2024 that permit athletes to share photographs and recorded audio or video, but explicitly prohibit "using AI or any AI generated content or outputs" (IOC, 2024). This highlights the significance of understanding how the potential issues posed by AI-generated content are developing around sport event sponsorship.

Outcomes, Reflections and Future Development

The researchers also analysed anti-ambush marketing legislations spanning the past two Olympic Games and examined plans for future Games (e.g., from Tokyo 2020 to LA 2028) to determine if these legal measures are sufficient to safeguard the commercial interests of key Olympic stakeholders, particularly during the period of heightened impact by AI. Despite protecting the Olympic intellectual property such as the symbol, logo, mascots, none of this legislation explicitly encompasses any provision addressing the potential threats posed by AI-generated content. In the current phase of technological evolution presented by AI and the novel legal challenges for Olympic stakeholders, the application of established policies and legal frameworks may be insufficient to address these emerging legal issues (Grady & Kim, 2023).

This presentation will identify potential challenges of ambush marketing prevention posed by AI in the context of sport event sponsorship and brand protection. Using legal analysis to explore the novel concerns that AI may present during sport events, the researchers will provide early insights into understanding potential obstacles that sport organisations may encounter as AI becomes more prevalent in sport. By integrating insights from diverse sources, including legal frameworks and contemporary sport business developments, the researchers can offer scholars and practitioners valuable guidance about how best to protect Olympic intellectual property in the AI era.

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Safeguarding For Whom? A Critical Policy Analyse Of The IOC's Safeguarding Documents

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Aim and Research Questions

This study provides a critical analysis of the athlete safeguarding policies developed by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Although the scope of research on athlete safeguarding has broadened from an initial concentration on sexual misconduct to encompass a holistic perspective on multiple types of non-accidental violence (Solstad & Strandbu, 2019), there remains a lack of in-depth exploration into the safeguarding policy documents. Similar to other sports governing bodies that have neglected athlete safeguarding due to concerns about reputation, ignorance, or complicity (Ardern et al., 2019), the IOC also demonstrated a prolonged period of inaction in the proactive safeguarding of athletes. It was not until 2007 that the IOC issued its inaugural official statement on harassment and abuse. Subsequently, in 2016, a second statement focused on non-accidental violence, followed by the unveiling of the IOC's first toolkit for key stakeholders in 2017. Finally, in 2021, the IOC introduced an 'Action Plan to Strengthen Safe Sport/Safeguarding Across the Olympic Movement.'

The current study aimed to critically analyze the policies regarding athlete safeguarding as presented in the IOC's documents. Specifically, the study sought to address two primary questions: How is the concept of safeguarding articulated and problematized, and what aspects of safeguarding are not problematized within these policy documents.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

This research employs the "What's the Problem Represented to be" (WPR) framework developed by Bacchi (2009) to examine the IOC policy documents on safeguarding. The WPR framework suggests a methodology that diverges from the conventional problem-solving approach, favoring a problem-questioning perspective (Bacchi & Bonham,

2014). Moreover, WPR emphasizes that policies demonstrate how policy developers, in this study IOC, define the policy problems.

Building upon previous studies in sport policies implemented WPR (Lucas & O'Connor, 2021; McRae et al., 2024), the current study applies two of the six WPR questions (Questions 1, What's the problem of safeguarding represented to be? and Question 4; what is left unproblematic in this problem representation?) as posited by the WPR chart (Bacchi, 2012).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The study specifically examined the two most recent policy documents published by the IOC related to safeguarding: the "Action Plan and Toolkit for Safeguarding Across the Olympic Movement" (IOC, 2021) and the "Safeguarding Athletes from Harassment and Abuse in Sport, IOC Toolkit for International Federations (IFs) and National Olympic Committees (NOCs)" (IOC, 2017). As previously mentioned, Bacchi's WPR framework (2009) guided the data analysis in this study, focusing on two selected WPR questions: Question 1 (used primarily for policy clarification) and Question 4 (which highlights aspects ignored by policymakers).

Results/Findings and Discussion

Based on the data analysis, the problematization of safeguarding in IOC documents is largely confined to the safeguarding of athletes during the period of the Olympic Games, a two-week timeline every four years. This left athletes other than Olympic-time vulnerable to safeguarding concerns.

By applying the WPR approach to answer research questions, the study reveals that the IOC's action plan falls short in holding the IOC, as an organization, accountable for safeguarding the athlete. Instead, it primarily emphasizes the IOC's role as a leader within the Olympic Movement and the owner of the Games. Responsibility for athlete safeguarding is then delegated to NOCs, IFs, and the Organizing Committees of the Olympic and Youth Olympics with vague measurement criteria which lack binding and auditing mechanism.

Furthermore, the study highlights a significant unaddressed safeguarding problem concerning the safeguarding of marginalized and vulnerable groups of athletes, including but not limited to those in areas affected by war and conflict potentially leaving them unsafeguarded.

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Investigating the Legitimation Work of the UEFA Financial Fair Play

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Aim and Research Questions

For decades, in its changing institutional environment with emerging issues (e.g., European Super League and club ownership transformation), the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) has faced the issue of maintaining the discipline and rationality of European football (Peeters & Szymanski, 2014). To maintain the fiscal soundness of professional football clubs and enhance competitive balance, UEFA approved Financial Fair Play (FFP) in 2010 and integrated it into club licensing regulations, along with additional requirements for the sustainable success of professional football clubs.

Previous studies adopting an economic (e.g., Plumley et al., 2018) and a legal perspective (e.g., Lindholm, 2010) indicated positive (e.g., revenue enhancement) and negative impacts of FFP (e.g., the dominance of big clubs). However, there is a limited understanding of how UEFA attempts to maintain its influence and authority in European football under increasing institutional pressures. Thus, using an institutional theory approach (Dowling et al., 2024), this study explores the rhetorical legitimation work of UEFA's FFP by focusing on the first decade since its implementation. Drawing on rhetorical legitimation literature (Erkama & Vaara, 2010), we address the following research questions: 1) What rhetorical legitimation strategies were employed by UEFA to maintain the legitimacy of FFP? and 2) What were the types of legitimacy pursued through such strategies?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Legitimacy is defined as “a broadly accepted view or belief that an entity's actions are appropriate within a framework based on social norms, beliefs, and definitions”, while

legitimation is an organizational practice to cultivate legitimacy (Suchman, 1995, p.574). Scholars have paid increasing attention to legitimation efforts within various sport organizations and contexts (Nite et al., 2024; Sant & Mason, 2019). Rhetorical legitimation approaches, such as logos, pathos, and ethos, emphasize the importance of languages and texts in persuading audiences (Erkama & Vaara, 2010; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005). Logos means persuading the audience with rational and logical arguments. Pathos refers to appeals based on emotional and moral arguments. Ethos refers to authority-based legitimation drawing on the speakers' credibility and reputation. The three rhetorical strategies may influence the evaluation of an organization's legitimacy, including pragmatic (the extent to which actions generate positive value for stakeholders), moral (alignment with ethical and societal norms), cognitive (congruence with established institutional routines) legitimacy (Sant & Mason, 2019; Suchman, 1995). Thus, using the rhetorical approach may offer insights into the UEFA's legitimation work in implementing FFP.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

This study adopts a single-case study approach to explore the rhetorical legitimation work of UEFA in implementing FFP. We have collected policy documents related to FFP published by UEFA from 2010 to 2023 (n=39), including but not limited to UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Fair Play Regulations, Procedural Rules Governing the UEFA Club Financial Control Body, and Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) documents related to FFP. News and public statement on the UEFA's official website and social media were also collected (n=55). We employ thematic analysis (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005), and deductive and inductive coding are being conducted.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The preliminary results thus far showed that logos (rational arguments) emphasized that FFP is necessary to address the unstable financial situation of European football, which may be related to pragmatic legitimacy. Moreover, pathos (emotional legitimation) underlined moral values promoting the sustainability of the European football

industry, such as creditors (e.g., team employees and tax authorities) protection, integrity, and fairness of European football, which may influence moral legitimacy. Lastly, ethos (authority-based legitimation) was demonstrated by establishing the Club Financial Control Body that regularly monitors and imposes disciplinary measures in non-compliance cases, enhancing UEFA's credibility in enforcing FFP. This strategy may be related to pragmatic legitimacy due to its direct influence on the interest of teams.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

Employing the rhetorical legitimation approach, this study offers a novel theoretical and practical insights into FFP. Theoretically, our findings contribute to sport legitimacy literature (e.g., Nite et al., 2024) and enhance an understanding of the role of agency in sport (Dowling et al., 2024). This work will also provide practical implications to help sport organizations effectively manage their legitimacy in a consistently changing institutional environment by using rhetorical strategies.

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Institutional Work in Response to Criminal Interference in Community Sport Organizations

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Aim and Research Questions

Community Sport Organizations (CSOs) are increasingly susceptible to criminal interference, posing a significant threat to the integrity of sport clubs as institutions in our society (Bruinsma et al., 2018; Bruinsma et al., 2020). However, empirical investigation and theoretical understanding of this phenomenon remain limited. Particularly lacking is a focus on the organizational dynamics (the 'bad barrel') rather than solely on individual perpetrators (the 'bad apple'). This paper aims to explore one central question arising from the organizational perspective, namely: How do individual and collective actors respond to signals of criminal interference to protect CSOs from deinstitutionalization?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The relationship between sport and organized crime has garnered attention, primarily centering on corruption, match-fixing, illegal betting, and drug trafficking in professional sports (Antonopoulos, 2015; Kihl, 2018). While some research has examined criminal activities within CSOs, like occupational fraud, the focus has been predominantly on the nature and incidences of this behavior in CSOs and the processes that contribute to organizations vulnerabilities to this behavior (Kihl et al., 2021; Souvenir et al., 2023). This paper diverges from existing studies by shifting the focus to the responses of individual and collective actors within CSOs to signals of criminal interference, viewed through the theoretical lens of institutional work (Lawrence et al., 2009).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

This study stems from research conducted by a team of scholars from Utrecht University between 2020 and 2023. Media reports on criminal interference in sports clubs were analyzed, complemented by 21 interviews with various stakeholders. Case studies were then conducted at football clubs where recent signals of criminal interference had emerged. As part of these case studies, 28 interviews were conducted with club officials, trainers, volunteers, and external stakeholders. Data analysis involved qualitative coding using MAXQDA software, ensuring confidentiality and ethical standards were maintained.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The findings reveal that criminal interference in the studied football clubs stemmed from a gradual internal process. Typically, involvement began with soliciting a commercially successful club member or associate to act as a primary sponsor, subsequently allowing the sponsor to expand its influence within the club. Despite concerns raised about the sponsors' reputations, actions to safeguard the club against criminal interference were notably absent. The origin of sponsorship funds or payments made with black money were often overlooked or justified rather than used as grounds to terminate the relationship with the sponsor or limit its influence. Action against suspicious sponsors was only taken under external pressure: in one instance, an investigation by the Fiscal Information & Investigation Service of the Dutch government compelled action against illicit payments. In other cases, the KNVB (Royal Dutch Football Association) compelled football clubs to terminate sponsor relationships with coffeeshops under threat of expulsion from the competition.

Conclusions, contribution, and implication

Contrary to our expectations, signals of criminal interference did not elicit strong reactions within the CSOs studied. Theoretically, there was evidence of institutional work within the club, but it had an almost opposite effect: questionable sponsorships or illicit payments were disregarded, downplayed, or deliberately overlooked to mitigate financial strain on the club. Institutional work as the purposive

action of individual and collective actors to counter criminal interference did not originate from the CSOs themselves, but rather from external actors. Their interventions had a different purpose, focusing on safeguarding broader, more general institutions within Dutch society: ensuring tax compliance and maintaining faith in football clubs as safe havens for sports. This highlights the urgent need for increased vigilance within CSOs to combat criminal interference and promote ethical governance effectively.

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Evolving our Understanding of Safe Sport Education: Studying Canadian Safe Sport Resources and Instruction

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Aim and Research Questions

While many private, public, and government entities have prioritized development of safe sport programming (Government of Canada, 2023; UK Sport, 2023), issues exist in the lack of standardization of safe sport educational development and program delivery, which possibly threatens the effectiveness of such programming (Willson et al., 2022). Moreover, a knowledge gap exists in understanding the effectiveness of safe sport educational programs. The purpose of initial portion of this 3-longitudinal study, funded by the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada, is to critically evaluate existing safe sport education presently being delivered within Canada. The following research questions will help guide phase 1 of the study and will be the focus of the presentation: 1. What safe sport education programs are in place and operating in Canada?; 2. How effective are present safe sport education programs in delivering information on the prevention of maltreatment in sport in Canada? Providing a systematic evaluation of present programming it will highlight early successes and areas for improvement in safe sport education protocols to further strengthen current and future program offerings.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Maltreatment is characterized as willful actions that may cause or produce the threat of physical, sexual, or psychological harm and often occurs in sporting relationships when power imbalances exist (Stirling, 2009; Van Bussel & Spence, 2022). Though athletes depend upon coaches, support staff, or athletic administrators in sport contexts to promote trust, ensure safety and encourage their development to reach goals (Kerr & Stirling, 2019; Kerr et al., 2019), it may be athletes, coaches, administrators, parents, or athletic

staff who constitute both perpetrators and/or victims of maltreatment (Stirling, 2009).

Pragmatically, many resources have been developed with an explicit purpose of providing athletes, coaches, and other sport personnel guidance and training for 'safe sport' conduct. Research of such resources lags however, given two existing knowledge gaps, which include: 1) an understanding of how resources are disseminated and are used throughout Canadian sport organizations; and 2) an effectiveness assessment of available safe sport resources.

Millar and Stevens' (2012) Transfer of Training Model will be utilized as the theoretical framework to assess the effectiveness of present safe sport programming and the transfer of such training to program participants. To develop this model, Millar and Stevens (2012) used Yamnill and McLean's (2001) concepts to designate participants' (e.g., coaches, athletes, administrators) to the first level of learning conceptualization of both understanding and applicability in training. This understanding of training highlights mediating factors occurring in an individuals' transfer of training, including motivation to transfer, training design and organizational climate, all of which influence individual and organizational performance (Millar and Stevens, 2012).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Employing a sequential research design will enable the researchers to understand 1. how safe sport training occurs; and 2. the effectiveness of relaying safe sport information through safe sport program facilitation. An analysis of data will enable the researchers to further understand the effectiveness of delivery method(s) for these programs. The researchers plan to first establish a national safe sport program baseline by sending surveys to all Canadian NSOs and PSOs that deliver safe sport programs. The researchers will collect anonymized data regarding safe sport programs and analyze these data using statistical tests to reveal national trends regarding safe sport. The researchers will invite Canadian NSOs, PSOs, and safe sport organizations delivering such programming, to provide program documents with which

they will conduct a content analysis to uncover both trends and gaps in program development and provide recommendations for further program iterations.

Results/Findings and Discussion

This study is currently in progress. Phase-one results that will be presented involve a review and analysis of the safe sport educational resources and policy documents utilized by the 58 Canadian national sport organizations (NSO) in addition resources created by the Coaching Association of Canada. This first review will provide an initial point of reference for this study to understand the safe sport education structures present at the NSO level and complement an analysis of the proliferation of these resources to the provincial and community sport levels. Furthermore, this first stage will also provide a comparator for a similar analysis of European sport organizations to be completed in future phases.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implications

Recently, Macintosh, Doherty, and Kerwin (2023) found that Canadian high performance sport coaches and administrators perceived and acknowledged that safe sport education and training is difficult to track, and that program content varies within and across sports. Moreover, while these research participants acknowledged the importance of education and training, they lacked knowledge as to the mechanisms for effectively developing and delivering program content within high-performance sport organizations. The findings of the current study will fill knowledge gaps and build upon similar/such research to further understand safe sport education in Canada.

Linking Professionalisation and Volunteering in Voluntary Sports Clubs – Benefits and Challenges

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Aim and Research Questions

Voluntary sports clubs (VSC) increasingly use professionalisation strategies to overcome current challenges, particularly the much-discussed «crisis of volunteering» (e.g., Breuer et al., 2021; Bürgi et al., 2023). These strategies include hiring paid employees, setting up a club office and using forms of strategic planning and management tools. With this increasing business orientation, the question arises as to whether this is accompanied by unintended side effects, such as reduced willingness of members to volunteer. Such effects could dampen the potential of VSCs for public welfare such as the promotion of social integration and civic engagement, and weaken associated socio-political functions (Nagel et al., 2020). Based on this problem, we examine forms and consequences of the professionalisation of VSCs with particular focus on the extent to which professionalisation and volunteering can be meaningfully linked.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Our study is based on a broad understanding of professionalisation (Ruoranen et al., 2016), where paid staff is only one dimension of a more business-like VSC. The investigation of consequences is based on a heuristic multi-level model for the analysis of organisation professionalisation (Nagel et al., 2015). Existing literature mostly focuses on the positive consequences of organisational performance of VSCs (e.g. Perck et al., 2016). However, professionalisation can also have unintended consequences, such as conflicts between paid and voluntary staff, over-formalisation, financial problems or change in organisational culture (e.g. Lang et al., 2022; Seippel, 2019). Further studies have shown

that VSCs with more paid staff and a higher service orientation have lower member identification and lower member willingness for voluntary engagement (e.g. Nagel, 2006). However, to date no study has analysed in detail the relationship between professionalisation and volunteering in VSCs. Thus, we focus on the research question: What positive and negative consequences for volunteering of club members can be observed in the context of professionalisation? Furthermore, we are interested in the following question: What options do VSCs have to professionalise without the engagement of paid staff, such as on an entirely voluntary basis?

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The empirical analysis is based on the case studies (n=11 Switzerland; n=8 Germany) of the SNSF and DFG-funded project «Processes and consequences of the professionalisation of sports clubs». The sample of the multiple-case design (Yin, 2014) consists of VSCs of different sizes, goals and orientations in various sports, all of which have recently undergone an organisational process of professionalisation. The content analysis (according to Mayring, 2022) of club documents, expert interviews and focus group discussions was carried out both de-ductively and inductively.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The majority of the VSCs in our sample show forms of professionalisation without paid staff and larger financial resources (e.g., strategy workshops and documents, quality management and certification through club labels, formalisation of administrative regulations and job descriptions/job specifications, adaptation of governance structures, selection of individuals with professional expertise for board positions, centralising sponsorship management, digital tools, volunteers).

The findings also show that consequences of professionalisation for volunteering are ambivalently assessed. Performance and work processes in a club can improve and the burden on volunteers decrease because of clearer decision-making structures as well the support of paid staff, while other clubs report increasing demands and expectations and an overburdening of volunteers. It appears that

the motivation of volunteers and volunteer work can be improved because of a fruitful cooperation with paid staff, however, there can also be a decrease of motivation and reduced identification among volunteers which makes recruiting volunteers more difficult. Finally, a sensible division of tasks and roles between paid staff and voluntary work is faced with conflicts between both groups, because, for example, strategic and operative issues are not clearly defined.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The results show that professionalisation often takes place without paid staff - for example, through strategy orientation or formalisation of processes - and volunteers and paid staff work together in a meaningful way when transforming organisational structures - for instance, when setting up a club office. However, VSC professionalisation is not only associated with opportunities, but also with challenges, for example, overload and loss of motivation of volunteers as well as conflict between volunteers and paid staff.

To conclude: Professionalisation seems to be a suitable approach to solving the current challenges that VSCs face. However, organisation transformation has to be designed using appropriate management measures and in such a way that the diverse advantages of volunteering are largely retained and are sensibly combined with forms of professionalisation.

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The Use of Football Refereeing Technology Among Referee

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Aim and Research Questions

Football is one of the most famous sports all over the world. This sport contains a huge number of participants and has a great influence on the whole world. The referees who maintain authenticity and make the decisions that can be the difference between winning and losing play an important role in football matches (Webb, 2022). To increase the accuracy of the decision-making of referees, the governing bodies, including the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and the International Football Association Board (IFAB), are developing technology to develop referees' performance to fit modern football by reducing the occurrence of errors. Referee-supporting technology has already been developed for a long time to improve referee performance, such as communication technology, Goal-line Technology, Video Assistant Referee, and Semi-Automated Offside Systems. However, the purpose of using technology in football refereeing is to improve precision and fairness, its introduction has sparked much debate. These technologies are intended to assist officials in making decisions rather than to take place of them (FIFA.com, 2014). These measures may help referees reduce or eliminate the mistakes that can occur during the match, but the technology tools depend on the referee who used them. Therefore, from the users' aspect, how technology improves referees' experience and how referees adopt these technologies is the focus of this study.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Most of the past research on football referees analyzed the referees' performance such as the activity profiles (i.e. distance run, running speed, etc.), physical capability, and biases in referees' decision-making (e Pina et al., 2018). Only a few of them discussed the technologies implementation in the referee. Furthermore, even though plenty of studies in social and behavioral sciences focus on the impact of technologies on different sports including football (Spitz, 2021), how the referee as the

user adopted and implemented these technologies is referred to less. The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2) is a theoretical paradigm that explains individuals' acceptance and utilization of technology. The UTAUT2 is a comprehensive framework incorporating multiple factors influencing technology adoption and utilization (Marikyan & Papagiannidis, 2023). To explore how football referees adapted to technology and how technology improves the refereeing experience, the research adopts the UTAUT2 on technology acceptance to analyze the data. Based loosely on UTAUT2 to user acceptance, it can offer a framework to understand what the positive and negative mediators of technology and adoption attitude are. While UTAUT2 was originally developed for studying technology adoption by individuals, it can be adapted to analyze how referees embrace and utilize technology to enhance their decision-making and overall performance.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The study is based loosely on the theoretical framework of the UTAUT2 model by Venkatesh et al. (2012) which aimed to establish the roles of social influences, facilitating conditions, performance expectancy, effort expectancy, hedonic motivation, price value, and habit on the attitudes and behavior referees towards technologies applications. Through qualitative research methods, this study will investigate the opinion of the referee who uses these technologies to support their officiating and examine their technology acceptance and adoption. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the most suitable data collection method and investigate their personal feelings about the technologies from different aspects. With the aim of finding out the adoption of technology among football referees, seven FIFA-level elite referees are identified as the qualified sample pool for this study. The data analysis organized and analyzed the gathered data using a grounded theory, and three-level coding method, which included starting from scratch and extracting key codes directly from the data. Interviews were first transcribed verbatim to guarantee the preservation of the data's richness and profundity. Through the precise recording of interviews, researchers can perform comprehensive and nuanced

analyses, resulting in more credible and precise findings.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Based on the UTAUT2 framework influence, the research found some key themes to the referee technology adaption: benefit, adoption difficulties, facilitating support, cost, and human factors. The referees can feel the benefits of the refereeing technology, however, they need to overcome the adoption difficulty when technology implementation. The external factors such as facilitating support and cost have some influence on the refereeing technology, but it needs more discussion in further research. Human factors are important when refereeing technology is applied considering the subjective of human refereeing. The refereeing technology aims to help the match official to referee the match better rather than take their place.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This research offers a different view from users on the future impact on how technology will develop in football referees' area. The practical contribution shows the process of how referees adapt to the technology and the key issues that exist in modern refereeing technology from the referee's aspect to the football governance organization and referee administration. Based on the UTAUT2 model, this study makes a theoretical contribution to the framework in analyzing the refereeing technology. the factors of the UTAUT2 framework can utilized to describe the user experience and how they adapt to the refereeing technology. Offering insight into views from the referees from the study, which has seldom been researched, concerning the acceptance and adoption of football refereeing technology. It bears implications for the future development of football refereeing technology while providing an understanding of its impact on referees.

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Sport Management Education

Track chair: Anna-Maria Strittmatter

Podcasts for Learning in Higher Education

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This relates to professional practice; learning and teaching in Higher Education (HE).

Aim

To evaluate a relatively novel approach to learning and teaching within HE.

Purpose & Background

The initiative explained here is the delivery of a Podcast, used as the learning content for an online employability module. The module, 'Reflection on Learning in the Workplace', is on Level 4 of the BA (Hons) Sports Business and Management at the University of South Wales (USW). This degree is delivered in partnership with the English Football League Trust, where students attend USW twice per year for Residential Visits. For the rest of the year, they're based within football club Community Foundations across England and Wales, studying online materials created by USW academics, facilitated by a Club Mentor.

Given much of this learning is done at a distance from USW, student engagement is challenging. Students here are like those reported by Chen, Lambert, & Guidry (2010); non-traditional and studying in this mode because it suits their lifestyle and learning preference. Students are required to complete an enhanced level of placement hours at their club, as they are developed as their future workforce. This increases the challenge of engaging with their studies, resulted in similar retention issues that have been reported elsewhere in the sector (Meyer, 2014). We also know there's a correlation between the effectiveness of online resources and grades (Crampton., et al, 2012), so the course team is constantly trialling study modes to generate engagement. Thus, a Podcast was created, allowing students a rare opportunity to learn passively, which has some value in HE with distance learners (Smith and Smith, 2013).

Design & Implementation

Planning Phase:

The Podcast engaged with a range of industry guests, meeting the varied career prospects of the student cohort. Prior to delivery, the following objectives were met:

1. USW's Media Team engaged to film and edit the content.
2. Logo for the Podcast created.
3. Name created, via student vote.
4. Episode structure created, aligning with module's Learning Outcomes.
5. A range of organisations and guests recruited.
6. A standardised introduction was filmed.
7. A jingle created.

Delivery Phase:

- Some episodes filmed in-person and some on MS Teams.
- After each episode was filmed, a specific episode summary was filmed, recapping on key aspects.
- Final edit combined the introduction, main interview, and summary. A video and audio file were then uploaded to the VLE, with a different presentation to the usual asynchronous lecture.
- Deeper module evaluation process being undertaken, including module feedback; qualitative student feedback (using adapted Listening Room approach (Parking and Heron, 2017)); questionnaire for Club Mentors.

Outputs/Outcomes, Reflections & Future Developments

An initial analysis of the usage statistics has generated interesting insights. There was a 100% engagement from the 9 football clubs on the programme at some point, however only 7 of the 11 episodes were watched. The average completion rate of each item (where 100% represents watching the full episode) was 56%, but the engagement per user varied significantly from 1% to 100%. Only 2 of the 9 clubs engaged with more than 50% of the episodes, and 4 clubs only watched 1 episode. It was also evident that engagement deteriorated as the module progressed, with 100% engagement for the first episode, falling consistently until 0% for episodes 9-11. It seems engagement reduced once the students realised, they could score well on the module's assessment without watching anything. Initial reflections on this are that it's imperative to ensure the module assessment

is directly linked to the content of the episodes, much like they would normally be to the content of weekly lectures. While the episode content and assessments are focused upon employability, the connection is only thematic and not task specific. Therefore, there'll be a change to the assessment for 24-25, aligning the two more specifically, aiming to increase and prolong engagement.

Engagement will be explored further by collecting qualitative feedback from students and their Mentors. This is currently being collected and the analysis would be ready to share by September if accepted to deliver at EASM 2024.

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Lessons From Using Human-centred Design Thinking in Sport Management Education

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This abstract relates to professional practice in the category 'Sport Management Education'.

Aim, Purpose, and Background

Design thinking is a human-centred approach to practice that allows non-design practitioners (such as sport managers) to access and employ the mindsets, practices, and techniques of expert designers in order to generate enhanced value for users (Carlgren et al., 2016). As it enables practitioners to identify and deliver upon the unmet needs of their users – typically with the involvement of those users – design thinking can be employed to foster social inclusion (in line with the theme of the 2024 EASM Conference). Indeed, research of the use of design thinking by sport managers foregrounds that such human-centred approaches are assuming increasing importance and utility as sport organisations continually evolve to serve different users (Joachim, 2021). Consequently, sport management students (being the sport management practitioners of the future) stand to benefit from being immersed in the human-centered design thinking process (Pierce et al., 2019).

The author will share his experiences using human-centered design thinking in two undergraduate subjects in different faculties at a large (30,000+ undergraduates) university of technology in Australia. These classroom experiences will be connected to the author's ongoing research into the use of design thinking by sport organisations (Joachim et al., 2021; 2022; 2024) to connect classroom best practice to the practical environments in which sport management students ostensibly hope to find themselves working after the completion of their course.

Design and Implementation

The five-stage Stanford d.school model of design thinking – empathise, define, ideate, prototype, test (Joachim, 2021) – is used as the

structure for two subjects ('Innovation Lab' [IL] and 'Design Thinking for Social Innovation' [DTSI]) in different faculty (Business, and Arts and Social Sciences, respectively) at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). While the subjects share the same structure, they employ meaningfully different assessments and schedules.

IL is a UTS Business School subject for management students undertaking numerous courses, including sport management. Each week, students watch a pre-recorded lecture and attend a live and highly interactive 80-minute tutorial workshop. Students undertake two iterations of the design thinking process: an entrepreneurial project within their industry (undertaken as a group of 7-8 students) and an individual intrapreneurial project focused on an organisation of their choice.

DTSI is a UTS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) subject undertaken mostly by students in the School of Communication (i.e., not sport management students). Students meet for extended sessions (3 – 4 hours) every second week that incorporate a short lecture ahead of an interactive workshop. DTSI students are presented challenges by industry professionals facing a social challenge and are grouped with other students who wish to respond to a given challenge. The author annually presents one such challenge: to design a sport program that is tailored for women who ceased playing sport after high school, encouraging and facilitating physical activity in their adulthood.

Outputs/Outcomes, Reflections and Future Development

In addition to the author's observations across multiple deliveries of the two subjects (from 2018 – 2024), insights were gathered from student feedback survey results and reflective assessments undertaken in both subjects. As design thinking is a relatively new management concept, students in both subjects typically start the semester feeling (in their words) "lost". However, final reflections indicate a broad appreciation for design thinking as a concept and practice. Many students note that IL or DTSI was their favourite subject.

In regard to pedagogy, the most profound learnings are derived from the differences

between the two subjects. Perhaps the biggest difference is that, while both subjects see students employ design thinking within the sport industry, sport management students undertake IL while DTSI is undertaken by students in other fields. While it is not possible (let alone, meaningful) to determine which of these cohorts is 'better' at design thinking, it is interesting to note that each cohort tends to (by their own choice) design within different sectors of the sport industry. Specifically, IL [Business] students tend to design within the commercial sector, while DTSI [FASS] students tend to design within the public or volunteer/non-profit sectors.

Ultimately, each subject can learn from the other to move toward an 'ideal' use of design thinking in sport management pedagogy. Considering 'diversity of perspectives' is a key theme of design thinking practice in management (Carlgren et al., 2016), blending the IL and DTSI cohorts has the potential to improve classroom outcomes for both cohorts. This might be best achieved through the creation of a transdisciplinary design thinking subject offered as an elective to students in all faculties.

In line with Pierce et al.'s (2019) proposal of design thinking as a framework for sport management capstone courses, the author will outline how a transdisciplinary approach – including revised assessments and approaches to subject delivery – might enhance outcomes for sport management students at all levels.

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The Financial Impact of Stadium Development in Professional Football

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Aim/Research Question

There is widespread debate on whether it is best to own a stadium or sports facility privately or if it is best left under public ownership, as this may impact franchise value (Miller, 2007). Similarly, there are arguments on whether renovating or building a new arena generates more value for a sporting organization. Feddersen et al. (2006) claim that while the literature on stadium construction and firm finances is abundant in a North American context, more work needs to be carried out from a European perspective. Addressing this shortcoming will enable sport managers and practitioners to address whether the financial impacts are similar across geographic regions.

In Europe, the English Premier League, Spain's La Liga, the German Bundesliga, France's Ligue 1, and Italy's Serie A are colloquially known as the Big-Five, given their financial and on-the-field dominance. However, there is variation in their facility ownership. After analyzing the 19 most valuable European football clubs in 2021/2022 (Football Benchmark, 2023), over 50% of English, Spanish, and German teams played privately owned stadiums, compared to 25% of Italian and 0% of French teams.

Therefore, this paper investigates whether the construction or renovation of a stadium belonging to a football team located in one of the Big-Five leagues impacts franchise value and operating revenues. It also examines whether this valuation differs if the facility is funded privately or publicly and whether there are heterogeneous impacts across countries. Finally, it tests how franchise values differ given the extent of debt capital used in facility construction.

Theoretical Background

Capital budgeting theory is used to assess the feasibility of long-term investment opportunities (Dayanada et al., 2002; Peterson

& Fabozzi, 2002). Sports stadiums fall into this category, and a decision to upgrade or build a new facility is often made based on a cost-benefit analysis. If a project has monetary benefits exceeding costs, it is claimed to add value to the business.

Similarly, funding sources may determine how much value is added to a sports franchise as it looks to upgrade its facilities. Szymanski and Drut (2020) showcase that the private benefits for football clubs after hosting a major international football tournament are minimal despite the significant investment in constructing new or renovating existing stadiums. Similarly, Feddersen et al. (2006) find that a novelty effect occurs when a new facility is constructed, where venue attendance and revenues drastically increase, only to subside thereafter. Therefore, it is unlikely that the private benefits will exceed the costs, resulting in a loss of value.

As such, the public sector is heavily involved in financing sports facilities in North America, and one argument is that the franchise cannot monetize the social benefits of the new stadium. Despite the claims that the investment in these new sports facilities benefits the local economy, which academics refute (Bradbury et al., 2023), public financing of sports stadiums is common. It is precisely this subsidy that may then add value to the existing franchise.

Finally, the capital structure theory provides the additional foundations for the empirical design. Debt financing in nations with a favorable tax rate can increase firm value (Miller & Modigliani, 1958). Therefore, privately financed stadiums using debt should enhance value more for a franchise that funds its stadium using equity. However, there is a double-edged sword to leverage, where excessive amounts may destroy value with increasing bankruptcy risks.

Research Methods

Multiple regression is the method chosen to answer the research question. The data spans 2003-2023 and includes information for football clubs from the Big-Five leagues. It is available from Deloitte, club financial accounts, UEFA, and individual club websites. Franchise value/revenue is regressed on the dollar investment in facilities, a dummy variable if the facility is new or renovated,

franchise debt-equity ratios, several covariates including the on-field performance of the franchise, and time and country fixed effects. The preferred estimation strategy uses instrumental variables to overcome the argument that stadium investment and franchise value/revenues are jointly determined.

Results and Conclusions

The preliminary findings showcase a positive impact of stadium construction and renovation on franchise values and revenues. This study enriches the literature on stadium construction by giving the audience a point of view from a European standpoint. The findings are essential to both sport managers and policymakers. For the former, it calculates the value added to a dollar invested in new sports facilities. It also documents the best sources of funding to use for investments and enables sport managers and financiers to make better decisions regarding their firm's capital structure. For policymakers, it shows their subsidy's incremental value to a sports franchise.

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Teaching and Learning Sport Management with Group Work

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Teaching and Learning Sport Management with Group Work

The following abstract is the result of my search for solutions to overcome my students' resistance to group work. This is a work based on my professional practice as an instructor in sport management and hospitality management at the University of Missouri-Columbia USA.

This presentation's objectives are:

1. To explain the need and benefits of group work in sport management students' education;
2. To present the main causes for sport management students' resistance to group work; and
3. To provide sport management instructors with research-based strategies to overcome students' resistance to group work both in person and online.

Reasons for and benefits of using group work to teach Sport Management

Effective collaboration and teamwork are highly valued by employers in the sports industries. They were proven to be robust methods for preparing sport management students for the workforce (Bakir et al., 2020; Davies & Stroebel, 2022; Donelan & Kear, 2023; Foster & Pierce, 2021; Sattler, 2018; Weese et al., 2022). Through group project experiences, students learn to apply knowledge, solve problems, and develop teamwork skills (Bakir et al., 2020; Davies & Stroebel, 2022; Foster & Pierce, 2021; Hall & Buzwell, 2013, Sattler, 2018).

Students' resistance to group work

Due to the scarcity of studies about causes for resistance to group work in sport management, this work relied on studies from other fields of study. Students often resist group work due to past negative experiences (Bakir et al., 2020; Donelan & Kear, 2023; Ekblaw, 2017; Hall & Buzwell, 2013; Sokman et al., 2023).

These studies revealed a shift in the main reason for negative group work experiences (Bakir et al., 2020; Donelan & Kear, 2023; Ekblaw, 2017; Hall & Buzwell, 2013; Sokman et al., 2023). In 2010, Hall and Buzwell (2013) found students mainly disliked the perception that some members contribute minimally but receive equal credit (free riding). More recently, Bakir et al. (2020) identified poor communication as the primary complaint for both online and face-to-face students.

Other reasons for negative experiences, indicated by students include insufficient interaction, last-minute efforts, unclear assignment instructions, scheduling conflicts, unequal task distribution, participation issues, and inadequate technological tools (Bakir et al., 2020; Donelan & Kear, 2023; Ekblaw, 2017; Hall & Buzwell, 2013; Sokman et al., 2023).

Strategies to overcome resistance

Instructors must create guiding policies and a supportive environment with collaboration tools that allow for monitoring and support (Hall & Buzwell, 2013; Polyakova-Norwood et al., 2023). Group work policies must clarify work expectations and regulate in-group communication and collaboration. In addition, they must provide students with tools to facilitate group formation, role assignment, idea sharing and product creation (Ekblaw, 2017).

Group formation is critical in project-based learning (Ekblaw, 2017). While some scholars advocate student-selected groups for better cohesion (Hall & Buzwell, 2013), others recommend instructor-formed groups to ensure balanced skills and work ethics (Ekblaw, 2017). Brannen et al. (2021) and Polyakova-Norwood et al. (2022) also recommend group formation to be based on grades, majors, or allow students to select group mates they had worked with previously. Bakir et al. (2020) and Brannen et al. (2021) agree that the ideal group size is between 3 and 5 students. Regardless of the selection method, early interaction and communication are essential (Brannen et al., 2021; Donelan & Kear, 2023; Ekblaw, 2017; Hall & Buzwell, 2013; Polyakova-Norwood et al., 2023). Instructors can utilize extra-credit activities where group mates get to know each other, and practice using online collaboration tools (Bakir et al., 2020).

The next step is contract signing. Brannen et al. (2021) and Polyakova-Norwood et al. (2022) defend that group contracts outlining effort distribution (roles), communication timeline, conduct expectations, instructor monitoring, and conflict resolution plan can increase mutual accountability, understanding, and reduce anxiety. Group members must agree on the final product and process, understand their roles and interdependence, communicate effectively, and develop a smooth process requiring minimal intervention (Donelan & Kear, 2023; Ekblaw, 2017; Hall & Buzwell, 2013; Polyakova-Norwood et al., 2023).

As the semester progresses, free-riding and poor communication must be detected early through periodic peer-assessment and communication monitoring. Such monitoring helps deter negative behaviors, prevents conflict, and improves grades (Borjesson et al., 2006, as cited in Hall & Buzwell, 2013; Brooks & Ammons, 2003, as cited in Hall & Buzwell, 2013).

Future Developments

This presentation will introduce and discuss past challenges the author had with group work, strategies he found to address those challenges (through research), and the experience he had applying them to an online summer 2024 class taught through Canvas. Within the class's canvas site, each individual group had their own page, communicated through their own discussion board, and collaborated in case studies and a final video project using Google Docs. The instructor had access to all group spaces to monitor and support each group. Students' perception of the process may be available at the time of the presentation.

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Generative Artificial Intelligence and Inclusivity in Sport Education: A Survey Study

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Introduction

ChatGPT (Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer), developed by OpenAI, is a chatbot built on a large language model (LLM) and represents the cutting edge of generative artificial intelligence (Generative AI) technology. This technology, including applications like ChatGPT, has gained widespread recognition across various fields such as education and medical education. In the educational sector, studies have consistently shown that ChatGPT excels at delivering personalized content, fostering adaptive learning, and serving effectively in roles related to tutoring, mentorship, and as a learning partner (Grassini et al., 2023; Ray, 2023). Furthermore, it provides significant benefits to teachers by assisting in the creation of materials, planning activities, designing instructional strategies, curating teaching resources, and offering feedback on student performance (Chiu, 2023; Zhai, 2022). However, the role of ChatGPT in sport education, particularly concerning inclusivity, is less explored (Keiper et al., 2023).

This study aims to evaluate several aspects: (1) sport education major students' usage behaviors of ChatGPT; (2) the potential benefits of ChatGPT for future applications in sport education; (3) the potential risks of ChatGPT for future applications in sport education; and most critically (4) students' perceptions of how ChatGPT might influence inclusivity in sport education, specifically whether it is viewed as more beneficial or more harmful. Does the widespread use of ChatGPT contribute to inclusivity in sport education, particularly for those with physical or intellectual disabilities, by enabling more precise adaptive training and decision-making? And its implications to the inclusive issue toward ChatGPT's closing or widening

the divide between typical athletes and those with special needs, such as Paralympic athletes.

Method

This study employs a quantitative approach to evaluate the impact and engagement with generative AI that students major in sport education. An online survey will be administered to 500 Taiwanese students to gather data on their usage behaviors, perceptions of benefits and risks, and the influence of generative AI on inclusivity. Data analysis will include T-tests to identify significant differences in generative AI perceptions, usage and attitude toward impact on inclusion between the male and female. Additionally, hierarchical regression analysis will be used to examine the effects of demographic variables such as gender and educational level on the adoption and impact of generative AI. This analysis will help isolate the effects of these variables, clarifying their influence on students' receptivity to generative AI in educational contexts. The study also includes provisions in the research protocol and data collection tools to identify obstacles to the use of artificial intelligence.

Expected Results

Based on the pilot study, the expected results show significant differences in the use of generative AI and its perceived future educational utility between male and female. Male educators are anticipated to adopt a proactive and optimistic stance in applying generative AI to future teaching roles, more readily embracing this technology. Notably, demographic analyses suggest that female educators in sport education believe that generative AI has greater potential to promote inclusivity compared to their male counterparts (North et al., 2023). Despite the acknowledged potential of generative AI to enhance inclusivity in sport education, its impact is expected to be less pronounced than anticipated, highlighting a substantial area for growth. The research will explore potential reasons for the observed greater sensitivity of female educators towards inclusion. One hypothesis could be that female sports educators, who are typically more numerous than their male counterparts in training courses on adapted physical and sports activities, have more experience and awareness in this area. (Chen & Tsuge, 2023)

Discussion

The study reveals a disparity in the adoption of generative AI between male and female educators in sport education. Male educators show a more proactive stance toward AI adoption, likely due to broader exposure to technology. In contrast, female educators, more engaged in adapted physical activities, recognize AI's potential for promoting inclusivity but are cautious in its adoption. This highlights the need for tailored integration strategies that address practical, experiential learning values in sport education. Overcoming obstacles such as unfamiliarity with AI tools and concerns about replacing traditional methods is crucial for maximizing AI's benefits in sport education. The discrepancy in perspectives on generative AI's role in promoting inclusivity (more favored by female educators in sport education) also highlights areas within the curriculum that could be adapted to leverage AI's strengths. Given the less than anticipated perceived impact of generative AI on inclusivity in sport education, there is a compelling case for developing strategies that increase its effectiveness and acceptance in this area. Continued research is critical to refine these strategies and understand how they could best serve student engagement and outcomes. It should also explore the long-term implications of integrating generative AI into sport education, particularly in fostering an inclusive environment that narrows the gap in opportunities for students with disabilities.

The Power of Inclusion: Creating a More Equitable Sport Management Field

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Statement that Abstract relates to professional practice

The authors affirm that the content outlined in this abstract pertains to practical application, as the session will concentrate on a crucial element of professional practice: learning environments. Attendees will benefit from this session by gaining insights into how they can incorporate topics relating to diversity, equity, and inclusion into classes across the sport management curriculum.

Aim

This abstract exemplifies the significance of integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) themes into the sport management curriculum. We seek to highlight how faculty can infuse these critical topics throughout the expansive sport management curriculum, extending beyond the typical DEI focused courses. The presenters will share strategies for achieving this objective, particularly in environments or locations where support for DEI initiatives may be lacking.

Purpose & Background

The content we include along with its' delivery in the sport management classroom holds significant implications for how students navigate and engage with an increasingly diverse society and organizational landscape (McDowell et al., 2022). In her 1994 Ziegler address, Dr. Joy DeSensi highlighted the critical need for sport management professionals to possess cultural competence and a deep appreciation for diversity (DeSensi, 1994). Vianden & Gregg (2017) determined "sport management program leaders should encourage faculty to infuse diversity and social justice content into each course" (p. 98). However, there has been a concerning surge in efforts aimed at diminishing or altogether

removing classroom discussions on inclusive and diverse topics from our historical narrative. There are twelve states in the United States that have DEI bans, or other laws that prohibit the consideration of race, ethnicity, national origin, or sex as part of employment decisions or admissions criteria with more laws under consideration (Chronicle staff, 2024). Consequently, it is more important than ever to increase our efforts in preserving diversity and fostering inclusion.

As educators in sport management, we bear the responsibility of nurturing the next generation of leaders within the sport business industry. These emerging professionals will yield significant influence over the industry's trajectory and evolution. Against the backdrop of today's political climate, where leadership has put in measures on limiting select diversity topics and shuttering DEI centers, the importance of this scholarship cannot be overstated. It serves as a vital call to action, reminding us of our duty to champion diversity, equity, and inclusion within sport management education and beyond.

Design and Implementation

This presentation will expose attendees to the critical topic of integrating DEI concepts into the sport management curriculum. Recognizing the imperative of diversifying the sport industry, the presenters will expose attendees to best practice approaches to teaching DEI, including case studies, guest lectures, and experiential learning activities along with anecdotal experiences. The presentation will include the following sections:

1. Introduction: Significance of DEI in sport management curriculum
2. Strategies: Incorporating DEI into classes
3. Personal Reflections: Successes & challenges
4. Moving Forward: Navigating the immediate future

Outputs/Outcomes, Reflections, and Future Development

Attendees will leave the presentation with practical examples of how they can incorporate DEI into their sport management classes. The presenters will offer practical suggestions and actionable recommendations

for faculty seeking to enhance the inclusion of DEI across the curriculum. This may involve identifying overlooked opportunities for DEI integration within existing courses, developing new course modules, reframing verbiage attached to curriculum, creating assignments focused explicitly on DEI topics, or fostering partnerships with external organizations to enrich student learning experiences.

Upon reflection, we determined it was critical to dive into and underscore the significance of this topic, particularly considering recent developments in the United States concerning the defunding of DEI centers. These actions have stretched across campuses and had negative impacts on both students and faculty members, highlighting the ongoing relevance and urgency of addressing DEI issues within the sport management curriculum.

Overall, strategies will be suggested to help faculty improve their inclusion of DEI across the curriculum. This session will benefit faculty in the field who see the value in including DEI content across various coursework but may not know where or how to include it. This may increase inclusion opportunities in courses without explicit DEI content ties.

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Gambling With Their Future? Exploring The Prevalence And Normalization Of Gambling Among Sport Management Higher Education Students In The Netherlands

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Aim and Research Questions

The liberalization of the Dutch (online) gambling market in 2021 led to a massive targeting of Dutch consumers by online gambling providers via advertising and sponsorships. As forewarned by Bibert and Constandt (2021), this has led to a rapid growth of gambling among youngsters between 18 and 24 years old. In 2023, high numbers of gamblers, negative effects on (financial) wellbeing, and an increase in harmful gambling have been reported (Kansspelautoriteit, 2024). Current gambling scholarship is quite dominantly focused on harmful gambling and addiction. However, less is known about the group that gambles occasionally and the extent to which online gambling is normalized. Young adults who love sports may be particularly vulnerable to the effects of marketing via sponsorships and across sports media (Djohari et al., 2019). Therefore, it is both topical and relevant to investigate gambling behaviors within this group, particularly those enrolled in higher education sport management programs.

RQ: “What characteristics of higher education students can be associated with the normalization and prevalence of online gambling?”

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The study aims to explore the risks of gambling among young adults between 18 and 24 years old. They face a high risk of experiencing gambling harm (Kansspelautoriteit, 2024; RIVM, 2023). Most students enrolled in full-time bachelor and

master educational programs fall within this age group. Scholars have used normalization theory (Thomas et al., 2018) to frame gambling as normalized in sports (Ferris & Wynne, 2001) and the gambification of sports (Hing et al., 2023). The current research builds on scholarly work that focuses on gambling in a sports setting (Constandt et al., 2022). Nevertheless, this study explores this topic in higher education, where sports management students are compared with the general student population. Gambling research has been carried out in different student settings (Lostutter, 2019; Nelson et al., 2007), but little is known of the link between student characteristics, including study domains, and online gambling.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

An online survey assessed students' (n = 691) demographic background and involvement in sports (sport participation, sport media consumption), their perceptions of the normalization of (online) gambling, and finally their own online gambling behavior, including sports betting. The extent to which their gambling could be considered risky was determined by applying the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI) (Ferris & Wynne, 2001). In line with existing gambling harm research (Constandt et al., 2022), respondents' PGSI scores were calculated into five categories.

Ethical clearance was obtained. Data were collected during the 2024 spring semester. Descriptive statistics and a series of Chi-square tests and t-tests for independent samples (SPSS 26) were used to analyze the effects of four background variables (gender, study, sport participation, sport media, and consumption) on three dependent measures: prevalence (online casino's, sports betting), normalization, and problem gambling.

Results/Findings and Discussion

First, male students had higher scores on all three measures: online (problem) gambling behavior and normalization (all $p < .001$). Secondly, the study domain (alpha, beta, and gamma) seems relevant for online gambling since gamma students scored highest on gambling behavior and normalization ($p < .001$). Third, sport participation was measured by identifying the two most popular sports as

primary sport in the last twelve months. Soccer-playing students' scores were higher on gambling behavior and normalization than non-soccer-playing students ($p < .001$). No significant differences were found for fitness. Finally, higher levels of sport media consumption were associated with higher scores on all dependent measures in this study ($p < .003$).

No less than 4.6% (n = 32) of the students in our sample can be identified as problematic gamblers based on their self-reported gambling behavior. This appears higher than the 1% of self-reported problematic gamblers among higher education students (RIVM, 2023), but RIVM did not use PGSI. This is an alarming outcome. Not only for the members of this group and their social environments, but this outcome is also a call to action for more strict measures and more awareness and prevention regarding the dangers of online gambling in higher education.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The overall conclusion of this study is that students, particularly male students from gamma sciences who follow sports, find it (a) normal to gamble online and (b) do gamble online frequently. Sports betting is the most popular form of online gambling. Insights from this study help to identify the need and possibilities for denormalizing online gambling, including sports betting, among students and provide support for the development of new rules and preventive measures for this group. Further, insights from this study can be used to develop materials for sport management curricula for the development and implementation of responsible (sport) marketing and ethics for future sport management professionals. Limitations that can be addressed include limited generalizability (one-time voluntary nature), potential selection bias, lack of appeal to problematic cases, and the varying sizes of faculties.

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Dual Career – Young Athletes’ Perspective on Education

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Aim and Research Questions

The aim is to identify the relationship between the sports career and young athletes’ education, focusing on how they perceive their success in sports as a decisive factor. The added value is the identification of ways to effectively help young athletes master skills for their careers outside sports. Research questions:

- 1) What is the approach of young athletes to education depending on their perception of their sports success?
- 2) What role do the conditions for a professional sports career offered by the school, or the city, play in choosing a university?
- 3) Which forms of education appeal to young athletes?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Sports careers are usually short. As studied by Carapinha et al. (2019), elite soccer players finish professional careers after 8 to 11 years. This research was done within Spanish La Liga. Thus, we can assume that this represents the situation in the Big Five and other European soccer leagues as well. This means that athletes must start thinking about future at an early age (Knights et al., 2016). One of the reasons is the high incidence of injuries. They are often not serious, but they can end an athlete’s career. Athletes must realize that their careers can end unexpectedly (Barth et al., 2021). The retirement includes a significant change in their identity as well as the loss of social ties, lack of ambitions, and health risks (Voorheis et al., 2023).

Many young people are involved in sports while also pursuing education. In sports sciences, this is called a dual career. It can be described as a combination of sports and study. Dual careers begin when children start doing sports and can continue throughout the school years and beyond. Such a career requires managing two activities. Young

people attend schools during the years favorable for development in sports. We believe that combining sports with studies is beneficial, but also challenging. The advantages of building a career outside sports include less problems in finding a job compared to people only prioritizing sports (Stambulova & Harwood, 2022).

Obtaining education, developing soft skills, and planning for the long term are recommended for the transition from sports to work (Vidal-Vilaplana et al., 2022; Brassard et al., 2023). Interlinking sports and education affects performance in both. In some cases athletes leave school to fully concentrate on sports. For others, school can add to physical exhaustion and stress. Some youths must reduce their sports involvement for the risk of burnout (Kuokkanen et al., 2022).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The research is performed on a sample of athletes from Slovak sports clubs in individual and collective sports, aged between 14 and 19. This is a pivotal period for decisions on professional careers. The population for the survey (55,000) was estimated using the latest data on the number of active athletes in the studied age group (Greguska & Blazo, 2022), considering the slightly rising trend derived from the number of pupils enrolled in lower-secondary education (Eurostat, 2024). With the currently collected sample (n=237), the margin of error is 6.35%.

The survey questions focus on descriptive characteristics, sport types, own perceived level in sports, as well as on the skills perceived important outside sports. A part in the survey is dedicated to preferred education forms. The total number of questions is 25. These include mostly predefined options or Likert scales with 5 stages. For the research questions' operationalization, three groups of indicators were defined – approach to education, perceived sports success, factors included in decision-making on career. The collection of responses is performed via Google forms. The results will be processed by statistical software Wizard. Specific independence tests and other analytical procedures will be selected in accordance with data types.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The research is in the phase of preliminary results and the collection of responses is still open. We work with a presumption that young athletes are interested in education not related to sports if it is provided by an educational institution or their sports organization. Further results will be included in the presentation.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

Although there are numerous authors studying aspects of dual careers, new perspectives can be found. By researching the relationship of young athletes to a career in and outside sports, as well as the attractive ways of learning for this group, a specific system of additional education can be designed. This should focus on key knowledge and skills needed for a career after sports.

The research was performed in Slovakia, but its results can be applied in countries with a similar socioeconomic environment, especially within Central and Eastern Europe. Further research will focus on education of current professional athletes, sports organizations, and the employment of former athletes.

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Sport Entrepreneurship: Its Time Has Come!

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This presentation topic relates to professional practice. Aim: The aim of the presentation is to examine the tremendous potential that sport entrepreneurship courses can have on the future development of sport management professional preparation curriculums at colleges and universities of higher education. Background: Sport management (including sport business) programs as a profession and academic discipline have grown by leaps and bounds over the past 55 years to the point where college and university programs that educate and train future sport administrators and sport managers are located in countries around the world. In the United States, there are over 400 sport management college and university professional preparation programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels (Masteralexis, Barr, Humes, 2023). Historically in the United States, the first wave of sport management college and university professional preparation programs offered coursework to educate and train workers for professional sport organizations. In the 1960s, for example, the Ohio University Sport Administration Program was developed to educate and train individuals to work in major league baseball (Pedersen & Thibault, 2019). A second wave of development saw college athletics as another popular employer of sport administration program graduates. Many of these sport administration and later termed sport management programs were housed in colleges of education as they had close links to physical education and athletics. A third wave developed over time where sport management graduates started looking for employment opportunities in the private sector that included (but were not limited to) pursuing entrepreneurial endeavors in sport that would include the creation of sport related small businesses (Case, 2023). The many collegiate sport management and sport business professional preparation programs that have been emerging in recent years resulted in thousands of sport management graduates entering the sport related workforce and job markets. The once plentiful professional sport and intercollegiate athletic “sport management type” positions were not

as readily available as in past years due to the tremendous influx of applicants and competition for open positions. Design and Implementation: As a result, a number of sport management program graduates have turned to other sport related career options. Sport entrepreneurship is one such option. It is not uncommon to find sport management program graduates starting their own sport businesses or inventing sport products. This might include ownership of a pickleball facility, tennis pro shop, golf driving range, sport memorabilia online business, ownership of an off-road triathlon event, etc. The definition of “sport” has evolved over the years from a very narrow focus to a much broader view of sport that includes a variety of human movement activities at various competitive and non-competitive levels (Coakley, 2020). A shift has also been realized for the academic and departmental location of sport management programs. In the United States, a number of sport management programs have moved to Colleges of Business and changed their name to “sport business.” After close examination of sport management and sport business curriculums that are offered at colleges and universities in the United States, it can be argued that a key area deserving inclusion in sport management and sport business professional preparation program curriculums is sport entrepreneurship. Moreover, Colleges and Schools of Business have understood the potential of entrepreneurship education for decades. Hundreds of business schools around the world have majors, minors, and courses in entrepreneurship (Hisrich, Peters, Shepherd, 2024) but very few U.S. based sport management programs currently offer courses specifically in sport entrepreneurship. A 2017 study found that less than 10% of U.S. based sport management programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels offer courses in sport entrepreneurship (Case, 2017). This is despite the fact that more and more sport management graduates are looking to start and own some type of sport business. The sport entrepreneurship curriculum inclusion growing pains currently being experienced are not that different from the curriculum inclusion growing pains experienced by sport sales courses. It took many years to finally see sport sales courses included in college and university sport management professional preparation curriculums. Today, many U.S. college sport management programs include a sport sales

course in their undergraduate sport management curriculums either as a required course or an elective course. In addition, the current trend of seeing a growing number of sport management programs move to Colleges of Business in the U.S. may positively impact the infusion of more “sport specific” entrepreneurship courses in sport management curriculums. The reason is that Colleges of Business long ago realized the importance of entrepreneurship education and training. The many entrepreneurship courses, majors, and minors that are located in Colleges of Business curriculums support this claim. Future Development: An underlying question for the future relates to whether sport management students will be looking to create and start sport related businesses. If the answer is yes, then offering sport entrepreneurship knowledge and skills in the professional preparation of future sport management students is essential. The Third Wave is pointing to sport management related jobs outside the traditional pro sport and college athletics “type” jobs. Sport jobs found in society that are attractive to sport management students are plentiful. Sport related jobs in event management, facility management, sport marketing, e-sports, sporting goods industry, youth sports, health and fitness, sport tourism, and many other sport business sectors are numerous and continuing to grow each year. Analyzing sport related online job listings and openings (e.g., Jobs in Sports, Work in Sports, Indeed) reveals that hundreds of sport related jobs exist that are attractive to sport management program graduates. As mentioned previously, the Third Wave also includes entrepreneurial “type” knowledge and skills that can translate into jobs for sport management students. Examples of sport related businesses can be found in many communities. In Virginia Beach, Virginia, for example, J&A Racing is a sport event management business that is owned and operated by an ODU graduate and it conducts road races throughout the year. The Annual Shamrock Marathon is its largest event that draws over 20,000 runners each year. The Virginia Baseball Academy is owned by a sport management program graduate and it specializes in baseball skill training and sport camps for youth in the Hampton Roads (Virginia) community. Elite Sport Marketing is another Virginia Beach based sport business owned by a sport management graduate and it specializes in conducting economic impact studies for sporting events.

757 Sports Collectibles is an online sport memorabilia business located in Virginia Beach that is owned and operated by another sport management graduate. The Boo Williams Sportsplex located in Hampton, Virginia is run by a long-time sport management professional. The multi-purpose sport facility hosts a number of sporting events including regional and national Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) basketball tournaments. The list of sport related small business examples goes on and on... The aforementioned examples of sport related businesses have certain common themes that each sport business encounters and could learn about in advance through a sport entrepreneurship course. The development of a business plan is one key example. A typical course in sport entrepreneurship can include the following: How to generate and identify sport business ideas. How to assess whether the business idea is worthwhile. How to conduct a feasibility study and market/industry analysis. How to recognize legal issues such as intellectual property and be able to select the appropriate business structure. How to seek funding and investors for your sport business. How to organize a business and hire an effective management team. How to write an effective business plan including the executive summary, marketing plan, and financial documents (Case, 2023). In the future, the trajectory of sport management program curriculum development clearly indicates that sport entrepreneurship is very much needed (Case, 2023; Ratten, 2020). It is now time to provide sport entrepreneurship knowledge and skills in sport management professional preparation curriculums. It is clear that when talking about sport entrepreneurship – its time has come!

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Investigation of Factors Affecting Learning Transfer in Developing Sport Environment: Case of Dream Together Master Program

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Aim & research questions

To support the sports development in developing countries that officially receive aid designated by OECD DAC, students from these nations are selected for scholarships and education over decades. Sports management master's programs, such as the AISTS (International Academy of Sports Science and Technology), CIES FIFA MASTER Program (International Centre for Sports Studies), RIOU (Russia International Olympic University) DTM (Dream Together Master program, Seoul National University), have played a pivotal role in developing human resources in developing sport environment. The purpose of this study is to deduct factors for enhancing the application of knowledge and skills (learning transfer) from master's degree program on sport management by focusing on Dream Together Master (DTM) program of Seoul National University of South Korea. DTM program selected for this study is a longstanding master's degree program in sports management offered by a single university. Since 2013, this program has consistently produced over 20 graduates annually, making it stable to collect and analyze data from the alumni cohort over the past 10 years. Therefore, it was chosen as the case for this research. The First research question is what are factors affecting on application knowledge and skills from master's degree program. The second question is what are the distinctive factors, apart from those identified in prior research, that emerge in the context of sports.

Theoretical background and literature review

The application of knowledge and skills acquired during a master's program to real-world work settings can be conceptualized through the concept of learning transfer (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Chatterjee et al., 2018; Holton 1996; Kirwan & Birchall, 2006). Literature on factors affecting learning

transfer have progressed from Kirkpatrick's (1959) four-level evaluation model, which explains factors influencing reactions, learning, behavior, and outcomes, to study by Noe (1986) delving into learner capabilities and individual attributes, and further elaborations by Baldwin & Ford (1998) on transfer conditions. Holton (1996) criticized the constraints of the Kirkpatrick model and introduced the HRD evaluation research and measurement model, which identifies motivational, environmental, and competency-related factors influencing learning transfer. Each country's educational system, sports-related culture, institutional environment, and competencies learned in a master's education program affect learning transfer in many ways. Therefore, Holton's (1996) model, which is the theoretical model that most encompasses these factors, was set as the theoretical frame of this study.

Research Design, methodology and data analysis

To achieve the research objectives, a case study method, suitable for identifying the causes, methods, and processes of specific phenomena, was employed (Creswell, 2007). Qualitative research methods were utilized to collect and analyze data to address the research questions. Specifically, factors influencing learning transfer were identified by content analysis through literature review (previous studies, related documents from DTM office, and newspaper articles), in-depth interviews (semi-structured, via zoom), and observation (works as team manager of DTM staff for 7 years). Peer review was conducted to validate the credibility of the research. The study participants consisted of 25 graduates from the Dream Together Master program at Seoul National University, with the research period spanning from 2017 to 2022. The participants were comprised of individuals from Asia (52%), Africa (24%), Latin America (16%), the Middle East (4%), and Europe (4%). The triangulation method was employed to collect data through literature review, observation, and in-depth interviews, and factors were derived through categorization and itemization. The researcher's personal experience of working on human competency development in developing countries for more than 7 years leaves room for subjective evaluation and judgment to be involved in the content analysis process of this study. In order to conduct research while excluding such

subjectivity as much as possible, efforts were made to secure the objectivity of the research through peer verification during the data analysis and result derivation process.

Result / findings and discussion

For result related to the first research question, factors affecting learning transfer are students' motivation and capacity, work environment, and sport event of each country. Each factor has sub-factors as follows: For motivation, it includes rewards, recognition, and contribution by learning transfer. Under capacity, there are knowledge, skills, and networks for learning transfer. Regarding environment, there are sport policies, culture, and institutions. Lastly, for sport event, the sub-factors are organization, institutions, resources, and authority from international federation. For the findings related to the second research question, sport event-related factors emerged as influencing learning transfer, different from previous research. This is attributed to the characteristics of sports. In the realm of sports, event preparation and hosting processes often require adherence to international standards distinct from those in developing sports environments. As a result, for students, there are opportunities to apply the knowledge and skills acquired during the master's program in these processes.

Conclusion, contribution, and implication

To support the sports development in developing countries, students from these nations are selected for scholarships and education. However, it is crucial to ensure that learning doesn't end upon graduation but extends to the application of acquired knowledge in practical settings. To achieve this, understanding the factors influencing learning transfer in the context of developing countries is essential. Of course, in order for the results of this study to be applied and effective learning transfer to occur, not only the individual student's capabilities, but also the surrounding social and cultural institution and environment, and opportunities such as holding a sports event are expected to be working together. When the three elements of individual competency, culture and institution, and sports events are in harmony, learning transfer occur effectively. This study contributed to the sport education field by discovering a new factor, events, alongside the

factors identified in prior research, which influence learning transfer. This can be attributed to the unique characteristics of the sport. This research demonstrated that sport event not only contribute to the industry but also facilitate learning transfer, thereby contributing to the sports development in developing countries.

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Discovering Best Practices for Teaching Critical Thinking to Sport Management Students

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Aim and Research Questions

This study aimed to answer the research questions, “What are the best teaching and learning strategies for increasing sport management students’ critical thinking (CT) skills?” and “What is the best definition of CT through an instructional lens?”. The project objectives are aligned with project outcomes of increased awareness and implementation of CT teaching and learning practices for faculty at the undergraduate level. These objectives include: 1. conduct a systematic literature to define critical thinking and discover best practices for teaching critical thinking to undergraduate students in the higher education classroom and 2. create a working definition of critical thinking from a learning application perspective.

Background/Literature Review

An increasing need for CT is prevalent as we encounter increased twenty-first-century global challenges (Cruz et al., 2020). Higher education and the sport industry (Elson et al., 2018) recognize the significance of increased CT skills for college graduates; however, the apparent lack of skills (Hart Research Associates, 2018) exacerbates the need for increased classroom integration at the undergraduate level.

While increased classroom integration is imperative for student success and global impact, due to the complex nature of CT, minimal instruction and assessment focused on enhancing students’ CT competencies exist at the higher education level (Hart Research Associates, 2018). Various factors influence this deficiency. First, the broad nature of CT lends itself to multiple interpretations and debates (Liu & Roohr, 2022). Second, CT competencies are leveled based on student proficiency (Paul & Elder, 2008). Third, while the overarching concept of CT is generic (Davies & Barnett, 2015), subject-matter-specific nuances influence classroom integration (Abrami et al., 2015) (e.g., Sport

Management (SPMT)), which causes debate over how CT should be taught and assessed.

Current CT teaching and assessment practices are often confounded and disparate. As such, many instructors choose not to focus on increasing students’ CT skills. The project aims to address the above factors to create instructional resources to increase classroom integration of CT learning and assessment for career and life success.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

We conducted a systematic literature review to define CT and discover best practices for teaching CT to undergraduate students. This project focuses on a thorough investigation of peer-reviewed articles published from 2000-2023 using the terms CT (and synonymous), undergraduate, intervention (and synonymous), and instruction (and synonymous) from EBSCO, APA Psych Info, and Education Source databases. Three hundred ninety-eight articles were found and reviewed at the abstract level. Of those articles, 209 were omitted due to not meeting inclusion criteria, leaving us with 189 articles for full review.

Results and Discussion

The results of this project revealed several unique definitions for CT. The definitions were categorized into specific and general based on the authors’ definition use and description. A more focused definition is beneficial as we continue the discussion around educating faculty and students on the importance of CT as a teaching and learning tool. Additionally, this systematic literature review provided resources and best practices for teaching and assessing critical thinking to undergraduate students. There were four overarching themes for best practices centered around methodology (e.g., flipped classroom), active learning (e.g., case studies), technology (e.g., discussion boards), and writing (e.g., journaling). These results will be used in future research to create instructional materials for faculty to use when teaching and assessing CT in their courses.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implications

CT skills have been linked to educational and industry success, making the top 10 list of

transferable skills required in industry for multiple years (Forbes, 2019). Data reveals that most higher education students do not acquire the skills necessary for proficient critical thinking (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). Throughout the nation, higher education programs are beginning to increase their focus on CT skills within their curriculum (Pauline, 2013). As authentic assignments and contextual applications have been proven to provide the greatest support for students, with increased retention and transfer of skills to additional contexts, sport programs must seek to create meaningful assignments and assessments for learning and applying CT skills. Furthermore, CT skills continue to be listed as the top skills crucial for sport managers (Guidotti et al., 2023). As such, a better understanding of the best teaching and learning strategies for increasing sport management students' CT skills and disseminating this knowledge to sport faculty is essential to best prepare future sport professionals.

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Source Of Competencies And Knowledge Among Sport Industry Professionals In India With Limited Sport Management Higher Education

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The sports industry has the unique potential to bridge political divides, address socio-economic disparities, and positively impact regional economies. Despite global progress in sports management education, India's development in this field remains limited and under-researched. This quantitative study aims to investigate the current standards of sports management education in India and identify the sources of knowledge and competencies among existing professionals within the Indian sports industry.

A comprehensive literature review reveals a significant gap in research concerning the Indian sports industry and its sport management programs in higher education. Although India hosts a range of sports activities, from professional leagues to international events, the development of sport management curricula and programs is still in its early stages, particularly compared to those in the United States and Europe. The review also indicates limited sport management higher education programs in India. Surprisingly, India has evidence of various sports activities, ranging from sports development programs and professional leagues to hosting international events. Over the last 15 years, 20 new professional sports leagues have been created since the launch of India's first sports league, the Indian Premier Cricket League, in 2008. These leagues utilize the franchise structure; many are owned and funded by the private sector. Despite the lack of higher education programming, sports in India have experienced significant commercialization in recent years. Qualified sports professionals in sports management, sports marketing, venue and facility management, sports governance, and activities related to development are in high demand. Therefore, an examination of sports

industry professionals' educational and professional skill preparation is warranted.

To understand the gap between research in Indian sports and its sport management higher education, this study employed Toh & Jamieson's Competencies of Sports Managers (COSM) instrument, adapted to the Indian context. The COSM was selected as it was created using fundamental statistical and methodological practices. It is also one of the few instruments that has reported indications of validity and reliability. Furthermore, because the COSM was created primarily to evaluate the skills of managers of recreational sports, its utility was considered appropriate for the objectives of this research. Sports industry professionals were selected to complete the COSM survey on Qualtrics and rate their perceived knowledge and professionalism on a Likert scale. Respondents answered questions involving their competencies, experiences, educational backgrounds, and years of experience in the sports industry. MANOVA was used to measure the degree to which the various independent variables impact the current knowledge and competencies of India's sports industry professionals. A diverse sample of sports industry professionals in India was surveyed using Qualtrics. Participants rated their perceived expertise and professionalism on a Likert scale across various competencies, including governance, sports foundations, budgeting, risk management, computer skills, and communication. The data were analyzed using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). The results indicated that higher education alone did not significantly impact the competencies of sports management professionals. Instead, practical experience emerged as a critical factor. The results supported an informal learning theory alongside the need for integrating learning strategies into existing sport management curricula. Furthermore, the results align with work-based learning theories by supporting an experiential learning environment and emphasizing the critical role that real-world experience plays in developing professional competencies. Professionals with more than eight years of industry experience demonstrated significantly higher competencies in governance, sports foundations, budgeting, and risk management than those with less experience.

The findings of this study underscore the importance of integrating experiential learning opportunities into sport management curricula. The study's recommendations for educational institutions in India to enhance their programs by incorporating internships, practical engagements, and collaborations with local, national, and international sports organizations are not mere suggestions, but essential steps towards the future of sports management education in India. Such collaborations could include partnerships with entities like the Sports Authority of India, the Ministry of Youth Sports Affairs, the Indian Premier League, and international bodies such as FIBA and BCCI. By bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills, educational institutions can better prepare future sports managers to meet the industry's evolving demands. This research contributes to the limited academic literature on sport management education in India and provides a benchmark for current educational standards. It also highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to talent development, emphasizing the critical role of real-world experience in developing professional competencies.

Overall, the study's findings advocate for a re-evaluation of the sport management curriculum in India, stressing the integration of experiential learning to enhance the professional skills of sports industry practitioners. This holistic approach to education will not only improve the competencies of future sports managers but also support the continued growth and commercialization of the Indian sports industry, a sector with immense potential and a promising future.

Sportification Approach for the Challenge of Social Inclusion

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Aim and Research Questions

Social inclusion, understood as a balance between equality and respect for differences, is one of the main goals of a democratic society. However, social inclusion is not the end result of a process, but a permanent challenge. Indeed, social inclusion depends on how the individual citizen acts in the situation. Social inclusion is therefore a matter of training. It is required: 1) to develop the needed skills to act in a socially inclusive manner; 2) to exercise a socially inclusive approach.

Accordingly, the study conducted by the 'REFLECT: educational practices' research group (University of Turin) addressed the following questions:

- What are these skills?
- What does a socially inclusive approach consist of?
- How can these skills be trained and how can a socially inclusive approach be exercised?

Starting from these questions, the research has:

- a theoretical aim: to define these skills and propose an innovative version of a socially inclusive approach;
- a design aim: to plan a training path that develops the defined skills and exercises the proposed approach;
- a methodological aim: to use a revision of educational reflective practices.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Social inclusion is recognized as one of the main conditions for the respect of human rights (Sen; Crips, Taket). As such, is the cross-cutting objective of the U.N. 2030 Agenda (González). Social inclusion means promoting equal opportunities for all individuals to participate in the society (Vrankan, De Decken, Van Nieuwenhuyze).

Social inclusion, however, is not always a "spontaneous process". The promotion of social inclusion must be one of the main tasks of educational policies (Brown). This promotion

requires the raising of levels of responsibility, participation and reflection. Hence the educational need for the development of critical thinking, reflexivity and agency.

This educational need finds a great opportunity in the sports experience (Jones).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Faced with this task, the REFLECT group research has developed a theoretical paradigm that defines the process of social inclusion as sportification.

According to the sportification paradigm, the necessary social inclusion skills are sporting ones (taking sides, being super partes, trying to take sides, stepping aside, ...); it follows a sportified approach that transforms the existing space into an “augmented space” where it is possible to live an existence aimed at a continuous surpassing. The challenge of social inclusion has in this approach the condition of possibility for an increasingly inclusive society.

In order to develop the sportive skills and to exercise the sportified approach, the research planned an educational path experimenting with a revision of traditional educational reflective practices: the 3RPlay - reflecting, researching, replying. Through the methodological device of the “pretext” - i.e. a hypothetical suspended situation, which does not involve predefined questions or immediate answers -, the path “forced” the participants to confront the pretext and assume the posture necessary to look at situations as opportunities to implement inclusive development.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The 3RPlay methodology includes a guided self-assessment plan that records the development of skills needed for social inclusion and the strengthening of the approach that maintains the direction of inclusiveness.

The research realized two paths: SOCCER – Football School: educational roles and tasks (2021) and STEREO - Sports educator for a new society (2023). These projects have shown that the pretext device improves the social inclusion skills and, as a result, strengthens

reflection and judgment skills needed for a social inclusive approach.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

Encouraged by these results, the challenge of inclusion continues. The practices of 3RPlays enable the formation of an approach that - as sportified - supports a continuous inclusive action. It is an approach that should not be confined to specific areas or roles, but should be exercised as a necessary approach to the citizenship. As such, it can be the goal of the school system.

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What Can Determine a Person's Career in Sports Management? Case of Lithuania

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Aim and Research Questions

Sports management is still considered a semi-profession due to prevailing uncertainties regarding education, activities, behavior, and other classic elements of a profession (Gutović, Relja & Popović, 2020). However, the rapid development of the sports industry, which creates conditions for the pursuit of a career as a sports manager in various spheres, naturally requires understanding and analyzing the meaning of this profession in a specific environment, distinguishing its identity, social position, and status. Specific knowledge associated with career opportunities and career development within the framework of a specific profession also plays an important role in such searches (O'Reilly, McMahon, Parker, 2020). Unfortunately, the aforementioned knowledge is lacking within the framework of the sports management profession. It is also not entirely clear what elements can be considered essential when a person chooses and continues a career in the sports management profession, which is especially important for sports organizations when managing the careers of employees, and in this case, managers. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to reveal the factors that determined a person's career in sports management in Lithuania.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

A professional career can be defined as a lifelong journey that begins in mid-adolescence and ends in retirement. Since the concept of career emphasizes the individual level, the choice of career itself is one of the most important decisions in a person's life, but further career decisions are often related to other factors, such as education, opportunities for self-realization, the pursuit of effective job performance, the pursuit of job satisfaction, social status and the resulting material guarantees, which are especially important to

make meaning to a person's life (Fatimah, 2020; Lepold, Tanzer, Bregenzer, Jimenez, 2018). However, recent research has paid considerable attention to what individuals do or can do to create successful and sustainable careers (Spurk, Hirschi, & Dries, 2019), but notes that a full understanding of the construct of a career requires consideration of the context in which it is analyzed, as well as the temporal dimensions and the individual themselves (De Vos, Van der Heijden, & Akkermans, 2020). Knowledge of how individual and national factors determine a person's career choice and career development can provide useful insights for organizations dealing with recruitment and retention challenges (Howe-Walsh, Turnbull, Khan, & Pereira, 2020).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

This research project is part of the Erasmus+ Sport project funded by European Commission with a title Developing Sports Managers and Leaders Employability Across Europe (DSMLE, 622709-EPP-1-2020-1-UK-SPO-SCP). Qualitative research was chosen. The qualitative data collection was made using the face-to-face semi-structured interview method, which was organized according to the topic guide. The empirical study involved nine sports managers working for different organizational sectors sports organizations in top or middle management positions. The research sample was drawn up using purposive sampling. Interview materials were analyzed employing the content analysis method - as a method of hand/human-coding data to develop and interpret categories/subcategories in the data.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The data analysis has tentatively led to the identification of 5 categories and their sub-categories, revealing the factors that may have a bearing on the career of a sports manager in Lithuania. The first category, personal exposure to sports, reveals the knowledge of the sports context and the influence of being part of sport on the career of a sports manager. The second category - competency prerequisites - reveals the influence of knowledge, skills, and education on the career of a sports manager. The third category, Work in sports experience, reveals the impact of an individual's work experience in a sports

context. The category Characteristics of the individual reveals the factors of the individual's character, performance, and attitudes, and the category Randomness, shows the fact of unpredictability of the career.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

In the Lithuanian context, the career of a sports manager can be influenced by such elements as the person's exposure to sports, his/her professional competencies, work experience, personal characteristics, and life's coincidences. These emerging elements should be known to representatives of sports organizations responsible for human resources management and career counselors, but the cultural context in which the career is developed should also be considered.

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Experience is Knowledge”: A Multi-faceted Approach in Enhancing Sport Marketing Education through Active Experiential Learning

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This abstract explores the professional practice in sport marketing education through the integration of experiential learning methodologies within undergraduate sport management programs.

Aim

The aim of this work is to share an educational experience on applying an experiential learning approach in an undergraduate sport marketing program, which encourages students to foster a deeper understanding of the sport industry and strategic marketing principles.

Purpose and Background

Sport marketing has become a fundamental component of undergraduate courses in sport management programs across universities. Proficiency in sport marketing allows various career opportunities for students, such as market researcher, branding agent, sponsorship manager, and event coordinator. While students in sport management programs typically learn marketing principles rooted in business or management academia, there is still a critical need for a balance between theoretical concepts and practical applications (Ball & Bennett, 2024; DeLuca & Fornatora, 2020). In this work, I drew on the experiential learning theory (ELT) approach in a sport marketing curriculum. ELT emphasizes the importance of concrete experience based on observation and active participation in the learning process (Kolb, 1984). Incorporating experiential learning into marketing courses is a strategic approach to bridging the gap between theory and practice, especially within the unique context of the sports industry. Hence, the purpose of this work is to employ ELT as a pedagogical approach and understand how this approach can be applied and developed in the undergraduate sport marketing curriculum.

Design and Implementation

I adopted the concept of ELT into my undergraduate sport marketing class during the Fall 2023 semester at the University of Louisiana Monroe (ULM). It was the first attempt to employ ELT in the school's sport marketing curriculum. I designed a new sport marketing course as a junior faculty, which included four key curriculums central to this course: case study simulation, mentor interview, field observation, and facility tour.

The case study is organized for in-class activity using a real-time case of contemporary issues in sport industry. The students are provided with background information on sport organizations, different stakeholders, and the marketing challenges or opportunities involved. Throughout the role-playing simulations, students are encouraged to critically think and analyze the situation and discuss potential solutions. Students actively engage in real-world scenarios and explore how marketing strategies are created, implemented, and evaluated in the broader sport industry.

The mentor interview immerses students in the second-hand experiences of sport industry professionals. Students become interviewers and conduct semi-structured interviews with mentors from various sectors of their interests. This assignment provides students with insights into career trajectories and industry trends. This interactive approach facilitates the transfer of theoretical knowledge to practical application through the lens of their mentors, while also providing students with networking opportunities and industry connections.

The field observation offers students the chance to observe sport events and venues from the marketer's perspective. By attending local sporting events, students gain a nuanced understanding of the operational dynamics. Through guided observation and analysis, students apply theoretical concepts learned in the classroom to further assess their applicability in the sport field.

The facility tour provides students with a comprehensive overview of the intricacies involved in planning, operating, and evaluating sporting events. Led by the knowledgeable facility staff, the tour includes visits to various areas of the facility. For

example, my students had the opportunity to tour the ULM football stadium and surrounding sites, including the ticketing office and media booth. By touring collegiate sport facilities and engaging in immersive experiences, such as game-day preparations and operations, students gain insights into the multifaceted nature of marketing and see how marketing principles are applied in the sport industry.

Contribution and Future Development

Sport marketing education has evolved beyond traditional classroom settings, recognizing the value of practical knowledge in preparing students for the dynamic and competitive sports industry. By presenting educational experiences and curriculum, this work contributes to the understanding of ELT in higher education for sport marketing. Implementing a creative ELT approach supports educators in providing students with opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in practical contexts, develop essential skills, and enhance their employability.

Based on the positive feedback from my students, I believe that sharing my insights and teaching experiences at the EASM Conference 2024 can encourage meaningful discussions among sport management teaching community and inspire to build practical course materials, specifically to benefit fellow junior faculties. The engagement and evaluation of this work are in progress as I continue my academic endeavors in the education of sport management. For the next three years, further data collection from students and participating professionals is expected by incorporating this work as a foundation stone for the sport marketing course.

Examining Employer and Student Perceptions of a Sports Sales Experiential Learning Project

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Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this project is to examine the perceptions of an experiential learning project from the standpoints of both the employer and student participants.

How do perceptions of students in a classroom experiential learning project compare to the employers' perception of the same project?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Higher education has recognised the benefits of experiential learning in the classroom in many different scenarios and fields (Barnes, 2014; DeLuca & Fornatora, 2020; Ball & Bennet, 2024). Students can gain additional benefits when learning is practical and tied to an experience with a specific employer working on real-world projects. This is especially true in Sport Management as a way for students to enhance their resumes, as many employers value practical experience (Lee & Lupi, 2010; Foster & Pierce, 2021). Currently, many of these experiences are gained through formal internships, though additional experiences in the classroom are beneficial (Lu, 2021). However, not all students find classroom experiential learning to be positive. Many students report group work, which is common in these projects, as a negative, especially if there is no mechanism for group member accountability (Cohen & Nite, 2019).

Though there has been a great deal of research on the student satisfaction, or lack thereof, of experiential learning in the classroom, very limited study has been done on the employers who help facilitate these projects. This is an important factor to examine, as schools need businesses to collaborate with on classroom experiential projects. If businesses do not see a benefit to working with schools and

students, they will not be willing to provide those opportunities.

Methodology

In this case study, a Sports Sales class in a large Southern University in the United States partnered with a Minor League Baseball team (Team) to sell tickets to individual themed games during the 2024 season. Students were split into four groups, with each group assigned a different game. Groups were assigned separate Team sales staff members to act as a mentor and provide guidance and support throughout the semester. Students were required to individually sell tickets, which was a component of the final project grade.

The questionnaire comprised of Likert scale and open-ended questions, with slightly different questions geared towards to each group, hoping to compare and contrast opinions of all project participants. The questions focused only on aspects of the project, not the overall course.

Results

A total of 13 students and 5 Team sales staff members, all male, completed an online qualitative survey. Data analysis is currently ongoing. Responses are being reviewed using thematic analysis. Responses from Team mentors will be compared to student answers to evaluate the perceptions of the project from each side of the project. Student responses and Team responses will also be analysed separately to determine themes within each group. One unique issue of this project and worthy of further examination, is that all participants are male. This is due to no females as Team staff members or students. Preliminary themes include application of grades to the project and satisfaction of Team mentorship.

Conclusion

Overall, students are benefited from classroom experiential learning. However, it is important for both students and the employers to be satisfied with the experience, to ensure the collaboration can happen in the future.

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Beyond the Lecture: Active & Experiential Learning Strategies for Sport Management Instructors

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Statement that Abstract relates to professional practice

The authors affirm the content outlined in this abstract pertains to practical application, as the session will concentrate on crucial elements of professional practice such as learning environment, student engagement, and best practices.

Aim

The purpose of this abstract is to share the concepts of experiential learning, active engagement, and beyond-the-textbook strategies utilized within sport management curriculum to engage learners. Through a synthesis of examples and best practices, the presenters will highlight distinctive strategies for fostering active engagement and deepening student understanding beyond traditional textbook instruction.

Purpose & Background

Traditionally, higher education relied heavily on textbooks and traditional classroom lectures as primary modes of learning. However, throughout history, there has been a notable transition towards experiential and active learning practices, particularly within applied majors like sport management (Dane-Staples, 2013). Active learning is a way of teaching where students become engaged in the classroom environment (Mangram et al., 2015; Miller & Metz, 2014). While internship programs have become a consistent component within sport management programs, scholars have observed a pattern among many students to delay selecting an internship until their senior year, potentially limiting their exposure to experiential learning opportunities. As such, Petersen and Pierce (2009) urged sport management faculty to integrate experiential learning techniques into the curriculum, highlighting its capacity to bridge theoretical knowledge with practical

industry applications. To address this limited exposure, previous scholars have emphasized the importance of exposing students to multiple learning experiences throughout their academic journey to maximize the benefits of experiential learning. Similarly, scholars found recent graduates of a tourism and hospitality program viewed their engagement in experiential learning activities throughout their undergraduate studies positively, associating these experiences with enhanced employability skills in the workplace (Yang et al., 2016). In a recent evaluation of sport management student preparedness, DeLuca and Braunstein-Minkove (2016) recommended programs to incorporate additional experiential opportunities, advocating for mandatory pre-internship coursework provides students with formal contact hours with various organizations. Existing literature highlights a collective call to action aimed at offering sport management students diverse experiential learning opportunities throughout their academic journey.

Design and Implementation

Drawing upon their backgrounds, education, and varying expertise, the presenters will showcase a range of hands-on experiential learning activities, interactive exercises, and beyond-the-book engagement techniques designed to cultivate critical thinking skills, practical competencies, and industry-relevant insights. From partner activities to collaborative projects, to industry immersion experiences and virtual field trips, the presenters will explore how these immersive learning opportunities can enrich the educational experience and better prepare students for success in the evolving world of sport management.

Hands on experiential learning: Within this section the presenters will highlight various examples of hands-on learning such as apprenticeships, practicums, and internships while also exploring additional instances of experiential learning opportunities (McClellan et al., 2020).

Active learning in the classroom: Within this section, the presenters will provide examples of low, medium, and high intensity active learning strategies that can be incorporated into a class from quote question comment to

debates to jigsaws to concept maps (Dane-Staples, 2019).

Beyond the Book: Within this section the presenters will highlight the importance of going “beyond the textbook” to enrich students experiences and knowledge through practical methods such as guest speakers, case studies, and informational interviews (López-Carrill et al., 2020)

Feedback from students was collected continuously throughout courses through both informal methods (i.e. in-class discussions) and formal approaches (i.e., surveys, exam questions). This comprehensive feedback was aimed at evaluating various experiential activities administered in the course.

Outcomes, Reflections, and Future Development

Results of this study include feedback from students and instructor implementation feedback. Reflections from students on the use of experiential learning in the classroom will be shared. These results show students feel empowered and engaged when the classroom strategies are designed to provide ways of active learning. Attendees will leave the presentation with practical examples of how they can incorporate hands-on experiential learning and active learning strategies into their classes and across their curriculum. By diving into these key areas and sharing actionable strategies, the presenters aim to inspire educators to embrace innovative pedagogical approaches. This session will prove valuable to faculty members seeking to enrich the student learning experience, spanning from junior faculty members to those with demanding teaching schedules and even to tenured or seasoned faculty.

A potential avenue for future development entails broadening the scope of the practicum/apprenticeship experience available to students. This expansion would maintain the requisite number of hours dedicated to practical work within a term while incorporating supplementary career development components aimed at enhancing the course's credit value. These additional career development elements might encompass sessions dedicated to networking strategies, resume crafting, leveraging LinkedIn, and other pertinent professional skills.

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Application of Experiential Learning Activities in Sport Management Class: Effectiveness of Industry-Coupled Problem-Based Learning (IC-PBL) Course

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Aim and Research Questions

The importance of experiential learning activities is increasing in the sport management education worldwide. In particular, the need for Industry-Coupled Problem-Based Learning (IC-PBL) based courses is being emphasized with the goal of nurturing students' creative and integrative talent suitable for the rapidly changing sport business industry. The purpose of this study is twofold: (1) to find out if IC-PBL course can be an effective tool to increase students' learning outcomes as a discrete learning tool (2) analyze the fan experiences at the baseball park.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The ideal sport management program is to have three key components: (1) required and elective courses to cover theoretical background in sport management, (2) discontinuous experiential activities, and (3) discrete experiential learning activities (COSMA; Parkhouse, 2001). Discontinuous experiential learning activities can be viewed as an extension of a specifically designed course and/or program, including field projects, interviews with industry experts, field surveys and site visits to the sport field, and educational activities through role play (Davis, 2012). On the other hand, discrete experiential learning activities refer to acquiring field experiences outside the realm of the traditional university classroom setting and include internships, field research, cooperative education between industry and academia (Southall, Nagel, LeGrande, & Han, 2003). Rapid technological development driven by the 4th Industrial Revolution is widening the gap between the classroom and the sport field. In this situation, the

importance of IC-PBL is gradually increasing (Young, Lee, & Ramos, 2012; Wigfield, 2022).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The introductory sport management class (n=57) is designed to provide the basic theory and practices of sport management. Students are to learn fundamental aspects of sport business including but not limited to, ticketing, concession operation, security management, sport media, marketing and promotions, event bidding and management, and sponsorship activations. To maximize students' learning outcomes, IC-PBL method was adopted to this class. In fact, students were invited to one of the most prestigious professional baseball games in Seoul, Korea and asked to identify and analyze pros and cons of their fan experiences at the ballpark as guided by the professor's manual. Furthermore, they had to provide the optimal solutions to increase the wiliness to revisit to the ballpark in the future. The survey consisted of a total 13 sections with 57 questions to cover the points (i.e., gate, security, concession, shop, concourse, game viewing, cheer-leading, smoking booths, restrooms, waste management, etc.) that baseball fans can face and interact at the baseball park in Seoul, Korea.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The results are as follows. Firstly, the most satisfactory responses came from the cheering experiences (4.29 out of 5) such as cheering songs and cheerleaders followed by the social media areas (4.07 out of 5) which helped maintain fan engagement both through online and offline. With the influx of young fans represented by Generation Z, the high-quality cheering culture at the ballpark and social media services meeting the needs and wants of fans can make a positive contribution to improving fan experiences and the rate of revisit. Secondly, the following areas of merchandise shops, concessions, waste management with recycling program, and restroom quality were marked as less satisfactory compared to other sectors. Also, they suggested that stadium seating structure and design of a paper ticket needed to be fixed. The final report written through the IC-PBL class has been delivered to the professional baseball team.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

It is worth to note that the IC-PBL based cooperative education could not only help enhance students' learning outcomes as planned, but the sport company also gained the field research report with the lowest budget. This study proved IC-PBL could be an effective teaching method as a discrete experiential learning activity. Moreover, it was very successful to establish the mutually beneficial relationship between the academia and the industry in the realm of sport business. However, there existed limitations. Firstly, the final report produced in this class has been written only based on one-day event. Secondly, class size was not big enough to obtain the credibility of this final report.

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Sport Marketing and Sponsorship

Track chair : Tim Ströbel

Who Wins from the Gambling Sponsorship of Sport? Case Studies from the United Kingdom and Ontario.

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Aim and Research Questions

Drawing on two separate studies exploring the gambling marketing in sports within two different jurisdictions, the United Kingdom and Ontario, Canada, this paper answers an overarching research question, who benefits from gambling marketing across different televised sports, and what are the implications for vulnerable audiences? In answering this question, the paper will compare the frequency and format of gambling marketing found across three broadcast sports, football (English Premier League, EPL) ice hockey (National Hockey League, NHL) and basketball (National Basketball Association, NBA), compare the format of marketing found in the UK and Canada, and highlight how gambling marketing shown in both jurisdictions highlights the need to consider the implications for underage and vulnerable audiences.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

This paper explores the prevalence of gambling sponsorship across broadcast sports in UK (Rossi et al., 2023) and Ontario, Canada (Wheaton et al., 2024). Gambling sponsorship comprises the sponsorship of sports matches, the sponsorship of television programmes, cultural event marketing, social causes and influencers or tipsters (De Jans et al., 2024). Live sports broadcasts present an opportunity for sports clubs and leagues to draw income from gambling operators. However, the advertisement of gambling via sports marketing or sponsorship can incur detrimental impacts which can include harms incurred from increased gambling (McGrane et al., 2023), to the normalisation of gambling amongst sports fans including children (Hing et al., 2023). This generates a tension on how sports fans should be best protected from marketing that – while important for the

income of sports teams or leagues - can lead to increased gambling.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

The findings are drawn from two studies that followed the same methodology in the analysis of advertisements that appeared during live sports. EPL matches took place during the opening weekend of the 2023/2024 season in August 2023, while NHL and NBA matches were played from 25th-29th October 2023. Gambling-related advertisements were subject to frequency analysis similar to that followed by Purves et al. (2020), with each instance of gambling marketing coded according to variables such as format, gambling brand, duration, number of logos, type of gambling advertised, and the presence of harm reduction or age restriction messages. Instances of gambling advertising were recorded during the EPL project from the live broadcast of six matches during the opening weekend season. Similarly, during the Ontario-focused project, advertisements were recorded from the live broadcasts of two NBA and five NHL matches. Advertisements during both projects were recorded in codebooks similar to that used by Purves et al. (2020), developed in Excel. Data analysis was conducted in IBM SPSS v29.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Both projects revealed that live broadcasts across all three sports contained significant levels of gambling sponsorship which were exposed to audiences that would have included children and other vulnerable audiences. Our study of sponsorship within EPL broadcasts found 6,966 gambling references (logos or other gambling-related messages) during the six matches, the majority of which – 55.7% - occurred on electronic pitchside hoardings. Additionally, 14.5% of references contained harm reduction messaging, while 11.1% contained age restriction messaging. Meanwhile, our analysis of NHL and NBA matches as broadcast in Ontario uncovered 3,537 gambling references, most commonly appearing (50.4%) on the playing surface itself. The prevalence of harm reduction (2.6%) and age restriction messaging (2.8%) was lower in comparison to sponsorship found in the EPL. These findings demonstrate the global relationship between gambling sponsorship and live sports broadcasts. While

gambling operators may seek to sponsor sporting events and generate goodwill amongst fans or viewers, there are implications for the viewer, for whom the mere exposure effect implies they may build a positive association between the gambling operator(s) and the sporting coverage (Bornstein et al., 1987). Additionally, increased exposure to gambling sponsorship may lead to subsequent gambling behaviour and possible gambling harms (McGrane et al., 2023). While sports teams may seek to heighten sponsorship revenue, they may also wish to consider the implications of gambling sponsorship on young and other vulnerable audiences.

Conclusion and Implications

In summary, gambling operators are the main beneficiaries of sponsorship, with possible detrimental impacts for children and vulnerable audiences. The findings of these studies demonstrate how gambling sponsorship is a global and phenomenon. These findings carry implications for sports clubs and leagues whose reach includes children and vulnerable audiences. The wide prevalence of marketing – with little harm reduction messaging – serves to further normalise gambling as part of the consumption of sport with little awareness of the risk of gambling harms. Additionally, the findings highlight the inefficacy of the regulations within different jurisdictions, highlighting the need for global guidance on the relationship between gambling sponsorship and sport.

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Concurrent Sponsorship: How Sponsorship Congruence and Group Dynamics Affect Spectators' Attitudes

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Aim and Research Questions

A brand sponsors a sporting event hoping to gain substantial exposure to spectators during the event hosting. In practice, spectators are subject to a plethora of sponsors simultaneously visible when attending or watching an event. Recent studies have yielded evidence of a spillover effect within the concurrent sponsorship context (Boronczyk & Breuer, 2021; Yousaf et al., 2018). Despite the significance of these studies, the benefits a brand can reap when multiple brands are concurrently visible at a sporting event is overlooked. This research aims to investigate: 1) how sponsorship congruence affects spectators' brand attitude; 2) whether the perceived congruence is moderated by the magnitude of sponsorship groups; and 3) its prediction to behaviour intentions.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Building upon the brand association theory, research has consistently indicated that event sponsorship serves as a strategic avenue for brands to integrate their identities with the attributes, benefits, and attitudes that spectators associate with their favoured sport entities (Boronczyk & Breuer, 2021; Dickenson & Souchon, 2018; Yousaf et al., 2018). This alignment is crucial, as the level of perceived congruence between the sponsor and the sporting event plays a pivotal role in shaping spectator attitudes towards the brand. This leads us to hypothesize:

H1. Spectators' perceptions of sponsor-property congruence has a positive association with spectator brand attitudes.

Further investigation reveals the nuanced impact of sponsorship group size on these dynamics (Cobbs et al., 2015). When a sponsorship arrangement encompasses a broad array of brands, the sheer volume of

information may lead spectators to overlook less congruent brands, thereby diminishing potential negative spillovers.

H2. The size of sponsorship group moderates the relationship between sponsor-property congruence and spectators' brand attitudes.

As spectators develop more favorable attitudes towards a brand through its association with a sporting event, these positive sentiments are likely to translate into a greater likelihood of purchase. This suggests that

H3. Spectators' brand attitudes are positively associated with purchase intentions.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The Shanghai ATP Masters 1000 (hereafter SAM1000) was selected as the research context. Measures for sponsorship congruence (Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006), attitudes (Lardinois & Quester, 2001), purchase intentions (Speed & Thompson) were adapted from existing literature using seven-point Likert scales.

Before the main study, the highest and lowest sponsors were identified by asking 30 students who volunteered at the SAM1000 to rank levels of congruence from the 31 official sponsors. Then, the hypotheses were tested via two separate studies. In Study 1, a total of 120 undergraduate students participated in a 2 (size: large vs small) × 2 (congruence: high vs low) between-subjects experimental design. The experiment adopted a pre-and post-test approach. In the pre-test, participants were asked to report their initial attitude toward the focal brands. In the post-test, participants watched a designated video clip of SAM1000, followed by another measurement of their brand attitudes.

In Study 2, a total of 500 spectators who watched the SAM1000 completed an online survey a week after the event using wjx.cn. The survey measured congruence, attitude, and behaviour intention spectators attributed to the focal brands. Following Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two steps approach, structural equation modelling was used for data analysis.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Results of Study 1 indicated the difference in pre-and post-test brand attitudes is significantly higher for the high sponsorship-match group compared to the low group ($M_{high} = 1.77$, $M_{low} = 0.88$, $t(70) = 2.258$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that sponsor with a higher event congruence gain a greater spillover effect. When adding the size of sponsorship group in the analysis, the results showed that in larger sponsorship groups, sponsor with higher match exhibited significantly greater spillover effects than those with lower match ($F(1) = 8.843$, $p < 0.05$). In smaller sponsorship groups, the influence of event congruence on sponsor spillover effects was not significant ($F(1) = 0.016$, $p > 0.05$). The results suggest that the size of sponsorship groups moderates the impact of sponsorship match on brand spillover effects.

Results of Study 2 are expected to corroborate the hypotheses that spectators' perception of sponsorship congruence positively influences their attitude toward sponsors and, subsequently, purchased intentions. Details will be reported at the conference.

Conclusion, Contribution and Implication

This study contributes to the understanding of spillover effect of concurrent sponsorships in a sporting event setting. While a sponsor' fit with a sporting event enhance spectators' attitudes toward the sponsor, the effect of varied sizes of sponsorship groups offer valuable suggestions to event organisers about how to organize and categorize sponsors' brand and to maximize their spillover effect when hosting a sporting event.

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Components And Processes Of Centralization Of Sponsorship Management In Multi-Divisional Sports Clubs

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Aim and Research Question

Voluntary sports clubs (VSCs) are increasingly relying on sponsorship income to fulfill their club mandates (Hindmarsh, 2020). This poses a particular challenge for multi-divisional VSCs. Due to the complex multi-divisional structure, it can frequently be seen, that individual divisions pursue different sponsorship concepts and strategies, and, that sponsors are offered comparable sponsorship rights for different prices. Initial studies show that multi-divisional VSCs try to centralize their sponsorship management to deal with these issues (Schulz et al., 2023). As previous analyses of sponsorship-related organizational structures have primarily focused on professional (team) sports (e.g. Dietl & Schweizer, 2014), it is unclear what the addressed components of such centralization processes are and how these transformative processes take place in multi-divisional VSCs. Therefore, this study addresses the following questions: (I) Which components are addressed in the context of centralization processes of sponsorship management in multi-divisional VSCs? (II) How do centralization processes of sponsorship management in multi-divisional VSCs unfold?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The only existing model of the sponsorship management process in VSCs (Hindmarsh, 2020) differentiates six phases from Preparation to (Dis)Continuation/Termination including the corresponding tasks/functions that need to be undertaken by VSCs. Although this process model does not consider any transformative developments (e.g. centralization), potential components of centralization can be derived

from the tasks/functions that are undertaken in the sponsorship management process (e.g. approaching potential sponsors). To analyze the extent to which the potential components of centralization are (not) centralized and which mechanisms underlie these transformative processes, a multi-level processual model (Lang et al., 2020) is used. The processual model takes a holistic view considering the internal and external environment of the VSCs, and differentiating among the context, action, and outcome of transformative processes.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The study is based on a multiple-case study design (Yin, 2018). Multi-divisional VSCs (n=3) were selected in Germany and Switzerland, which made it possible to generate greater variability in the sample. The data in each club were gathered through (i) document analyses, (ii) three to four expert interviews with decision makers and (iii) one focus group discussion with club members. The data were analyzed applying a qualitative content analysis with theory-based deductive coding and supplementary inductive coding (Mayring, 2021). To visualize the transformative centralization processes with their underlying mechanisms, the visual mapping method (e.g. Parmentier-Cajaiba & Cajaiba-Santana, 2020) was applied.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The results regarding components show that the VSCs centralize different tasks/functions, and the degree of centralization varies across the VSCs. For instance, VSC 1 installed a full-time position in the headquarter of the club as umbrella, to be in charge of the entire sponsorship management (e.g. pricing, approaching of potential sponsors), whereby VSC 3 implemented a voluntary sponsorship position in the headquarter of the club, that takes on a primarily strategic and coordinating role, however the operational sponsorship management (e.g. approaching of potential sponsors, relationship management) remains the responsibility of the individual divisions. Regarding the unfolding of the processes, it was found that the context factors why and to what degree certain components are (not) centralized differ among the VSCs. The explanations can primary be found in the VSCs' capacities (e.g. time/expertise of

decision makers, financial resources). Overall, the centralization of sponsorship management in multi-divisional VSCs has led to increased sponsorship income and more long-term partnerships. Nevertheless, conflicts between volunteers and full-time staff, allocation conflicts, and diverging interests among individual divisions were observed.

Conclusion, Contribution and Implication

The centralization of sponsorship structures in multi-divisional VSCs seems to be a suitable strategy in response to the increasing expectations of sponsors. Nevertheless, the transformative processes are not only accompanied by more systematic sponsorship management, potentially resulting in increased sponsorship income, but also by potential negative consequences that need to be specifically addressed. The analysis contributes to the functional management of sponsorship-related organizational structures in multi-divisional VSCs.

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Exploring Female Athlete Endorser Motivations: Values and Agency in Action Sports

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Aim and Research Question

While athlete endorsements and sponsorship have been researched extensively within sport marketing scholarship, comparative little research in this space has been devoted to the athlete's perspective. To begin to address this gap, this research seeks to examine athletes' motivations and decision-making drivers in entering into sponsorship agreements, asking: what motivating factors drive female athletes' decision-making regarding athlete sponsorship and/or endorsement agreements?

Literature Review

The objectives, managerial implications, and commercial returns of such partnerships have been explored across myriad contexts and examples (e.g., Slatten et al., 2017). However, within this research the views of athletes and the considerations behind endorser marketing from the endorser's perspectives have largely been overlooked. This is perhaps of no greater significance than in the context of action sports, where athletes are highly reliant on endorsement contracts and athlete sponsorship agreements, given the absence of guaranteed salaries and lucrative broadcast agreements (Thorpe & Dumont, 2018). Little research has explicitly investigated athlete endorsements in action sports, though, and what research has been completed has predominantly focused on the star quality of male athletes (Thorpe, 2017).

This gender bias towards male athletes is reflective of the significant branding barriers faced by female athletes in securing commercial support (Fink et al., 2014). Female action sports athletes have been shown to face greater challenges when securing sponsorship or endorsement deals (Parris et al., 2014; Thorpe & Dumont, 2018), resulting in the "self-objectification" of athletes to cultivate an audience and attract sponsor interest (Thorpe, 2017). Fink (2019), in turn, has highlighted that female athletes' motivations in marketing and branding require greater consideration

and investigation, particularly as endorser effectiveness appears to be more directly attributable to positioning rather than gender.

Research Design

Data collection will consist of semi-structured interviews ($n \approx 10$) with sponsored female snowboarders. The selection of snowboarding as the study's context was first informed by the diversity of sponsored athletes across multiple disciplines, ranging from elite international competitors to freestyle off-piste and park riders. Second, unlike more conventional, professionalized sports, action sports maintain a sub-cultural ethos and unique relationship to media and brands (Thorpe, 2017), encouraging entrepreneurial self-branding by athletes and greater agency in securing partnerships (Parris et al., 2014).

Interviews are presently underway and expected to be completed in spring 2024. Analysis will comprise a two-stage coding process (Saldaña, 2021). First cycle values coding is being employed to identify discrete values, attitudes, and beliefs within participants' responses. Second cycle pattern coding will then be undertaken to identify and extrapolate central themes and explanations across the dataset, providing a narrative description of the findings consistent with prior research into the experiences and perspectives of female athletes.

Findings

Preliminary findings have highlighted three key themes within the data: (1) participants highlighted the importance of values congruence between athletes and their sponsors, wherein sponsorship opportunities serve as a source of empowerment a means through which to communicate and share their own personalities; (2) this emphasis on values congruence is an earned one, however, as respondents have equally stressed the importance of maturation and personal relationships in advancing their commercial opportunities; and (3) perhaps uniquely, participants have emphasized the importance of value-in-kind payments and sponsor "swag" as key assets sought out by athletes. This in-kind payment bestows a sense of legitimacy, place, and purpose amongst respondents, both at the highest competitive levels and for sponsored park riders creating social media content.

Conclusion

The present research stands to contribute significantly to endorsement and athlete sponsorship scholarship, providing the first examination of athlete motivations in agreeing to corporate partnerships. This study expands our understanding of athlete decision-making and provides new insight into the importance of values congruence and value provision in athlete marketing.

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Exploring the Sponsor Credibility-Attitude-Purchase Intentions Relationship: A Case of University Sport Sponsored Apparel

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Research Objective

Although research has examined sponsored-apparel purchase intentions (PI) within professional sport contexts (e.g., Biscaia et al., 2013), the effects of international consumers' sponsor credibility (SC) and attitudes-towards-purchasing (ATP) on sponsored-sports-apparel PI within European (amateur) university sponsorship contexts requires further investigation.

There has been a substantial international student market for over 20 years. Indeed, 2023 alone saw "record levels" of Chinese international students (over 1m) and returnees (Educationfair, 2024), whilst India was estimated to have over 500,000 students studying abroad. Within Europe, international students not only spend money in those European countries they are studying in, but also enhance their own careers through a European degree (e.g., Zhao & Cox, 2022), ultimately creating future-purchasing power and greater influence in home-markets (e.g., via higher-level managerial positions). Pertinently, the international student population becomes exposed to less-prominent apparel-making sponsors that have little-to-no foothold in students' home-markets, through university-logoed sports apparel featuring the less-prominent sponsor-manufacturers. Thus, an innovative internationalisation strategy from less-prominent apparel-making sponsors could involve targeting international students through sponsoring university sport. Subsequently, this study, underpinned by Attribution Theory (AT, Heider, 1958) and the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA, Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), investigates the significance of this important population's SC on PI, mediated by their ATP (as per TRA's framework) from apparel-making sponsors.

Literature Review

AT suggests consumers infer sponsors' motives from sponsorships, impacting SC. Here, SC refers to international students' evaluations of trust (cf., Wang et al., 2012) towards the sports-apparel sponsor. TRA indicates individuals' behavioural intentions (i.e., PI here) are determined by individuals' evaluative beliefs, mediated by attitudes towards that behaviour (namely, ATP in this study) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Specifically, ATP concerns international students' (un)favourable impressions towards purchasing the sponsors' apparel, emanating from SC inferences (cf., Biscaia et al., 2013), while PI represents the extent to which international student-consumers are willing to support sponsors by purchasing their sports apparel (cf. Lee & Koo, 2015). Collectively, AT and TRA provide the theoretical underpinnings for identifying relationships between SC and ATP, and subsequently PI; extant literature (e.g., Biscaia et al., 2013) suggests a positive relationship exists between SC and ATP, which is also hypothesised here. PI is heavily influenced by individuals' ATP (cf., Schlesinger & Güngerich, 2011), thereby providing the foundations for a hypothesised positive influence of ATP on PI here. Finally, international students' SC positively links to ATP and, ultimately, PI (Biscaia et al., 2013), thereby underpinning the wider nomological network of hypothesised relationships.

Method

Given the international context, measures were adapted from Wang et al. (2012) (5-point Likert scales used). Only international students who had previously purchased university sport-sponsored apparel were considered as participants, thereby controlling for previous purchasing behaviour. The questionnaire was distributed online over two weeks to minimise potential extraneous factors impacting substantive findings. Data were collected towards the end of the academic year, as international students neared 'international alumni' status. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was utilised, including bootstrapping procedure for testing mediation (also meaning smaller sample sizes needed; Sim et al., 2022).

Results

121 valid samples, including 74 males (61%) and 47 females (39%), were recruited, aligning with the university's wider student demographic. Results indicated common method bias was not a problem. Construct reliabilities and factor loadings exceeded minimum expected thresholds. Meanwhile, all average variance extracted (AVE) values were above .50, supporting convergent validity. Discriminant validity was also supported, evidenced by the square root of each construct's AVE exceeding the correlations between those constructs. SEM-analysis substantiated an acceptable model fit (GFI=.93, NFI=.92, CFI=.98, RMSEA=.06). Finally, the hypothesised relationships between SC and ATP ($\beta=.83$; $p<.001$), and between ATP and PI ($\beta=.72$; $p<.001$), were supported. The bootstrapping test also supported the indirect effect through ATP ($b=.75$, 95% CI [.59~.88]). This large effect, coupled with bootstrapping, also supports the study's respective sample size (see Sim et al., 2022).

Conclusions, Contributions, Implications, and Future Research Avenues

This study contributes to our theoretical understanding of university sport consumers as important (sub)populations of general sport consumers, by investigating (a) international students within (b) European (amateur) university sport sponsorship contexts. Findings reveal international students' PI are indirectly determined by SC (e.g., via ATP) rather than directly via SC, as observed in sponsorship settings in non-university contexts (e.g., Olson, 2010). Stated differently, a shift in ATP is also necessary as SC increases, if university sport-apparel-making sponsors are to leverage the PI of international university student consumers effectively. Managerially, the findings suggest university apparel-making sponsors should not only emphasise sponsor credibility but also elucidate why credibility is positively-valenced, if they are to realise international student's purchasing power, both in the near future and as alumni. Future research could delve deeper into the specific role(s) international student sport consumers play in enhancing the internationalisation strategies of less-prominent university-logoed apparel sponsors, and also their potential impact as international alumni endorsers.

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Attention and Memory in Sport Sponsorship – the Effect of Language on Sports Audiences in Esports Broadcasting

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Aim and Research Questions

Numerous studies have explored the influence of different factors on how television sport audiences perceive billboards that show the sponsor information at sporting events. Although various factors can affect the impact of sponsor signage in these contexts, there is a notable gap in research specifically examining the language used on billboards surrounding sports facilities. To address this gap, this study utilizes eye-tracking technology to investigate the influence of billboard advertisement language on TV sports audiences' attention, recognition, and recall of sponsor signage.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Attention encompasses various cognitive processes, but generally refers to the ability to select specific stimuli. Visual attention, often characterized by a focus on the visual field, plays a key role in decision-making and behaviour (Khachatryan, 2018). In the context of sports sponsorship and broadcasting, eye-tracking technology helps researchers understand how different visual stimuli affect audience focus and engagement, and further helps to test the sponsorship effectiveness.

Brand positioning theory explores how companies differentiate themselves and connect with consumers by focusing on reshaping perceptions rather than solely innovating products (Lee, J. L. et al., 2018). When expanding into new markets, brands must adapt to local conditions, such as through linguistic modifications, to overcome barriers (Behrens et al., 2022). Sports sponsors employ similar strategies by using local languages in advertisements during sports events.

Besides, different levels of sport involvement can also be a factor. Sponsor signage receives more attention if audiences are less involved with the sponsored event (Boronczyk et al., 2018). It remains to be clarified whether sport involvement affects audience attention when different language display strategies are employed in displaying sponsors.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The current study employed a controlled experimental design in conjunction with a questionnaire. Participants were recruited from two linguistically distinct regions, mainland China and Japan. In total, the study involved 39 Chinese participants (with 20 assigned to the control group and 19 to the experimental group) and 38 Japanese participants (19 in each group). The rationale for selecting these two languages is that prior research on language effects in the field of advertising has predominantly chosen the investigated language from the Indo-European language family, leaving a gap in the study of East Asian languages. This is particularly significant as East Asian countries are increasingly engaging in global sports sponsorship. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by examining the impact of East Asian languages within the sport sponsorship context. Two distinct treatment versions were implemented; one where sponsor brands displayed in the video were presented solely in the Roman alphabet, and the other was solely in the native language of the participants.

In contemporary sports event broadcasting, two primary types of billboard display patterns are employed. The first type is the static billboard, which simultaneously displays all sponsors without any changes. This approach is commonly utilized in sports like tennis, where it is crucial to minimize distractions from the surroundings. The second type is the dynamic billboard, where sponsors are shown in a scrolling manner within a fixed area, each sponsor being displayed individually in a predetermined sequence. This type is frequently observed in international soccer events and esports live broadcasts. Previous studies have examined the impact of language using static billboards (Xu et al., 2024). Therefore, the current research aims to investigate the effects within the context of dynamic billboards. To this end,

a video of esports broadcasting was selected as the stimulus.

At the beginning of the experiment, participants were exposed to a video of esports broadcasting. During the viewing process, their eye movement was recorded using an eye tracker. Subsequently, participants were required to fill out a questionnaire to collect data about their recognition and recall of the sponsors featured in the video.

Results and Discussion

The impact of language on participants from two linguistically different countries was analysed individually. For both groups, the findings suggest that the attention registered by different languages on sponsor signage varied significantly across the three observational metrics: time to first fixation, fixation duration, and fixation counts. A notable increase in recognition rates was also observed. However, the results indicated no significant differences in recall. The interaction effect between sport involvement and language was not observed.

Based on the findings, it is advisable that sponsors seeking to optimize targeting strategies via sports sponsorship maximize the impact of their sponsorship by displaying their logos or slogans in both their original language and the language of the target market. This approach is particularly crucial for newly entering brands aiming to augment attention and recognition among sports audiences. Adapting designs to align with the language and culture effectively promotes sponsorship messages and logos, thereby enhancing their efficacy in garnering attention and fostering brand recognition.

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Expressions of Pride: Consumer Responses to Sport Teams' LGBTQIA+ Advocacy on Facebook

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Aim and Research Questions

Sport leagues face escalating pressure around social stances (Frederick et al., 2017), which can polarize audiences, raising branding dilemmas in balancing diverse fan views (Heere & James, 2007). Sport teams' advocacy for social justice causes (e.g., LGBTQIA+ rights) can be impactful given sports' passionate following, economic impact, and privileged societal standing (Antunovic et al., 2023; Babiak & Wolfe, 2009). However, activism might not be appropriate and could negatively affect teams among fans who disagree with divisive social or political positions (Frederick et al., 2017).

We explore social media users' responses to professional sports teams' support for Pride and LGBTQIA+ causes on Facebook. Since 2016, Facebook offers users "reactions" in a variety of ways beyond simply "liking" content (like, love, angry, haha, care, sad, and wow), providing nuanced data capturing specific valenced sentiment. Taking advantage of users' flexible options, we examine how sport consumers respond to sport brand activism and shed light on challenges faced by sport organizations navigating diverse fan bases with varying political and social views.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

We ground our study in institutional theory, branding theory, and social identity theory. Teams engaging in LGBTQIA+ activism conform to or challenge institutional norms. Branding theory suggests consumers form associations between teams (brands) and values or causes. When marketing actions align with existing perceptions, it enhances brand loyalty; when incongruent, it breeds skepticism and risks accusations of "rainbow washing." Social identity theory predicts fans react positively when team activism aligns with their personal identity and values. Backlash for activism counter to prevailing cultural norms remains underspecified in

most signaling models (Abitbol & Sternadori, 2019). Observing negative reactions to Pride messaging helps quantify tangible risks and penalties associated with virtue signals viewed as identity-incongruent by fans. Comparing Pride messaging reactions updates assumptions on activation risks, especially for women's leagues riding increased visibility (Toffoletti, 2016). We provide novel insights into activism acceptance, advancing applications of brand social advocacy. Testing gender differences in activism acceptance also fills a gap given limited research on women's sport fandom.

H1: Women's professional sport teams have a higher ratio of positive reactions to negative reactions on Pride-related social media posts than men's professional sport teams.

H2: There is greater variance in reactions to Pride messaging among men's professional teams than women's professional teams.

Methods

We reviewed all Facebook profile pictures from teams in eight major North American professional sports leagues since 2016. For Pride-themed images (N=639), we recorded user interaction metrics (comments, shares, reactions) and collected all public comments (N=436,781). We categorized reactions as positive (like, love, care), negative (angry, sad), or neutral/ambiguous (haha, wow). We calculated sentiment values for each comment and compared reaction and sentiment patterns by team and league.

Results and Discussion

Leagues varied in Pride image use from 69.1% of WNBA teams annually to 14.1% of NFL teams. Most reactions were positive (99.7% NWHL/PHF to 81.6% NFL). Fourteen teams, all in NWHL/PHF or NWSL, averaged positive reaction rates greater than 99%. Supporting H1, teams in the NWHL/PHF, NWSL, and WNBA generated a higher proportion of positive reactions than teams in the NHL, NBA, MLB, MLS, and NFL (MD=.099, $p < .001$). Consistent with cost-benefit analysis theory, this favorable consumer response was reflected in how often teams used Pride iconography. Teams generating more positive consumer responses to Pride images were more likely to employ them.

Sentiment of user comments on Pride images was slightly positive (0.049 [-1 to 1 scale]),

with a plurality of neutral comments (43.6%). Replies were slightly more negative in tone than initial comments (MD=-0.016, $p<.001$). Supporting H2, variance in reactions was greater for men's teams than women's teams. Contrary to expectations, variance in comment sentiment was slightly higher for posts by women's teams than for men's teams. The highest proportion of negative-sentiment comments was in response to NWSL teams (24.3%), despite overwhelmingly positive reactions (97.1%).

Our results indicate backlash concerns by sport teams may be overblown. Consumer responses to Pride-related social media were overwhelmingly positive. While substantially stronger for leagues that have consistently embraced the LGBTQIA+ community, even leagues with a mixed history with the issue (e.g., NHL) saw overall positive consumer responses.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implications

Analyzing reactions to Pride campaigns across gendered sport contexts advances social identity and brand association theories while informing marketing decisions around sport brand activism. Findings bring focus to the complex terrain teams face navigating social activism, authenticity, and tradeoffs emphasizing different identities in messaging strategies. A strong positive relationship emerged between favorable reactions and Pride-related marketing likelihood. Consumers' reactions were strongly positive, with nearly universal acceptance among teams in leagues that have actively aligned their brands with social justice causes and support for multiple genders and sexual orientations. We provide insights into consumer responses to brand activism and shed light on the potential risks engaging in social advocacy campaigns.

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Athlete's Personal Brand: Do We Need To Think About Social Responsibility?

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Aim and Research Questions

The modern sports landscape has seen athletes increasingly focusing on personal branding, beyond their on-field achievements, recognizing its importance and broad implications (Kunkel et al., 2020). A strong personal brand not only boosts an athlete's visibility and commercial appeal but also provides a platform for addressing societal issues and engaging in social responsibility initiatives (Park et al., 2020). Research highlights the growing significance of intangible brand attributes, such as uniqueness, image, positioning, values, and identity (Hu & Yang, 2010; Carlson & Donovan, 2013). For athletes, these elements are crucial as fans often identify with them as symbolic representations of desirable reference groups. Aligning their brand with positive social causes allows athletes to drive meaningful change and cultivate a lasting, positive legacy. Recent studies show that athletes who actively communicate their social responsibility initiatives can build stronger personal brands and positively impact society (Nazemi et al., 2020; Dašić et al., 2021). In the digital age, social media platforms offer unprecedented opportunities for athletes to connect with their audience and amplify their social impact (Bredikhina et al., 2023).

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The concept of social responsibility is gaining attention in scholarly discourse, highlighting its potential to shape public perceptions and enhance an individual's brand. Incorporating social responsibility into branding strategies

can differentiate athletes, fostering a sense of authenticity and purpose that resonates with their audience (Oshiro et al., 2021; Dašić et al., 2021). Kunkel, Doyle, and Na (2022) emphasize the significant impact of athletes' social responsibility initiatives on personal brand development through strategic philanthropy. This aligns with existing literature, underscoring the potential for athletes to enhance their brand image through meaningful societal contributions. In conclusion, the intersection of athlete personal branding and social responsibility is a compelling area of research and practice. By aligning their brand with meaningful social causes, athletes can strengthen their public image and commercial value while contributing to positive societal change (Kunkel et al., 2020). To further explore this intersection, recent publications by Osorio, Centeno, and Cambra-Fierro (2020) provide a comprehensive review, highlighting the importance of human brands and the elements that contribute to a strong personal brand, aligning closely with athlete branding and its role in driving social responsibility initiatives.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

To achieve the study's objectives, high-profile Lithuanian athletes active on social media were selected. Interviews were conducted with Rokas Baciūška, Indrė Sorokaitė, and the LavTwins, who represent different ages and sports. Participants consented to the use of their real names. The athletes were aged 44 years (Darjus and Krzysztof Lavrinovic), 35 years (Indrė Sorokaitė), and 24 years (Rokas Baciūška), covering basketball, volleyball, and motorsport, respectively. Qualitative research through interviews was chosen to gain deep insights into the athletes' perspectives on personal branding and social responsibility. This method is crucial for understanding the motivations behind their actions (Fossey et al., 2002). Additionally, the complexity and individuality of athletes' branding and social responsibility are difficult to quantify. Qualitative research allows for a nuanced exploration of these phenomena, capturing the unique views and experiences of each athlete (Öhman, 2005), thereby providing a detailed understanding of their behaviors and attitudes. Thematic analysis was used to process the qualitative research data.

Results

The study examines high-performance athletes' self-branding and social responsibility. LavTwins confidently view themselves as a brand, emphasizing their role as societal role models since 2017. They feel a responsibility to society, stating they must set an example as professionals, parents, and representatives of society. Rokas Baciūška founded his brand, «Baciūška,» around 2018-2019, seeing it as a business opportunity to earn money and raise his profile. Indrė Sorokaitė, however, avoids commercializing her brand, focusing on emotional connections and social responsibility, emphasizing warmth and cordiality over marketing. Branding started for these athletes after achieving significant career milestones and public interest. LavTwins began branding when they gained media recognition, while Baciūška realized its necessity for motorsport funding, lamenting that branding should have started when he was younger. Sorokaitė's branding began with her volleyball academy, which she views as self-realization rather than a marketing strategy. Social responsibility is important to all interviewed athletes. LavTwins engage in youth education, hospital visits, and charity work, viewing it as a duty. Baciūška participates in similar activities but prioritizes financial stability, acknowledging he cannot fully concentrate on social responsibility yet. Sorokaitė champions women's rights and education, recognizing athletes' influence in raising awareness and supporting vulnerable populations. Communication about social responsibility varies. LavTwins do not focus on publicizing their efforts extensively. Baciūška publicizes selectively, depending on the circumstances and importance. Sorokaitė actively shares her social responsibility efforts through her channels, aiming to educate the public about social issues and focusing on women's empowerment and motivation. Despite differing approaches, all athletes understand the importance of their societal roles and the potential impact of their brands. They perceive themselves as influential figures who can use their popularity and brand to promote positive societal values and contribute to the overall well-being of society.

Discussion

The study reveals that high-performance athletes consider their «professional» careers to start with competition participation or

receiving rewards. Athletes identify as personal brands due to business opportunities, societal recognition, and their roles as role models, aligning with definition. An athlete's brand is multifaceted, reflecting sporting success, values, lifestyle, and social responsibility. Athletes aim to connect with their audience and influence public opinion and social values. They understand their brand's societal impact but do not always communicate their social responsibility activities. Brand-building motivations differ: Lavrinovic and Baciūška developed their brands for fame and income, while Sorokaitė focuses on maturity and social responsibility without seeking commercial gain. This supports Carlson & Donovan's (2013) view that athletes are perceived as brands with unique values, forming emotional bonds with the public. Social responsibility varies: Lavrinovic focuses on youth education and charity, Baciūška on diverse activities, and Sorokaitė on women's rights and education. These activities demonstrate their potential societal impact, supported by Abuín-Penas et al. (2020) during the Covid-19 crisis. Publicizing social responsibility also varies: Lavrinovic avoids it, Baciūška does selectively, and Sorokaitė varies by context. This aligns with Tainsky and Babiak's (2011) finding that older, higher-income athletes engage more in social responsibility. Overall, the study supports Azadi & Javani's (2018) assertion that athletes' brands are powerful tools for career development and social responsibility, offering societal benefits.

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Green Media Messages in Motorsport? Examining NASCAR, F1 and the WRC's Environmental Approach

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Aim

Motorsport is potentially one of the most visible sports for environmental impact, however leading motorsports, such as NASCAR, Formula 1 (F1) and the World Rally Championship (WRC) have ecological plans, with each aiming for carbon neutrality by 2035 and experimenting with sustainable fuels and engines. Unique cultures, histories, audiences, and approaches to environmental communications exist for sports. The research seeks to understand the approach to sustainability messaging on YouTube and the subsequent reception.

Background

F1, NASCAR and the WRC are the three most popular forms of motorsport in the world when four-wheeled motorsport is considered. Their fanbases are huge with a potential reach of billions of people and each has over 1 million YouTube subscribers. The research comes as the sport faces threats from governmental policy (to be a positive environmental player) and auto manufacturers (as a research testbed and for reputational benefit). Research into motorsport sustainability is emerging through works like Naess & Chadwick (2023) and Sturm, Wagg & Andrews (2023).

The research was underpinned by Second-level agenda setting theory, whereby audiences are not only influenced by “what to think about” but “how to think about it” (Moon 2013, p. 669). It is pertinent to sustainability in motorsport with each series having announced carbon neutrality objectives. Furthermore, audience theoretical perspectives were included, like the Imagined Audience (Marwick & boyd, 2011), and the salient feedback that comes from social media communications. Additionally, the fan viewpoint, and their efforts for “refocusing on people’s mediated participation in society,

whether through fandom, protest, or other forms of public connection” (Livingstone, 2019, p. 175) would be considered about motorsport and sustainability.

Research Design

The comparative case study research design examines the communication strategies and tactics of the three motorsports championships and the reaction of their fanbase to key pieces of communication. The project undertook two distinct phases. The first was a content/document analysis of environmental messaging from each series, their main stakeholders (e.g. teams, suppliers, drivers, sponsors) and their key media outlets. Official reports were utilised to understand the position of the Series and the transcripts of YouTube videos were critically analysed. Videos were chosen regarding sustainability initiatives (e.g. search terms of hybrid, sustainability, fuel etc) and were analysed over the period 2011-2024, with 2011 being the time that F1 announced their shift to hybrid power units. Critical discourse analysis was used to understand how the corporate ideologies were met with concern to their fanbase, and the themes and perceived importance of the messages (see e.g. Colton & Poploski, 2019; Daymon & Holloway, 2010).

The second phase regarded analysing YouTube comments from these videos. The content was viewed concerning each series and its stakeholder base, carried over from phase 1. Content Analysis was conducted, (utilising MaxQDA) measuring sentiment, popularity, and overall themes. Certain outcomes could be drawn from these comments, from noting acceptance or otherwise of the communications, acceptance of the messaging and change over time and between the series studied and if these comments seemed to affect the communications over time. It follows from analysis by e.g. Thelwall (2018) and Mulholland et al., (2017).

Results/Findings and Discussion

Phase 1 of the research suggests that, despite each aiming for carbon neutrality, the championships had different approaches to environmental messaging. Differences appeared as F1 prioritised technological leadership, NASCAR emphasised tradition and WRC focused on direct relationship to the natural environment, for example.

The approaches appeared to run deeper than surface-level communications with F1 and WRC, seeing their role going further, to be leaders in the communication and policy space for future technologies, which include hybridisation, electrification, fossil-free sustainable fuels, and being a proponent for change with politically based organisations. NASCAR, a US-based sport however took a much different approach, seeking to influence on a business-to-business approach, preferring to maintain a stronger link to the ‘traditional cultures’ of the sport.

Phase 2 of the project was ongoing at the time of submission. However, from early indications, it appears that F1 was the most prolific in both messaging and reaction online. An example of a clear issue is that of ‘noise’, and F1 was able to push through negative reactions and offset that through other storytelling techniques.

Conclusion

The early conclusions suggest that a single way to communicate an environmental aim does not exist, with issues like heritage and audience demands needing to be accounted for, even if external pressure (e.g. political) exists. To not do so risks the perception of environmentally friendly technologies. Furthermore, the outcomes suggest that communication is as important as technology for sports and getting either wrong could place an existential threat on the sport. Such communication outcomes could help other sports through change management like environmental concerns or financial restructuring.

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1

Surfing Nostalgia Waves: Examining the Effect of Nostalgia and Emotion on Brand Memory and Attitude While Watching Sports

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Aims and Research Questions

The primary purpose of this study is to explore how nostalgia impacts sports consumers' memory and attitude towards embedded sponsorship stimuli while they are watching sports matches. Additionally, the study seeks to investigate the mediating effects of pleasure and arousal in this relationship. Based on this background, the study poses the following research questions:

1. Will nostalgia be evoked while watching sports significantly influence consumers' pleasure and arousal?
2. Will nostalgia be evoked while watching sports significantly affect brand memory and attitude?
3. Do pleasure and arousal significantly mediate the relationship between nostalgia and brand memory or brand attitude?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Nostalgia is a mood or a feeling that causes a pursuit of things that tend to evoke memories of the past (Holak & Havlena, 1998). For sports fans, an exceptional performance by an athlete in a previous sports event may trigger their nostalgia under certain circumstances, thereby deepening their memory of the specific objective scene from that time. Therefore, nostalgia is an emotion that occurs along with the cognitive process, initiated by various external stimuli that evoke past memories. According to the PAD(Pleasure, Arousal, Dominance) model, emotions from external stimuli can be expressed in the dimensions of pleasure and arousal (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) have pointed out that the ultimate goal for fans through sports is enjoyment. Therefore, it is reasonable to speculate that in a sports

environment, positive emotions rather than negative ones will dominate nostalgic emotions. Furthermore, Lim et al. (2018) demonstrated that emotions (e.g., pleasure vs. arousal) are crucial factors in memory and attitude toward brand sponsorship and can influence consumers' cognitive processing of sponsorship stimuli. Thus, we can also infer that the positive emotions experienced by sports consumers while watching sports matches may indirectly increase their levels of memory or positive attitude towards sponsorship brands from a past sports event.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

The research employed an experimental research design to address the research questions. A total of sixty-three participants participated in the study and were asked to watch an edited extract lasting approximately 8 minutes on a television screen. The experimental stimuli consisted of a match from the 2006-2007 seasons between Real Madrid and FC Barcelona, featuring world-class soccer player Lionel Messi. This match was selected because there are still many fans who miss his heyday. Before the main test, we conducted a one-sample test to confirm this match inducing nostalgia sufficiently ($M = 5.575$, $SD = 1.606$, $t = 7.722$, $p < .01$). Also, a one-sample t -test was conducted to ensure that the target-embedded signage in the video was unfamiliar to participants ($M = 1.543$, $SD = .326$, $t = -59.283$, $p < .01$). While watching the video, the subjects' arousal levels were measured using the Biopac MP160 system. After watching experimental stimuli, participants completed scaled measures of nostalgia (Pascal et al., 2002), pleasure (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), brand recall (Lim et al., 2018), and brand attitude (Mitchell & Olson, 1981). Data were analyzed through regression and mediation analysis using SPSS version 28 and PROCESS macro version 4.2 for SPSS.

Results

The statistical results reveal that nostalgia had a significant direct effect on pleasure ($\beta = .149$, $SE = .072$, $t = 2.054$, $p < .05$). Furthermore, pleasure also significantly influenced brand memory ($\beta = .126$, $SE = .046$, $t = 2.767$, $p < .01$) and brand attitudes ($\beta = .767$, $SE = .222$, $t = 3.457$, $p < .01$). Although nostalgia did not directly affect brand memory

($p > .05$) and attitudes ($p > .05$), it was observed that pleasure fully mediated the relationship between nostalgia and brand memory ($\beta_{\text{indirect effect}} = .0214$, $SE = .0128$; $CI [.0013, .0513]$), as well as the relationship between nostalgia and brand attitude ($\beta_{\text{indirect effect}} = .1176$, $SE = .0680$; $CI [.0085, .2707]$). Additionally, arousal was found only to have a significant negative direct effect on the memory of sponsor brands ($\beta = -.125$, $SE = .058$, $t = -2.143$, $p < .05$).

Conclusion and Implication

The current study revealed that nostalgia experienced while watching a sports match influences viewers' pleasure, which in turn impacts their brand memory and attitude towards embedded sponsorship stimuli. Furthermore, pleasure was found to fully mediate the relationship between nostalgia and brand memory, as well as between nostalgia and brand attitude. Additionally, consistent with previous research, arousal was observed to negatively affect brand memory.

This investigation represents one of the initial efforts to explore the impact of nostalgia and emotion on consumer behavior within the context of sports viewing. The findings provide valuable insights for sports marketers, enabling them to better understand the mechanisms activated by nostalgic sports events in consumers.

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Football Fan Tokens Supporters And Detractors: Uncovering Football Fans' Views Towards Fan Tokens

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Aim and Research Questions

With web3 applications having undoubtedly entered numerous aspects of our life, we recently saw the emergence of fan tokens being introduced into the world of sport. Fan tokens, operating like virtual shares of sport organisations, built on blockchain technology, were quickly welcomed by the sport ecosystem worldwide, with major football clubs and federations being some of the earliest adopters (Manoli et al., 2024). Nonetheless, and despite this acceptance, wide criticism exists on how fan tokens operate and what risks they entail, with the Football Supporters Association advising against them and football clubs that were due to issue them, withdrawing their interest. In this study, we delve deeper on football fans' views, by focusing on football fans who have not purchased fan tokens, in order to explore the following question: How are fan tokens perceived by football fans?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Fan token consumption was found in a recent study to be occurring due to two diverse reasons (Manoli et al., 2024). First, as a token of one's identity as a fan, exemplifying the symbolic and ritualised expression of their affinity (Dixon, 2013), combining modern-day aspects of gamification (Deterding et al., 2011), and enabling democratic communication and participatory fandom with the clubs (Ersan et al., 2022). Second, as investment tokens, in which this new type of football 'merchandise' can reach even non-fans, who are drawn to it due to its innovation and potential investment value, appreciating it as a commodity as per its price volatility (Lopez-Gonzalez & Griffiths, 2023). The study by Manoli et al. (2024) on why football fans consume fan tokens was the first to examine

this blockchain technology application, neglecting nonetheless the views of those fans who had not purchased them, something that this present study aims to do.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Data collected through 20 focus groups, with a total of 82 participants, and 84 individual interviews were used for this study, to account for potential social desirability issues that might have emerged as limitations in previous studies on the topic (Manoli et al., 2024). All 166 participants were football fans who had not purchased fan tokens, but who had knowledge of what they are and how they operate and were asked questions on their fandom experiences and their views on fan tokens. All focus groups and interviews took place in person in the Lombardy area of Italy between October and December 2023 and were conducted in Italian. The focus groups and interviews were recorded and later translated and transcribed by the researchers who are bilingual. Manual thematic analysis was conducted by the research team without the use of any a priori codes (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Results/Findings and Discussion

Through the data, it emerged that fan tokens are viewed as both a fundraising tool for a club and a tool for engagement and fan base expansion. However, the lens through which both these perceptions occur, differs based on the fans' predisposition towards fan tokens. As such, the fans that are in support of fan tokens expressed enthusiasm for the idea of investing in one's passion, such as their favourite football club, while appreciating that fan tokens could potentially help fans feel closer to the club they support. On the other hand, the fans that were against fan tokens suggested that they are nothing more than just another mechanism for clubs to draw funds from fans, while arguing that authenticity in fandom could erode, potentially even diluting the pureness of the wider football fan community.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

What these strongly expressed opposing views demonstrate is a dichotomy in the way in which football fans perceive fan tokens, with similar representations being expressed as two completely opposing ideas, namely an

opportunity and a threat for football fandom based on the fans' predisposition and how they view fandom overall. These two directly opposing representations bear nonetheless significant managerial implications for the organisations which chose to adopt them, informing them on how fan tokens can be promoted to football club fans. This dichotomy appears to be also connected to the way in which the participants perceive fandom overall, with a clear distinction identified between those who view fandom as encapsulating an element of consumption, and those who oppose to such a conceptualisation. As more interest is being drawn on fan tokens and other web3 applications in the world of sport, capturing fans' perceptions, through this study can help pave the way for future research on drivers and obstacles in this ever-developing area and overcome potential limitations that arise in this study.

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Analysing Commercial Representation by Football Agents in the Football Industry

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Research aim

This paper sets out to analyse commercial representation of talent, also known as off the field representation, in football, by football agents. Despite increasing athlete branding and commercialisation in the modern football industry, the role football agents play within this dynamic commercial space is extremely under researched. The primary aim of this study is to explore and conceptualise commercial representation to address this research gap.

Literature review

Agents' position as the intermediary between players, clubs, and third parties has seen their role and power grow immensely in football since the early 1990's (Holt et al., 2016). The role of today's football agents has two dimensions; on-the-field representation involving representing clients (player, coaches, and clubs) in contract negotiations for their football activity (Kelly & Chatziefstathiou, 2017) and off-the-field representation about managing clients' off-the-field activities such as commercial negotiations and marketing (Geey, 2021). These dimensions of the agents' role also overlap and intertwine throughout their representational activities (Zarkada & Tzoumaka, 2020). Although the on-field representation remains to be the core role of agents, existing academic literature underlines that agents are taking a more active role in negotiating commercial deals on behalf of their clients (Poli et al., 2012; Green & Ghaye, 2021). The study by Poli et al. (2012) identified that over two-thirds of agents who participated in the study provided services concerning marketing and endorsements of their clients. Yet, there is a gap within academic work exploring the role of football agents in the commercial side of their football representation, especially their role in building athlete brand equity.

Models of athlete brand equity have been developed by authors such as Arai et al. (2014) and Hasaan et al. (2018). However, these models are most often from the perspective of the consumer, focusing on the attributes that would be most attractive to them in an athlete brand. This leaves the question of how the athlete, who in the case of football is represented by their football agent, would develop and utilise a brand within the commercial market and what role an agent plays in this process.

Research design

The researcher proposed a pragmatic approach to this study, as it most closely fits their beliefs regarding reality and would be appropriate to answer the research question. The paper gathered data through a qualitative semi-structured interview with ten (10) football agents and five (5) commercial agents exploring their experiences of commercially representing athletes. The qualitative interview questions were developed from a combination of concepts from the emergent practices of football agents (Green & Ghaye, 2021) along with athlete branding models (Arai et al., 2014; Hasaan et al., 2018). The interviews were thematically analysed and applied the concept of salience to arrive at the most important aspects of the agent's role in commercial representation to produce a conceptualised framework of the football agent's role in commercial representation.

A sampling frame of agents, both football and commercial, representing athletes in commercial activity within Europe was chosen for the research. Football agents were recruited by directly approaching registered agents and football agencies from a list maintained by the English FA. Commercial agents were recruited by directly approaching commercial talent agencies offering commercial representation for athletes.

Results

Commercial representation by agents within sports marketing and athlete branding most closely resembles that of a brand manager, balancing the need to build brand equity and convert that brand equity into commercial revenue for the athlete. The conceptualisation of commercial representation by football agents has been developed as a model with three core dimensions: (i) Athlete Brand

Development, (ii) Athlete Brand Utilisation, and (iii) Commercial Market Partnerships and Relationships. Then, each dimension has its sub-components. Athlete Brand Development is comprised of four key components that focus on establishing the athlete brand and developing its initial brand equity: (1) Creating the Athlete Brand Identity, (2) Identifying Athlete Brand Potential, (3) Developing Athlete Brand Strategy, and (4) Promoting the Athlete Brand. Athlete Brand Utilisation is comprised of four key components that focus on balancing the growth of the athlete brand's equity against the acquisition of endorsements and sponsorship agreements for commercial revenue: (5) Enhancing the Athlete Brand, (6) Sourcing Commercial Contracts, (7) Negotiating Commercial Contracts, and (8) Managing Commercial Contracts. Commercial Market Relationships is comprised of five key components that the focus on the establishment of a commercial network to support the growth of brand equity and commercial revenue: (9) Player Relationship, (10) Commercial Industry Relationships, (11) Collaborative Partners Relationships, (12) Maintaining Commercial Relationships, and (13) Player Fanbase Relationship.

Conclusion and contribution

A conceptual framework of commercial representation from an agent-centric view is the primary contribution of this paper filling the gap in existing research. Further study into areas where agents' opinions diverged within a future quantitative online survey analysis will be required to iterate and refine the conceptual model to produce a framework of best practices in commercial representation of talent in football.

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Using Virtual Advertising for International Brand Positioning of European Football Team Sponsors

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Aim and Research Question

Internationalization is becoming increasingly important in sports, as popular sports and clubs have fans all over the world, in addition to their local audience (Behrens et al., 2022). Sponsors, thus, must decide if and how sponsor messages should be adapted to different geographical markets. While such considerations were predominantly academic in previous years, the advent of fully functional virtual advertising now allows sponsors to adjust their sponsor messages to show different sponsor content to multiple target markets simultaneously. This leads to the following research question: How do football sponsors use virtual advertising for adaptations of sponsor messages and different brand positioning strategies?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The present study builds on the overarching framework of consumer culture positioning strategies, which proposes that companies can position brands in terms of global, local, or foreign consumer culture (Alden et al., 1999). Virtual advertising provides a unique opportunity to study brand positioning strategies in sports sponsorship, because sponsor brand messages can be adapted to different geographical target markets in real-time to consider cultural consumer differences (Rumpf & Breuer, 2017).

Yet, to date a lack of empirical studies remains, because virtual advertising was introduced on a broader scale only recently. Therefore, the present study aims to explore which brand positioning strategies football team sponsors use to address international markets based on characteristics of the original (home) football league, the target market, and the sponsor.

Research Design and Data Collection

Interviews with industry experts showed that European football clubs started using virtual advertising in national football leagues on a broader scale during the 2022/23 season. Therefore, we used this season and identified four leagues (Bundesliga, LaLiga, Ligue 1, Serie A) with nine clubs (Borussia Dortmund, FC Bayern Munich; Atlético Madrid, FC Barcelona, Real Madrid; Paris Saint-Germain FC; AC Milan, Bologna FC, Inter Milan) that used virtual advertising for national league home matches during the regular season. In broadcasts of these clubs' matches, original sponsor messages on LED advertising boards next to the football field were overlaid with virtual advertising sponsor messages. We assigned these different overlays (feeds) to six target markets (Europe, North America, South America, Southeast Asia, South Asia, and Middle East/Africa). For the nine clubs, the first author watched (more than 300 hours) highlight videos on YouTube in every feed and identified a total of 137 domestic sponsorships with 506 sponsor messages across all foreign target markets.

Data Analysis and Preliminary Findings

First, we applied content analysis to examine adaptations of sponsor messages (in terms of language, content, color, and sponsor logo) compared with the domestic feed. More than one-quarter of the sponsors (26%) changed the sponsor message in the target markets regarding at least one item ($M = 1.74$ items, $SD = 0.731$). Most adapted messages used another language, followed by a change in content and color.

Second, we developed a codebook for classifying consumer culture brand positioning strategies into global, local, and foreign strategies based on existing research (e.g., Michaelidou et al., 2020). Most sponsors used a global brand positioning strategy (68%), followed by foreign (25%), and local (7%). One sponsorship combined a local with a foreign approach, and 81 sponsorships could not be assigned unambiguously to a brand positioning strategy (if sponsors used English language in the North American target market, or if Spanish league sponsors used Spanish language in the South American target market).

Model-free evidence indicates differences in terms of brand positioning strategies related to different home league markets, target

markets, and sponsor industries. To formally test the drivers of specific brand positioning strategies, we estimate a multinomial logistic regression model that explains the choice of a specific (global, local, or foreign) consumer culture brand positioning strategy as a function of different home league markets, target markets, and sponsor characteristics (e.g., industry, country-of-origin, size). Results will be presented at the EASM conference if the submission is accepted.

Conclusion

Current sport sponsorship research discusses the potential of virtual advertising and personalization of sponsor messages as innovative communication formats (e.g., Boronczyk et al., 2021). This study is, to our knowledge, the first empirical investigation how sport sponsors adapt their sponsorship messages on perimeter boards in football stadiums in line with global, local, and foreign brand positioning strategies.

In terms of theoretical contribution, the study extends our understanding how companies use brand positioning strategies in marketing communications, because virtual advertising is unique as only a limited number of communication elements is changed, and the brand messages are communicated simultaneously, in real-time, in different target markets. In terms of practical implications, the findings can help sponsors, sponsored clubs, and broadcasters to determine adequate brand positioning strategies in different geographic regions depending on sponsor characteristics and national leagues.

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Do Fans Care? An Explorative Study on Soccer Fans' Perceptions About the Moral Appropriateness of Unhealthy Sports Sponsorships

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Aim and Research Questions

Existing research on sports sponsorships by industries that sell unhealthy commodities (e.g., fast food, tobacco, gambling) has primarily focused on the prevalence of these so-called unhealthy sports sponsorships (USS), and some of its outcomes. However, scant empirical evidence exist about the ethical concerns and moral appropriateness of USS. The objective of this qualitative study is therefore to explore sports fans' perceptions and evaluations about the appropriateness of USS and to investigate how they experience the health-related impact of these sponsors.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Last year, the global sports sponsorship market was valued at nearly 97 billion US dollars (Statista, 2023) with a large share for unhealthy sponsorship as it shows ongoing growth (Ireland, 2021). These USS were previously operationalized as sponsorships by companies that sell health-threatening products, for example alcohol, gambling, tobacco, and food and beverages high in fat, salt, and sugar (Ireland, 2021; Sartori et al., 2018; Scully et al., 2023). Exposure to these products leads to positive perceptions about and attitudes towards the products, increased propensity to try these products and actual consumption (Ireland, 2021). Ethical concerns arise based on the image transfer theory whereby the healthy image of sports is transferred to unhealthy products. These products benefit from the association since consumers start to perceive them as less riskful, also called the health halo effect (Whalen et al., 2018)

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

This study used in-depth interviews based on the q-methodology to determine sports fans' perceptions, experiences, and views about the appropriateness or desirability of USS (Shemmings & Ellingsen, 2012). Three first-division soccer games were attended to recruit participants randomly. We conducted 30 in-depth interviews with soccer fans in Flanders, the northern and Dutch-speaking part of Belgium. The purposively sampled case of Belgium soccer offers an interesting study context since the highest professional league is sponsored by an alcohol brand (i.e., the Jupiler Pro League), the cup championship is sponsored by a chips brand (i.e., the Crocky Cup), and all teams, except one, are sponsored by at least one gambling brand.

At the beginning of the interview, each participant completed a survey targeting socio-demographics and their gambling, drinking and eating behaviors. After the survey, participants were provided with a q-sort task consisting of 29 sponsors they had to sort in a pre-defined grid from -5 to +5 based on the question "how appropriate/suitable do you perceive this sponsor relating to soccer". They were categorized based on previous literature defining unhealthy sponsors (i.e., alcohol, gambling, food and beverages high in fat, salt and sugar), healthy sponsors (i.e., sports brands), and neutral sponsors (i.e., financial institutions, travel agencies etc.) (Danylchuk & MacIntosh, 2009; Ireland, 2021). Participants were asked to clarify their choices. Interviews were transcribed in Sonix and coded in NVivo. The codes were generated through an inductive coding process, using first-cycle and second-cycle coding (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019).

Results/Findings and Discussion

Data collection has been finished in December 2023. Data analysis is currently ongoing. Initial findings illustrate that Jupiler, an alcohol brand, is perceived as a neutral sponsor ($M=0.13$, $SD=3.085$). Participants clarified their choice by stating that drinking beer and attending a soccer game belong together. The same occurred for eating snacks ($M=-1.00$, $SD=2.221$) and drinking soft drinks ($M=-.61$, $SD= 2.390$). Although participants were aware of the health-threatening aspect of these products, they perceived them as normal

and harmless as soccer games only take place once a week.

Related to gambling, private and public gambling companies were perceived differently. A private gambling sponsor was mostly perceived as an inappropriate sponsor for soccer ($M=-3.03$, $SD=2.152$). Participants made this decision based on the addictive and therefore health-threatening nature of gambling, a contradiction to the other unhealthy products that can be addictive in nature. However, they also indicated that gambling is following the same trend as alcohol since it is becoming fully intertwined with soccer. As a result, participants expressed their concerns about gambling sponsorship, in particular regarding children or vulnerable adults (e.g., trigger existing and new gamblers). Public gambling, managed by the government, was perceived more neutral ($M=-1.13$, $SD=2.642$) compared to private gambling companies.

Conclusion, Contribution and Implications

Based on the initial analysis we might conclude that drinking alcohol, soft drinks and eating snacks or fast food when attending a soccer game is perceived as normal and has become completely intertwined in society and soccer. Therefore, these sponsorships are more perceived as neutral and appropriate in soccer, although participants are conscious about the contradiction. Additionally, gambling is following the same trend, but participants remain more reversed and expressed more strongly ethical concerns regarding gambling sponsorship. After completing analysis and critical discussion, this paper might support practitioners and policymakers in curbing the potential impact of USS.

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Teaming Up For Success: Partnership Objectives In Professional Sport Clubs

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Aim and Research Questions

This study investigates the strategic objectives and underlying motives of partnerships between professional sports clubs. Central to this research is the research question: What are the underlying motives and strategic objectives driving partnerships between professional sports clubs? It seeks to understand the recent rise in interclub cooperations, exploring their strategic value, potential for future collaborations, and achieved outcomes in the sports industry. Despite the prevalence of such partnerships, their strategic objectives and underlying motives remain underexplored. By applying a comparative case study approach alongside thematic analysis, empirical insights into the motivations driving these alliances are provided, offering a foundational perspective on their strategic implications for the sports industry.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Mohr and Spekman (1994) emphasize that partnerships form strategic alliances between independent organizations, aiming for mutual benefits and interdependence. They identify five major drivers of value creation and collaborative advantage: relationship marketing, transaction cost reduction, resource dependency, strategic behaviour, and organizational learning (Shei et al., 2010). The theoretical foundation of sports partnerships, particularly among professional clubs from diverse disciplines, is based on legitimacy, stability, reciprocity, and efficiency. These partnerships demonstrate strategic alignment, as seen in the German football industry, where clubs integrate their goals and capitalize on collective strengths. This requires complex discussions and a shared vision for success (Babiak, 2007; Duffner, 2020). Additionally, corporate engagements with sports leagues enhance shareholder value and provide marketing opportunities, which become increasingly important in cross-

disciplinary sports collaborations (Lei et al., 2010). Fundamental aspects of these partnerships lie in the collaborative process, where a unified vision and strong pre-existing relationships profoundly influence efficacy (Lefebvre et al., 2022). Together, these factors create the multifaceted landscape of professional sports partnerships, highlighting their potential for collaboration and growth. Alexander et al. (2008) researched long-term sports partnership dynamics, stressing the importance of alignment during the formation stage and effective ongoing management and evaluation, which are supported by clear communication and early achievements in shared goals.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Utilizing a comparative case study design, this research employs content analysis with a focus on thematic analysis. Analysing a collection of 26 documents, primarily press releases, the study covers eight collaborations between clubs participating in professional leagues from 2011 to 2024. These partnerships include those within the same league, between different leagues, within the same sport, and across different sports. Included are the cooperative efforts of Rhein Fire (ELF) and Düsseldorf Panther (GFL), Hamburg Sea Devils (ELF) and Hannover 96 (2. Bundesliga), Arizona Diamondbacks (MLB) and Phoenix Suns (NBA), Manchester City (Premier League) and New York Yankees (MLB), FC Barcelona (LaLiga) and Miami Dolphins (NFL), Eintracht Frankfurt (Bundesliga) and Carolina Panthers (NFL), Los Angeles FC (MLS) and Borussia Dortmund (Bundesliga), and FC Bayern Munich (Bundesliga) and FC Dallas (MLS). Cases were selected based on partnerships being explicitly termed as 'partnership,' 'crossing paths,' 'collaboration,' or 'cooperation' among professional sports clubs. To refine the analysis, specific comparative criteria were applied: Brand Alignment, Announced Objectives, Key Terms and Conditions, Promoted Benefits, and Frequency and Tone of Communication. Within MAXQDA software, inductive coding was employed to identify emerging themes. A subsequent phase involving qualitative interviews with key stakeholders involved in the cases is planned.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Preliminary findings from the analysis show a diverse range of motives and strategies. These include (1) Fan Experience; (2) Marketing Efforts; (3) Knowledge exchange. (4) Acquaintances; (5) Expansion; (6) Player and Youth Development; (7) Use of facilities; (8) Growing Fan Base. (9) Financial Matters; (10) Reputation Branding; (11) Club Ownership; (12) Value Expansion; and (13) Community Efforts.

Clubs are driven by shared visions and mutual benefits, which are pivotal for the success and sustainability of these alliances. Multifaceted strategies beyond marketing are common in partnerships, such as the FC Bayern Munich and FC Dallas player development program. Frequently involving a range of stakeholders, including city governments, these collaborations underscore the potential for contributing to community and economic development. The Rhein Fire and Düsseldorf Panther program exemplifies this impact on city sports development. Given that the majority of partnerships in the selected cases lack set end dates, they seem to be considered long-term strategic investments rather than temporary arrangements.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The study provides insights into the strategic objectives of sports club partnerships and their broader socioeconomic impacts. It suggests these collaborations impact the sports industry and local communities, urging further research of their long-term effects. For policymakers and sports managers, the findings highlight the strategic value of using partnerships to foster sports development and community engagement, enriching the competitive landscape.

Building on this research, the suggestion emerges for a comprehensive model that employs the aforementioned criteria, such as Brand Alignment, to better guide sport clubs through the processes of developing, maintaining, and evaluating successful partnerships. This unified framework would integrate and apply insights from the study to optimize partnership strategies effectively.

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“He’s One of Our Own” - An Experimental Study Examining the Effects of Country of Origin and Club Levels on Fans Behavior and Purchase Intentions among Asian Fans of the German Bundesliga

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Aim and Research Questions

Due to the structural conditions and media interest abroad, the German Bundesliga continues to lose ground to the English Premier League. Alternative strategies are needed to further increase profit-oriented marketing overseas. Therefore, this study builds upon social identity theory, the country-of-origin effect, and concepts like basking in reflected glory, to explore Bundesliga fan behavior and purchase intentions among fans in international markets, contributing to both theoretical understanding and practical guidance for actors within the sports ecosystem. In doing so, this study aims to understand which impact the country-of-origin of players in transfers to different clubs in the 1st and 2nd German Bundesliga have on fan behavior and purchase intentions of fans in the region of Asia & Pacific.

Theoretical Background, Literature Review and Hypotheses

This study examines the effects of country-of-origin (German vs Chinese) and club levels (1st tier club vs 2nd tier club) of potential player transfers on fan behavior and purchase intentions among Chinese fans of the German Bundesliga. Based on the theoretical foundations of social identity theory (e.g., Ashforth & Mael, 1989), country-of-origin effect (e.g., Balabanis & Diamantopoulos, 2004), and BIRGing and CORFing (basking in reflected glory; cutting off reflected failure) (e.g., Trail et al., 2012), this study extends previous research by revealing insights into

fan behavior and purchase intentions of Bundesliga fans in China. In addition, we assume moderating effects of both national pride (Huddy & Khatib, 2007) and vicarious achievement motive (Wu et al., 2012). Drawing on existing literature, various covariates should be considered when examining the outlined effects between country-of-origin effect and fan behavior across different club levels on fans’ consumer behavior and purchase intentions. In this study, we focused on the three covariates of fan identification, past consumer behavior, and brand familiarity that potentially influence the outcomes of our experimental design. Therefore, the following hypotheses were developed:

Main effect of country-of-origin

H1. The impact on Chinese fan behavior and purchase intentions will be greater for the transfer of Chinese players to the German Bundesliga compared to German players.

Main effect of club level

H2a. The impact on Chinese fan behavior and purchase intentions is expected to be higher when players are transferred to a 1st tier club compared to a 2nd tier club of the German Bundesliga.

H2b. The impact on Chinese fan behavior and purchase intentions is expected to be higher when German players are transferred to a 1st tier club compared to a 2nd tier club of the German Bundesliga.

Interaction effect

H3. The impact on Chinese fan behavior and purchase intentions will be greater when a Chinese player (vs a German player) is transferred to a 1st tier club of the German Bundesliga compared to a 2nd tier club.

Moderating effect

H4a. The effects of the country of origin of a player transferred to the German Bundesliga on fan behavior and purchase intentions of Chinese fans will be greater among fans with a higher level of national pride.

H4b. The effects of the club level of a player transferred to the German Bundesliga on fan behavior and purchase intentions of Chinese

fans will be greater among fans with a stronger vicarious achievement motive.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

In order to test these hypotheses, we conducted a 2x2 quasi-experimental design. Bundesliga fans in China will evaluate fictitious, AI-generated Instagram posts of the German Football League (DFL), which are manipulated with regard to the experimental conditions of country-of-origin of the player (German vs Chinese), and different club levels (1st tier club vs 2nd tier club). The study applied rigorous attention check, manipulation check, and realism check and utilized scale measurements (a 7-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree) to capture fan behavior and purchase intention as well as the three identified covariates of fan identification, brand familiarity, and past consumer behavior.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Data collection starts in May 2024 and will be analysed before and presented at the conference. Although at the time of abstract submission there are no results available from this study, we expect that this research contribute to the sports marketing literature by integrating social identity theory, country of origin effect, and BIRGing and CORFing to explore Chinese fans' behavior and purchase intentions towards the German Bundesliga. By examining the moderating effects of national pride and vicarious achievement motive, we deepen our understanding of fan engagement behavior.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

Our findings offer actionable insights for sports marketers and club managers, informing targeted strategies for fan engagement and international branding efforts. Overall, our study advances theoretical understanding while providing practical guidance for several actors (e.g., sponsors, clubs and leagues) in the sports marketing domain. Overall, this study not only advances theoretical knowledge in the field of sports marketing, it also offers valuable insights improving the strategic decision-making process and enhancing the effectiveness of marketing efforts of a sports league.

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The Effect of Fitness Center's Spatial Layout, Rapport with Trainer, and Consumers' Price Sensitivity on Satisfaction

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Aim and Research Questions

Recently, the fitness industry in Korea has been experiencing intense competition to attract members, contributing to the overall decline in the quality of the fitness industry. In order to satisfy the diverse individual consumer needs, it is necessary to consider a number of factors including both operational factors and psychological factors. Therefore, this study aims to conduct a multidimensional study that considers consumers' personal dispositions, operational factors to understand the satisfaction of fitness center consumer. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of price sensitivity, rapport, and spatial layout on consumer satisfaction by personal training consumers.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The concept of spatial layout as defined by Bitner (1992) in the context of service landscapes refers to the spatial layout based on the specification of appliances, equipment, etc. and focuses on functionality to achieve a given service goal. Efficient spatial layout becomes even more important when the task level is high and there are time constraints (Bitner, 1992). In this context, the spatial layout of fitness centers is an important factor because the nature of personal training services requires a high task level as a professionally qualified trainer guides the exercises during the promised time for physical strengthening, rehabilitation, prescription, etc. Therefore, in this study, the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) theory (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) was used as the cornerstone of the research logic to investigate the impact of fitness center spatial layout on

personal training consumer satisfaction. If the emotion towards the spatial layout is positive, the customer will show high satisfaction and intention to revisit, while if the emotion is negative, the customer will stop consuming and avoid the space (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). Therefore, we set hypothesis 1 to investigate consumer satisfaction with the spatial layout of fitness centers.

Hypothesis 1. There will be a significant difference in consumer satisfaction based on the level of spatial layout (high, low).

Rapport refers to a state of feeling secure in interpersonal relationships based on mutual empathy and trust (Gremler & Gwinner, 2000). In the consumption context, rapport between consumers and providers increases consumer satisfaction and loyalty and is a result of the word-of-mouth effect (Wissow et al., 2010). Given the nature of personal training services, which typically involve close communication between trainers and members for at least one hour, rapport formation may be a determinant of member satisfaction. Rather than focusing on excessive price competition, it is better to focus on customer and rapport building and increase the loyalty of existing members to increase competitiveness in the long run (Keiningham et al., 2015). Therefore, we propose hypothesis 2 below.

Hypothesis 2. There will be a significant difference in consumer satisfaction based on the level of rapport (high and low).

Price sensitivity refers to the degree to which consumers perceive and react to the price of a product (Bucklin et al., 1995), which serves as a key cue for evaluating price-satisfaction (Kotler et al., 2003). Previous research has shown that consumers with low price sensitivity are more willing to accept a higher price for a service, even if it is a high-priced service (Wakerfield & Inman, 2003). In this study, the following hypothesis is proposed to investigate the effect of consumers' price sensitivity level on their satisfaction with fitness center services.

Hypothesis 3. There will be a significant difference in consumer satisfaction based on the level of price sensitivity (high and low).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

A total of 332 data were collected from six fitness centers in Seoul, Korea by selecting a sample of personal training experienced consumers in October 17 to 25, 2023. One-way analysis of variance(ANOVA) was conducted using SPSS with a 2 (spatial layout) X 2 (rapport) X 2 (price sensitivity) factorial design.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Results showed that, spatial layout [$F(1,332)=64.629, p<.05$], rapport [$F(1,332)=45.815, p<.05$], and price sensitivity [$F(1,332)=4.754, p<.05$] were all found to have a effect on consumer satisfaction, so Hypothesis 1, 2, and 3 were all accepted. Furthermore, a interaction effect between spatial layout and price sensitivity was found [$F(1, 332)=4.155, p<.05$]. Specifically, first, high perception of spatial layout consumers was more satisfied than low perception of spatial layout consumers. Second, high rapport was more satisfied than low rapport. Third, low price sensitivity consumers were more satisfied than high price sensitivity consumers.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This study provides a stable management strategy for fitness centers based on stimulus-organism-response theory by offering multiple interpretations in psychological, relational and environmental contexts. To successfully operate a fitness center, managers must consider spatial layout, including placing goods and equipment in anticipation of consumer movements. Additionally, it's essential to monitor the degree of rapport and provide staff training. Moreover, it is imperative to guarantee consumer satisfaction regarding price by presenting specific prices in delivering services.

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The Effects of Social Isolation and Perceived Ease of Use of Purchasing Online Tickets for Sports Games on Suicide Intentions of the Elderly

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Aim and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine the issue of suicide among the elderly in aging society. The study will provide implications by examining the effects of social isolation and the perceived ease of use of purchasing online tickets for sports games on suicide intentions of the elderly.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The problem of suicide among the elderly is expected to increase in the future as Korea enters an ultra-aging society. Therefore, this study focuses on the phenomenon of social isolation that affects suicidal intentions among the elderly (Conwell, 1997). Social isolation is dichotomized into objective and subjective isolation, where objective isolation refers to isolation at the social level and subjective isolation refers to isolation at the psychological level (Lee & Cho, 2017). Objective isolation has been found to primarily affect physical health, while subjective isolation has been found to affect mental health (Cornwell & Waite, 2009). However, both factors have the commonality of increasing suicide rates among older adults (Trout, 1980). In fact, the importance of social isolation for older adults can be seen in the fact that older adults who live alone are more than four times more likely to report suicide intentions than those who live with family (Kim, 2009). Therefore, in the context of this study, the following hypotheses were developed to confirm the effect of social isolation on suicide intention among the elderly.

Hypothesis 1: There will be a difference in suicide intention based on the level of objective isolation (low or high).

Hypothesis 2: There will be a difference in suicide intentions based on subjective isolation (low vs. high).

The technology acceptance model was first introduced in the field of management information systems and was proposed to explain consumers' acceptance behavior towards technology (You & Park, 2010). Davis (1989) introduced perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use as the main variables that influence the process of consumer acceptance of technology. In this study, we focus on the concept of perceived ease of use of technology as described in the Technology Acceptance Model to examine the impact of perceived ease of use of online sporting event ticket purchases on suicide intentions among older adults. This refers to the degree to which people perceive using technologies and systems as not difficult (Davis, 1989). The reason for focusing on perceived ease of use is that when older adults experience digital discomfort, which is contrary to their perceived ease of use, they tend to feel deprived, discriminated against, alienated, and socially disrespected (Ryu & Yoo, 2023). On the other hand, it can be inferred that the ease of online ticketing for sporting events has a greater utility value in reducing isolation and suicide intentions among the elderly than the ease of other digital ticketing. This is because the sense of belonging, unity, and social integration that comes from watching sports is not easily found in any other content or service. This leads us to Hypothesis 3 below.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a difference in suicide intentions based on the level of perceived ease (low, high).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The study was commissioned by research firm Micromill Embrace in South Korea and was conducted nationwide over an eight-day period from December 18 to December 26, 2023, with a total of 350 samples collected, processing basic statistic, factor analysis, reliability analysis, and conducting 2 (subjective isolation) × 2 (objective isolation) × 2 (perceived ease of use) univariate analysis of variance.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The results revealed significant main effects for subjective isolation and objective isolation on suicide intention. So, Hypothesis 1 [F(1, 350)=34.789], and Hypothesis 2 [F(1, 350)=5.010] were accepted. Furthermore, significant interaction effects were found between subjective isolation and objective isolation [F(1, 350)=6.269] and between subjective isolation and ease [F(1, 350)=5.320] on suicide intention. Specifically, suicide intentions were found to be higher among lonely older adults, with a mean value of 1.38 for those with lower levels of subjective isolation and a mean value of 1.91 for those with higher levels. For objective isolation, suicide intentions were higher among those with less social support, with a mean value of 1.74 for those with low social support and a mean value of 1.46 for those with high social support. Therefore, professional sports organizations need to consider ways to create both economic and social value by establishing an online ticketing system customized for the elderly, thereby facilitating their ability to easily watch sports games. This strategy would contribute to reducing suicide intention.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This study provided strategies for reducing the problem of suicide among the elderly by offering multiple interpretations in sport contexts by examining the effect of social isolation and ease of using technology on suicide intentions among the elderly. Implications and suggestions were presented.

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Effectiveness Of Marketing Strategies For The Introduction Of Discgolf To The Market: The Case Of The Baltic States

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Aim and Research Questions

The concept of sport is very broad and encompasses many activities that are being developed through creativity (Schwartz, 2021). New sports are emerging because of the increasing need and desire to unleash one's physical activity and leisure time drives the development of new ways to spend time being active, in a different environment or with a group of friends (Korsun, Zadorina, & Murashov, 2023); as alternatives to traditional sports by creating new rules or using different tools to the same rules or in response to trends, technological developments or changing lifestyles and value systems (Ezue, & Brisibe, 2023). The development and promotion of new sports opens up opportunities to expand markets, create new goods and services and organize events (Mandiuk, & Masyuk, 2022). Many sports are created by sports enthusiasts, whose creativity and willingness has led to the formation of new sports that are growing in popularity worldwide, such as a disc golf. This study aimed to analyze the marketing strategies used to introduce disc golf in the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian markets and to assess the effectiveness of the marketing strategies used.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Constantly evolving consumer needs make the development of new products and their successful introduction into the market a key factor for business growth and competitive advantage (Varadarajan, 2015). The sports market also is constantly evolving, changing, and keeping up with the latest trends, technologies and consumer demands is essential, which drives the emergence of new sports or the evolution of existing ones. Between 35 and 46% of new product launches fail, lose market position and fail to meet consumer interest (Adams-Bigelow, 2004). To

avoid this and to have a strong position in today's competitive marketplace, organizations need to have a clear product strategy and to know the key stages of a new product launch in order to position themselves in the marketplace amongst competing organizations that also offer new products, activities or processes (Porter & Heppelmann, 2015). Innovative approaches to marketing communication strategies, such as tailoring content and channels to different customer segments, can also play a key role in the successful launch and growth of new sports (Varmus & Kubina, 2015; Tasaddoghi et al., 2020; Zsigmond et al., 2020). New sports launches are no exception, where marketing decisions determine the speed of entry or even the survival of a sport and each element of the marketing toolkit should be fine-tuned to the specific characteristics and needs of the sports market, ensuring a cohesive and effective approach to market entry and consumer acquisition (Mandiuk, & Masyuk, 2022).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews with quantitative surveys (n=551) targeting disc golfers in the respective countries. Interviews were conducted with representatives of the Baltic states disc golf federations, responsible for the marketing strategy and decision-makers. Two persons (6 informants) from each federation participated to ensure data collection. Content analysis is utilized to analyze qualitative data, while quantitative data is subjected to statistical analysis.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Qualitative findings reveal variations in marketing strategies across the Baltic countries. Latvia emphasizes improving competition quality and organizing educational events, Estonia focuses on advertising and social media engagement, while Lithuania exhibits limited marketing efforts. Quantitative data highlight the efficacy of word-of-mouth and infrastructure in Latvia, social networks in Estonia, and friend recommendations in Lithuania. It should be noted that although Estonia is the last Baltic country to introduce disc golf, the game is the fastest growing in Estonia, thanks

to a well thought out and implemented marketing strategy.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The study underscores the importance of clear strategic planning for organizations seeking to promote discgolf. Recommendations include leveraging social media advertising, integrating discgolf into school programs, organizing more events, and expanding coaching sessions to enhance sport accessibility and appeal across the Baltic region. The findings offer valuable insights for discgolf federations and organizations involved in sports marketing, emphasizing the need for tailored marketing strategies to effectively penetrate and engage diverse consumer segments in the Baltic markets.

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Unpacking Sport Brand Co-creation: An Empirical Examination of Brand Co-creation Performances

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Aim and Research Questions

Sport management research increasingly follows a multi-actor-dominant logic, acknowledging that sport brands are dynamic social constructs co-created through resource-integrating interactions among multiple actors (e.g., fans, sponsors, other sport brands). Sport brands are nested within the sport brand ecosystem (Baker et al., 2022), perceived to be co-created through the passion and excitement of fans (Kolyperas et al., 2019), require brand governance strategies to deliberately involve multiple actors in branding activities (Taks et al., 2020), and are conceptualised as dynamic ecosystems, comprising all actors interested in a sport brand (Brand et al., 2023). However, brand co-creation remains a vague concept. To unpack the co-creation of sport brands, this research aims to detail how specifically multiple actors co-create sport brands (Brand et al., 2023). We draw on performativity theory (von Wallpach et al., 2017) and a qualitative single case study to empirically examine the brand co-creation performances of multiple actors.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The integrative sport brand ecosystem provides a holistic perspective on the multi-actor-dominant logic of sport brands. Within the ecosystem, actors engage on brand engagement platforms to co-create the sport brand. Internal actors (i.e., brand conductor collective) develop brand identity in collaborative processes on the internal brand management platform and communicate it via brand engagement platforms. Every actor interested in the sport brand engages in interactions on institutional and emergent brand engagement platforms to co-create brand meaning (Brand et al., 2023). In order to detail how actors engage on brand engagement platforms, sociological performativity theory offers a rich theoretical

approach (von Wallpach et al., 2017). Performativity theory assumes that social reality is continuously constituted and produced through recurrent linguistic and socio-material performances of actors. Thus, sport brands are co-created through brand co-creation performances of all actors engaging within the sport brand ecosystem. Extant branding research identifies several brand co-creation performances in the context of LEGO (von Wallpach et al., 2017), multiple B2B brands (Iglesias et al., 2020), and an athlete brand (Anderski et al., 2023). While these studies provide a starting point, there is a need for more empirical research dedicated to the context of sport brands to unpack how sport brands are co-created.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

Due to its explorative character, this research builds on a qualitative single case study, allowing to examine complex phenomena that lack strong existing theory (Yin, 2018). We use the unusually revelatory case of the German football club brand FC St. Pauli, which provides, due to its atypical brand management strategies, unique insights into the co-creation performances of multiple actors. We conduct semi-structured interviews (N=26, Ø=66 min) with various actors (i.e., management, employees, partners, media, and fans) and apply a netnographic analysis to the club brand's official Facebook and Instagram accounts over the first half of the season 2021/2022 (Nposts=1.000; Ncomments=42.348). Data was analysed following the process of qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2004).

Results and Discussion

Our study reveals eight interrelated brand co-creation performances, which are divided in direct and enabling brand co-creation performances. In direct brand co-creation performances, actors directly co-create the identity and meaning of a sport brand. While communicating refers to the linguistic transmission and reinforcement of brand meaning, implementing describes how actors participate in socio-material branding activities to reinforce brand meaning. Through contesting, internal and external actors challenge existing brand identity and brand meaning. Developing refers to the process of initiating strategic directions of the

sport brand. While mainly internal actors engage in this brand co-creation performance, the brand conductor also deliberately includes various actors in the development of branding strategies. Enabling brand co-creation performances are foundational for brand co-creation, eventually making direct brand co-creation performances possible. Negotiating describes the ongoing conversational process of harmonizing diverging perspectives on brand meaning among internal and external actors. Facilitating involves the development of brand engagement platforms to enable direct brand co-creation performances of multiple actors. Social listening comprises the brand conductor's recording of developments in society and within the direct context of the brand. Assimilating refers to the psychological processes to enable an understanding of the meaning of the sport brand.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implications

This research enhances the understanding of the multi-actor-dominant logic of sport brands. In particular, it makes a unique contribution to current sport branding research by unpacking how (i.e., through which brand co-creation performances) multiple actors co-create sport brands. Specifying the underlying mechanisms of sport brand co-creation additionally offers valuable implications for managers of sport brands. The brand conductor remains an important source of brand meaning. However, managers need to acknowledge the brand co-creation performances of internal and external actors to foster the development of a strong sport brand. Thus, it is key to enable and facilitate favourable brand co-creation performances of all actors within the integrative sport brand ecosystem.

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Predicting Fans' Social Media Engagement: The Role of Brand Associations and Team Identification.

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Aim and Research Questions

With the widespread use of social media, sport clubs are increasingly dedicating significant resources to boost online interaction with their fans. Although research has been focused on the factors that predict individuals' engagement with their favorite teams' social media, how social media engagement (SME) is associated with brand associations has not been explored yet. The purpose of the present study was to investigate the interrelationships among team associations, team identification, and fans' engagement with sport teams' social media.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

According to vanDoorn et al. (2010) customer engagement is defined as "customers' behavioural manifestations toward a brand or firm, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers" (p. 254). Muntinga et al. (2011) conceptualized SME in three hierarchical tiers: Consumption (e.g., reading posts about the brand), Contribution (e.g., liking or sharing posts about the brand), and Creation (uploading posts about the brand). Outside the sporting context, SME has been found to be predicted by brand associations (Schivinski et al., 2021). Brand associations represent anything that is retained in customers' memory concerning the brand (Aaker, 1991). Keller's (1993) theoretical approach of brand associations includes the dimensions of Product-related attributes (i.e., features that correspond to the core product,

such as the head coach), Non-product-related attributes (i.e., ancillary attributes which are not related to the core product, such as information provision), and Benefits which are associated to fans' expectations from consumption, such as socialization. Brand associations might also predict SME indirectly, through team identification (i.e., individuals' psychological bond with the team). Team identification is considered a major construct in explaining fans' behaviors and has been used as a mediator variable in previous studies (e.g., Wear et al., 2018). Prior findings have shown that brand associations are related to team identification (Wear et al., 2018) and that team identification impacts fans' usage of their team's Facebook page (Moyer et al., 2015). Based on the above the following hypotheses were developed:

H1: Brand associations are associated with team identification.

H2: Team identification is associated with SME.

H3: Brand associations are associated with SME.

H4: Team identification mediates the relationship between brand associations and SME.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Data were obtained by uploading an electronic questionnaire to a Greek sporting website. The sample consisted of 213 football (i.e., soccer) fans. Brand associations measurement was based on the works of Gladden and Funk (2002), Kunkel et al. (2017), and Trail et al. (2023). Team identification was measured using Tsigilis et al.'s (2023) instrument, while Schivinski et al.'s (2016) scale was employed to capture SME. Data were analyzed by employing Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Brand associations were treated as formative constructs. All VIF values were less than 3.66 indicating that multicollinearity was not an issue. After ensuring the reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the reflective measures (team identification and SME), results of the bootstrapping analysis showed that brand associations explained 61% of the variance of team identification, with Benefits ($\beta=.70$) and Non-product-related attributes ($\beta=.13$) having a

statistically significant association with team identification, partially supporting H1. Brand associations and team identification explained 57% of the variance of Consumption, 40% of the Contribution, and 26% of the Creation. H2 was supported as identification was statistically significantly associated with all dimensions of SME ($\beta=.36$ for Consumption, $\beta=.37$ for Contribution, $\beta=.39$ for Creation) in line with previous findings (Moyer et al., 2015). Statistically significant structural paths were observed in the Benefits/Consumption ($\beta=.36$), Benefits/Contribution ($\beta=.23$), and Non-product-related/Consumption ($\beta=.14$) relationships, supporting prior results in other than the sport-related context (Schivinski et al., 2021). Consequently, H3 was partially confirmed. Finally, identification was shown to mediate the relationships between Benefits and all SME dimensions ($\beta=.25$ for Consumption, $\beta=.26$ for Contribution, and $\beta=.27$ for Creation), as well as the relationships between Non-product-related and SME dimensions ($\beta=.05$ for Consumption, $\beta=.05$ for Contribution, and $\beta=.05$ for Creation), partially confirming H4.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This research contributed theoretically to the sport management literature by introducing team identification as a mean to enhance fans' SME coming from brand associations. Identification's role was pivotal for driving fans that hold positive Non-product-related attributes to increase both Contribution to their team's social media and Content creation. Similarly, team identification was crucial for motivating fans who perceived benefits from their team to create content on their social media. A surprising finding was that Product-related attributes (e.g., management, players) did not influence fans' SME, neither directly, nor indirectly through team identification. This finding provides an interesting avenue for future research, focusing on factors that may impact the relationship. From a practical point of view, the results propose that team marketing managers should develop strategies to increase team identification to boost fans SME.

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Sport Tourism and Events

Track chair: Rui Biscaia

Professional Golf Post-Alliance Purchase Intentions: A Sport Identification, Country-of-Origin, and Brand Association Examination

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This research explores the intersection of event business and sport tourism by investigating sport identification (ID), country-of-origin (COO) attitudes, brand association (BA), and purchase intentions (PI) within the three prominent international professional golf circuits (PGA TOUR, LPGA, & LIV Golf). Sport Identification is a key framework of this study measuring how meaningful the sport of golf is to the fan (Gwinner & Bennett, 2008) combined with the ideas, images, and thoughts associated with professional golf circuits to create league-based BA (Kunkel et al., 2014). Exploring ID and sport BA with the fit of COO (Hien et al., 2020) is a continuing conversation within European Sport Management Quarterly (Lee et al., 2016) with a unique application of the PI measure (Gwinner & Bennett, 2008).

The upstart LIV Golf circuit began play in 2022 using some of the richest contracts and prize money in sport history, backed by money from the sovereign wealth fund of Saudi Arabia known as the Public Investment Fund (PIF), to acquire professional golfers and compete with the PGA (Blinder, 2023). Researchers have assessed the magnitude of COO on consumer behavior such as product perceptions and purchase intention (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995; Rezvani et al., 2012). However, there remains a gap in COO being applied to sport identification, especially in the golf setting, which this research explores as the audience for golf has grown dramatically in recent years (Hwang, J. & Lee, K. W., 2018). This 2023 measurement is a critical addition to the literature with the recent June, 2023 professional golf alliance

announcement of the PGA TOUR and LIV Golf circuits (Blinder, 2023).

Is there a significant difference across followers of the three major professional golf circuits (PGA TOUR, LPGA, & LIV Golf) in:

(RQ1) Sport identification?

(RQ2) Country-of-origin relationship?

(RQ3) Brand association?

(RQ4) Purchase intentions pre/post-merger announcement of the PGA TOUR & LIV Golf?

CloudResearch-Connect was utilized to recruit two paid online Qualtrics survey panels (\$8hr USD). Study one yielded 3,997 usable participants across a 21-item ID, COO, attendance, and demographics survey. From the 3,997 participants, 2,085 (52%) were recruited for a follow-up 40-item BA and PI study with the qualifying criteria of having attended a professional golf tournament as a spectator (47% PGA TOUR, 24% LPGA, 12% LIV Golf) resulting in 1,266 participants completing study two.

Study one descriptive results showed that 52.2% (N=2,085) had attended a professional golf event as a spectator, with 46.47% having attended a PGA TOUR event (N=1,858), 23.46% LPGA (N=938), and 12.13% LIV Golf (N=485). The participants were 50.7% male, 47.5% female, 1.5% non-binary/third gender/self-described, with 64.8% of the sample being 25-44 years old. Participant race was 73.0% White/Caucasian, 10.3% Black/African American, and 8.3% Asian with a median household income of \$50,000 - \$74,000.

For RQ1, an independent samples t-test revealed that golf ID average was 2.21 on a 5-point Likert style scale (SD=1.10) with 48.67% following the PGA TOUR (N=1,946, ID=3.12, SD=.816), 25.84% following the LPGA (N=1,033, ID=3.57, SD=.710), and 22.56% following LIV Golf (N=902, ID=3.68, SD=.670). With respect to RQ2, participants identified ($p<.001$) the US as a more prestigious country (M=3.51, SD=1.08) than Saudi Arabia (SA) (M=2.70, SD=1.56). The US was also classified ($p<.001$) as the more advanced country (M=3.80, SD=1.01) than SA (M=2.73, SD=1.15).

For RQ3, three linear regressions from study two revealed a significant positive effect, as indicated that a participant who follows the PGA TOUR (3.47) has a higher brand

association with that tour (3.81). Those that follow LIV Golf (2.26) carry a higher BA for LIV Golf(2.99). Interestingly the brand equity of the PGA was higher than LIV golf while maintaining that positive effect of those that follow the PGA (2.41) carry a higher BA for the PGA (3.34). This has implications for sponsors and the tour itself and demonstrates the high level of brand equity associated with the PGA tour compared with recent competitors. With respect to RQ4, a significant difference was found in purchase intentions pre/post merger announcement across the followers of the two major male professional golf circuits (PGA TOUR & LIV GOLF) via linear regression with PI dropping for the PGA TOUR (3.90 pre, 3.69 post) and PI increasing for LIV Golf (2.76_pre, 2.85_post).

With the discovery of ID, BA, and PI differences amongst US-based and SA-based golf circuits, the presentation will discuss consumer perception data shifts with respect to future professional golf partnerships/sponsorships. Results implications for sponsors and the tours themselves will be discussed. In context of LIV Golf's emergence as a new organization, COO image (Gerke et al., 2014) together with ID (Gwinner & Bennett, 2008) is a first measurement step toward attachment to the upstart brand community (Lupinek, 2019). Additional results and study limitations will be presented that support future research examining the practical differences amongst golf tour brand loyalty and brand attitudes pre- and post-merger announcement.

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Fishing Tourism: The Niche Market of Sport Tourism and the Use of Solar-Powered Vessels

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Aim

This study explores the transformative journey of fishing tourism with a particular focus on the shift from traditional shipbuilding to the adoption of solar-powered vessels. The study aims to examine several key aspects related to this topic, including sustainable development, networking prospects, analysis of the existing situation, economic impacts and investment opportunities.

Literature Review

Sports tourism is a special form of tourism, made up of groups of people travelling to participate in many different sports activities. However, this means that it is a heterogeneous market that is difficult to study. Thus, it is common to segment it into smaller homogeneous groups (nichemarkets), composed of individuals with common characteristics, motivations and expectations (Alexandris, 2018). According to a 2020 study by the Centre for the Promotion of Imports from Developing Countries of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, «The European Potential for the Development of Sports Tourism», sports tourism was the fastest growing form of tourism before the pandemic. After the pandemic we can expect a lot of opportunities, especially in certain forms that contribute to sustainable development. This study showed that the sports tourism market can be divided into nine smaller markets. According to Tarfanelli (2010), smaller focused sports tourism markets contribute to sustainable development. In the model presented by CBI (2020), the focal markets of sports tourism include: running tourism, water sports tourism, diving, fishing, adrenaline, cycling, golf, skiing and sport tourism trips. Fishing and diving tourism in

particular are two very strong niche markets within the specific form of sports tourism. Fishing tourism is a developing form of sport tourism that promotes fisheries and aquaculture, offering travelers an opportunity to enrich their activities. Fishing tourism can be defined as “a set of activities carried out by professionals in order to differentiate their incomes, promote and valorize their profession and socio-cultural heritage, and enhance sustainable use of marine ecosystems by means of boarding non-crew individuals on fishing vessels”. A notable change towards more environmentally friendly and sustainable maritime transport is the switch from conventional to solar-powered ships. The use of fossil fuels by traditional vessels to power them often leads to pollution and greenhouse gas emissions that damage marine ecosystems and accelerate climate change. In contrast, solar-powered vessels use the sun's renewable energy for propulsion and have a range of benefits in terms of their environmental impact, operational efficiency and long-term cost savings (Kurniawan, 2018). Yfantidou et al. (2024), used the Tourist Role Preference Scale of Gibson and Yiannakis (2002), so as to combine tourist behavior with the 4E theory for the typology of experience of fishing tourism. They referred to Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) and Pine et al. (1998), as the first authors of business studies to interpret in their book on business management the categories of experience “4E” and they present the nature of the experiences in terms of economic activities. The groundbreaking work of Pine et al. (1998), illustrates the four ways in which customers (tourists) can become involved or engaged in tourism experiences. The coupling of the dimension “tourist participation” with the dimension “environmental relationship” defines the four “realms” of an experience: Entertainment, Education, Aesthetics, Escape. Sustainable development requires a conscious and balanced approach to the management of the coastal and marine environment. The goal is to ensure the long-term health of these ecosystems, the surrounding communities and the tourism industry as a whole (Wang, 2020). This includes minimising the negative environmental, social and economic impacts of tourism activities while maximising their positive effects. The ultimate goal is to establish a harmonious coexistence between tourism promotion and the protection of marine ecosystems and cultural heritage.

Sustainability has emerged as a critical factor in the development of sports tourism. With the growing awareness of environmental issues among travellers, countries hosting sport events are facing increasing pressure to implement sustainable processes. The primary goal is not only to reduce environmental impacts, but also to use sport tourism as a means to promote community development and conservation (Kersulić et al., 2020).

Methodology

The methodological approach adopted for the analysis of the transition from traditional to solar vessels included an integrated triangulation strategy. Secondary research to gain a baseline understanding of fishing tourism, with a review of existing literature, academic papers, industry reports and case studies of conventional navigation practices and solar integration opportunities associated with marine propulsion technologies. Primary research, which included two distinct methodologies: interviews and direct observation. The observation studies concern the operational aspects of both traditional and solar powered vessels in their natural environment. A structured questionnaire designed for the comprehensive evaluation of various aspects of the research area, based on the philosophy of SWOT analysis with questions based on Triple Bottom Line Analysis (TBL) and explores the (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) of fishing tourism in Patmos. TBL concerns the analysis of sustainability, which is based on three main pillars: economic, economic, social and environmental. For the sample of the Primary Research, we used interviews with marine engineers, boat operators, environmental experts, representatives of social stakeholders. It was selected the purposive sampling, a non-probability technique that selects participants based on their expertise and direct involvement (participant selection criteria: direct involvement, experience, different roles). Six interviews with marine engineers, vessel operators, environmental experts, representatives of social stakeholders took place. Although this sample size may seem relatively small, it aligns with the qualitative nature of the research and the focus on in-depth insights from people directly involved in the project. Qualitative research often

prioritises depth of information over breadth of participants.

Results and Discussion

A SWOT analysis based on TBL is conducted to critically evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with the adoption of solar boats in Patmos. This analysis reveals the environmental benefits and innovative potential of solar boats, while also highlighting challenges such as higher initial costs, technical limitations and the need for regulatory frameworks. The study also explores the impact of this transition on local employment, the skill set of workers and the wider socio-economic context of Patmos. It discusses the potential of solar-powered ships to attract eco-conscious tourists, thus aligning with global sustainable tourism trends and enhancing the island's tourist appeal. Key findings indicate that while the transition to solar-powered vessels presents some challenges, it offers substantial opportunities for sustainable growth in marine tourism. The study concludes with recommendations to policy makers, industry stakeholders and the local community on how to capitalize on the benefits of solar-powered vessels while mitigating potential drawbacks. This research contributes to a broader understanding of sustainable practices in maritime tourism and offers insight into the evolving dynamics of the shipping industry in Greece. In conclusion, the evolving dynamics of the marine tourism market and the changing perceptions of consumers can be seen. There is a growing interest among eco-tourists in sustainable travel options offered by solar-powered vessels. The study argues that despite existing challenges, the adoption of solar-powered vessels represents an interesting and sustainable direction for the marine tourism industry related to sport tourism. With strategic planning, community engagement and government support, solar-powered boats can significantly improve the ecological, economic and cultural landscape of marine tourism and, by extension, sports tourism related to marine activity and boat use.

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Sport Event Dominance in a US College-Town: An Event Portfolio Approach

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Aim and Research Questions

Ideas about strategic event planning emerged in late the 1980s (Getz, 1989) and discussions about a community's event calendar have coalesced around concepts such as Getz's (1997) pyramid model proposing a “portfolio of destination events” (p. 113), event ecosystems (Anchak et al., 2019), and most prominently the event portfolio (Ziakas, 2010). While evidence shows that some communities use a portfolio approach to manage events (e.g., Anchak, 2017; Kelly & Fairley, 2018b), knowledge about the actual implementation of event portfolios is at an “embryonic stage” (Ziakas & Getz, 2021, p. 104233). This study examined the extent to which event-stakeholders employed strategic event management in a US college-town with a NCAA Division 1 collegiate sports program. 1. How do collegiate sport events influence the scheduling of other community events? 2. Do collegiate sport events complement or interfere with other community events?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Ziakas (2010) introduced the event portfolio suggesting a strategic management approach for community events. Ziakas and Costa (2011) suggested that by adopting an event portfolio communities could focus on the “synergies” associated with different events such as sport and arts as these provide different community benefits. Indeed, Ziakas (2013) suggested that an event portfolio approach could not only be conceived of as a “holistic approach” to event planning (Ziakas, 2013) but it could contribute to sustainable development (e.g., Ziakas & Costa, 2011). While Ziakas and Getz (2021) in a comprehensive analysis of the event portfolio identify numerous studies that have applied the approach, in line with its origins in Product Practice Management, much of the focus has been on destination competitiveness.

With a similar aim to the current study, Dickson et al. (2018) examined collaboration or lack thereof in the Cook Islands and found little evidence of a strategic approach to event hosting and even existence of “collaborative inertia”. Similarly, Antchak (2017) found in Auckland, NZ events were viewed from an economic outcomes perspective and an “agnostic” attitude prevailed about the very structure of an event portfolio. Yet, Kelly and Fairley (2018a) found that “collaboration is crucial” among the events community for long-term success and the development of relationships is key in establishing and maintaining event portfolios (Kelly & Fairley, 2018b).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Straussian Grounded Theory Method was used throughout our study (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Working from an initial list of event-stakeholders, a series of interviews were conducted using a semi-structured approach asking participants about their perceptions of events in the host city. Based on the initial interviews, using constant comparative methods, theoretical sampling was used to identify stakeholders who could address the emerging themes from the first interviews. The sample consisted of 22 event planners, (sport, arts, conferences), hoteliers, tourism DMO staff, and parks and recreation personnel. Open and axial coding guided by Event Portfolio Theory (e.g., Ziakas & Getz, 2021) was used to identify preliminary findings.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Preliminary analysis identified three themes: (a) Resource Challenges, (b) Need for Strategic Scheduling, and (c) Existence of an Organically Derived Event Portfolio. Interviewees from non-collegiate sport agencies reported encountering various Challenges in the hosting of events, including cancellations and difficulties in securing lodging and venues during the collegiate sports season, particularly the fall football season. To address these challenges and coexist with collegiate sport events, they strategically planned events outside the football season (spring and summer) or hosted local community events in the fall that did not require hotel accommodations. This strategic approach to event management contributed to

the development of an organically evolving event portfolio within the community. In other words, collegiate sport events play a catalytic role necessitating coordination and optimization of the use of limited resources in the host community and resulting in the organic development of an event portfolio (Ziakas & Costa, 2011; Ziakas, 2019). Consequently, although the creation of an event portfolio was not initially intended, strategic planning to avoid the collegiate sports season and ensure successful event hosting has ultimately facilitated the arrangement of a variety of events throughout the year (Ziakas & Getz, 2021).

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

Our analysis shows that collegiate sport events influence other community events. During football season event-stakeholders compete for resources. Indeed, the power dynamics inherent in the collegiate-community relationship warrants further analysis. At the same time, an informal organically developed event portfolio is in operation. This supports Ziakas’ (2019) contention of diversity in event portfolio development whereby an organic bottom-up approach to an event portfolio can emerge. However, our analysis suggests co-existence rather than the synergy envisioned by Ziakas and Costa (2011) which they suggest detracts from long-term sustainable community benefits. The lesson here for communities with dominant sports programs would be to find ways to collaborate and leverage potential partnerships among different events (Kelly & Fairley, 2018a).

Managing Community Sport Events for Heritage Development

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Aim & Research Questions

In this paper, I examine the Opeongo Heritage Cup, as a community sport event organized explicitly around goals of developing local heritage in a rural community in Ontario, Canada. In doing so, I answer the following research questions:

(A) How are community and heritage constructed and communicated through community sport events?

(B) How do organizers and participants use sport as a platform to engage with heritage and rural culture?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Increasingly, scholars have examined the relationship between sporting events and both tangible and intangible heritage (Ramshaw & Gammon, 2017). However, few have examined this relationship in the context of community sport events which are organized by and for local residents around explicit goals of developing cultural heritage. This research project is framed with literature on sport for development (Schulenkorf, 2012) and heritage sport (Pinson, 2017) events.

Specifically, I interrogate events as liminal spaces in which social norms and hierarchies are suspended, allowing community members to engage in social practices otherwise marginalized by modern sport and social organization (Chalip, 2006). Within these liminal spaces, community members engage in carnivalesque collective celebration and performative transgressions of social norms (Rich, 2021). While the social practices inherent in these events have been examined in the context of tourism and event leveraging literatures, the management practices of community sport event organizers have not been thoroughly examined in academic literature. In this research, I address this dearth of scholarly inquiry.

Research Design, Methodology, & Analysis

Drawing on an anthropological and ethnographic approach, I used an instrumental case study methodology (Yazan, 2015) as I was primarily interested in using the event to understand how community, culture, and heritage were implicated in rural sport. Data were collected through nine semi-structured interviews with event organizers, volunteers, and participants as well as participant observation conducted at the event in 2019 and 2023, as well as a visit to the region in advance of the event in 2019. Data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis.

Results/Findings & Discussion

I first provide a contextualized description of the event and community context, and then present the two themes constructed from the data. First, I discuss how playful enactments of culture are implicated in various aspects of the event – both on and off the ice. This theme was constructed from codes such as learning heritage through the event, uncovering family histories, and hockey and community identity. Second, I examine how the event fosters intergroup connections and relationships. This theme was constructed from codes related to the engagement of different cultural groups in the event, as well as the importance of inter-community and inter-generational connections that can be fostered through participation and event organization. These themes speak to the way that community, culture, and heritage were understood and enacted in the context of the community sport event. The findings also illuminate how event organizers staged a sport event that draws on heritage resources, engages residents of many different demographics, and contributes to ongoing efforts to develop heritage processes in a rural community context.

Conclusion, Contribution, & Implications

The contributions of this research are both empirical and theoretical. Empirically, I contribute a discussion of the role of sport in rural heritage and provide a contextualized analysis of sport heritage processes and event management practices in one rural region. Theoretically, I draw from an anthropological perspective to examine the processes of heritage development through community sport events. Conceptual framing of liminality

and carnivalesque expressions are novel to sport for development research and as such, these contributions have implications for literature examining management practices of heritage sport events as well as development through sport events more broadly. This research extends current discussions by theorizing collective and performative transgressions within community sport event contexts. This approach has implications for how we understand expressions of culture within community sport contexts, particularly those which are organized outside of modern, rationalized sport governance structures.

Testing the Relationship Between Service Quality and Event Image in the Setting of a Small-scale Event

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Small Scale Outdoor Events refer to seasonal sports competitions, international sports events, and local gatherings (Higham, 1999, p.87). The benefits of these events are economic, social, and environmental, such as economic development for the local community, contribution to local tourism development, promotion of the area, and enhancement of the destination's reputation, while also contributing to personal well-being and quality of life for participants, as well as promoting an active lifestyle (Alexandris, Douka & Balaska, 2012; Balaska & Kouthouris, 2014). Small-scale sports events serve as valuable tools for local and regional economic and tourism development (Alexandris, Kaplanidou, 2014). Local government organizations, along with sports programs provided to citizens in recent years, have been involved in organizing local sports events (Balaska, 2007, 2013). Service quality is an important factor on building the image of these events. There has been limited so far to test the relationship between service quality and event image in the settings of small-scale sport events. The research objectives were to test a) the relationship between service quality and event image b) gender differences in terms of service quality evaluations and event image. The case study of the research was a three-day Beach Volley Mixed 2X2 recreational tournament held in early September 2023 in a Municipality of Central Macedonia, Greece. Quantitative research was conducted for the data collection, using adjusted versions of Kaplanidou & Vogt, (2007) event image scale consisting of the two dimensions Cognitive and Affective, and event quality questionnaire (Alexandris, Douka, Balaska, 2012) consisting of twelve questions. Descriptive statistics for the demographic characteristics of the sample (n=230) revealed that the majority were female (57%), aged 18-

30 years (35%), and attended the tournament for 3 days (38.7%) with friends (56.6%). 55% of the sample were residents of Eleftherios Kordelios area, 16% from Evosmos area, and 29% from other areas. The overall event quality and image were evaluated very high (M=6.57 and M=6.45 respectively), with both dimensions of the event image, Cognitive (M=6.43) and Affective (M=6.47), scoring high averages, while the Cronbach's alpha coefficient indicated satisfactory internal consistency. The correlation analysis of the two dimensions of the event image: Cognitive and Affective, with the twelve event quality questions revealed strong correlations with ten of the twelve questions. The strongest correlations with the two dimensions of image were found in the question about the variety of the program of the event ($r=.52$, $p<.001$), the problem-solving skills of the staff ($r=.47$, $p<.001$) and the time spent at the event ($r=.58$, $p<.001$). The analysis of variance (ANOVA) with the independent variable being the days of event attendance and the dependent variable being the 12 event quality questions revealed that 10 out of the 12 quality questions showed statistically significant differences in event evaluation, between those who attended one-day and two- and three-days. The greatest difference was found in the question «The event staff have the skills to solve any problems» ($F_{2,229}=10.9$, $p<.001$). To find the differences between genders in the evaluation of the image of the event, a t-test was applied with the gender as the independent variable and the two dimensions of the image, Cognitive and Affective, as dependent variables. The results revealed a statistically significant difference between the two genders only in the Cognitive dimension ($F=4.49$, $p<.05$). The audience's perception of beach volleyball improved by 74% after attending the event, with 40% expressing interest in engaging in the sport themselves and 67.4% indicating they would encourage their children to do so. Nearly all attendees (93%) expressed a desire for the tournament to be held annually, with 80% stating they would attend and 85% recommending it to friends. The research results revealed that the event had a positive impact in terms of usefulness (93.9%) and contribution to the region's economic development (87.8%). These results show the value of small scale sport event for local communities. They also show the importance of measuring service quality in such events, and focusing them to the specific characteristics of the visitors, such as genders

and individuals with different expectations. Such small-scale sport events should be organized in a professional manner in order to become attractive to local communities. Small-scale sports events involving all sectors of the local community can offer multiple benefits to the local society, both in the short and long term.

Understanding participant satisfaction: An Importance-Performance and Segmentation Analysis

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In the last five years, the endurance running industry has faced significant market fluctuations. Prior to the 2020 pandemic, which led to the cancellation of numerous races, the industry witnessed a decline in participation alongside a rise in the number of events offered (Running USA, 2019). However, Running USA (2022) reported an increase in participant numbers from 59,885 to 68,720 in total participation, with the number of running events in the United States surpassing pre-pandemic levels. This intensified competition among events to attract participants underscores the importance of cultivating a loyal consumer base for event sustainability.

Event satisfaction stands as a pivotal determinant in predicting various consumer behaviors, including loyalty, event engagement, and goal-directed behavioral intentions such as event retention (Yoshida & James, 2010). However, existing methods for assessing event satisfaction often lack comparative insights within the oversaturated endurance running event space. Du et al. (2015) addressed this gap by introducing the Participant Sport Event Attribute and Delivery (PSEASD) scale, focusing on core and peripheral elements associated with marathon events. While the PSEASD scale offers valuable insights, it lacks a comparative framework for event managers to gauge their event's performance against others.

Building upon this, Aicher et al. (2022) proposed the Gap-2 Analysis of the Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) as a potential method to address this gap. However, their application of the method, focused on spectator sport events, lacked comparative data on participants' perceptions, and overlooked demographic and psychographic considerations. This study aims

to extend the works of Du et al. (2015) and Aicher et al. (2022) by delving deeper into the Gap-2 analysis and incorporating demographic, psychographic, and behavioral characteristics into the analysis. We adopted a comprehensive segmentation approach based on Middleton et al. (2009) and Tkaczynski et al. (2009) to categorize event participants into distinct segments. These dimensions include demographic factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, psychographics using social worlds (Aicher et al., 2020), as well as behavioral variables such as sport type, skill level, hours trained, and race length.

In partnership with a marathon event in the Western United States, participant data were collected through a post-event online questionnaire. A few days after the race, an email with a link to the online survey was sent by the event organizers to all those who participate in the race events. This included a virtual and in-person 5K, half marathon, and marathon. Those who participated in the event virtually are not entered in the dataset. Two sorting questions were used in the data collection. First, the respondents were asked if they participated in the race in person or virtually. If they participated in person, they were then asked if they have participated in a previous race within the past year at the same distance. If yes were answer to both, participants then completed the PSEAD scale was used in three different formats. Participants were asked to rate the importance of each attribute (SCALE), the performance of the attribute (SCALE), and how well the event performed (SCALE). Demographics (e.g., age, race, gender), psychographics (i.e., social world scale [Aicher et al., 2020]), and behaviors (e.g., runner type, weekly running, previous participation) were collected for segmentation. In total, 420 runners completed either the half or full marathon. Given the initial response yielded 120 completed responses (a 28.6% response rate), no follow-up e-mails were sent. Of those who completed the survey, 151 competed in a similar event in the past two years.

We are currently conducting data analysis. For segmentation, we will utilize cluster analysis, incorporating demographic, psychographic, and behavioral data. Once segments are identified, we will initially assess differences in attributes within each of the three areas (importance, performance, and competitive analysis) for the segments.

Subsequently, we will follow the methodologies outlined by Yavas and Shemwell (2001) and Aicher et al. (2022) for the Gap-2 analysis. This involves calculating and plotting the relative performance index onto the Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) matrices, visually highlighting any disparities between segments in their assessment of the event's positioning in the marketplace.

By integrating segmentation analysis with Gap-2 analysis, we aim to enhance our understanding of how intrapersonal characteristics influence event evaluation. Additionally, this study aims to provide event managers with a refined method to evaluate event satisfaction within the competitive landscape. Through clear guidelines for improvement, event managers can enhance their event's image and reputation within the marketplace, ultimately optimizing consumer satisfaction and competitive positioning.

Volunteer Motivation, Experience and Outcomes at Chinese Mega Sport Events: A Longitudinal Approach

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Aim and Research Questions

This study aims to expand the current understanding of sport event volunteering and address the following gaps. Firstly, cross-sectional data have been widely used to investigate causal relationships, e.g., the relationship between volunteer motivation, experience and volunteer outcomes. In particular, measuring volunteer motivation after volunteering experience could be biased because motivation refers to underlying reasons to act and thus, needs to be formed before the experience. Secondly, few studies have investigated multiple consequences of volunteering within a single setting, with most focusing on a single consequence, particularly future volunteer intention (FVI). Thirdly, literature investigating the impact of sport event volunteering on social capital exists but remains scarce, particularly only one in a major multisport event context (Hallmann et al., 2023) and none in a non-Western context. Additionally, the development of human capital and labour market outcomes in sport volunteering has received relatively less attention.

To address these gaps, this study utilises two waves of longitudinal data to investigate how multiple volunteer outcomes are shaped in the volunteering process through volunteer motivation, person-environment fit (P-E fit), and overall volunteer satisfaction. The outcomes include the widely studied FVI and under-researched social capital, employability, and subjective well-being (SWB).

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The hypothesised model is developed drawing on self-determination theory (SDT), P-E fit theory and empirical evidence. SDT makes a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic

motivations and believes that intrinsic motivation results in a higher quality of experience (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Additionally, people engage in an activity to fulfil their psychological needs and the degree to which these needs are fulfilled determines their satisfaction with the activity (Deci & Ryan, 2000). P-E fit theory posits that “the degree of compatibility or match between individuals and their work environment” affects job satisfaction (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011, p. 3).

With respect to volunteer outcomes, firstly, Degli Antoni (2009) found that social capital is more likely to develop among volunteers who are intrinsically motivated. Additionally, social capital is shaped by work conditions and volunteer satisfaction (Zhigang et al., 2022). Secondly, employability was found to be positively associated with social motivation (Goodman & Tredway, 2016). Moreover, the development of employability depends on the availability of relevant resources in volunteering, resonating with the needs-suppliers fit (Kristof-Brown & Guay, 2011). Furthermore, volunteers who are more satisfied with their work tend to be more engaged and involved, thus potentially acquiring more employment-relevant skills and knowledge. Thirdly, FVI is positively predicted by volunteer motivation, experience and satisfaction (Bang et al., 2019). Furthermore, the resources of social capital (e.g., networks and social ties) promote collective actions, such as volunteering (Putnam, 1993). Fourthly, volunteers’ SWB was positively associated with intrinsic motivation and volunteer satisfaction (Stukas et al., 2016). P-E fit was documented to positively impact multiple aspects of employees’ well-being, while there is little exploration in volunteering. Moreover, individuals’ SWB is positively predicted by social connectedness and optimism about employability (Karavdic & Baumann, 2014). Accordingly, 18 hypotheses were proposed.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The participants were volunteers at the 2023 Asian Games taking place in Hangzhou, China. Two waves of longitudinal data were collected. The first wave was collected before the event, measuring volunteer motivation (N = 576). The second wave was collected after the event, and measured P-E fit, satisfaction,

social capital, employability, FVI and SWB (N = 357). The volunteer motivation scale was developed and validated by the authors in a previous study. Other measures were adopted from existing validated scales. Covariance-based structural equation modelling was employed, and all analyses were run in RStudio using packages lavaan and manyome.

Results/Findings and Discussion

12 hypotheses were supported and 6 were rejected. One main finding was that higher levels of motivation tended to produce more positive outcomes, i.e., higher employability, a greater desire to volunteer again, and higher levels of well-being. Interestingly, a negative indirect relationship was found between volunteer motivation and social capital, perhaps because some Chinese volunteers were invited by their friends to volunteer and preferred to bond with those old friends rather than make new ones. Another primary finding was that P-E fit had significant impacts on all four volunteer outcomes investigated, while volunteer satisfaction only affected social capital and FVI significantly. Specifically, P-E fit was vital for the development of employability in volunteering, as it played a full mediating role in the path from motivation to employability. Furthermore, P-E fit partially mediated the impact of motivation on FVI and SWB, where volunteer satisfaction showed marginal and non-significant influences, respectively.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The study highlights the significant positive impacts of event volunteers’ motivation and P-E fit on volunteer outcomes. Event managers should comprehensively understand volunteers’ motivations and needs before volunteer service and provide suitable resources and opportunities for volunteers to achieve positive outcomes.

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National Multi-sport Events' Impact On Sport Federations And Local Communities

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Aim and Research Questions

The aim of the present project is to improve our understanding of the role a national multi-sport event can play for host municipalities and participating sport federations. Through a focus on the perceived impact among these temporary stakeholders the study answers the following research questions based on a study of the Swedish National championships' week (SM-veckan) 2019-2023:

1. What effects do sport federations and municipalities perceive when participating respectively hosting SM-veckan?
2. Why does SM-veckan leave these perceptions for these stakeholders?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Studies on non-mega sport events suggest that these can provide positive outcomes for local communities, if also short-lived due to a lack of leverage (Taks et al., 2014) and are overall more sustainable than mega events by allowing better for adjustments (Taks, 2016). A new non-mega event format, which combines single national championships with a common concept, is however currently unexplored but relevant as it is spreading, and its use of a common framework provides new impact opportunities.

To discuss the event's perceived impacts, the present study combines stakeholder and innovation theories suggesting that stakeholders create value by adopting new and creative ideas that these adoptions/innovations can be enabled at personal, organisational and environmental levels (Damanpour, 2020, pp. 18–20; Phillips et al., 2019, p. 3; Tjørndal, 2017, p. 293).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The study is explorative and based on qualitative interviews with representatives from five municipalities (13 interviews) hosting five editions of the event (2019-2023)

and 11 sport federations (15 interviews) with a spread in terms of members and event experience. The study also includes 6 interviews with the event's permanent stakeholders (the Swedish sport confederation (Riksidrottsförbundet) and the Swedish national public broadcaster (SVT)) as background.

The interviews were primarily conducted online and all recorded, transcribed by the researcher, and analysed thematically based on an open coding of the impacts reported by the informants (Saldaña, 2016).

Results/Findings and Discussion

The municipalities and sport federations mainly experienced an improvement of their organisational capacity and a positive change to their image. The event had been a "learning process for the organisation" (municipality) and made it possible to convince people of the town's qualities. A head of a small sport appreciated "a huge new audience in the host cities, which we had not had otherwise".

For both groups the environment was an important enabler. It was "exciting" meeting the professional organisers from the sport confederation and for a sport official "the whole complex" had taken their usual championships to a new level.

In addition to the environment, the organisation was an important enabler for the municipalities as the event "made people stand up" (civil servant). For the smaller sports the impact depended "more on persons than on the organisation" (former board member in sport federation).

The impacts also had limits. Bigger sports did not perceive a change and all sports emphasised their autonomy, e.g. regarding competition regulations, with which the event concept did not interfere. Some sports however did experiment with new competitions but then only in newly developed disciplines.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

Upon participating sport federations and municipalities perceived improved organisational skills and branding not least enabled by the event environment. For the municipalities the organisation in addition was an important enabler whereas the sports

depended on personal initiative and the event's respect for their autonomy.

The study shows that the event's format provides an inspiring learning environment and a sound balance between the sports' need for autonomy and want for innovation which could inspire other events. The study however also questions the sustainability of these learning outcomes as they often depended on individual commitments. Future research should study this factor through longitudinal studies of sport federations.

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Evolution of Residents' Perceptions of the Social Impact of the 2023 Pan American Games from an Individual and Community Perspective

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Aim and Research Question

Studies that have examined the impact of sport events have focused on residents' perceptions from either a personal or community perspective, with fewer studies integrating both perspectives (Fredline et al., 2006). Therefore, the purpose of this study is twofold. First, to examine changes in residents' perceptions of the social impact associated with the 2023 Pan American Games at three different points (before, during, and after the event). Second, to compare individual (self-reference, SR) and community (other-reference, OR) perceptions of these impacts.

Theoretical Background

Studies on the impact of sport events (i.e., Prayag et al, 2013) have used Social Exchange Theory (SET) to explain why residents would or would not support the hosting of sports events. Thus, if benefits exceed the costs, the probability of supporting the event is greater than if the costs exceed the benefits. More recently, scholars have recommended assessing the social impact of sport events by including not only the individual perspective (self-reference) on how the event may impact the individual but also how the event might impact the community (other-reference) (Oshimi et al. 2023; Task et al., 2020).

Research Design, Methodology, Data Analysis

The study involved 8,497 residents of Santiago, Chile, who were surveyed at three different times, before (N=2,671), during (N=4,205), and after (N=1,621) the 2023 Pan

American Games. A questionnaire, adapted from Parra-Camacho et al. (2020), was used to assess residents' perception of the social impact of the Games. The instrument included 25 items organized in six positive impact factors (socio-economic, urban development, administrative/political, psychosocial, sociocultural, and sport) and ten items in three negative impact factors (socio-economic, socio-cultural and environment) of the Games. Items were assessed from the individual (SR) and community (OR) perspectives. To test the validity and reliability of the two scales, CFA was performed at all three times in three independent samples (before, during and after the Games). A t-test for related samples was conducted to compare the mean scores of the factors from the two perspectives at each point, and a one-way ANOVA was used to compare the mean differences across the different points.

Results and Discussion

Results regarding the validation of the scale from the individual and community perspectives showed a good fit (GFI) in all three samples (pre, during, and post-event). Most of the asymmetric and kurtosis values ranged from 0 and 3. However, some items showed values higher than the recommended cut-off point of <3.0 (Chou and Bentler, 1990). These variations were taken into consideration when the CFA was conducted by using the Robust Maximum Likelihood Estimation method (Bentler, 2004). The RMSEA value was less than 0.08, ranging from 0.043 to 0.047 in all analyses, while the values of the Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Incremental Fit Index (IFI) were higher than the cut-off point >.90 recommended by Kline (2003), ranging from 0.90 to 0.94 in all analyses. Results of the one-way ANOVA test showed statistically significant differences ($p < .001$) in the mean scores based on the temporal moment for both the mean scores of factors from the community and individual perspectives. Positive impacts were better valued during the event itself than in the pre and post-event and were also better valued in the post-consultation than in the pre-event. Negative impacts were valued more acutely before the event than during and after the event. On the other hand, t-test results showed statistically significant differences between the means of the community and

individual perspectives within each consultation moment.

Conclusion

Results show changes in residents' perceptions regarding the impact of the Pan American Games based on the timing of the evaluation. The Games contributed to increase residents' perceptions of the positive impacts during and after the event while reducing expectations of potential negative impacts or costs. Residents' perceptions of impacts vary not only depending on the perspective from which they are evaluated but also perceptions of the impacts of sporting events change over time (Oshimi et al., 2023).

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Perceived Value and Behavioral Intentions of Local Marathon Participants

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Aim and Research Question

Hosting a marathon event not only generates economic benefits through the expansion of event-related consumption but also produces social benefits for the host area residents such as interactions between host area residents and between them and non-host area people. With the aim of gaining the economic and social benefits, more and more marathon events have been organized in the last decade.. To successfully produce the economic and social benefits in the events, securing repeat participants is imperative and intention to re-participate is a substantial factor for it.. As such, the current study examined the intention to re-participate a marathon event from a perceived value lens.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

For a marathon event to sustainably maximize economic and social benefits, it is necessary to increase the behavioral intention of participants. Behavioral intention is composed of revisit intention and recommendation intention, and has been widely used in sports management research such as sports spectator research and tourism. Indeed, previous literature showed that behavioral intention is strongly related to the rate of re-participation. To examine the mechanism of re-participation in marathon events, the concept of perceived value has been heavily utilized (Sato et al., 2009). Perceived value is the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given (Zeithaml, 1988) Yoshida (2010) reviewed previous research on perceived value in the field of sports marketing and suggest to collect data from consumers from various sports at different levels of competition to confirm the relationship between perceived value and behavioral intention. However, this relationship has not been examined in

marathon events at highly competitive levels. Thus, by targeting the population of highly competitive marathon runners, we examined the relationship between perceived value and behavioral intention. Following the previous literature, we hypothesized that perceived value would positively predict behavioral intention.

Methodology and Data analysis

we used the runner's perceived value measurement scale modified by Yamaguchi et al. (2019) based on Petrick (2002) and Sato et al. (2009) and intention to participate scale. Before conducting the main analysis, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis of the runner's perceived value scale to confirm the reliability and validity of the scale. Next, to investigate the effect of perceived value on behavioral intention, structural analysis of covariance was conducted with behavioral intention as the dependent variable and perceived value as the independent variable

The participants were finishers of the 10th Ryoma Marathon held in Kochi pref. Japan on October 8th 2023 who were not local people there?. Self-administrated questionnaire was distributed and collected at the finish area. A total of 301 questionnaires were distributed, of which 261 were valid responses (valid response rate: 86.7%).

Results

The factor structure was examined through confirmatory factor analysis. As the factor of reputation did not converge with other factors (factor loading was low, maybe?), this factor was removed. As a result, the perceived value scale consisting of four factors was compatible with (showed a good fit with) the data of this value. Therefore, following analysis was proceeded with four factors; "emotions" "convenience" "costs" "reliability".

Next, the results of the analysis of covariance showed that the hypothesized model was acceptable based on the goodness-of-fit indices ($\chi^2/df = 2.316$, CFI = .922, GFI = .889, AGFI = .852 and RMSEA = .071). the path coefficient from "perceived value" to "behavioral intention" was significant ($b = .752$, $p < .001$). The results of this study indicate that consists of the four factors of perceived value of non-local participants in marathons have a positive influence on behavioral intention.

Conclusion and Implication

The relationship between perceived value and behavioral intention has not been fully clarified in the field of event management. In the current study, the relationship between perceived value and behavioral intention was examined using data from marathon event participants. The results showed that perceived value positively predicted behavioral intention, which supported our hypothesis. Future research is suggested to keep examining the relationship between perceived value and behavioural intention at various sports and at different competition levels to confirm whether the results will be replicated. Among perceived value, the three factors of emotions, costs, and reliability showed significant differences, but the convenience factor showed no significant differences, indicating that emphasizing the convenience of the event does not increase behavioral intention.

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Scoping Review on the Impact of Hosting Multiple and Recurring Sports Events in Short Periods

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Aim and Research Questions

This scoping review systematically investigates the impacts of hosting multiple sports events in a city or country within a short period, including recurring sports events. It addresses two research questions: (1) What are the impacts of hosting multiple sports events in a city or country within a short timeframe, including cases of recurring sports events? (2) Are there similar and different patterns observed in the impacts of multiple sports events versus recurring sports events?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Recent years have seen a significant trend in cities hosting multiple international sports events within short periods, such as Rio's 2014 FIFA World Cup followed by the 2016 Olympic Games, and similar quick successions in Tokyo and Paris with the Rugby World Cups and the Olympic Games. There are various reasons for cities, countries, and committees to bid for hosting international sports events (Bason & Grix, 2018). Common reasons include the expected growth in sport participation, nation and community building, urban development, enhancing the global profile of the city or country, and the development of specific sports. However, existing research predominantly focuses on the impacts of single events, with insufficient exploration of how hosting multiple events within short timeframe might deliver impacts such as economic and social benefits.

Criticisms of hosting sports events argue that their impacts are not long-lasting and that large international sports events often get criticised for the massive expenditures involved. In this context, hosting multiple events might potentially overcome some of these criticisms by creating sustained engagement and cumulative impacts. Knowledge management and transfer processes, as explored in the study by Schenk

et al. (2015), indicate that hosting multiple events can lead to refined and improved management practices, suggesting a potential for greater efficiency and deeper impacts over time. Moreover, the theory of identification with a sports property, as discussed by Lock et al. (2012), suggests that hosting multiple events can enhance public identification with the events, thereby increasing the likelihood of ongoing engagement and support. This could lead to a cycle where initial interest sparked by one event is capitalised upon and enhanced by subsequent events, maximising the socio-economic benefits and community involvement.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

Adopting a scoping review approach as outlined by Arksey and O'Malley (2005) and refined by Levac et al. (2010), this study identifies any impacts, including economic and social impacts, from hosting multiple sports events in a short period in a city or country. The literature search process involves searching the key database SPORTDiscus, which provides a sport-specific representation of published material. In addition to SPORTDiscus, and following the literature search process of the previous study (e.g., Schulenkorf et al., 2016), a strategic additional manual search is performed on nine A-journals from the ABDC journal list that are also on the NASSM's list of journals serving sport management. This review employs a systematic search strategy using keywords such as «multiple + sport events», «consecutive + sport events», and «recurring + sports events», targeting studies published between 2000 and 2024. The inclusion criteria ensure a focus on articles that analyze multiple sports events in the same city or country within a short timeframe. This research does not set specific criteria for the duration between events, as long as an article covers any impacts from hosting more than one sports event. Similarly, for recurring events, it must cover recurring aspects of sports events and not only focus on a single event of recurring events. The data analysis begins by extracting relevant information from each article and summarizing it in a spreadsheet. This is followed by descriptive and thematic analyses to map existing evidence and generate narrative accounts of the literature. This process allows for presenting results aligned with the research questions and drawing

conclusions to meet the scoping review's objectives.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Preliminary findings from this scoping review so far have identified eight articles that address recurring sports events, with four focused on aspects directly relevant to this research. These studies preliminarily suggest that recurring events tend to foster sustainable community benefits and enduring economic impacts. In addition to these initial results, a further scoping review will be conducted to explore the impacts of hosting multiple sports events in a city or country within a short period. Comprehensive results and detailed analysis from both reviews will be presented at the conference, offering insights into the patterns of impact and their implications for future sports event planning.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This scoping review enhances understanding of the dynamics involved in hosting sports events multiple times or on a recurring basis. Insights from this study will aid policymakers and event organisers in making informed decisions to host multiple sports events and deliver impacts through hosting them.

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Participant Segmentation in an International Marathon Using Unsupervised Machine Learning Techniques: A Case Study of the Madrid Popular Marathon

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Aim and Research Questions

The objective of this study was to establish a post-event segmentation of participants in an international marathon based on satisfaction surveys using unsupervised machine learning techniques.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Segmentation involves dividing a market into different groups with similar needs and/or characteristics (Frochot & Morrison, 2000). Similarly, segmentation has proven to be one of the most effective tools in the hands of companies and sports organizations when it comes to achieving their goals, whether they are sports-related and/or economic (Frochot & Morrison, 2000; Islam, 2022). Among the various pieces of information that can be used to perform this segmentation, one of the most commonly applied has been satisfaction with different aspects of a sporting event due to the existing association between customer satisfaction and aspects such as event loyalty, perceived value, or future recommendations (Akinici et al., 2015; Calabuig et al., 2010; Cronin et al., 2000; Theodorakis & Alexandris, 2008; Vila-Lorenzo & Guzmán-Luján, 2023). Therefore, several studies have thoroughly analyzed the satisfaction of spectators at different sporting events. Conversely, a still underdeveloped field is that linked to the satisfaction of participants in such events. Taking this into account, and considering one of the sports events with the greatest social impact, such as a marathon, this study has been proposed.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Through a descriptive cross-sectional design, 3,668 (N=34,000 runners) online surveys were conducted on participants in an international marathon held in Madrid in 2023. The surveys were carried out by the event organizers and preprocessed by the researchers of this study. Participants rated their satisfaction on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 on 35 event items about before, during, and after experience of the event. Participants reported their satisfaction level about: i) online registration process, ii) Pre-race communications, iii) Start line experience, iv) Start line corral management, v) Event security, vi) Race staff, vii) Spectator Viweing points, or viii) course design, among other aspects of the event. Out of the total surveys analyzed and preprocessed, 1,504 were eliminated for the following reasons: i) incomplete surveys (n=1,096), ii) missing data (n=143), iii) outliers in survey duration (n=252), iv) duplicate data and/or registration errors (n=13). Among the 2,164 final surveys, satisfaction values were standardized, and a k-means clustering analysis and a two-dimensional principal component analysis were applied to examine the variables associated with each cluster.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The clustering algorithm yielded a silhouette score of 0.27, clustering participants into 2 clusters or groups. The satisfaction items with the greatest influence on the first dimension were: i) safety at the finish line, ii) event staff, iii) event security, iv) post-race communications, and v) race announcements. Regarding the second dimension, the items with the highest weight were: i) timing of the expo, ii) refreshments at the finish line, iii) course layout, iv) health and fitness vendor selection, and v) On-site registration. Based on these results, it can be inferred that there are two types of runners: those with a greater concern for the overall organization of the event and those with a greater concern and/or interest in the sporting event itself. These results are consistent with those obtained by Maggon (2018) after analyzing the profiles of marathon runners in India. In this study, the performance of a factorial analysis allowed segmenting participants in this type of events into two main clusters or groups: performance-oriented and those oriented towards overcoming a personal challenge or goal.

Conversely, satisfaction items with greater importance in segmentation showed clear differences from those found by Alemany-Hormaeche et al. (2019). In this case, the study authors found that items associated with public transportation in the event city or costs associated with travel were of high importance when clustering runners. In this sense, we consider that the particular context in which an event like the marathon is held is a fundamental factor when analyzing participants' perceptions. Therefore, we believe that the fact that our study was conducted in Madrid may have significantly reduced transportation costs, for example. Undoubtedly, more studies with different samples in different events and countries are necessary to increase the scientific corpus on this topic.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

Clustering can be an important tool in establishing different segments and/or profiles of runners in massive sporting events such as marathons. Although the clustering algorithm did not yield optimal results, this work can still guide various strategies in event organization and management, as well as decision-making regarding different pre-, post-, and during-event elements. In this way, in future events, race strategies can be oriented according to the interests of the runners, allowing the identification of different types of participants depending on whether their goal is related to athletic performance, the experience of running this type of event, or other detected profiles.

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Exploring Individual-level Knowledge Management to Help Sustain Major Sport Event Legacies

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Aims and Research Questions

Knowledge management (KM) is proposed as a solution to ensure the success of events and to create a lasting legacy (Parent et al., 2014). Effective KM enables individuals to develop skills and enhances host cities' knowledge acquisition, improving future learning processes (Werner et al., 2015). However, there is a significant gap in understanding KM's role in sustaining event legacies, indicating a need for further research in this area (Thomson et al., 2019). Individuals, known as 'knowledge brokers', play a vital role in KM processes for both national and international events (Parent et al., 2014). They facilitate knowledge sharing, build knowledge, identify sources and adapt it for specific settings (Conklin et al., 2013). However, current theoretical approaches to KM are limited in their explanations of how knowledge brokers manage knowledge (Parent et al., 2014), especially in non-western event legacy contexts (Qin et al., 2022). Therefore, this study aims to explore how individual-level KM helps to sustain major sport event legacies. The research is guided by two questions: How do individuals manage (i.e., identify, create, store, share, use, learn, and improve) knowledge to sustain major sport event legacies? and What factors (enablers and barriers) may influence individual-level KM of event legacy-related knowledge?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Globally, countries and cities host major sporting events (e.g., Olympics and World Cups) to harness economic and social benefits. Although these events traditionally bring advantages like tourism, job creation, and infrastructure development, concerns about associated social, economic, and environmental impacts persist (Chalip, 2004). These concerns have inspired scholars to examine the types and outcomes of event

legacies, often neglecting strategies to maximize positive outcomes such as KM (Thomson et al., 2019).

KM involves systematically coordinating an organization's resources such as people, technology, and processes to enhance value through reuse and innovation (Dalkir, 2013). Fundamental elements of a KM framework include managing explicit (codified) and tacit (personal) knowledge. Within the KM process, codified and personal knowledge types are managed through core activities (i.e., identify, create, store, share, use, learn, and improve) (Evans et al., 2014). These core activities form a sequential organizational process that embodies the KM life cycle (Dalkir, 2013). Evans et al.'s (2014) knowledge life cycle (KMC) model is used to conceptualize KM processes, stressing the importance of learning and improvement for continuous progression in KM. This model is used to frame the study as a response to the call to apply new theories in sports event legacy management (Qin et al., 2022).

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

The Gangwon 2024 Winter Youth Olympic Games in South Korea serve as a case study to examine KM strategies and challenges (Yin, 2018). Leveraging the infrastructure and operational expertise from the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics, approximately 39% of the individuals from the 2018 Organizing Committee participated in the 2024 Games. Case selection rationale was based on enhancing the lack of cultural understanding in non-Western contexts in KM and sport event legacy research (Schenk et al., 2015; Thomson et al., 2019). Data collection involves archival materials and semi-structured interviews with approximately 15 individuals. The criteria for sampling participants were: (a) experience working at both the 2018 and 2024 Games and (b) experience in managing event legacies and KM with the ability to discuss factors that facilitate event legacy KM. Data collection and analysis is ongoing. All data will be thematically analyzed to explore KM strategies and influencing factors for sustaining sports event legacies in Korea.

Findings and Discussion

Findings are pending as the study progresses. Interviews will be completed July 2024 thus we guarantee analyzed findings for the start of the conference. The expected results are twofold. First, this research aims to shed light on the practices and strategies that individuals employ to manage knowledge related to sustaining sport event legacies. Findings are expected to unveil numerous methods for identifying, creating, storing, sharing, using, learning from, and improving knowledge that contributes to event legacies' longevity. Such results will bridge gaps in the understanding of KM based on these legacies. Second, this study will likely unearth factors that either facilitate or hamper KM at the individual level. Ultimately, this study intends to illuminate KM's power in supporting the sustainability of sport event legacies. It will underline the importance of personal efforts and the need to create environments conducive to knowledge sharing and application. Practically, this research offers valuable insights into KM practices in sports events, focusing on cultural and contextual elements. It can inform future event organizers, promote effective knowledge management, enhance stakeholder collaboration, and optimize benefits for host regions. The 2024 YOG case study addresses a gap in current research, offering a non-Western perspective on sports event legacy from diverse socio-political perspectives. This research can help maintain continuity and build upon past experiences in sports events.

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Internationalization Strategies Of Leading Marathon Races

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Aim and Research Questions

Marathons have become transnational in the way that they are managed and participated in. These races have evolved and grown from being a mass athletic event that attracted many recreational runners, as part of what Scheerder et al. (2015) describe as the first and second running boom, to follow the strategy of gaining more international runners. The internationalization of marathon races has become a crucial element of the managerial and marketing strategies of race directors of many races worldwide. As part of the event sport tourism (Miller & Washington, 2021), international runners are not only deemed an extremely valuable group of runners to offset the running costs of races, but also for being an attractive market to stimulate local tourism due to runners' high income. The purpose of this exploratory study is to examine the contribution of the steady increase in the number of international runners to the financial stability of five selected major marathons, such as the Honolulu, the New York City, the Bank of America Chicago in the U.S., the Tokyo in Asia, and the Valencia Trinidad Alfonso Zurich in Europe, and to the local tourism industry of their host cities.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Over the last two decades, one of areas of the ensuing literature that has attracted the attention of more scholars as well as practitioners has been to describe the sociodemographic profile of other related characteristics of runners of marathon races, according to different variables, such as sex, racial identity, nationalities, involvement level, loyalty level or other socio-psychological features (Agrupa et al., 2011; Hallman & Wicker, 2012; Scheerder et al., 2015).

However, little is known about the sociodemographic profile of international runners that explain the sizeable increase of this new niche market represent in many marathons.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The five marathons analyzed in this study were selected based on different criteria such as the increased participation experienced in all of races since their first inaugural decision to the latest edition (Llopis-Goig & Paramio-Salcines, 2022; Paramio-Salcines & Llopis-Goig, 2023). All these marathons have an international status as three of the fastest world major marathons for male and female athletes, for their level of participation of national and international runners in the last decades and specifically, for their financial contribution to the overall running cost of those races and to the local tourism. Not least of the selected marathons can be regarded as part of "marathoning nations" such as Japan, the US and Spain. This paper presents the main findings of the marathons selected based on content analysis of academic and professional publications, annual reports and official websites of the selected marathons and ex-post longitudinal economic and tourism analysis of those marathons. Additional data was gathered through personal communications from the organization AbbottMM complemented with information from the marathon cases staff chosen.

Results/Findings and Discussion

While analysis is still ongoing, the preliminary analysis shows that all marathon cases studied reported a significant increase in the participation by international runners over the last two decades. Regarding a longitudinal examination of the participation of our target group in selected marathons, the Trinidad Alfonso Valencia Marathon ranked first after reporting the largest increase in this niche market studied since the 2011 edition, where, of 6,732 runners, only 769 (9.8 per cent) were international runners, whereas for the 2023 edition, of the 35,000 runners, 18,540 (52.9 percent) were foreign runners, with an average individual expenditure amounting to €157 per day, as opposed to €122 for national runners (Benages & Maudos, 2024). The second-ranked marathon in this aspect is the Honolulu Marathon which has totaled in the

period 1973-2022 an overall figure of 828,835 runners, from which, and this is one of the distinctive characteristics of this case, 411,017 (around 50 percent) are Japanese (Honolulu Marathon, 2024), followed by the last 2024 Tokyo Marathon, international runners accounted 13,543 (36.9 percent) (The Tokyo Marathon Foundation, 2024), the Bank of America Chicago Marathon with 33 percent of international runners (Bank of America Chicago Marathon, 2023) and the New York City Marathon with 32.2 percent of international runners.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The analysis undertaken allows us to conclude that the internationalization of city marathons has gradually contributed to consolidate those events as global business and important segments of the tourist industry. All these cities that host marathons are relevant for being known as tourist destinations and for their economic impact on their local tourism economies. Not surprisingly, this niche market of international runners has become extremely attractive not only for race directors of leading marathons and cities themselves, but also to big sponsors.

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Using a Smart-Phone Application to Market Sport Tourism: The Case of “Go Bike.”

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Research Objectives

The objective of this paper was to test the usability of Harrison et al.'s (2013) theoretical model on evaluating a smart-phone application, in the context of bike tourism. The results of this study are part of a 3-year funded project (“Go Bike”), which aimed to develop and apply technology as a strategic decision-making tool for bike tourism development.

Background to the Literature

It is well documented today that technology can help towards the marketing and strategic planning of sport tourism activities, improving at the same time tourists' experience (Ribeiro et al., 2018). Smart phone applications have been shown as popular among tourists in different contexts (Meireles & Ribeiro, 2020). Such applications can increase tourism involvement and engagement, creating environments for interactions and improved experiences. They can also be used as a tool for strategic planning, since information on users' experience, evaluations and suggestions can be used from sport tourism providers. Finally, they can help towards the development of destination image and branding, because of increased tourism engagement (Morfoulaki et al., 2023). This paper will report results of a funded project (“Go Bike”), in which a smart phone application has been developed for bikers, with the main goal to develop a questionnaire, based on the model proposed by Harrison et al., (2013). This questionnaire could be as measurement tool for use by future researchers.

There is still limited research on how specialized smart phone applications can help towards a more effective promotion,

marketing and strategic planning of bike tourism. There is also limited research on the attributes of such applications, and in relation to bikers' expectations (Alexandris et al., 2023). In order to develop such smart phone applications some basic principles have been proposed by Harrison et al. (2013): Effectiveness: which is defined as accuracy and completeness with which users achieve specified goals; Efficiency: which is defined by resources expended in relation to the accuracy and completeness with which users achieve goals; Satisfaction, as expressed by freedom from discomfort, and positive attitudes towards the use of the product; Learnability, which is assessed on the time that they need to learn it; Memorability, which relates to the ability of a user to retain how to use an application effectively; Errors which are made by participants while using mobile apps; Cognitive load, which is the ability to performing additional tasks while using the mobile device.

The global cycle tourism market size was estimated to be at 345.1 million dollars in 2020 and it is expected to increase to 1,291.3 million dollars by 2030, (Precedence research, 2023). Overall, around 143 million bicycles were sold worldwide in 2022. The largest share of bicycle sales was in Asia, in which China is leading with around 43 million units sold in 2022. The region with the second highest bicycle sales in 2022 was Europe with around 24 million bikes sold (Statista, 2024).

Cycling tourism is a form of alternative tourism which can help the economic development of local communities; furthermore, it is not strongly characterized by seasonality, and it is linked to sustainable development (Alexandris et al., 2023). According to Siderelis, Leung, & Nader (2010), mountain biking was defined as off-road cycling requiring specialized equipment to navigate the remote, rough, and narrow trails that traverse through forests, deserts, mountains, and/or meadows. The attractiveness of the destination is an important element of developing bike tourism (Moularde & Weaver, 2016).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The smart phone application “Go Bike” has been developed based on extensive research related to the existing competition and the

bikers' expectations (Alexandris et al., 2023). Some of its technical specifications and features include: Platform and Compatibility: It is available on both iOS and Android platforms. Database and Map Features: It includes detailed trail maps of Seich-Sou, Chortiatis and Mt. Olympus, that can be used online. Route Planning: The app allows users to select specific trails and touristic points of interest. Trail Information and Updates: It provides extensive trail information, including descriptions, conditions, user ratings, and reports. The app enables real-time updates for trail conditions and closures. User Contribution and Community: Users can contribute to the platform by submitting trail conditions and photos.

The quantitative data of the current study are currently under collection, aiming to apply the theoretical framework of Harrison et al. (2013) and evaluate the application: Effectiveness, Efficiency, Satisfaction, Learnability, Memorability, Errors, and Cognitive load. The sample of the study will include a minimum of one hundred individuals who have experience of mountain bike and express an interest in bike tourism related activities. These individuals will be invited to watch a demo video of the application and / or try it in real settings, review its features, and then answer the questionnaire, which covers the dimensions proposed by Harrison et al., (2013). The collection of the data will finish at the end of June, 2024. These quantitative data will be analyzed and presented. The usability of the Harrison et al's (2013) dimensions will be tested with the use of an exploratory factor analysis and subsequent reliability testing.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implications

The development of the "Go Bike" smart application will be a powerful promotional tool for developing bike tourism. It can be used by and-users (bikers), local authorities, spot tourism organization and agencies. Evaluating this application is an important task for examining the application of the general models for developing smart phone applications in the context of bike tourists. The paper has also academic contribution since for the first time a theoretical framework proposed by Harrison's et al., (2013) will be applied in the context of bike technology for tourism purposes. The proposed questionnaire, which has been developed based on this framework, can be a useful tool

for future researchers in their aim to measure the attractiveness and applicability of smart phone applications in outdoor settings, and include it in consumer behavior related models.

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Applying the Customer Experience Modeling Method in the Context of Running Events

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Aim and Research Questions

This research aims to identify and redesign services that shape and affect runners' overall experience by applying the «Customer Experience Modeling» method of service design within the context of running events to enhance runners' experience positively.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Lemon and Verhoef (2016) mentioned that customer experience is a multidimensional concept that encompasses customers' cognitive, emotional, behavioral, sensory, and social reactions to a company's offerings throughout the customer journey. The customer journey includes all direct and indirect interactions with the company that occur before, during, and after consumption (Homburg et al., 2015). Since experiences cannot be designed, Service Design Science enables customers' desired experiences by designing specific services (Teixeira et al. 2012). Service design methods, including Customer Experience Modeling (CEM) (Teixeira et al., 2012), play a pivotal role in creating and designing services that deliver an enhanced customer experience. Integrating contributions from different fields, CEM provides a systematic representation of the experience context. It integrates service design models and tools in a systematic manner that offers detailed analysis and visualization of customer experience and supports the design of new services.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Extensive qualitative research has been conducted among runners to implement Customer Experience Modeling. The credibility evaluation criteria involve the use of an appropriate number of runners and a range of data collection approaches (Charmaz, 2006). Qualitative data were collected using theoretical sampling, particularly the snowball sampling procedure, to enrich the sampling clusters and provide access to new runners (Noy, 2008). Sixteen semi-structured interviews (Hammersley, 2003) were conducted with nine male and seven female Greek Marathon runners. A semi-structured interview format was chosen to encourage participants to further discuss their activities and the services they utilized to achieve the desired experience. In addition, five running events were observed to develop and highlight the essential categories of activities (Preece et al., 2002). For the data analysis, the thematic approach proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was adopted with open and focused coding (Charmaz, 2006) to discover the underlying meanings and various dimensions of runners' experiences across the dataset. In addition, the triangulation of perspectives as a collaborative analysis helped to uncover any biases that one researcher might bring to the interpretation process and enhance the reliability of the findings.

Findings and Discussion

The CEM method was applied on three levels. The first level "Value Constellation Experience" revealed that the overall runners' experience includes services from various providers and encompass its interactions throughout their customer journey (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). For example, runners sought continuous access (24/7) for reliable information, as well as safe and specialized training. The interrelation among the services that form the runners' experience was discovered using the service design tool "Customer Value Constellation. The second-level "Service Experience" focuses on the service systems of the event organizer, that is, the corporate processes, technology, or other resources offered (Maglio et al., 2009). In addition, Brakus et al. (2009) support that these experiences are created not only from service consumption but also from customer interactions with the organizer's environment:

staff, policies, and practices. The runners revealed that value creation is related to the service systems of information, starting point, hydration points, finish point, and parallel events. The contributions of Service Architecture and the Customer Journey Mapping tool revealed that safe and sufficient products from an event's catering stands and festive finish point could affect their experience. The third level, "Service Encounter Experience" showed that there were many touch points (Homburg et al., 2015) that affected experiences such as the event's website, race registration, parallel events, volunteers, and hydration stands. Utilizing the "Service Blueprint" service design tool revealed that runners primarily rely on technology (e.g., the internet, smartphones, and mobile applications).

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This study attempted to understand the overall experience of runners with the application of the CEM method to redesign existing or new services that positively enhance their experiences. It significantly contributes to the interrelation discovery of desired experience services, which influenced runners' experiences before, during, and after the running event. Further, this study is one of the first to apply a service design methodology in the context of running events. In addition, it extends the "CEM" method by incorporating "Customer Journey Mapping" in every design step. Finally, the significant role of technology in shaping runners' experiences throughout their customer journey is revealed. At a practical level, results showed that running event organizers should collaborate with third party providers such as specialized running coaches and nutritionists, and tourism service providers so to enhance runners' event experience. Acknowledging the importance of technology, event organizers can provide digital interactive services to participants, such as virtual walkthroughs for event races, and artificial intelligence for profiling event participants.

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Sport, Media, and Communication

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Esports' Commentators and Communicative Effect: A Preliminary Linguistic Analysis Of Emerging Features For a Healthy And Inclusive Community

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Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this study is to focus on the eSports phenomenon and explore it from the linguistic and communicative point of view. This study is part of a wider Italian projects of relevant national interest (PRIN 2022) "E-well: esports between resilience, inclusion, and social capital", which main aim is to investigate eSports as a multidimensional phenomenon from different interrelated dimensions. Considering that eSports are interestingly expanding from a youth subculture (Wagner, 2006) or niche to mainstream entertainment, we intend to investigate and define this new emerging language genre (or sublanguage) through an integrated analysis "across different level of discourse analysis" (Catenaccio et al., 2010) of eSports commentators and to verify if it might be a crucial element of cohesion within the community. Thus, the following research questions will be addressed:

RQ1 What is the impact of the eSport phenomenon on the language of commentators/commentaries? What are e-sports commentators' communication strategies and what language features emerge from e-sports commentaries?

RQ2 Characteristics and language features of e-sports commentaries: Do eSports commentators focus on e-sport athletes stress or stressing situations? To what extent are eSports commentators/commentaries more concerned on entertainment rather than on a healthy and inclusive community?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Relatively little research has been carried out on the language of eSports commentators, although eSports is a massively growing sector which involve an increasing number of professional staff (players, spectators, commentators, mental health coach etc.) and

high revenue. Regarding the academic study of eSport, the activities accepted as sports disciplines will probably change due to the rapid development and cultural integration of technological advancements thus bringing changes also in societal values. It is therefore expected that the mastery of multimodal communication is crucial to achieve a high status not only within youth groups (Wagner, 2006; Callies, Levin, 2021) but also within eSports community. Consequently, this has an impact on language use, specialized register, specific jargon, phraseology, formulaic language, metaphors, and rules at different levels: among players, within the audience and through commentators (Lewandowski, 2012, 2017, Meier, 2021). These latter need to use a "spontaneous largely unplanned discourse, time critical as to the action unfolding" at extremely high speed (Callies, Levin, 2019) and also need to express emotional involvement. For this exploratory study, a data-driven corpus linguistic analysis of the language of eSports commentators and the related communicative effect has proved to be the necessary starting point (Callies, Levin, 2021; O'Keeffe, McCarthy, 2022).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

A selection of commentaries to FIFAE Nations Cup 2023 matches will be analysed. The FIFAE, the platform for FIFA's eFootball activities, periodically organizes several competitions simultaneously with football tournaments (such as the FIFAE World Cup). This allows for analysis extension, comparisons and contrasts between traditional sports and eSports characteristics. Furthermore, references to elements of the FIFAE "Good Game Promise" program, focusing on Healthy Planet, Healthy Community and Healthy Players, have shown specific relevance to the main general aims of national project (PRIN 2022) this study is a part of. The event FIFAE Nations Cup 2023 has been chosen as one of the most recent, concluded international events, featuring commentaries in English, and for the availability of the videos of its matches entirely online, in the YouTube and Twitch channels of FIFAE.

The methodology will apply Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Catenaccio et al., 2010; Duszak et al., 2010), i.e. a mixed integrated interdisciplinary approach to discourse

analysis as a form of social practice. A quantitative and qualitative corpus-driven linguistics analysis of the commentaries, with further quali-quantitative analysis of the most prominent linguistic features of short interviews occasionally included in the games' videos will be carried out. First, a corpus of transcripts of available games of the selected event will be collected. Manual tagging of specific parts of each transcript may be necessary, for detailed analysis of the language used in different phases of the games and for easier comparison with the matching visual elements (i.e., the mention of players' heart rate may be concurrent with the video showing the players' heart rate). Sketch Engine program will be used for corpus analysis. Main language features collected from frequency lists, concordances and keywords will be analysed and systematized. Linguistic elements focusing on the health and well-being of players and/or commentators will be highlighted to contribute to the research project wider scenario on eSports and well-being for a healthy and inclusive community.

Results/Findings and Discussion

We are still in the process of finalising the preliminary results, however we can guarantee that the completed data and results will be finalised in time for the conference presentation.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

Although we are still finalising the preliminary results, this project is still running, and we are collecting and analyzing raw data of our corpus for a clear picture of the language dimensions under investigation. We expect though to confirm our hypothesis of eSports language as an emerging new genre characterised by overlapping interdisciplinary elements and by multimodal elements focusing not only on the entertainment dimension but also on health and inclusion dimensions thus proving to be a cohesive element within the community. Furthermore, a comparison between the most statistically relevant features of eSports commentaries to the findings related to traditional sports (football) commentaries will be necessary for a more exhaustive analysis (Callies, Levin, 2021; Meier, 2021; Lewandowski, 2012, 2017).

A New Approach to Understanding Crisis Communication in Sport: A News Media Analysis of the European Super League Crisis

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Aim and Research Questions

This paper introduces a novel framework for the analysis of crisis communications in sport, Crisis Communication for Professional Sport (CCPS), which builds on rhetorical arena theory (RAT) and emphasises the relationships between various stakeholders involved in a sports crisis. Using the European Super League (ESL) crisis as a case study, we conduct a detailed content analysis of news reporting in the UK, Spain, and Italy to understand stakeholder interactions and media framing of the crisis, as well as exploring specific features that render sport unique as an industry and thus influence crises within it.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

There are numerous crisis communication approaches and guidelines that offer crisis managers specific response strategies to minimise reputational damage through communication, the most influential being situational crisis communication theory (Coombs, 2007). However, these theories lack contextual nuance and have limited applicability to unique industries like sport. Crises are common in sport, yet sport crisis communication research remains fragmented and largely focused on athlete reputational crises (Brown et al., 2020). Sport organisations consistently employ 'sub-optimal' strategies (Manoli, 2016) and exploit industry-specific buffers (Koerber & Zabara, 2017) shielding them from long-term reputational damage. Traditional models fall short in accounting for influential stakeholder relationships, most notably with fans, and the unique sport features and cultural implications that shape sport crises. To address these gaps, we use insights from RAT (Frandsen & Johansen,

2017) which provides a multivocal lens from which to analyse complex crises in the digital era.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Data from top newspapers across UK, Spain and Italy was gathered and analysed using content analysis. A sample of 169 articles (20% of the 845 total), included 72 UK, 58 Spanish and 39 Italian articles, representing a sample that was manageable for an exploratory study, nationally representative and in line with recommended newspaper sampling in social science (Lacy et al., 1995). Sampling four major newspapers per country (featuring in top 10 by circulation in 2021) appealed to a wider base of the sport consumer market and allowed for a national perspective and incorporated potentially differing opinions.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Findings showed a complex understanding of the crisis in Italy and Spain compared to the UK, whereby contrasting attributions of responsibility left several key stakeholders portrayed as both protagonists and victims. Our analysis highlighted sporting culture as an overarching influence, which was shaped by the power of the fans' voice, particularly in the UK. There was a volatile relationship between fans and owners, who failed to acknowledge established sporting values within the sport and failed to account for the differences in sporting culture between the USA and UK, notably the values of 'open' competition and meritocracy, tradition and history. The authority of owners and executives in Spain and Italy was less questioned, and more emphasis was placed on tensions between owners and UEFA, whose integrity as a regulator was questioned due to a conflict of interests with the clubs under its authority. The analysis reveals 'strategic silence' used by executives in using players and coaches as a first line of defence in the face of media scrutiny. Arguably an expected outcome, this strategy and cultural differences in stakeholder reaction do not feature in conventional mainstream theory and therefore require emphasis. Indeed, sporting culture, the strength and/or fragility of key stakeholder dynamics, are also unaccounted for. These considerations, and RAT's limitations in fully grasping a systemic sport

crisis, underscore the need for a framework like CCPS.

Conclusion, Contribution and Implication

This study provides the initial steps for the development of CCPS, the first holistic crisis communication framework tailored specifically to sport. Informed by RAT, it offers a useful starting point from which to understand key stakeholder relationships and interactions whilst incorporating sport-specific features such as sporting and regional culture. These considerations will also inform crisis management in other sectors, advocating for more dynamic, nuanced and culturally sensitive communication strategies.

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Destigmatizing Effects of the Eudaimonic Experiences Generated Using the Interdependence Frame in Media Stories about Parasports

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Aim and Research Questions

Media frames that depict parasports from an inclusive perspective can induce eudaimonic experiences and reduce stereotypes about people with disabilities (PWDs; Shiome, 2023). This frame is called the “interdependence frame” that indicate mutually beneficial relationships and understanding between people with and without disabilities (Goethals et al., 2022). This study replicates a study by Shiome (2023) in a modified form. It seeks to increase the reliability of its findings demonstrating this prosocial effect and investigate the following two research questions. First, do the interdependence frames that appear in multiple articles about athletes with disabilities (AWDs) induce eudaimonic experiences (RQ1)? Second, do the eudaimonic experiences induced by this frame positively impact the public’s attitude toward PWDs (RQ2)?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Unlike hedonic experiences, eudaimonic experiences induce appreciation, including thought-provoking experiences, and can encourage prosocial behaviors while also reducing stereotypes. However, there is a lack of research on the prosocial effects of the eudaimonic experiences induced by media stories about parasports. Bartsch et al. (2018) demonstrated that eudaimonic experiences triggered by a video clip about the Paralympics induced feelings of closeness and elevation, thereby positively impacting attitudes and behavioral intentions toward PWDs. They also demonstrated that the mediating effects of pity have a negative impact on the destigmatization of PWDs. Meanwhile, Shiome (2023) found that the use of the interdependence frame in a public relations article regarding AWDs had a positive effect on attitudes toward PWDs.

However, as this study only used one article for each experimental group, future research should use multiple articles that employ the interdependence frame to increase the reliability of their findings.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

This ongoing research project uses a web-based experiment employing a between-subjects design (text: interdependence frame vs. control) that targets Japanese participants who possess varying levels of knowledge regarding disability sports and issues. The experiment randomly shows participants three different online articles about AWDs comprising images and text. The text is manipulated based on the framing devices of the interdependence frame (Goethals et al., 2022). The images contained in the articles are identical for both the experimental and control groups. The study will measure hedonic and eudaimonic experiences (mediators; Oliver & Bartsch, 2010) and affective, cognitive, and behavioral attitudes toward PWDs (dependent variables; Findler et al., 2007) using a five-point Likert scale after exposure. After assessing the measurement model, a multigroup mean analysis will illustrate the differences across the frame conditions.

Findings and Discussion

Although data collection is still ongoing, the results will be available at the conference. They will contribute to the theoretical and practical understanding of how textual content related to disability sports can be strategically presented to elicit positive experiences. This study hypothesizes that manipulating parasports media content using the interdependence frame will lead to significant eudaimonic experiences and enhance readers’ attitudes toward PWDs. However, the stereotype reduction effect may differ according to the psychological dimensions of the individuals’ attitudes toward PWDs. Additionally, the experiment does not manipulate the visual images in the articles. The study results will promote discussion at the conference regarding why the effects differ depending on the psychological dimensions, as well as the theoretical basis for determining what kind of images attributes should be manipulated when investigating their effects.

Conclusion, Contributions, and Implications

Parasports promoters in Japan have been struggling with the question of how to portray athletes with disabilities and persuade the public of their messages. This is due to the difficulty of predicting social reactions to information about disability issues, as well as promoters' passive tendency to present information that is tailored to the current social situation and media climate. This study seeks to demonstrate the effectiveness of the operational definition of the interdependence frame by confirming the reproducibility of its effect. This will increase the predictability of effects and allow parasports promoters to more proactively disseminate content that can further promote widespread understanding of PWDs.

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Crisis Communication and Fan Discourse: Bottom-up framing in the European Sports Context

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Aim and Research Question(s)

This research aims to provide insight into the particularities of communication around athletes' mental health and how this is viewed and framed by fans. It analyzes Marlene Reusser's use of crisis communication strategies in an interview following dropping out of the 2023 World Championships time trial and the way fans framed the issue in their comments on social media. It answers the following questions. First, how do Reusser's, Team SD-Works's, and Swiss Cycling's use of Coombs' (2007) crisis communications strategies compare to the use of these strategies in non-mental health crises in sports? Second, how do social media followers respond to and engage in this communication?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Recent research has shown the positive and negative role that media can play in framing information on and perceptions of athletes' mental health (Parrott et al., 2021, p. 36). Parry et al. (2023) outlined the growing number of athletes that have garnered the attention of news outlets for acknowledging their mental health struggles. Thus far, research on media representation of athletes' well-being has taken an Anglo-American focus (cf. Perry et al., 2023; Doehler, 2023), and few papers analyze fans use of bottom-up strategies to frame the events. This paper aims to contribute to filling these two gaps.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

This research was conducted in two stages. First, Marlene Reusser's interview on Swiss TV and Radio (SRF) was analyzed taking a discourse analytic approach and applying Coomb's (2007) crisis communication strategies. These findings were then contrasted with previous research on athlete's and teams' use of crisis communication

strategies after losses (c.f. Coombs, 2022; Llewellyn, 2003; Enterline, 2010; Burk & Grimmer, 2016; Uts et al., 2021). Following this initial analysis, the extensive fan interest in Reusser's SRFSPORT-interview on Instagram and how followers used bottom-up framing (Nisbet, 2010) to contextualize and either support or condemn Reusser's actions and communication strategy is outlined. Follower engagement on SRFSPORT's Instagram channel was measured over an eight-week period, and a content analysis was applied to the follower comments (N=425) on Reusser's Interview on SRFSPORT.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The comparison between Reusser's and previous athletes' and teams' crisis communication strategies highlights the particularities of mental health in sports and how it is viewed differently from physical hurdles. Reusser applied several communication strategies typically used in response to a crisis, with exception of 'deference', which is used to praise one's competitors after a loss. Reusser and Swiss Cycling took steps to 'redefine' the situation, emphasizing the need for breaks and better season planning. They framed what could be considered a situation of blame into one from which they and others can learn.

Reusser's World Championship DNF received little to no traditional media presence beyond her interview. However, fans on Instagram showed tremendous public interest in the topic through their engagement. In the eight weeks surrounding the event, the Instagram clip of the interview on SRF Sport's Instagram channel received more likes than 97% of the other SRF Sport Instagram posts within an eight-week period, despite other significant events in the sporting world occurring within this time-frame. Additionally, the interview is the post with the second-greatest number of comments within these 8 weeks. 72 percent of the initial comments are positive. They indicate respect for her decision and characterized it as strong, honest, courageous, and the right thing to do. 20 percent of the comments were negative and characterized her action as disappointing, disrespectful, and a disgrace to Switzerland. The negative comments generated many responses defending Reusser. These comments further framed the situation by providing additional information supporting Marlen's DNF.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implications

The engagement illustrated through the content analysis of followers' comments shows considerable awareness of and respect for well-being and mental health in tandem with perseverance in sports. This research highlights the importance of considering fan perspectives in shaping future communication strategies and underscores the need for sports entities to acknowledge and address mental health concerns with sensitivity and awareness of fan sentiments.

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Spinning the Wheels of Soft Power: Western Media Framing of Formula 1 Grand Prix and Sportswashing Dynamics in Azerbaijan, China, and Saudi Arabia

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Aim and Research Questions

The concept of sportswashing has garnered significant attention from scholars in the fields of sport management and sport studies. Scholars have broadly defined sportswashing as a strategic endeavor by a nation to leverage sports as a means of diverting attention away from the less than savory aspects of the nation's internal affairs and international reputation (Boykoff, 2022; Chadwick, 2022). In recent years, Western media outlets have increasingly leveled accusations of sportswashing against countries hosting major sporting events, particularly those with namely authoritarian regimes. However, despite the growing prevalence of sportswashing narratives in media discourse, there remains a paucity of scholarly research that critically and empirically investigates the processes by which Western media construct and disseminate the meaning, causes, and dynamics of sportswashing. To address this issue, we focus on the Western media representation of the Formula 1 Grand Prix hosted in three countries including Azerbaijan, China, and Saudi Arabia. By examining media coverage of F1 events in these three sites, we seek to elucidate the implications of Western media representations for building the legitimacy and effectiveness of sportswashing while 'delegitimizing' the status and identity of countries accused of engaging in sportswashing.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

To facilitate the study, we specifically situate the media discourse of sportswashing through a geopolitics and soft power lens (Chadwick, 2022). Geopolitics provides a framework for understanding the complex interplay between

territories, politics, and power in the international arena (Flint, 2006). Central to this process is the concept of soft power (Nye, 1990; 2008)—a nation's ability to shape the preferences and behavior of others through attraction and persuasion, rather than coercion or force. In an increasingly interconnected and multipolar world, soft power has emerged as a critical resource for nations seeking to enhance their legitimacy, prestige, and influence in the international system.

As nations accused of engaging in sportswashing leverage the hosting of high-profile sporting events to enhance their soft power and legitimacy, media coverage of these events has become a key site of geopolitical contestation, where competing narratives and interpretations of national/territorial identities, political ideology, cultural status, and economic (re)development are articulated and debated. For example, scholars have recently interrogated the use of sportswashing as a nation branding and soft power tool, focusing on cases such as Qatar's hosting of the 2022 FIFA Men's World Cup and Saudi Arabia's involvement in the LIV Golf Tour (Davis et al., 2023; Ettinger, 2023). Other examples include Japan's use of the 2020 Summer Olympics for public diplomacy (Dubinsky, 2023) and Israel's hosting of the Giro d'Italia cycling race to promote territorial cohesion while concealing internal divisions (Mutter, 2021).

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

We adopt a multiple case study method (Stake, 2006) to facilitate the analysis. Using the NexisUni database, we collect English-language news articles published in Western countries between 01/01/2015 and 12/31/2023. Two rounds of search are conducted: an initial search focusing on general media coverage of the Azerbaijan (n=12,985), Chinese (n=5,418), and Saudi Arabian (n=3,378) Grand Prix, followed by a focused search of news articles discussing sportswashing in relation to each country and Formula One/Formula 1/F1, resulting in 27 articles for Azerbaijan, 110 for China, and 684 for Saudi Arabia.

In analyzing the news articles, we develop coding schemes by adhering to Entman's (1993) media framing analysis which includes four key elements that constitute a frame—

problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation. We then employ a combination of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2004). Thematic analysis allows us to identify broad patterns and meanings within the data. Qualitative content analysis is then used to systematically identify and collate the frames present in the media texts based on the coding scheme—which facilitates the reporting of frames and their prevalence within the analyzed media content.

Findings and Discussion

While still ongoing, this study should present the opportunity to identify and compare key frames present in Western news articles discussing sportswashing allegations in Azerbaijan, China, and Saudi Arabia. We anticipate that the media framing of F1 events in these countries may exhibit notable differences. While some frames may be present across all three cases, their specific focus, content, and prominence are likely to vary, reflecting the unique challenges and opportunities each nation faces in Western perceptions. Analyzing these media discourses may thus provide insights into understanding the different geopolitical relationships between each of the studied countries and the West.

Conclusion and Implications

This study contributes to the sportswashing literature by examining how Western media empirically present sportswashing to fans and spectators. Additionally, the media framing analysis expands sport media literature by elucidating Western news organizations' practices and strategies in crafting media representations that link sporting events with the host nations' geopolitical interests (Mamo et al., 2024).

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Piracy streaming: How And Why A Challenge For The Sport And Media Industry

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In recent years, piracy streaming has become a significant challenge for the media industry and sports event owners. In 2022, TV piracy accounted for 48% of all accesses to infringing sites in the EU, followed by publications (28%), films (11%), software (7%), and music (6%) (Cayella & Wajsman, 2023). When examining TV programming alone, sports comprise about three-quarters of the content delivered via streams propagated by pirates.

Within the sports genre, football was the most pirated, followed by general sports programming (networks that carry multiple sports), basketball, and motorsports (Hawley, 2019). For producers in the film and music industries, the emergence of services like Spotify, Netflix, and HBO, along with their pricing strategies, has undermined the piracy market (Stryszowski & Scorpecci, 2009). Another factor distinguishing sports from other industries is the importance of the live dimension. Viewers desire immediate access to live events as they happen (Hawley, 2019). This is so critical that they often accept reduced technical quality. However, the quality of pirated content has recently improved to the point that the difference between pirated and legal broadcasts has nearly disappeared (Wong, 2016).

Video piracy transfers profits from legal media companies to pirate operators. If prices in the legal markets are reduced, it also decreases the revenues of sports governing bodies and other content owners. A very high proportion of the costs related to sports programs are irreversible, including media rights, programming operations, and the distribution of signals to viewers. Media companies are, therefore, vulnerable if revenues are reduced. When considering the welfare economic impacts, it is also necessary to bear in mind that the marginal costs of distributing the signals to viewers are close to zero. This is because the reception of the signals is an

impure public good (Gratton & Solberg, 2007). Therefore, if the establishment of piracy operators reduces the price viewers must pay, it increases the consumer surplus. This, in turn, reduces the deadweight losses and represents a welfare economic gain (Rob & Waldfogel, 2006).

Premium channels have mainly concentrated on sports for which demand is very inelastic. For these sports, it has been more profitable to charge viewers rather than earn revenue from commercials. However, this price policy has caused significant deadweight losses. It excludes viewers who have a willingness to pay that is higher than the marginal cost of providing the programs.

This research analyzes factors that influence the demand for TV football viewers, with special attention on pirate streaming. The empirical data are from a sample of students at Norwegian universities (N = 330) and Norwegian fans of English Premier League clubs (N = 981). Separate analyses were conducted for the two samples. The data were collected through online surveys. Logistic regressions were used to compare those who had pirate streamed and those who had not. OLS regressions were used to analyze respondents' intentions to pirate stream in the future. The analyses were mainly based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). The questionnaire contained information on fan identification, attitudes, norms, and behavior towards piracy streaming, as well as opinions on subscription costs and player wages.

The findings show that 58% of the students and 74% of the members of supporter clubs had pirate-streamed football matches. Indeed, the actual figures may be even higher since 81% of the students and 89% of the supporters knew of friends/acquaintances who had done it. Those who had a favorite foreign team were more likely to stream illegally than others. Interestingly, this pattern did not apply to those who had a Norwegian favorite team. Previous research has shown that many football fans in smaller football nations identified more with teams in the big leagues than with domestic teams (Solberg et al., 2023). Those who pirate-stream were also very likely to have friends who did the same, a pattern also found in previous research (Wong, 2016).

The majority of respondents did not feel guilt from pirate streaming. This pattern applied to both samples and coincides with findings in previous research, which has shown that many individuals do not perceive piracy as a criminal act or have ethical reservations about engaging in it (Wong, 2016). Previous surveys among economics students have indicated that piracy is considered socially and ethically acceptable (Limayem et al., 1999). As much as 75% of the supporters of EPL teams pirated to save money. Additionally, many considered the expensive subscription fees justified piracy streaming. In summary, these and related attitudes indicate that it will be difficult to effectively reduce piracy streaming and the problems it causes for stakeholders that operate legally. Paradoxically, this reduces the deadweight losses caused by the price policy of the legally operating media companies.

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Equity in Sports Media: A Case Study of Swiss Olympics Instagram Coverage of the 2022 Winter Olympics and Enhancing Engagement in Non-Medal Winning Sports Federations

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Aim and Research Question(s)

This study analyzes Swiss Olympic's Instagram coverage of the 2022 Winter Olympic Games to determine how equitable it is across sports and genders and if and how interest in non-medal winning sports is generated, for example, what post types and content does Swiss Olympic use to generate interest.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

SPLISS provides a framework to understand how sports policies lead to international sporting success and aid policymakers and academics in evaluating policies (De Bosscher et al., 2015). Despite the media's role in promoting sports by bringing certain topics to the fore through agenda setting and framing, media has received little attention in SPLISS studies as much of it is not controlled by sports system policies and variation in media landscapes makes comparisons difficult.

This research draws on the assumption that in order for sports federations to develop and succeed internationally, they need to develop brand equity (c.f. Cooper & Weight, 2011), which then aids the acquisition of sponsor and new members. Social media, particularly Instagram, has become crucial for reaching all ages. It provides national governing bodies with a channel to bypass traditional gatekeepers, promote sports in line with their mission, values and goals, and it provides a comparable medium in which the promotion of sports by various national governing bodies can be contrasted to determine the success of their strategies in developing brand awareness and equity.

SPLISS illustrates that financial input in combination with throughput leads to output.

In Switzerland, the amount of funding each Swiss Olympic member federation receives is determined by a ranking system including membership numbers, previous international success and public interest. The promotion of sports in Switzerland is anchored in a Swiss Law with the aim of increasing public engagement in sport and exercise, creating a framework to promote competitive youth and elite sports, and promoting positive values of sport in society (415.0 Bundesgesetz). Moreover, Swiss Olympic aims to generate equal opportunity, use resources (social, economic, and ecological) responsibly, and include and integrate people with disabilities (Swiss Olympic, 2021).

Previous research has shown that medals won at the Olympics generate national pride leading to greater media coverage (Grabmüllerová, 2022). The goals of equity and the receipt of public funding place Swiss Olympic and its membership organizations in a different role than traditional media organizations to promote a diverse range of sports.

Previous research on the Summer Olympics (Grabmüllerová, 2022) demonstrates that Swiss Olympic's Olympic social media campaigns are not solely led by medal wins, but that a range of sports are promoted. This is an important finding that leads to the question of how non-medal winning sports can be best promoted to generate interest in their sport.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

Swiss Olympic posted 112 images, reels, and videos on Instagram during the 2022 Winter Olympics. These posts were coded for media type, pictured sport, gender, views, likes, and comments. Public funding figures were extracted from Swiss Olympic (Swiss Olympic, 2022).

Following Cooper and Weight (2011), the percentage of public funding, coverage, medals won, and engagement on Swiss Olympic's Instagram channel for each sport were calculated to determine the equity of the coverage. Second, a Spearman's rank-order correlation was performed to determine the relation between public funding, participation in the Olympics, medals won, Instagram coverage and fan engagement. Third, posts

were sorted according to engagement (e.g., likes, views and comments), content (e.g., medal wins, behind the scenes, schedule updates), and type (e.g., image, image and text, text, video or reel), and a qualitative analysis of the post type and content in relation to engagement was conducted.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The percentage of coverage received is similar to the percentage of funding and the participants in the Olympic delegation. The Spearman's rank-order results illustrate a correlation between public funding, medals won, and coverage as well as between medals won, coverage, and engagement. Alpine Skiing's coverage is boosted by medals won, but the coverage of other sports is greater than their results alone explain and correlates with funding and with participants in the delegation. Gender coverage is equitable (women N=43, 48%, men N=47, 52%) when considering 55% of the Swiss athletes at the 2022 Winter Olympics were men. However, it does not reflect the medals won as women won two-thirds of the medals won by Switzerland. The analysis of post content and type illustrates that reels providing sharing athletes' perspectives can generate just as much interest as images and texts announcing medals wins.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implications

Swiss Olympics' coverage of the 2022 Winter Olympic Games includes a wider range of sports than medal wins predict and reflects both funding and participation in the games. This method of media analysis provides an approach to monitoring public funding and coverage to ensure adequate coverage is provided to achieve brand equity and work towards Switzerland's and Swiss Olympic's sports promotion goals. Additionally, the qualitative analysis of post type, content and engagement provides a potential model for federations with limited resources and less international success to more effectively generate engagement and public interest on their social media accounts.

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Beyond the Broadcast: Understanding Technology Adoption of Sport Broadcasting Technology in South Korea

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This research project aims to explore the rapidly evolving landscape of sport media and technological innovations. To explore this aim, the following research question was developed: What factors influence the adoption of TV broadcasting technology in the evolving landscape of sport media? This study investigates these factors through the lens of the Technology-Organisation-Environment (TOE) framework (Tornatzky & Fleischer, 1990).

The value of the global sport media market has experienced exponential growth in recent years, driven by globalisation and technological advancements (Westerbeek & Karg, 2022). As evidence, Olympic broadcasting rights soared from US \$88 million in 1908 to US \$3.1 billion in 2021 (IOC, 2022), and the total value of the sport media rights market surpassed US \$56 billion in 2023 (SportBusiness, 2023), making it the largest revenue stream in the sport industry.

Technological innovations play a significant role in the production, delivery and consumption of sport media (Fujak & Frawley, 2022). In particular, TV broadcasting technologies enhance sport viewing experiences in a sensory manner, which has a fundamental influence when consuming sport content (Stavros et al., 2022). These technologies include various types of camera technology, such as drones and point-of-view cameras, miniature microphones attached to players or referees, and augmented reality (AR) that enrich the experience of watching sport (Sturm, 2020).

While studies like Goebert et al. (2022) explore the fan perceptions of broadcasting technologies such as AR in sport broadcasting, a deeper understanding of the factors influencing the organisational adoption of these technologies remains necessary. This project aims to bridge this knowledge gap by

shedding light on the factors influencing technology adoption in South Korean TV sport broadcasting. The TOE framework provides a valuable lens to examine these factors of technology adoption within organisations, as it explores different contexts, which are technological, organisational, and environmental (Baker, 2012).

TV sport broadcasting in South Korea serves as the research context due to its reputation for rapid technological advancements and a culture of innovation specifically within the domain of TV sport broadcasting. Examples include early adoption of new camera technologies, advanced graphic integration and data visualisation. This study utilises a qualitative design built on the researchers' relativist ontology and subjectivist epistemology. As this study requires an in-depth understanding of drivers and barriers to technology adoption from diverse organisational stakeholders, data collection is ongoing, with ten semi-structured interviews conducted across sport organisations, media organisations, and technology companies operating in South Korea. Thematic analysis using NVivo software will be employed to analyse the collected data. The TOE framework will guide the thematic analysis to explore various factors related to technology adoption at the organisational level.

Interviews with key stakeholders across sport organisations, media companies, and technology providers revealed a complex interplay of technological, organisational, and environmental factors. Preliminary findings suggest that technological factors such as compatibility, configurability/customisation, perceived ease of use, perceived advantages and risk concerns are crucial. Participants emphasised seamless integration with existing infrastructure (compatibility) and offering customisation options to tailor the experience (configurability & customisation). Ease of use and the perceived benefits for viewers and broadcasters were also highlighted. However, concerns regarding technical complexity and potential workflow disruptions (risk concerns) were expressed.

Organisational factors including attitude toward technology, organisational readiness for change, and top management support were significant influences. Positive attitudes towards innovation and a culture embracing new technologies were seen as facilitators.

However, lacking internal resources, skills, or training (organisational readiness) could hinder adoption. Strong support from top management was identified as crucial for driving continuous investment and overcoming internal resistance.

Regarding environmental factors, participants highlighted the need to consider the unique characteristics of different sports when evaluating technology suitability (nature of sports). Furthermore, the changing landscape of TV sport broadcasting, with trends like the use of specific images, storytelling narratives, and datafication, influenced adoption decisions (nature of sport broadcasting). External pressures such as competition, customer demands, and vendor quality also played a role. The COVID-19 pandemic was mentioned to have shaped some organisations' technology adoption for remote production workflows.

This study investigates the factors influencing technology adoption in South Korean TV sport broadcasting through the lens of the TOE framework. The findings contribute to the extension of the TOE framework and offer valuable insights for stakeholders navigating technology adoption in sport media. Theoretically, this research is expected to extend the TOE framework by highlighting the unique considerations relevant to the adoption of broadcasting technologies in TV sport. The unique factors specific to the convergence of TV broadcasting and sporting events include the need for real-time integration with on-field events and the influence of evolving broadcasting trends on technology choices. Practically, stakeholders also can make informed decisions to enhance the viewing experience for fans, cater to evolving broadcast trends, and remain competitive in the fast-paced and dynamic sport broadcasting landscape.

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Conceptualising And Testing A Service Quality Measurement Model For Sport Broadcasting Via New Media

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Research Aim

This ongoing study aims to develop a measurement scale for evaluating service quality of sport broadcasting via new media ('SBVNM' in short hereafter) in China. The term 'new media' refers to "any digital media production that is both interactive and digitally distributed" (Santomier & Shuart, 2008, p. 87). SBVNM has been popular in China, with 345 million users in 2023 (China Internet Network Information Center, 2024). However, one of the issues in the market is the lack of high service quality by providers. Furthermore, there are no comprehensive instruments to assess SBVNM service performances, and this hinders service providers' efforts to identify areas of improvement and enhance customer satisfaction.

Since Parasuraman et al. (1988) conceptualised service quality and developed a measurement model for assessing it, many studies have attempted to critically adapt the model to various specific service sectors. In the sport field, scale development of service quality has focused on participant sport or spectator sport. In the new media era, extant studies have paid attention to service quality of websites and/or online shopping. Limited consideration has been given to service quality of SBVNM, indicating a research gap in service quality measurements between SBVNM and other services. Considering the practical importance and issues of SBVNM and the research gap, it is necessary to establish a service quality measurement tool for SBVNM.

Literature Review

Considering the characteristics of SBVNM comparing with other industries and reviewing past relevant studies, a specific measurement scale is conceptualised. The

scale includes five dimensions (i.e., competition, programme transmission, commentator, interface, inter-user interaction).

Firstly, competition is specified as a dimension since competition is a core component of SBVNM. The dimension measures the overall quality of competitions that a platform has the rights to broadcast. While rooted in spectator sport literature (e.g., Biscaia et al., 2023), SBVNM platforms differ from traditional providers. They typically have various sport categories and events, requiring the acquisition of broadcast rights before offering them to users who seek specific competitions to watch. It is thus important to ensure that competitions are of good quality.

Secondly, transmission-related factors have been considered for quality assessment in e-services (e.g., Guo, 2022). Sport broadcasting's perishability and liveness characteristics (Hutchins et al., 2019) make transmission even more important than in general e-services. Therefore, programme transmission, which refers to the visual and audio presentation of a programme, is proposed as another dimension.

Thirdly, commentator, the individual(s) who narrate and analyse competition progress within a programme, significantly contributes to SBVNM. Therefore, commentator is proposed as a dimension, drawing on insights from other industries where personnel largely form customers' service perception (e.g., Ko & Pastore, 2005). However, the unique role of commentators in SBVNM requires the development of own measures.

Fourthly, interface, where users mainly interact with a platform, serves as an important component of SBVNM. This is aligned with various e-service studies (e.g., Loiacono et al., 2002). In this study, interface quality mainly involves the extent to which a platform interface is efficient and easy to use.

Lastly, the importance of interactions among customers has been highlighted in other industries, such as spectator sport (e.g., Biscaia et al., 2023) and e-services (e.g., Hur et al., 2011). Regarding sport broadcasting, inter-user interaction is a distinct component particularly in China, as most platforms have a chat room and/or bullet screen enabling users to interact with each other.

Consequently, inter-user interaction is proposed as the final dimension, which refers to communications among users during a programme.

Research Design

A scale development procedure provided by Churchill (1979) is followed. Firstly, the domain of the SBVNM service quality and its dimensions are specified by thoroughly consulting past literature. Secondly, an initial item pool representing the conceptualised dimensions is generated, followed by content validity tests (i.e., penal of expert and q-sort analysis). Next, an online questionnaire is designed for collecting data. The research population is users who have used a Chinese new media platform for consuming sport broadcasting in the past year. A convenience sampling technique is employed. Lastly, exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis will be employed to ascertain the conceptualised factor structure and test the psychometric properties of retained measures.

Results

Results of this study are not yet available at the time of abstract submission. They are expected to be obtained by June. The proposed measurement instrument is expected to be modified and/or refined according to the results.

Conclusion and Contribution

This study attempts to conceptualise and test a service quality measurement model for SBVNM. Findings of this study will fill the research gap and provide practitioners with a useful measurement tool to identify and direct key aspects of service performances. For example, practitioners can periodically track their service quality trends and assess their service performances relative to competitors using this scale.

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Niche vs. Mainstream Sports Media Viewing: Analyzing Consumer Experiences in YouTube Sports Documentaries Through Topic Modeling and Sentiment Analysis

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Aim and Research Questions

Over-the-top (OTT) streaming platforms have moved content beyond the fixed schedules of cinemas and TV, allowing for more flexible viewing times for documentaries produced by sports leagues and broadcast networks. Sports documentaries increase interest in the exposed teams and enhance brand engagement (Frederick et al., 2019). For example, *The Last Dance* offered viewers a unique consumer experience (CE) that stimulated fandom and enhanced the intention of viewers to watch a Chicago Bulls game (Mereu, 2024). These documentaries cover diverse sports, including niche ones. Viewership services of niche sports deem a distinct platform that caters to fans seeking uniqueness and new information, compared with mainstream sports CE (Dwyer et al., 2016). While watching sports documentaries on niche sports that are difficult to access through traditional mainstream media, it is necessary to address on the process of identifying oneself with both the team and the fans through external stimulation driven by new knowledge acquisition and interaction through comments. Research comparing fans' CE with sports documentaries involving niche versus mainstream sports is limited. This study explored the overall CE of sports documentaries and identified differences between documentaries on mainstream versus niche sports. It was guided by the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1: What consumer experiences and attitudes do sports documentaries provide?

RQ2: How does the consumer experience vary between mainstream and niche sports documentaries?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

From a communications perspective, mainstream sports typically attract large fan bases and widespread media coverage, while niche sports receive limited fan support and media attention (Dwyer et al., 2011). However, niche sports are perceived as more unique and accessible, which differentiates them from mainstream sports and offers a unique CE (Mahoney et al., 2013). Notably, niche sports employ a variety of media platforms (e.g., YouTube, Netflix, and ESPN+) to deliver new information and create unique viewing experiences that are not available through traditional sports media channels. According to social identity theory, people identify with specific sports, communities, players, and teams (Robinson & Trail, 2005). Dwyer et al. (2016) suggested that niche sports are unique entities within the greater sports marketplace and, thus, may create or attract a population of fans who use this attribute to meet their own desire to be unique (i.e., enhance their social identity). Therefore, documentaries centered on niche versus mainstream sports may invoke different CE and attitudes.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

Our methodology employed a three-step exploratory approach. First, 1,247 sports documentary-related videos were extracted from YouTube. YouTube is the largest and most comprehensive video platform. It enables sharing of CE through comments, unlike other OTT platforms (e.g., Netflix, ESPN+, and Prime Video), and it provides free access without a subscription fee. Second, topic modeling, including analyses of word frequency, Bigram networks, and term frequency-inverse document frequency, was used to explore the CE discussed in YouTube comments. Third, consumers' attitudes toward sports documentaries and the relationship between CE and attitude were analyzed using sentiment analysis tools such as VADER word sentiment, NRC emotion lexicon, and AFIN. All data analyses were conducted using R (version 4.4.0) in RStudio (version 1.4.1106) and Python (version 3.12.2).

Results/Findings and Discussion

We employed the official YouTube application programming interface to extract videos based

on seven keywords. Subsequently, videos were filtered according to five exclusion criteria—non-English videos, live streams, videos with disabled comments sections, videos with fewer than 40,000 views, and duplicate videos—yielding a final dataset of 333 videos. Among the 36 sports identified, 4 were considered mainstream (N = 158): American football, soccer (or football), basketball, and baseball. The remaining 32 (N = 175), including cycling, snooker, windsurfing, kickboxing, track, MMA, motorcycle racing, and mountain sports, were classified as niche sports. The mainstream sports videos accumulated a total of 190,695 comments (mean [M] = 1,207) and garnered 235,825,263 views (M = 1,492,565). Niche sports videos amassed a total of 225,951 comments (M = 1,291) with 220,837,617 views (M = 1,261,929). Data analysis is ongoing; the results of topic modeling and sentiment analysis and a discussion of these will be presented at the conference.

Contributions and Implications

This study will convey implications for both academics and practitioners, as OTT content interest duration is relatively short compared to other types of video content and the change cycle is rapid. We intend to provide practical data for content development by identifying which content produced a positive response. Additionally, the findings will provide knowledge on how the popularity of a sports category influences CE, as we will examine the disparities in consumption experiences between mainstream and niche sports. The discussion will provide valuable insights informing the content production strategies of video providers, content creators, and sports players and teams.

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Digital Flourishing on Sports OTT Platforms: Motivation, Engagement, and Team Identification

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Aim and Research Questions

Media consumption has been transformed by the shift from mass media to decentralized social networks, such as over-the-top (OTT) services. Spending on sports rights for OTT streaming services increased from \$5.2 USD billion in 2021 to \$8.5 USD billion in 2022 (Stoll, 2023). Given the growing demand for OTT sports services, it is essential to understand users' growing demand for OTT sports services, and the viewing patterns that elicit positive psychological rewards, such as flourishing. Janicke-Bowles et al. (2023) first defined digital flourishing as a person's favorable view of experiences during digital interactions. Digital flourishing can be improved by supporting users' motivation and engagement with digital tasks during digital interactivity (Peter et al., 2018). Previous research on sports viewers' digital well-being primarily focused on television or live sports streaming, but all forms of sports spectatorship can generate positive emotions and enhance well-being (Jose et al., 2022), highlighting the need to examine other sports-related digital connectivity. Sports OTT consumption involves the exchange of sports content beyond the games, such as watching sports documentary series or sports-related entertainment programs (Xu et al., 2023). While using OTT sports services, fans feel a sense of unity and identification with their favorite teams, which offers fulfilling and valuable experiences in their lives. Nonetheless, the theoretical framework

regarding determinants and concepts of digital flourishing in sports is underdeveloped. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship among sports OTT motives, engagement with OTT interfaces, and digital flourishing. Additionally, this study seeks to understand the moderating effects of team identification on the aforementioned relationships based on the following research questions (RQs):

RQ1: How does engagement mediate the relationship between OTT usage motivation and sports viewers' digital flourishing?

RQ2: How do the structural relationships of the theoretical model differ according to whether team identification levels are low or high?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The Motivation, Engagement, and Thriving in User Experience (METUX) model is premised on self-determination theory (SDT). SDT posits that flourishing, a holistic indicator of well-being, occurs when fundamental needs are met. According to the METUX model, the selection of digital services is linked to user experience through interfaces, suggesting that tasks and behaviors displayed during these interactions affect individuals' well-being. Digital users autonomously undertake various tasks, leading to the learning and mastery of digital interfaces. Users' social interactions affect their motives and enhance their engagement and well-being (Peters et al., 2018). Fulfilling certain motives regarding sports OTT may reinforce online engagement (Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018). Engagement positively impacts sports fans' flourishing (Yoshida et al., 2024). Prior studies only addressed the physical presence of games or the generic motives of sports OTT content, neglecting the role of sport-related psychological components (e.g., team identification) through sports OTT viewership. Team identification refers to how closely an individual is connected to a sports team and helps determine the significance of choosing sports content as a mindful activity that becomes integral to a fan's life (Yoshida et al., 2024). This study aims to fill the research gap by reflecting extended sets of sports OTT viewership and investigating a comprehensive set of psychological rewards.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

The survey will be distributed through the Prolific website, with an expected 500 panel participants. The survey tool will be the Sport OTT Motive Scale, which will measure sports content motives, emotional motives, and functional motives as second-order factors. Sports engagement will include emotional connectedness, time spent, and time subscribed, while digital flourishing will be assessed using eight items. We will employ Kline's (2016) two-step approach to analyzing a hybrid model whereas a multigroup confirmatory factor analysis will be conducted based on degree of team identification. After checking the measurement model, we will conduct multiple-group structural equation modeling analysis to compare the path coefficients across low and high team identification groups.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The study aims to explore several key aspects: (a) the mediating role of engagement between OTT usage motivation and viewers' flourishing and (b) the moderating effect of team identification on these relationships. This research is underway, with data collection and analysis scheduled for May and June 2024.

Contributions and Implications

The study results will contribute to the literature on sports media consumption by empirically examining the impacts of OTT usage motivation on viewers' psychological rewards. First, the findings are expected to enhance understanding of how sports media consumption via OTT services impacts viewers' well-being and the mediating effect of engagement. Second, the findings regarding the moderating effects of existing consumer team identification are expected to provide critical insights for OTT service providers. By understanding how team identification level influences viewer experience, practitioners can more effectively tailor their recommendation systems to match viewer preferences, providing content that enhances the latter's overall satisfaction.

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Changing Careers For High-level Athletes: Gender-differentiated Media Coverage?

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The aim of this communication is to examine the media coverage of former French top-level athletes, with a focus on gender as part of a doctoral thesis. Several hypotheses structure this work, such as a greater media interest in the professional retraining of top-level athletes in the context of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, an under-mediatisation of women compared to men, and the use of a gender-specific lexical field.

The status of high-level athlete was created in 1982 and represents sporting excellence. A list of athletes is drawn up, divided into four categories: “Relève”, “Senior”, “Elite” or “Reconversion”. Each year, between 6,000 and 7,000 people from 71 federations are included. Among the athletes on this ministerial list, 31% are women. The phenomenon of professional reconversion of high-level athletes is the subject of emerging research. Researchers are investigating various mechanisms, such as the impact of the reasons for ending a sporting career, and the career paths of former top-level athletes (Coakley, 1983; Guiot & Ohl, 2007). However, indicators to measure the professional reconversion of former top-level athletes are almost non-existent, leading to a lack of clarity around this concept. The media have picked up on this issue, rarely qualifying their comments by mentioning successful reconversions or obvious failures (Fleuriel & Schotté, 2011). It therefore seems interesting to analyse the media coverage of the reconversion of top-level athletes. Research on press reviews often makes comparisons according to the gender of high-level athletes. In addition to the under media coverage of women compared to men, one study shows that women's media coverage seems to be conditioned by their sporting success (Lemieux, 2002). This quantitative aspect can be complemented by qualitative aspects concerning the vocabulary adopted by journalists in their articles. According to Brocard (2000), press articles about sportswomen always focus on femininity and aesthetics. On the contrary, Montañola (2011) shows in her study that both genders are the subject of comments on their physical

appearance. In our analyses, we also focused on gender to identify any differences in media coverage.

To answer the questions posed, we created a corpus of print media through Europresse, using a combination of key terms, such as «professional retraining», «high-level sportsmen» and «high-level sportswoman». A first reading made it possible to exclude articles that weren't related to the chosen topic. The research is based on a corpus of 510 press articles written between 1 January 2017, the year in which the 2024 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games were announced in Paris, and 31 December 2023. We used an analysis grid to highlight information such as the gender of the journalist and the gender of the former top athlete. Using this analysis grid gave us a good knowledge of the corpus. In addition, we used Prospéro©, a software that allows us to analyse textual data.

The first results highlight several trends. Journalists very often use a specific vocabulary to describe the career paths of former top-level athletes. For example, 40% of the articles use a valorising vocabulary to describe the reconversions of top-level athletes. However, when we focus on gender, we observe a slight contrast. Beyond the under-mediatization of former top-level sportswomen in the corpus - they represent 25% of the articles - we find that journalists are less likely to use a valorising vocabulary when dealing with the reconversion of women (34%) than when dealing with that of men (45%). On the contrary, articles dealing with women's transitions are more likely to highlight the difficulties faced by women (20%) than those dealing with men's transitions (6%).

Vocabulary related to the physical and aesthetic aspects of elite athletes, which is often present in press articles about their sporting careers, is practically absent from our press corpus. Therefore, when writing about the performance of elite athletes, we can assume that journalists are more interested in these aspects.

Research on the career transition of top-level athletes has paid little attention to the media coverage of this phenomenon. This research not only reveals a difference in the media coverage of top-level athletes undergoing

professional retraining, but also provides an insight into the specifics of the media treatment of such a research subject. This paper is an opportunity not only to present an original work, but also to confirm or refute other hypotheses that have been raised.

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Beyond Women Climbing in Skirts: Media Framing of Cholita Mountaineers

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We examine the media coverage of the “Cholitas escaladoras,” indigenous women mountaineers in the Bolivian Andes. Historically, sport in general (Cahn, 2015) and especially mountain sports have been male-dominated domains (Pomfret & Doran, 2015; Tulle, 2022). This hypermasculine culture in mountaineering associated with hegemonic notions of masculinity (Pomfret & Doran, 2015) has made it challenging for women to establish their legitimate presence (Tulle, 2022). Media coverage often mis- and under-represents women athletes (Cahn, 2015), which may contribute to this phenomenon (Tulle, 2022).

In 2015, indigenous Bolivian women received international media attention for scaling the Andes. At first glance, much of the media coverage focused on women wearing traditional dresses. In 2019, Murciego and Iraburu wrote and directed the documentary *Cholitas*, which was shown on Netflix, among other outlets. Given the media’s ability to influence perceptions (Entman, 1993), our study is guided by this research question, “How did the writers and producers of the documentary *Cholitas* (Murciego & Iraburu, 2019) framed the ‘Cholitas escaladoras,’ indigenous women mountaineers in the Bolivian Andes?”

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The investigation into the phenomenon of indigenous women mountaineers in the Bolivian Andes intersects with critical dimensions of gender, ethnicity, politics, and social class. Similar work has been done by Haynes (2020), who conducted ethnographic research on Cholitas Luchadoras, female Bolivian wrestlers, including their cultural representations. Haynes examined how these women navigate and challenge societal norms and ethnic stereotypes through their participation in a traditionally male-

dominated sport. The current study builds on this foundation.

The women in this study are commonly referred to as cholitas. They are indigenous Aymara women in Bolivia. Historically, these women have faced social ostracization and systematic marginalization and their career opportunities were severely limited (Weismantel, 2001). Under the country’s first president with indigenous background, Evo Morales, indigenous people made progress in Bolivia, but their struggle continues (Haynes, 2020). The cholitas’ traditional outfits are integral expressions of their identity (Rak, 2021), particularly in the realm of physical activity and sport. The analysis of the documentary *Cholitas* (Murciego & Iraburu, 2019) contributes to a growing body of work on sport documentaries, which have gained significant influence on the public imagination (Malitsky, 2014).

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

Our analysis is informed by Entman’s framing theory (1993). How information is presented—or “framed”—can significantly influence how audiences perceive and interpret mediated representations. Thus, members of the media have the power to set agendas and shape public discourse by selectively highlighting specific elements within their narratives. Applied to the examination of *Cholitas* (Murciego & Iraburu, 2019), we examine decisions and choices made by the film’s writers and directors, including (a) selection and salience, (b) problem definition, (c) moral evaluation, and (d) treatment recommendation (Entman, 1993). Additionally, we will employ feminist critical discourse analysis to examine how the documentary challenges hierarchically gendered social orders (Lazar, 2007), by analyzing the language and actions captured in the film.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Although our analysis is still in progress, preliminary findings reveal perceptions that challenge the traditional gender roles of cholita women. This can be seen by their nuanced interpretations of the word cholita, and the complex meaning behind the “muller de polleras” (women in/of skirts). The preliminary findings are grouped into three

themes: (a) cholita's intersected identities, (b) gendered social orders, and (c) the mountain sport as a tool for creating social change. Analyzing limited spectatorship reviews that were available, critiques are divided between empowering and inspiring while at the same time critically addressing the patriarchal relationship of cholitas with their guides, showing a sense of dependence. Additional analysis addresses the film's international impact in mountain tourism, offering a free advertisement of Aconcagua (Argentina), despite the Bolivian origin of the protagonists. According to Cineuropa.org the film received several awards, like the Diable D'Or prize by the Swiss Alpine Club in the International Film Festival Alpin des Diablerets, the Alpine Club Award at the Cervino Cine Mountain Film Festival, and the Judge's Prize of the Bilbao Mendi Film Festival.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The findings of this study will inform sport management scholars and practitioners about how media (e.g., sport documentaries) might shape audience perceptions of women and indigenous people regarding gender, ethnicity, social class, and politics. This can lead to more informed decisions about the construction of media coverage and policy decisions. Positive media portrayals of cholita climbers can challenge stereotypes, promote cultural diversity, and empower marginalized communities. However, to avoid reinforcing exoticism, it is important to highlight the climbers' skills, achievements, and personal stories to promote a more inclusive and equitable narrative.

Discriminatory Online Abuse in Women's Sport: A Longitudinal Examination

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Aim and Research Questions

Online abuse is a prevalent issue in sport, impacting stakeholders globally across sports, leagues, and international events (Burch et al., 2023; Kearns et al., 2023; Signify, 2021). Women's sport has grown exponentially in recent years with valuation estimated to reach more than £1 billion in 2024 (Kavanagh & Perry, 2024). The increased awareness and visibility, coupled with utilisation of social media for commercial purposes can simultaneously expose female athletes to gendered forms of online abuse.

While online abuse research is expanding, Kearns et al. (2023) noted an emphasis on men's sport. Thus, this study explored online abuse of female athletes from a longitudinal perspective to understand changes in online abuse coinciding with the increasing prominence of women's sport. The following research aims were developed to guide this project:

1. Identify the types of online abuse directed at female athletes.
2. Investigate similarities and differences in the types of online abuse directed at female athletes.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Kilvington's (2021) virtual stages of hate was employed as the theoretical framework for this research, which outlines how anonymity, invisibility, dissociative imagination, and rapid response within online communication contribute to abuse. Kilvington notes online abuse stems from 'trigger events,' contextualised as reactive, emotional outbursts that result in stereotypical, prejudiced, and derogatory content within sport.

Research has documented the disproportionate levels of gender discrimination and online abuse experienced by women online. One study by World Athletics found 70% of athletes who experienced abuse were female (Signify, 2021), while FIFPRO uncovered women's elite football players received sexist and homophobic abuse 90% of the time. Further, a recent study by FIFA found that female athletes participating in the 2023 Women's World Cup were 29% more likely to be the targets of online abuse than their male counterparts (FIFA, 2023).

Despite increased interest in women's sports and the growing instances of online abuse directed toward female athletes, there remains a lack of empirical research in this area. This study seeks to address this gap and answer the call identified by Kearns et al. (2023) through the study outlined below.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Online abuse directed toward female athletes between January 2016 and January 2024 were identified for analysis. This timeframe was selected to provide cross-sectional analysis of sports, leagues, and international events, as well as a large dataset for longitudinal analysis as outlined by Kearns et al. (2023). Cases were identified through Google keyword search (i.e., athlete, online abuse, social media) and narrowed to include English language only cases of online abuse occurring on X (formerly known as Twitter). X was selected as the platform for analysis due to API access that allowed researchers historical access to data. Once cases were identified, an X query was conducted specific to the athlete identified (i.e., first/last name, @username, until:date, since:date) to create a bounded dataset. Quantitative content analyses of posts related to each case were conducted to determine sentiment (i.e., positive, negative, or neutral), presences of online abuse (i.e., yes/no), and type of abuse (i.e., physical, sexual, emotional, discriminatory). If discriminatory abuse was present, the sub-type of abuse (i.e., gendered, racial, sexual orientation, religious, disability, nationalism, and transphobia) was coded. Qualitative thematic analysis was also conducted to understand the contextual nature of online abuse. Once coded, cases were placed in longitudinal order to identify trends.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Four cases (one from 2018, two from 2020, and one from 2022) identified during the timeframe of analysis have been fully coded, comprising 166,673 posts. Relating to the first research aim, 40.38% (n = 67,296) of posts were positive, 45.69% (n = 76,153) were neutral, and 13.93% (n = 23,224) were negative. Additionally, 4.95% (n = 8,260) of posts contained a form of discriminatory online abuse. Gendered forms of discriminatory abuse were not found (n = 3, 0.00%), however, nationalistic (n = 1,503, 18.20%) and transphobic abuse (n = 6,586, 79.73%) were found. Longitudinal analysis pertaining to the second research aim revealed the percentage of posts containing discriminatory online abuse increased in each case from 2018 (n = 2, 0.1%), to 2020 (n = 6,590, 54.9%), and in 2022 (n = 1,668, 61.5%). Three additional cases - one from 2016, two from 2024 - have been identified with coding underway.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

Preliminary findings indicate that while the overall volume of online content directed at female athletes during cases varied, the content within posts is becoming increasingly more discriminatory. This finding carries implications regarding the need for further safeguarding efforts to combat online abuse, as increased visibility for female athletes would appear to align with heightened proportions of abusive content. We are contractually obligated to our funder to complete analysis by late August and are confident we can present the full findings and implications at the EASM Conference, if accepted.

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The Self-presentation of Sportswomen on Digital Social Networks: Between Protest Positioning and Economic Stakes

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The self-presentation of sportswomen on digital social networks: between protest positioning and economic stakes

For several years now, scientific research has shown that the traditional media sideline sportswomen, especially when they don't correspond to expected standards of femininity (Creedon, 1994; Lapeyroux, 2021). Since they have the power to highlight certain sports or athletes, the traditional media provide «a legitimate definition of how one should use one's body at a given moment, in a given society» (Oboeuf, 2004, p. 24). Today, we are in the fifth feminist wave, which is developing essentially online (Breda, 2022). Women are increasingly speaking out to express their desire to combat patriarchy, particularly in sport. Digital social networks thus appear to be a way for sportswomen to bypass the system developed by traditional media by self-mediating online. In so doing, we're taking up the theory of self-presentation developed by Goffman in 1969 around the ideas of «front stage» and «back stage.» Actors, in this case sportswomen, can decide on their self-presentation, i.e. what they wish to convey to others, and choose the image they wish to give to users (Baumeister and Hutton, 1997). Faced with ever-increasing marketing challenges, this selfpresentation enables sportswomen to promote themselves, often by developing techniques linked to hypersexualization to increase interest in them (Kane, LaVoi and Fink, 2013). They become a brand (Arai, Ko & Ross, 2014). They then adopt strategies in which they navigate between «foreground» and «background» messages to give users, and therefore sponsors, what they expect (Pate, Hardin & Rühley, 2014).

Our proposal is based on an analysis of three French sportswomen who will win medals at the Olympic Games in Tokyo (2021): Clarisse Agbegnenou, judoka and double Olympic gold medallist in 2021, Cléopâtre Darleux,

goalkeeper for the French handball team and gold medallist, and Charline Picon, sailor and silver medallist. They have several things in common: they are both mothers, French, multiple Olympic or world medalists and active on digital social networks. The aim of our proposal is to categorize the choices these sportswomen make in their self-presentation on digital social networks.

Here, we have chosen to reflect on the self-presentation of sportswomen in the context of two digital social networks: X and Instagram. On the former, we've seen that sportswomen tend to give their opinions more freely, particularly on the question of women's place in sport. On X, then, we can say that they develop a «behind-the-scenes» strategy (Goffman, 1969), sometimes publishing messages that make demands. Despite a discourse that sometimes challenges male hegemony in the sporting world, on Instagram, sportswomen reuse the codes of traditional media while respecting expected gender norms. On this social medium, they respond to a particular expectation on the part of the public and sponsors, notably on the performance of their gender (Butler, 2006), materializing the construction of a reality linked to the «avant-scène» (Goffman, 1969).

Our analysis is both qualitative and quantitative. Over a period between 2020 and 2022, enabling us to see an evolution in the way we communicate before, during and after the Games, we'll be looking at the number of publications on the two social networks, as well as the number of user reactions to them. We will focus only on publications produced by sportswomen, as our study does not deal with message reception (Shannon and Weaver, 1963). From there, we will study the discourse produced by sportswomen on X. As image and text are closely linked, we have chosen to propose a joint reflection on both productions in the context of sportswomen's Instagram publications (Bardin, 1975). We're basing our analysis on a single grid for X and Instagram, with different themes: private life, claims, sponsors and sports (training and competition). This grid will give us both a quantitative and qualitative overview of the publications made by the sportswomen studied. This methodology will enable us to show the differences in proposals made by sportswomen on the two platforms, allowing us to materialize what belongs to the «front stage» and what belongs to the «back stage».

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When Sport Scandals go Beyond Sport: Media Analysis of the 2023 Rubiales Controversy

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Aim and Research Questions

In August 2023, following the FIFA Women's World Cup final, a series of contentious actions from Luis Rubiales, then president of the Spanish Football Federation, sparked a Spanish (and worldwide) media scandal which resulted in his resignation and a series of judicial proceedings in Spain for sexual assault and coercion. The aim of this research is to analyse how it unfolded from the first days of the scandal until the forced resignation. How and why did this outcome prevail, when previous allegations against Rubiales failed to affect his leadership position? Which lessons can be taken on the governance and culture within the sport sector and the nature of sports scandals in relation with larger societal dimensions?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

So far, sport management literature has predominantly analysed how scandals impact sponsorship, fandom and consumer behaviour (Wagner and Storm, 2022). Our research contributes to an emerging trend that seeks to better understand scandals in sport as social and cultural phenomena per se, and their "institutionalising power" (de Blic and Lemieux, 2005) in particular. To do so, we combine several theoretical lenses. The first one is pragmatic sociology, which interprets scandals as social dramas that "tests" (de Blic and Lemieux, 2005) social groups and seeks to understand the strategic actions from stakeholders within their socio-cultural and moral context (de Blic and Lemieux, 2005). We also draw from a processual analytical tradition, which focuses on the stakeholders' perceptions and inter-connections leading to the scandal break-out and evolution (Bayle and Rayner, 2018).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Print media remains relevant in terms of coverage and constitutes a reference for the

definition of sport scandals and crises (Osborne, Sherry and Nicholson, 2016). We therefore analysed a data set of media collated over a five-month period (August 2023-January 2024), covering the leading Spanish daily newspaper and sporting news paper (El País and Marca). For the international coverage, archives of The Guardian (World Edition, online) and Le Monde (both print and online) were also included. The first phase of study analyzed the broad body of data to reconstitute the chain of events. Then, a thematic analysis was conducted independently by two researchers to determine the key factors that contributed to the unfolding and the repercussions of the scandal. A processual analytical model was followed, under the model of the FIFAGate analysis conducted by Bayle and Rayner (2018). The researchers used an iterative process whereby items were discussed until consensus was reached.

Results/Findings and Discussion

According to the preliminary results, three factors played a leading role in the development of the scandal. The first one is the contrast between a multi-sectoral mobilisation against Rubiales and the strategy of aggressive denial opted by Rubiales and his allies. This contrast culminated around the extraordinary RFEF General Assembly held on Friday 25th, 2023, during which Rubiales unexpectedly refused to step down and therefore triggered a backlash against him. The second factor is the Spanish socio-cultural and political context and the multi-layered debates surrounding the defence of women's rights and their protection from violence, harassment and discrimination. Third, the international dimension of the scandal served as a catalyst and exacerbated the pressure on the stakeholders.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The worldwide mobilisation around the Rubiales scandal suggests that a form of international collective conscience, with common representations and values, exists around international sport and heightens the sensitivity of such types of scandals. This interconnection between this transnational public space and the national context constitute a specific dimension of scandals around major sport events. Likewise,

particularities linked to sport governance and autonomy should also be taken into account to understand stakeholders strategies and the value conflicts at play (Garcia, 2024).

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Beyond Viewing: Exploring Individual Motivations and Attitudinal Responses to Women's Sport on Social Media

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Aim and Research Questions

Women's sport is experiencing a surge in popularity, evident in the rising viewership and attendance across various leagues and events (Allison & Pope, 2021; Callahan, 2024; Tang et al., 2022). This growth is particularly notable in the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA), the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), the National Women's Soccer League, and the Women's World Cup and the U.S. Open (Forbes, 2024; Nielsen, 2023). Boosted by a threefold rise in media coverage, women's sport has seen substantial increases in viewership. Metrics like ticket prices and social media engagement have also surged (Darvin, 2024b; Sports Business Journal, 2023). College women's basketball exemplifies this trend, with ABC and ESPN recently drawing a staggering 18.9 million viewers – double the 9.9 million viewers who tuned in for the 2023 final between LSU and Iowa, featuring stars like Angel Reese and Caitlin Clark (Callahan, 2024).

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

At the heart of sustaining the growth trajectory and maximizing the multifaceted benefits of women's sport, understanding the motivations of individuals to consume women's sport is crucial (Funk et al., 2002; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995). Motivation is conceptualized as an activated state within a person, consisting of drive, urges, wishes, and desires that lead to goal-directed behavior (Mowen & Minor, 1998). Trail and James (2001) developed one of the most widely used motivation scales for sport consumers (MSSC). They argued that spectator motivation arises from perspectives of psychological and social need fulfillment, encompassing motivational factors such as aesthetics, drama, escape, vicarious achievement, knowledge, physical skill, and social interaction. Several scholars

have adopted the MSSC to examine the motivations of fans and consumers in various contexts, including women's sport (Clarke et al., 2024; Ridinger & James, 2002).

While some motivations likely overlap between male and female sport fans, research suggests that fans of women's sport also exhibit distinct experiences. In a survey of fans attending the 1999 Women's World Cup (Funk et al., 2001), several factors emerged that had not been identified in previous work on fan motives. These included role models, support for women's opportunities, entertainment value, and wholesome environment. Two decades later, Allison and Pope (2021) examined U.S. and England national team fans during the 2019 Women's World Cup. They found social connection, gender equality, entertainment, a welcoming fan community, and athletic success as key drivers of fandom. Delia (2020) emphasized affordability, social influence, and support for gender equality as key motivations for women's sport fans. Supporting this notion, scholars suggest that social awareness, social connection, access to the game, and a desire to support broader social causes appear to be more prevalent among women's sport fans (Clarke et al., 2024; Delia, 2019).

In addition to differing motivational factors for consuming men's and women's sport, the evolving complexity of the interconnected sport ecosystem (Kunkel & Funk, 2024) may shape individual preferences for women's sport consumption. Trail (2019) asserts that external, internal organizational, and customer environments influence sport consumption. External motivators such as social influence and accessibility are evolving in today's sport landscape (Kim & Kim, 2021). Conversely, financial barriers and time constraints can affect women's sport consumption (Funk et al., 2009).

Methodology

Drawing upon the Uses and Gratifications theory (Katz et al., 1973) and previous literature on consumer behavior in sport, this study aims to explore the motivations driving viewers to consume women's sport content on social media. We used purposeful sampling to collect user-generated content on women's sport from top global media platforms between April 2023 and April 2024. Utilizing the YouTube API (Version-3), we gathered 229

game videos from the 2023 WNBA season, 63 highlights of the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup from Fox Soccer, 324 game videos of the 2024 NCAA Women's Basketball Tournament from ESPN, 118 highlights of the 2024 NCAA Women's Tournament, and 56 videos of NCAA women's basketball regular season games. These videos amassed 90,089,545 views, 1,114,574 likes, and 159,942 comments. A multi-method approach employing Latent Dirichlet Allocation, thematic analysis, and negative binomial regression is used to analyze the data.

Results/Findings and Discussion

While this project remains ongoing, initial findings have identified nine motivational factors, which we have grouped into six main themes. The most prominent theme, comprising 41.9% of the content, centers on supporting players and teams. Game strategies and analysis, including referee decisions, account for 21%. Social identity is addressed in 12.8% of the content. Advocacy for women's issues such as media bias and pay gaps makes up 12% of the content, and social commentary on diversity and equality contributes 10%. The remaining 3% falls under other categories. These motivational factors and their association with affective and behavioral responses of viewers who consume women's sport content on social media will be discussed in this presentation.

Strategy, Leadership, and Stakeholder Management in Sport

Track chair: Géraldine Zeimers

Actions for Enhancing Young Leadership Programs in Norwegian Sports: Boosting Youth Involvement and Leadership Capacities

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Introduction

This research aims to uncover actions for enhancing Young Leadership Programs in Norwegian sports to boost youth involvement and leadership capacities. It critically asks, «How can these programs be improved to further promote youth engagement and leadership?»

Theoretical background and Literature review

The investigation is rooted in the theories of youth leadership development and participation in sports. Prior studies underline the pivotal role of youth leadership initiatives in fostering community involvement, increasing self-efficacy, and instilling a sense of belonging (Gould & Carson, 2008; Holt et al., 2017). Research also denotes the challenges young leaders face in adapting to established power structures within sports organizations, their limited influence on decision-making processes and the potential for them to enact leadership (Bodemar, 2023; Bodemar & Skille, 2024).

Despite these insights, there is a need to understand how these programs can be better tailored to augment youth engagement and leadership. Leadership development is often criticized for its lack of clear objectives, evaluation plans, and a tendency towards a «one-size-fits-all» approach (Fatien Diochon & Nizet, 2019). Experts recommend a dual-focus approach that emphasizes individual development and the cultivation of a collective growth mindset (Day et al., 2021). This study thus emphasizes the importance of a continuous, reflective process in leadership development programs.

Methods

The research adopted a comprehensive review approach, examining the current state of Youth Leadership Courses in sports in Norway, their strengths, and areas for improvement. Data was collected through an extensive review of course materials, participant feedback, and key stakeholder insights. The research design used was qualitative. Data was gathered from a survey of 51 young leaders and semi-structured interviews with 20 young leaders, aged 16 to 27, in various sports organizations. The main part of the young leaders had previously participated in the Young Leadership Program. All interviews were transcribed word-for-word and analysed using a six-step process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006).

Findings

Participants generally report positive experiences from youth leadership courses, appreciating the social aspects, networking opportunities, and informative components. Few negative experiences were reported, and those mentioned were minor compared to the positive outcomes. The course content, encompassing leadership, organization, planning, presentation techniques, and collaboration, was well-received. Action plans executed in their sports clubs were deemed meaningful by all participants, suggesting a positive impact on their personal and professional development. The course's relevance extended beyond sports leadership, emphasizing general management and communication skills. However, experiences varied regarding post-course follow-up, with some receiving extensive support while others experienced limited follow-up. Course administrators reported local, shorter versions of the Youth Leadership Courses, which were less resource-intensive but equally well-received.

Based on these findings, seven key optimizing strategies are proposed: promoting multiple participants from the same sport club, clarifying expectations pre-course, emphasizing youth contributions, developing specialized courses, implementing cost-effective measures, creating a course progression system, and designating follow-up contacts.

Conclusion and Implication

The study concludes that the proposed measures could significantly improve the quality of Youth Leadership Courses, fostering the development of competent young leaders in sports. The findings offer valuable insights for course organizers, sports clubs, and policymakers in designing and implementing youth leadership programs in sports.

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How Can Sport Employees Create Their Own Happiness? Examining Sport Employee Well-being Within Institutional Labor Dynamics

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Aim and Research Questions

This study aims to unpack the complexities of human dynamics in sport organizations by examining psychological well-being (PWB) through the lens of institutional theory, particularly the disruption element of institutional work. We seek to better understand how sport employees' PWB can be influenced by changing institutionalized labor dynamics (i.e., routinized working conditions) within sport organizations. Specifically, we aim to explore how current institutional dynamics are further disrupted through concerted action by employees. The study's research question is: how have the institutional labor dynamics in sport organizations been and continue to be disrupted?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

We examined the PWB of full-time sport employees working in the American intercollegiate sport system. PWB is an individual's subjective perception of their ability to realize their highest potential (Culbertson et al., 2010). Essentially, PWB is a measure of individual's psychological functioning and is comprised of self-acceptance, positive relationships, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose, and personal growth (Ryff, 1989). Sport scholars have used this paradigm to evaluate the influence of psychological capital (Kim et al., 2019) and job design (Schuetz et al., in press) on PWB.

We also utilized the disruption form of institutional work, which “involves attacking

or undermining the mechanism that lead members to comply with institutions” (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006, p. 235). We used institutional disruption to examine how the current structure of the institutionalized labor dynamics of sport organizations has been disturbed or changed by institutional actors (i.e., sport employees). Institutional work has been used to better understand concerted action in sport organizations (e.g., Nite, 2017; Nite et al., 2019) but specific studies on institutional disruption remain limited.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

We used qualitative methods based in Heidegger’s hermeneutic phenomenology (Laverty, 2003; van Manen, 1990) to co-construct meaning with the use of semi-structured interviews with 13 participants (van Manen, 1990). Our participants worked full-time for separate American intercollegiate sport organizations in a variety of capacities (e.g., fundraising, marketing, compliance, event management). Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012) was used to analyze the data. Our process included multiple readings of the data, grouping the data into codes, building initial themes, critiquing and revising those themes to produce final themes, defining and naming the themes, and producing the final report.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The first theme, “some have it better,” details how some settings were more amendable to changing practices that influenced employee well-being. Participants in organizations with greater labor resources were able to enable a transition to a more worker-friendly environment because these organizations had marginal but sufficient labor surpluses that could be leveraged to ease the burden on employees and thus support their well-being. However, those in organizations with fewer resources had less success in disrupting work arrangements that hinder worker well-being as these organizations had less flexibility to alter their labor dynamics due to fewer human and financial resources.

The second theme, “purposeful actions to support oneself,” detailed the strategies used by employees to disrupt institutionalized practices, which included focusing on their happiness, helping others, not prioritizing

work as much as they did when they first entered the industry, and transitioning to a new department or job. By recognizing that working excessive hours and prioritizing work is not likely to lead to promotions due to a scarcity of administrator jobs, participants instead prioritized their own objectives. In turn, the lack of willingness to prioritize work above personal priorities forced sport organizations to be more accommodating to their employees. Those sport organizations that have resisted these disruption strategies may be doing so in vain as the weakening labor supply and increasing sport employee autonomy, as depicted here, could result in these organizations falling behind their competition. Conversely, those organizations that are willing to adapt may realize a competitive advantage by underscoring their employees’ well-being.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

As the sport industry reconciles with the shifting global employee labor supply constraints, it has become critical to study how sport organizations will adapt to these changing circumstances. While we acknowledge that sport employees generally have arduous working conditions, we detailed how this is not a universal phenomenon, with some organizations better positioned to absorb changes that supported well-being among sport employees than others. Moreover, participants learned to cope with these circumstances and influenced the disruption of practices that minimized their well-being.

This study has significant implications given that past scholarship has noted the strength of institutionalized work arrangements in sport organizations that are not supportive of employees’ well-being. In contrast, our study describes how these structures are susceptible to disruption by detailing the actions taken by participants to improve their well-being. Instead of being held captive by existing structures as purported in past literature, participants were able to disrupt these structures by emphasizing their own well-being over the needs of their organization.

Career Self-Management and Its Impact for Sport Employees

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Aim and Research Questions

The evolution of sport industry-focused human resource management scholarship has focused primarily on both leader-member exchange concepts and the employee-organization relationships. However, there has also been increased focus on managing employees in the sport setting such a recruiting, developing and retaining them (Weight et al., 2021). These aspects represent some stages of one's employee career, an idea known as career self-management.

To that end, there has been a growing area of research on contemporary career orientations, career attitudes and career pathways (Briscoe et al., 2006; Glebova & Zare, 2023; Hirschi & Koen, 2021). This has been especially important within the sport management, as the uniqueness of the sport employee presents an avenue for further exploration (Oja et al., 2023).

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate career orientations and career attitudes, namely career satisfaction and career commitment among sport industry employees. The study focuses on the following guiding research questions:

RQ1: How do sport industry employees approach their individual respective careers?

RQ2: Does career orientation, operationalized as protean and boundaryless career, impact notions of career commitment and career satisfaction?

RQ3: What is the uniqueness of the sport employee regarding career decisions when compared to that of the general management industry?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Scholars suggest that contemporary career orientations play a specific role when it comes to career self-management (Hirschi & Koen, 2021). Career self-management suggests that employees undergo both cognitive and behavioral activities in response to various

points within the career (Cortellazzo et al., 2020). Using career-self management as a theoretical lens, this study focus is on what scholars refer to as "new" careers, including protean careers (values-driven) and boundaryless careers (working across organizational boundaries) (Briscoe et al., 2006).

Depending on one's career orientation, there are several outcomes that would be beneficial to understand from an organizational perspective, including career commitment and overall career satisfaction.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Data is presently being collected to examine the relationships among the career orientations, career satisfaction, and career commitment among sport employees in a variety of contexts (i.e., amateur, collegiate, and professional sport).

Surveys focus on protean career attitudes and boundaryless career attitudes (Briscoe et al., 2006), career satisfaction (Greenhaus et al., 1990) and career commitment (Carson & Bedeian, 1994). Data are presently being collected in the late Spring and Summer 2024, using an online survey delivered through Qualtrics.

Results/Findings and Discussion

It is expected that, similar to fields such as management and hospitality, career orientation will be positively related to career commitment. However, the uniqueness of the sport employee, especially those who are highly-identified either with a team or specific sport (Oja et al., 2023), should provide a better understanding of how various career decisions are made. Likewise, career orientations will predict perspectives of career success.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

Findings from this project should provide both individuals in the sport industry, as well as sport organizations with a better understanding of career self-management within our field. From an individual perspective, scholars have long discussed the uniqueness of the sport employee, particularly in certain fields such as intercollegiate athletics and professional sport. Due to the

perceived necessity to move from organization to organization to enhance career options, findings could provide insights into how to better manage these sport employees while they are with a specific organization.

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Psychological Safety in Sport Organizations: A Catalyst for Employee Satisfaction and Performance

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Aim and Research Questions

Contemporary competitive sport organizations have capitalized on employees' passion to merge their profession with their interest as a fans by developing a culture where they are overworked (Weight et al., 2021). Additionally, the highly rigid structures have limited employee's autonomy which has created a standard to stay within the status quo. However, this environment has negatively impacted the well-being of their employees and missed the opportunity to maximize their employee's ability to engage in creative and innovative behaviors to assist them in reaching their goals. A potential solution to enhance the satisfaction and encourage employees to act lie within in the nature that they often complete their tasks in work groups. As a result, psychological safety is a key concept that can improve the work environment in several factors (Newman et al., 2017). To improve work environment through psychological safety in competitive sport organizations, we seek to explore the following research questions: What are the effects of inclusive leadership and perceived competence on psychological safety and its effects on willingness to take risks and life satisfaction? What is the moderation effect of innovative climate on the relationship between inclusive leadership and psychological safety?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

This study highlights the role of perceived psychological safety of sport employees. It is defined as a shared belief in feeling safe to take part in interpersonal risk-tasking while in the workplace without expectations of retaliation (Edmondson, 1999). Previous research has found that psychological safety is enhanced through supportive behavior and

has a positive relationship with communication, work attitudes, team learning, and innovation (Newman et al., 2017). However, employees are hesitated to engage in interpersonal risks as it often places them in a vulnerable state which leads to them being cautious to provide their opinions or ideas (Edmondson et al., 2001). Thus far, psychological safety in the sport context has been solely explored regarding athletic sport teams.

Social learning theory and conservation of resources (COR) were implemented as a framework for this study. Social learning theory states that individuals learn in social setting by observing the behaviors and attitudes of others (Bandura, 1977). As individuals view supportive behaviors that are consistent with psychological safety, they will then mimic them to make their team psychologically safer. COR states that individuals attempt to gain, maintain, or protect resources (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Support in the workplace allows individuals to obtain resources through positive feedback that improves the work environment and allows individuals to reach their goals (Newman et al., 2017).

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

The target population for this study are athletic department employees of NCAA Division I institutions in the United States. A Qualtrics web-based survey link will be distributed to these employees May 2024. Once data collection is completed, the full measurement model will be tested for reliability and construct validity. Next, the research hypotheses will be examined by using structural equation modeling to compute individual standardized path coefficients among the variables. Lastly, the moderating effect of innovative climate in the relationship between inclusive leadership and psychological safety will be examined by utilizing the PROCESS model.

Results/Findings and Discussion

We anticipate the findings to support the following hypotheses: inclusive leadership will influence athletic department employee's psychological safety and this relationship will be moderated by innovative climate (H1 & H2). Athletic department employee's

perceived competence will also influence their psychological safety and will be moderated by years in the position (H3 & H4). Athletic department employees with experience psychological safety will experience higher levels of willingness to take risks at work and life satisfaction (H5 & H6). This study will also provide insight to the mechanisms that led to employees' ability to take risks at work and satisfaction through sport employees' psychological safety.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The design of this study will aid researchers in understanding factors that can lead to improving sport employees' flourishing as an individual and a workgroup. Thus far, the literature in sport management has been limited in empirically testing these elements, so this study provides insight to its mechanisms to encourage their satisfaction and behaviors. Additionally, this study provides in what ways psychological safety can be enhanced in the workplace. Practically, these findings provide leadership in sport organizations with insight into how they can prepare their managers to support their employees an environment that encourages risks.

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How Vocational Calling Affects Sport Employee Outcomes

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Aim and Research Questions

The sport industry has been characterized as a “calling” (e.g., Lu et al., 2022) where coaches and other employees make personal sacrifices due to their passion and/or sense of meaning working in sports. As such, calling is a relevant, but understudied, concept in the sport literature. Sport studies have hinted at the influence of calling on employees (e.g., Weight et al., 2021), with employers possibly exploiting their urge to continue living their calling by requiring more burnout-inducing work responsibilities. The purpose of our study is to examine the effect of multidimensional living a calling on employee outcomes in the sport industry. Specifically, we examine the relation of two living a calling constructs: (a) identification-and-fit and (b) transcendent guiding force, to global job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Additionally, we examine felt obligation as an explanatory mechanism linking these two calling constructs with employee outcomes. Felt obligation, such as a moral responsibility to serve, has theoretical connections with living-a-calling but there is limited research connecting the concepts.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

This study employs the Work as a Calling theoretical model (Duffy et al., 2018). This model has helped advance our understanding of calling but recent work (e.g., Nielsen et al., 2020) has identified empirical and theoretical gaps between constructs. The model uses a unidimensional calling concept but speaks to how further examination of multidimensionality could alter the model’s relationships. Additionally, the model establishes a theoretical relationship between (a) living a calling and (b) negative outcomes,

but the authors state that calling and negative outcomes needs further scrutiny due to a lack of empirical examination.

For this study, we define calling as, “seeking a sense of overall purpose and meaning and is used to help others or contribute to the common good, motivated by an external or internal summons” (Duffy et al., 2018, p. 426). Living a calling has shown to be strongly correlated with several positive employee benefits, meaning it’s an important characteristic for employees and employers, alike. If calling has different facets, it could mean a specific type of calling, such as identification-and-fit, could magnify the already-established benefits compared to those called by a transcendent guiding force.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

The study’s hypotheses were analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM). The sample consisted of 510 college sport employees. The participant demographics closely align the industry-wide demographics, as reported by Lapchick (2022). Calling was measured using Multidimension Calling Measure (Hagmaier & Abele, 2012), which includes (a) identification and person-environment fit and (b) transcendent guiding force. Felt obligation was measured using Eisenberger and colleagues’ (2001) Felt Obligation Scale. The two outcome variables were job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Job satisfaction was measured using the Global Job Satisfaction Scale (Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000). Turnover intentions were measured using Chatman’s (1991) Turnover Intentions Scale. All scales have been used in previously published studies. We ran structural equation models to assess the relationship between the concepts. We used maximum likelihood estimation and MPlus version 8.8.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The model fit the data (CFI = .95, TLI = .93, RMSEA = .07). For hypothesis 1, identification-and-fit calling was significantly related to global job satisfaction ($p < .001$). In addition, transcendent guiding force was not significantly related to global job satisfaction ($p = .16$). With respect to hypothesis two, identification-and-fit calling was significantly and negatively related to turnover intentions

($p < .001$). Contrary to our hypothesis, transcendent guiding force was not significantly related to turnover intentions ($p = .42$). When examining hypothesis three, identification-and-fit calling was significantly and positively related to felt obligation ($p < .001$). In confirmation of hypothesis four, felt obligation was positively related to global job satisfaction ($p < .001$) and negatively related to turnover intentions ($p < .001$). Additionally, there were two significant indirect effects. From identification-and-fit calling to global job satisfaction through felt obligation had a significant total effect ($p < .001$) and indirect effect ($p < .001$), while identification-and-fit calling to turnover intentions through felt obligation had a significant total effect ($p < .001$) and indirect effect ($p < .001$), therefore confirming hypotheses five and six.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

Our findings provide evidence of different living a calling forms. It also provides evidence that specific forms of living a calling can have a stronger relationship with employee outcomes than others. Additionally, results show that higher identification-and-fit calling will help reduce employee turnover intentions, but this benefits doesn’t exist with higher transcendent guiding force calling. This result could imply that transcendent guiding force calling is not deterring the employee from seeking out a different employer. Lastly, our findings provide evidence on the importance of moral obligation within the greater calling framework.

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The Mediating Effects of Organizational Citizenship Behaviors in Sport between Team Cohesion and Team Effectiveness

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Aim

The primary objectives of this research were to (a) validate the new OCB scale in an Asian context by evaluating its criterion and concurrent validity and reliability and (b) examine the mediating relationships between team cohesion and team effectiveness through OCB in sport. This study also compared the proposed relationships between Korea and Hong Kong, as student-athletes' perceptions and attitudes toward their athletic participation and experience may differ based on unique structures and cultural factors in the two countries.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) are characterized as discretionary individual actions that are not explicitly acknowledged by a formal reward system of an organization but collectively enhance organizational functionality (Organ, 1988). Such voluntary behaviors can be widely observed in the context of sport and have potential influence on team dynamics, performance outcomes, and organizational effectiveness (Aoyagi et al., 2008). Due to this potential influence of OCB in sport, there is a clear need for more research on the concept, including its antecedents and outcomes (Wagstaff et al., 2011). Therefore, our research team made foundational efforts to develop a new OCB scale (Kim et al., 2022) to reflect the unique nature of OCB in intercollegiate sport. The current research serves as a follow-up study intended to expand the OCB scale, initially developed in the United States, by implementing it in two Asian countries (i.e., Korea and Hong Kong) and proposing a conceptual model to analyze the potential relationships between OCB and other performance-related variables in sport.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

In the current study, data comprised survey responses from 613 college student-athletes (261 from Korea and 352 from Hong Kong, with 282 males and 331 females) across 25 sports. Validated scales for team cohesion (Carron et al., 1985), team effectiveness (Short et al., 2005), and OCB in sport (Kim et al., 2022) were employed, using a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to investigate each item. Researchers utilized confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), correlation analysis, and structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the established model. Construct validity and reliability were assessed following the two-step approach by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). CFA examined the measurement model, while SEM analyzed the research model. Fit indices, such as CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR, were evaluated, with CFI and TLI values $\geq .9$ and RMSEA and SRMR values $\leq .08$ indicating acceptable fit. A multi-group analysis was conducted to identify the moderation effects of two countries.

Results and Discussion

The results indicated that both the measurement model [$\chi^2 = 440.053$, $df = 74$, CFI = .956, TLI = .946, RMSEA = .090 (.082-.098), SRMR = .043] and the hypothesized model [$\chi^2 = 446.274$, $df = 75$, CFI = .955, TLI = .946, RMSEA = .090 (.082-.098), SRMR = .047] were acceptable. The study revealed that team cohesion significantly influenced OCB ($b = .753$, $p < .01$) and that OCB significantly impacted team performance ($b = .750$, $p < .01$). Furthermore, the results supported the full mediating effect of OCB between team cohesion and team performance ($b = .565$, $p < .05$). However, the multi-group analysis results indicated no significant differences between the Korea and Hong Kong groups.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The current study contributes to the sport management literature by empirically validating the relevance of OCB in intercollegiate sports in Asia and examining its mediating role in enhancing team effectiveness. The findings highlight the importance of promoting team cohesion for improved performance through OCB. Notably, no significant cultural differences were found

between the Korea and Hong Kong groups. Comprehensive practical implications will be discussed to enhance team cohesion and OCB in sport.

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Dynamic Stakeholder Mapping: What The Future Holds For National Professional Sports Associations And Their Stakeholders

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Aim and Research Questions

Professional sports associations play an important role in the governance of professional sports. Especially for managers of these associations, understanding the dynamics of their stakeholders is essential for effective prioritization and governance, and therefore sportive success. Based on the salience theory by Mitchell et al. (1997), this study creates a dynamic stakeholder map for national professional sports associations, comparing the present (2024) with the future (2040). The aim of this study is to identify which stakeholders are the most salient to shape the probable future of professional sports associations by 2040 and how their stakeholder-specific attributes or even types differ from today. Notably, applying the salience model with a forward-looking perspective has so far – at least to our knowledge – been neglected in existing literature.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Professional sports clubs, organizations, or associations have a more complex objective, compared to ‘ordinary’ corporates (Anagnostopoulos, 2011). Managers interact in a multifaceted environment of stakeholders (Russo & Vito, 2011), balancing sporting performance with societal value while managing financial and regulatory constraints. Systematic stakeholder identification and prioritization are therefore both beneficial and necessary. However, the application of stakeholder theory in sports has been a “relatively recent phenomenon” compared to other industries (Miragaia et al., 2016, p. 4). Most sports-specific stakeholder research concentrates on popular and commercialized disciplines such as professional soccer (e.g., Biscaia et al., 2018), American football, Formula 1, or rugby.

Dynamics of stakeholder salience in sports were first shown by Xue & Mason (2011) in a non-prospective study of a large-scale sports event in China. Given the evolving corporate environment, stakeholder landscapes are becoming more complex and dynamic (Parmar et al., 2010). Yet, no scientific studies have taken a prospective approach.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

This online study focuses on Germany, with data currently being collected from May to July 2024, using the professional software tool Surveylet. The mixed methods approach used includes stakeholder theory-specific survey items and a real-time Delphi study. Invited participants are stakeholders of German professional sports associations (cf. Russo & Vito, 2011, Figure 1), i.e., those from national sports associations within the German Olympic Sports Confederation. Over 50 stakeholders from sports, politics, and academia have already participated. The participants first self-assess using the stakeholder salience attributes. Building on Miragaia et al. (2014) and Biscaia et al.’s (2018) studies, participants indicate their agreement with 16 measures on a 7-point Likert scale (four for each power, urgency, legitimacy, and salience). Their self-perceived level of salience in relation to professional sports associations and their respective management is evaluated both for today (2024) and the future (2040). Then the assessment is followed by a Delphi study, using 14 projections. Given the diverse set of stakeholders (e.g., full-time vs. voluntary, internal vs. external), the projections cover regulatory, economical, socio-cultural, technological, and ecologic-geographical aspects. To encourage a thorough reflection, participants assess each projection along its expected probability, desirability, and impact in case of occurrence. Another self-assessment, identical to the one at the beginning of the study, follows, extended by additional items to measure the impact of the confrontation with future scenarios. The empirical analysis will include tests for validity and construct reliability, descriptive statistics and confirmatory factor analysis. Changes in perceived salience will be compared within stakeholder types (i.e., definitive, expectant, and latent) and their various combinations of attributes.

Results/Findings and Discussion (not yet available)

Detailed results will be available for presentation at the conference. The study provides a thorough overview of current stakeholders of (German) national professional sports associations, categorized by their stakeholder attributes and types. Preliminary results indicate significant dynamics of stakeholder salience between 2024 and 2040 across different stakeholder groups. Additionally, the subconscious confrontation with trends, future drivers, and potential scenarios relevant to professional sports associations appears to affect stakeholders' (re-)assessment of their salience. Dependencies on Mitchell et al.'s (1997) attributes and types will be analyzed closely.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication (not yet available)

This study addresses a research gap and offers potential levers to improve stakeholder management for professional sports associations. By incorporating diverse stakeholder perspectives into decision-making processes of professional sports associations, social inclusion can be promoted while achieving sportive and managerial goals. The insights could enable managers to not only adapt their strategies based on forward projections of the past but anticipate and proactively respond to (potentially) changing stakeholder needs and roles. Additionally, the study contributes to the stakeholder salience theory by exploring its dynamics, refining Mitchell et al.'s (1997) model, including a future-oriented perspective. Consequently, by applying multiple advancements of the original theory, we add to a more detailed and justified prioritization of stakeholders along Mitchell et al.'s (1997) described types.

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The Financial Playbook: Reassessing the Worth of NFL Draft Picks

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Aim and Research Questions

The National Football League (NFL) Draft represents a pivotal mechanism for enhancing the competitive dynamics within the league by facilitating the allocation of premier talent to teams positioned lower in the standings, thereby preserving competitive balance. The current study endeavors to address the inquiry: “What is the value of an NFL Draft pick relative to other picks?” Assessing the value of a draft pick presents certain challenges due to discrepancies in value between rounds and positions. Therefore, the aim of this study is to establish a novel methodological framework that enables teams to assess the value of their draft selections, thereby informing strategic decision-making processes and promoting competitive balance across the league.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The NFL's Pick Value Chart (PVC), created by Dallas Cowboys coach Jimmy Johnson, quantifies the worth of draft picks, decreasing from 3000 points for the first pick to 2 for the 224th. However, its relevance has waned due to its arbitrary values. Studies, like those by Massey and Thaler (2013), revealed that the PVC tends to overestimate the worth of first-round picks in relation to subsequent rounds. These findings suggest the need for refinements in the PVC. Our study identifies three key variables—weighted approximate value (wAV; Duquette & Cebula, 2020), games started, and games played (Schuckers, 2011)—as better indicators of pick value. We also factor in whether a trade was executed to acquire a player, a previously overlooked variable that significantly affects player value (Hersch & Pelkowski, 2016).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Data were retrieved from pro-football-reference.com. The complete dataset comprised (a) draft and trade information (year, team, draft pick, and trade up), (b) game information (the number of games/seasons played as a starter), and (c) player performance statistics (wAV, etc.). The total number of observations for the dataset included 4,996 distinct draft picks spanning from 1993 to 2012. Most players from that period have since retired, solidifying their wAV statistics. To encapsulate this curvilinear relationship, we adopted a polynomial regression, with a fifth-order polynomial providing the best goodness-of-fit, to estimate the impact of draft selection on player career achievements.

Results/Findings and Discussion

In Model 1, the three key metrics predicted by a player's draft position serve as significant indicators for gauging a player's value over their career. Our fifth-order polynomial regression achieved R² values of 0.90 for weighted approximate value (wAV), 0.82 for games played (GP), and 0.90 for season started (ST). Notably, our pick values exhibit a less pronounced decline compared to Jimmy Johnson's original model, suggesting that the latter undervalues lower draft selections. Our results show that the valuation of the last pick in the first round (Pick 32) is roughly half (approximately 1,500) of the first pick's value. Conversely, according to the PVC, this pick's value diminishes to less than a fifth (around 600) of the first draft pick's worth. Model 2, which incorporates the binary variable ‘Traded Up,’ demonstrates diminished predictive accuracy relative to Model 1, with R² values of 0.31 for wAV, 0.22 for GP, and 0.30 for ST. Model 2 indicates a potential decline of 0.56 points in the wAV for players obtained through such trades. Notably, while players acquired via trading up participated in an average of 1.2 fewer games than their non-traded-up counterparts, their tenure as primary lineup players remained comparable.

Conclusion, Contribution and Implication

We conclude that Jimmy Johnson's PVC has indeed underestimated the value of late round draft picks relative to early NFL draft picks. Our findings highlight that wAV and ST were

the two measures that had the highest variance predicted by the proposed models. While trading up can add more value to a pick, it often does not justify the cost of the trends observed in the NFL. We recommend that teams concentrate on Day 3 selections (Rounds 4-7) to find true value picks for their franchises. Day 3 picks are undervalued by existing draft pick value charts, and teams can accumulate many late draft picks by trading down during the draft. The influence of such studies on the strategic considerations of NFL teams is evidenced by the trading behaviors of teams like the 49ers and Rams, who traded their top draft picks for proven players such as Christian McCaffery and Von Miller. Both teams have also stockpiled numerous Day 3 picks that they have used to reload their rosters with players.

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Internationalization Strategies Of Large, Medium-sized, And Small Professional Football Clubs - An Assessment In Top European Leagues

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Introduction

Professional football clubs in Europe's top leagues have recently seen remarkable growth, but European football markets currently indicate signs of saturation. Additional revenues are highly dependent on performance in competitions. Consequently, clubs not only experience pressure performing on the pitch, but must pursue economic profitability elsewhere. As a result, many European clubs have increased their international presence in new markets, likely to exploit growing interest abroad. However, academically widely unexplored is:

- (1) why clubs diversify to certain markets,
- (2) how they position themselves abroad and
- (3) why they choose certain entry strategies.

Literature Review

Internationalization has been explained and investigated in other sectors, outside of sport. Theoretical frameworks range from the Uppsala Model (Johanson & Valhne, 1977) over reasons for global expansion (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000) to the Diversification Theory (Markides & Williamson, 1994).

Yet, internationalization in football has only recently been investigated academically and empirical contributions on the clubs' perspective are scarce. Only Wolf (2007) surveyed European clubs on their awareness of the potential for internationalization. Another contribution was made by Schmidt and Holzmayer (2018), who developed a framework for growth of football clubs through diversification. However, an overarching theory framework on internationalization in sports, let alone in football, has not yet been developed.

Methodology

The study empirically assesses (1) motivations, (2) differentiation approaches, and (3) market entry modes of large, medium-sized, and small European football clubs that attempt to internationalize. In accordance with Deloitte (2021), large clubs (LCs) are defined as top-15 European first-league football clubs with respect to their annual revenue generation, excluding player transfers (between € 237m and € 715m). Medium-sized clubs (MSCs) are those European top-tier clubs ranked between 16 and 30 by Deloitte (2021) with respect to annual sales without transfers (€ 152-222m) and small clubs (SCs) are European top-tier clubs which are not among the top-30 of the ranking (< € 130m).

A corresponding survey was sent out to executives of European first-league clubs in England, Spain, Germany, Italy, France, the Netherlands, Russia, and Portugal. The survey was completed by executives from 34 European clubs, the number of responses equally distributed among LCs, MSCs and SCs.

Additionally, to validate the outcomes of the survey, a double-digit number of semi-structured interviews with club executives responsible for internationalization and strategy were conducted.

Results and Discussion

The overall results show some statistically significant differences between the three groups regarding their motivations, differentiation strategies, and market entry initiatives. While the underlying motivation to internationalize is similar across LCs, MSCs and SCs, namely short-term revenue expectations (as opposed to a reduction of clubs' dependency on sportive performance in the long run), the strategic motives vary. While LCs intent to establish an international brand, MSCs and SCs are rather driven by the attempt to unlock additional revenue streams, e.g., through sponsorships or (commercial) partnerships abroad.

Furthermore, results with respect to differentiation strategies indicate that while MSCs and SCs position themselves in market niches in foreign markets, LCs internationalize rather by positioning their

well-known brand, sportive successes, and established social media activities.

With regards to market entry approaches, LCs tend to deploy brand-focused strategies, i.e., physical presence in the target markets, including own offices and pre-season tours. In turn, MSCs and SCs mainly rely on (local) partnerships as market entry strategy.

Conclusion and Implication

The results of the study imply that although all investigated European top-league clubs are active internationally, the applied internationalization strategies differ by club size. As a result, internationalization should - depending on the clubs' size (measured by revenue), attractiveness, and positioning- be approached differently to ensure a coherent and appealing image to international stakeholders.

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Exploring the Role of Political Astuteness Skills for Managers in Elite Women's Football

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Located within an interpretivist, constructivist research paradigm, the aim of this study was to explore the role of political astuteness skills in Elite Women's Football in Ireland. We used a criterion-based purposive sampling approach to recruit five managers and five players in the Irish Women's National League (WNL) to participate in semi-structured interviews. The interview data were analyzed using inductive thematic analysis. The participants identified that political astuteness skills positively impact the management of elite women's football players and were deemed as crucial skills that managers must possess. The findings advance studies on management in women's elite sport and have educational implications for managers to develop their political astuteness skills.

Literature Review

Women's football in the Republic of Ireland has experienced considerable growth in profile and popularity in the last fifteen years with a considerable increase in the number of leagues, players, and managers. Building on calls for research in women's sport (Burton & Leberman, 2017) as well as challenging the dominant unitary representations of sport management (Hall et al., 2021; Robinson et al., 2020), we adopt Hartley's (2017) advocate for more attention and value to be given to the development of managers' political astuteness skills by researchers and educators. Consequently, this research explores the political astuteness skills that underpin the performances, and role, of elite women's football club managers.

Political astuteness is viewed as 'a set of skills, knowledge, and judgements' regarding the discernment of managers (Hartley, 2013: 202). These skills include managers ability to read situations, understand the interests and preferences of different stakeholders, and to productively work towards organizational goals while considering, and responding to, these often divergent outlooks (Hartley, 2013). This study explores the relational, cognitive,

behavioral, and affective skills that are considered to be a crucial aspect of a managers role. To fulfill their managerial role these capabilities are connected to both the reading of the organisational context and stakeholders interests and, relatedly, the intra- and interpersonal strategies that managers use to constructively influence players (Hartley, 2017). We draw on Hartley and colleagues' (2013, 2017) conceptualisation of political astuteness and explore several key elements of their framework. These include Personal Skills, Interpersonal Skills, Reading People and Situations, Building Alignment and Alliances and, Strategic Direction and Scanning.

Methodology

Among those satisfying the criterion-based purposive sampling criteria, we conducted semi-structured tape-recorded interviews with five players and five managers representing all the clubs in the WNL in Ireland. All the participants possessed considerable levels of playing and managerial experience of the WNL with some of the players possessing international senior playing experience. Data collection ceased when data and meaning saturation was attained. The data analysis procedures adopted were drawn from guidelines developed for inductively analyzing semi-structured interviews (Skinner et al., 2020).

Findings & Discussion

The findings identify the role of political astuteness skills in assisting managers perform their role. Regarding personal skills, participants identified the need for managers to develop and continually reflect upon their own motives, role, emotions in their efforts to manage with political astuteness (Hartley, 2013). Interpersonal skills such as the capacity to influence the thoughts, emotions and behaviours of others was at the heart of their managerial role and significantly impacted their ability to cultivate relationships and get 'buy-in' from players.

The findings also identify several unique challenges that managers must deal with in the WNL in comparison to the men's game. One finding concerned managers ability to read people and situations, such as the 'dark side' of football. This finding identifies Machiavellian behaviours such as blaming,

scapegoating and more covert behaviours such as manipulating, concealing and exploiting (Hartley, 2017). Relatedly, political skills such as listening, and observation assist managers in identifying and solving the covert nature of conflict in the women's game. Moreover, intra-personal skills such as active listening and personal skills such as observation assist in the identification and subsequent management of a player's ego and dressing room cliques.

In terms of building alignment and alliances managers proactively sought out alliances and partnerships with key stakeholders such as the media and owners and directors. However, strategic direction and scanning were not deemed as important due to a greater sense of security regarding their tenure, particularly when compared to the chronically insecure and uncertain nature of the role of the manager in the men's game.

Conclusion

This study adds new knowledge to the growing body of sport management literature (e.g., Hall et al., 2021; Robinson et al., 2020) exploring political astuteness skills and the way they underpin various aspects of the managers role in the WNL in Ireland. The findings suggest that greater importance of the theoretical frameworks, tools and guidance are required for the development and application of political astuteness skills for managers in women's football.

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Typology and Definition of Multi Club Ownership. A Conceptual and Learning Framework Development

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Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this research was to develop a conceptual framework of Football Multi Club Ownership (MCO) for teaching and research purposes. Several Strategic Management theories and their alignment and representativeness for the different types of MCO were examined.

The research questions that guided the research were:

1. What are the different types of Football Multi Club Ownership (MCO), and how can they be understood through Strategic Management theories and concepts?
2. How can existing theoretical frameworks in Strategic Management be adapted or integrated to develop a comprehensive understanding and conceptual framework of Football Multi Club Ownership (MCO)?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

There is a very recent and fast growing interest in MCOs in football in both academic and practice, combined with or one could argue caused by the limited research on the concept which mainly focuses on the integrity aspects of it (Kirsch et al., 2024; Globan & Jägers, 2019; Breuer, 2018; Pastore, 2018). The limited existing study on the matter seems to explore MCOs as an all encompassing single phenomenon, which is at the same time, studied almost independently from already developed theories of strategic management. Nonetheless, practice shows that a one-size-fits-all approach cannot truly capture the different motives and forms of MCO development in football. Therefore, the need emerges for a more thorough analysis of the MCO concept, including a more detailed typology of the way in which it manifests in modern day football.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

A four-step evaluative conceptual approach for teaching and research purposes was used to examine the typology of MCO, comprising a) taxonomical structure of the content, b) developing a definition of the concept based on its critical attributes, c) organising the examples into logical sets, and d) arranging the presentation order based on the degree of divergence and difficulty (Tennyson & Park, 1980). The applicability, relevance and common patterns of the strategic management concepts in relation to the different types of MCO were examined through a deductive content analysis of business reports and media content.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Findings revealed that there are four distinctive types of MCOs strategies with mixed, incentives and theoretical framework alignments: Type 1 which could be viewed through the theoretical lens of Vertical Integrations combined with Resource Based View capabilities, Type 2, appreciated through the viewpoint of Mergers and Acquisitions combined with Internationalisation and Brand Expansion strategies, Type 3, influenced by Private Equity investments combined with Portfolio Management and Diversification, and finally Type 4, which could be conceptualised through Sovereign Wealth Funds Investment strategies combined with wealth preservation, national development and global presence. These four types, while distinct seem to at times overlap in terms of their incentives and potential conceptualisations, however, we argue they differ in the way in which they are operationalised. Through this analysis and the appreciation of the different types of MCOs that emerge, a more broadly encompassing definition of MCOs is introduced through our study.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This research contributes to the development of a conceptual and learning framework for Football Multi Club Ownership (MCO) by examining its typology and aligning it with Strategic Management theoretical concepts. The study offers a valuable resource for scholars, practitioners, and educators in the football industry and academia in order to

better capture and thus more accurately analyse MCOs as they develop. The identification of different types of MCO and their respective incentives can inform strategic decision-making and governance practices in football industry. It provides a basis for further theoretical development, empirical research, and teaching materials on MCO in football and Strategic Management more broadly.

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The Influence Of Multi-club Ownership Models On The Sporting Performance And Financial Stability Of Football Clubs In Austria, Portugal And France

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Multi-club ownership models can lead to financial resources being distributed and used more effectively, which can improve the sporting performance of the clubs involved. This is achieved through joint investments in players, coaches and infrastructure, which can be distributed across several clubs. Multi-Club ownership of football clubs is a quite current phenomenon that needs further research to evaluate both the financial as well as sports impacts. Both authors have next to their academic and lecturing backgrounds been deeply involved in the business of sports management (one author in the leadership of sports organisations, one author as a sports director in the field of football club management) and consequently this abstract shall fit well into the category of professional practice.

Aim

The aim of this research is to investigate the multiple effects of multi-club ownership models on football clubs. In particular, we examine both the economic and sporting aspects of clubs that undergo multiple ownership changes. By analyzing financial indicators and sporting performance, we aim to understand how multiple club ownership affects the stability and success of football organizations.

The study focuses on the three countries, namely on Austria, Portugal and France. The specific aim of this research is to study the:

1. sporting performance: to analyze whether clubs that are part of a multi-club ownership model show long-term sporting improvements. This includes examining league positions, success in national and international competitions, player development and transfer strategies.
2. economic development: to assess how the economic situation of these clubs is changing. Key financial figures such as turnover, profit,

debt level, investments and sponsorship income are analyzed.

Through this comprehensive analysis, the study should provide information on whether and how multi-club ownership models contribute to a positive sportive and economic development of the football clubs concerned in Austria, Portugal and France.

Purpose and background

In recent years, the football industry has witnessed a surge in multi-club ownership arrangements. These models involve one entity owning or having significant stakes in multiple football clubs across different leagues. While such ownership structures promise synergies and efficiencies, their effects on financial stability and sporting performance remain a subject of debate. This study aims to shed light on this phenomenon by examining various dimensions of multi-club ownership.

Theoretical background and literature discussion

The theoretical discussion of this study will be based on existing theories and models of stakeholder theory, corporate management and sports economics. Particularly relevant are theories of corporate governance, which analyze the control and decision-making processes within companies, and models of sports economics, which deal with the economic analysis of sports organizations. By integrating these theories into our study, we can better understand the mechanisms and dynamics that characterize multi-club ownership models. This theoretical foundation helps to place the empirical results in a broader context and allows us to draw general conclusions about the effects of multi-club ownership in football.

Szymanski (2015) for instance argues that financial resources and their distribution are crucial to the sporting success of soccer clubs. The theoretical framework of this study will be based on stakeholder theory and will critically reflect the current journal publications on multi-club ownership models published so far

Design and implementation

The research question aims to investigate both the economic and sporting aspects of the

introduction of multi-club ownership by football clubs in the leagues. Our research uses a qualitative content analysis according to Mayring. The expert interviews are conducted with sports directors and managing directors of Austrian, Portuguese and French from the second or third division that are aiming for promotion to a higher league. In addition, interviews will be conducted with stakeholders who focus precisely on the development of the leagues. In addition to the content analysis, a close examination of specific cases of the multi-club ownership model will also be carried out in order to identify certain correlations and possible differences in the three countries studied. The quantitative impacts on the sports development will be based on sports indicators as described below.

Description of Outcomes

- The economic impact of multi-club ownership on clubs' financial performance
- The impact of multi-club ownership on clubs' sporting performance
- The efficiency of resource allocation between clubs under multi-club ownership
- The impact of multi-club ownership on club identity and local fan engagement
- The relative performance of clubs with and without multi-club ownership

Critical reflection and future development

This research seeks to make a wider contribution to the understanding of the multi-club ownership model and its impact on football clubs. The findings will be of interest to a wide range of stakeholders, including club owners, managers, fans and policy makers. While our research provides a detailed insight, it is limited to three European leagues where some of the multi-club ownership models are already in use.

While multi-club ownership offers potential benefits, it also raises ethical, cultural and competition law concerns. Our research will critically reflect on these implications, taking into account the broader context of football governance and the conflicting interests of stakeholders and fans. Furthermore, the study provides an important insight into this under-researched topic and lays the foundation for future research. By analyzing the current models and their impact, the study

provides valuable information that may contribute to a deeper understanding and further development of multi-club ownership models and shall identify further research gaps.

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Comparative Analysis of Sport Systems: Examining Structure, Strategies, and Public Funding in Relation to Olympic Outcomes in Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and Romania

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Aim and research questions

The disintegration of the communist regime in Eastern Europe initiated significant transformations in various sectors, including sports. As the communist regime collapsed in Eastern Europe, a variety of sectors underwent significant changes, sports being among them. There has been a substantial change in how sports are organized, funded, and participated in as a result of the shift from centralized, state-driven models to more diversified, often market-based approaches.

Current research primarily focuses on Western nations, often overlooking the unique experiences of Central and Eastern European countries. This gap is notable given the robust sporting traditions and Olympic performances in this region. Existing studies include Goranova and Byers (2015), who examine the relationship between sport funding, performance, and mass participation in the UK, and Gowthorp et al. (2017), who explore the relationship between the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) and Summer Olympic National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) regarding Olympic performance outcomes.

This research aims to identify key factors that translate sports policies into improved Olympic performance and increased mass sports participation, essential for policymakers and stakeholders in shaping effective strategies in transitioning economies. It contributes to understanding the evolution of sports systems in post-communist Europe, their impact on Olympic outcomes, and sports participation. By comparatively analysing Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and Romania, the study seeks to uncover the complexities within transitioning sports systems and their societal

implications. The research questions to be explored are as follows:

1. How have the post-communist sports policy reforms in Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Hungary influenced their nations' Olympic success?
2. What is the relationship between strategic sports budget allocations and mass sports participation in these countries?
3. To what extent do differences in sports strategies and policies correlate with variations in Olympic medal tallies among the four nations?
4. How does public funding and infrastructure development impact the level of sports participation at the grassroots level in post-communist countries?
5. What are the key factors that contribute to the successful translation of sports policies into enhanced Olympic performance and increased mass sport participation in these transitioning economies?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

1. Impact of post-Communist sports policy reforms: The literature has extensively analysed the shift from state-centered to market-oriented sports structures and its effects on athletic performance and Olympic success. Key studies such as Andreff (2021) detail the challenges and impacts of these transitions, including decreased Olympic performance during economic transformations.

2. Sports funding and mass participation: Studies like those by Weed et al. (2015) and Thomson et al. (2021) discuss how large sporting events can inspire increased participation and contribute to a healthier community. The relationship between funding, participation rates, and socioeconomic disparities is further elucidated by Tenforde and Fredericson (2011) and Li et al. (2023), emphasizing the need for inclusive funding strategies to promote public health and societal well-being.

3. Sports strategies, policies, and Olympic medals: Research has focused on identifying factors contributing to Olympic success, with studies by Choi et al. (2022) exploring the influence of leadership, economic resources, and cultural factors. Additionally, the role of sports psychology in Olympic performance is highlighted by Szabo (2014), underscoring the

complex interplay of various elements in achieving elite sports success.

4. Public funding, infrastructure, and grassroots sports: Chen and Henry (2016) discuss the pivotal role of public funding and infrastructure in fostering grassroots sports, critical for nurturing a robust sports culture and talent development from the grassroots level.

5. Translation of sports policies to performance: The literature suggests that a comprehensive approach, integrating governance, funding, and infrastructure, is vital for translating sports policies into tangible outcomes like Olympic success and mass participation.

6. Olympic success: Research focused on examined different effects or outcomes of Olympic success on society or population. Zare & Géczi (2024) studied the political and societal outcomes of Olympic success.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

1. Document analysis:

- Review of policy documents, sports organization reports, and relevant legislation to trace the evolution of sports policy and strategy.
- Content analysis to quantify the focus on elite versus mass sports within policy documents.

2. Comparative policy analysis:

- Utilizing a analytical framework to systematically examine the sports policy environments of the four countries.
- Identifying best practices and lessons learned that could inform future sports policy development.

Results/Finding and Discussion

The ongoing study so far reveals that within the strategic vision of Hungary, Slovakia, and Poland, there is a pronounced emphasis on fostering a healthy and active society. Conversely, in Romania, the primary objective is the enhancement of the social and economic status of sports. The proportion of state sports funding relative to GDP in Hungary significantly surpasses that of the other countries under review, being more than

double. Slovakia, on the other hand, exhibits the lowest rates of sports funding. However, the sports strategies formulated around 2020 in Slovakia advocate for an increase in sports funding levels. Notably, each country demonstrates robust support for traditionally successful Olympic sports. Yet, in Slovakia, there is no preferential treatment for summer sports over winter sports, indicating a balanced approach to funding across different sports disciplines. Further results will be present at the time of the conference.

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4

Resiliency in Community-Based Nonprofit Sport Organizations

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Aim and Research Questions

Nonprofit sport organizations increasingly face significant pressures to sustain, to deliver their programs, and to perform, including expectations to become more innovative. Yet, in many cases they remain characterized by limited resources. Prior research suggests that one of the main reasons that efforts to implement existing programs or new ideas fail is because organizations are unable to mobilize the resources, knowledge, and processes needed (Svensson et al., 2020; Winand & Hoerber, 2017). This backdrop warrants questions about the role of organizational resiliency, which remains largely unexplored at the organizational level and in the sport management literature. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore nonprofit resiliency in an international sample of community-based nonprofit sport organizations. More specifically, the study is guided by a set of research questions: (1) what meanings do nonprofit sport leaders attribute to organizational resiliency?; (2) what role do nonprofit sport leaders perceive that organizational resiliency plays in their field?; (3) how (if at all) have their organization's experienced resiliency; and (4) what elements do nonprofit leaders perceive as critical for developing resiliency to overcome unforeseen challenges and learning from such experiences?

Theoretical Background

Resiliency – defined as the “amount and variety of resources and skills possessed and available for maintaining viability and growth relative to the requirements posed by the environment” (McCann et al., 2009, p. 45) - has been identified as a critical element associated with the nonprofit sector (Williams et al., 2017). Unfortunately, how nonprofits may be resilient at an organizational level remains a significant knowledge gap (Searing et al., 2023). There are a few exceptions where

resiliency has been examined in sport including the role of resilience in the wake of natural disasters (Wicker et al., 2013), as an attribute of employees (Kim et al., 2017), or in elite sport performance (Morgan et al., 2017). More recently, Bostock and Breese (2023) began to conceptualize the role of resilience in sport management. Their work is important in advancing this body of scholarship, but remains grounded in research from for-profit contexts and did not account for the nuances of different nonprofit sport organizations that provide direct human services such as community sport clubs or sport for development organizations.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

For this study, an interpretive qualitative research design is employed, guided by a social constructivist perspective (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Institutional review board approval was obtained, and data collection is currently in progress with semi-structured interviews being conducted with leaders from community sport organizations in Europe as well as sport for development organizations operating across several countries. The data collection process is expected to be completed by July 2024 with representatives of at least 20 different organizations. Purposive sampling was used to identify a sample, which shares a commonality around sport, while allowing enough flexibility to explore perspectives on organizational resiliency between membership and non-membership structured nonprofit sport entities. Data will be analyzed through a two-cycle inductive coding process to identify key concepts and themes (Saldaña, 2021). Both researchers are also maintaining reflexive journals and will be utilizing analytical memos throughout the data analysis process to support the rigor and authenticity of the findings.

Results and Discussion

Although data collection is currently in-progress, we expect our findings to reveal a multitude of meanings that practitioners associate with resiliency, which will allow for a contextualization of the concept among different types of community-based sport organizations. In addition, we also expect our findings to indicate the perceived critical importance of resilience, particularly for community-based organizations considering

the prior research is clear on the limited operational capacity of many nonprofit sport organizations (e.g., Cohen et al., 2020; Doherty et al., 2014; Svensson et al., 2021). Furthermore, we also expect our findings may likely involve a lot of examples of resiliency stemming from either personal experiences of failure or the observation of failure in organizations ranging from project failure to the potential demise of organizations.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implications

The findings are expected to advance the current body of knowledge around the practical realities associated with nonprofit resiliency in the context of nonprofit sport. More specifically, while some scholars have begun to try to conceptualize resiliency in sport (e.g., Bostock & Breese, 2023), such work was not grounded in empirical data. One important implication from our study will be a foundation for unpacking resiliency through a bottom-up approach within human service nonprofits across different sub-sectors in the sport industry. From a practical standpoint, we also expect that our findings will generate field-sensitive insight allowing for the identification on how practitioners can develop resiliency as well as how policymakers and resource providers can better stimulate resilience development within community-based sport organizations.

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Professionalization of Corporate Social Responsibility in Dutch football

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Statement of Professional Practice

This abstract constitutes a professional practice contribution, reflecting insights gained from a three-year collaboration between Eredivisie and Utrecht University aimed at advancing the professionalization of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) management within professional football clubs in the Netherlands.

Aim

The aim of this abstract is to elucidate the lessons learned, strategies employed, and outcomes achieved through the collaborative efforts between Dutch Eredivisie and Utrecht University in fostering a culture of enhanced CSR management within the professional football landscape of the Netherlands.

Purpose and Background

Professional football clubs, much like other organizational entities, serve as custodians of diverse values, encompassing sporting, business, cultural, and public facets. Within this context, the concept of CSR emerges as a pivotal dimension, encapsulating the club's commitment to social responsibility, sustainability, and community engagement. Van Eekeren (2016) underscores the importance of these values, asserting that a holistic approach to CSR not only aligns with the ethos of football but also augments organizational success. However, despite the acknowledgment of CSR's significance, there exists a discernible gap in the professionalization of its management, necessitating strategic refinement and robust monitoring mechanisms.

Design and Implementation

In response to this, Utrecht University and Eredivisie started a collaboration in 2021,

with the overarching objective of elevating the standards of CSR management within professional football clubs. Central to this collaboration were initiatives focused on capacity building, knowledge dissemination, and the implementation of effective monitoring and evaluation frameworks. The collaborative efforts were structured to encompass a multifaceted approach, comprising tailored training programs, educational interventions, and the co-creation of strategic frameworks designed to instill a culture of CSR excellence within participating clubs.

Outputs/Outcomes, Reflections, and Future Development

The outcomes of the collaborative endeavor are indicative of significant strides made in the professionalization of CSR management within the Dutch football landscape. Over the course of three years, discernible advancements have been observed across various dimensions:

Enhanced Knowledge and Capabilities: Through a comprehensive suite of training and educational activities, CSR managers have witnessed a notable enhancement in their knowledge base and professional competencies. Using a Theory of Change approach, participants have been equipped with the requisite tools to articulate and refine their CSR strategies, thereby fostering a more nuanced understanding of the intersection between sporting imperatives and societal obligations.

Strategic Refinement: The adoption of the Theory of Change methodology has facilitated a shift in the strategic orientation of CSR management within participating clubs. By delineating clear pathways for action and delineating measurable outcomes, CSR managers are better positioned to align their initiatives with organizational goals while concurrently addressing societal needs.

Monitoring and Evaluation Enhancement: A key facet of the collaborative initiative has been the emphasis on developing better monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for assessing the efficacy of CSR interventions. By adopting a systematic approach to data collection, analysis, and feedback integration, participating clubs have been able to refine their CSR practices.

Innovative Educational Interventions: In tandem with capacity-building efforts, the collaboration has witnessed the development of a new educational course tailored specifically for CSR managers within professional football clubs. This initiative seeks to learn from good practices in public value management and CSR in football, foster peer learning, and cultivate a community of practice centered around the principles of CSR excellence. An important part of the course has been the introduction of professional skills training, using an Organizational Role Analysis (ORA)-approach. ORA is a structured procedure aimed at fostering insight and comprehension regarding how the professional role of the client is influenced by both the organization and the role holder themselves, whether consciously or unconsciously (Newton et al., 2006).

In reflecting upon the journey thus far, it is evident that the collaborative efforts between Utrecht University and Eredivisie have yielded tangible dividends in terms of advancing the professionalization of CSR management within the Dutch football ecosystem.

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Conceptualisation and Analysis of a Federation Advisory Program for Voluntary Sports Clubs

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Aim and Research Questions

Sports federations are increasingly inclined to support the structural and organisational development of their member clubs (Schlesinger et al., 2021). These voluntary sports clubs (VSCs) face a broad variety of challenges, including the recruitment, retention, and management of members as well as volunteers (Nagel & Schlesinger, 2012). Consequently, sports federations offer tools and training courses and have, moreover, started implementing entire advisory programs focusing on the enablement of VSCs to tackle complex problems with strategic planning and organisational development (cf. Klenk et al., 2017). The effectiveness of external guidance, however, can be limited due to the level of autonomy and independence VSCs typically show (Nagel & Schlesinger, 2012). Accordingly, research has discussed critical factors, which support or constrain the transfer of advisory input into VSC-specific structures. So far, the examined advisory programs were thematically restricted and their conceptualisation was only discussed implicitly (e.g. Klenk et al., 2017). Hence, the purpose of this study is to further explore, (1) how advisory programs are conceptualised and (2) how successful the knowledge transfer is, depending on whether they are thematically focused or are covering organisational change in VSCs in general.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The goal of a (federation) advisory program is the implementation of external input into the VSCs' specific settings (Schlesinger et al., 2021). However, VSCs' decision-making processes and organisational barriers to change influence how they can execute structural change (Nagel & Schlesinger, 2012). Considering that VSCs are complex social systems and contexts, advisory input should provide process-oriented "systemic advice," nudging VSCs to optimise from within instead of utilising deductive "traditional

advice” (Bette, 2009). Further, the effectiveness of an advisory program depends on the transfer of the given input through three “critical interfaces” into VSC-specific structures (Klenk et al., 2017). The knowledge transfer through these interfaces relies on two sets of actors: On one hand, the advisory input is produced and organised by the “advisory providers” and, on the other hand, the “implementers of the advisory program” receive, process, adopt, and transfer the knowledge to their VSCs (Klenk et al., 2017, p. 74)

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The research questions are examined in an exploratory research design. In cooperation with the Swiss Gymnastics Federation, two advisory programs are designed, implemented, and analysed. The first program is thematically focused on volunteer management and the second program covers strategic club development in general. While their content differs, both advisory programs are structured around two in-person workshops and subsequent autonomous working phases. Each program was completed by project groups (two to five members) of three different VSCs.

The design of the advisory programs and additional program materials was based on a review of the relevant literature. Conceptually, both advisory programs were structured according to the guidelines for structural development in VSCs formulated by Nagel and Schlesinger (2012) and employ systemic advice (Bette, 2009). Content and implementation were further built on insights from previous case studies covering advisory programs or accompanying structural change within VSCs (e.g. Klenk et al., 2017; Nagel & Schlesinger, 2012) as well as thematically relevant findings (e.g. Schlesinger, 2014).

The advisory programs and their implementation process are analysed during their development employing case study methodology. Concurrently, qualitative group interviews are conducted with each project group after every in-person workshop. Additionally, feedback is gathered regularly from responsible personnel from the Gymnastics Federation and data collection is complemented by participant observations from the in-person workshops. The adoption of

the “critical interfaces” identified by Klenk et al. (2017) structures the investigation of the knowledge transfer from “receiving and processing” to “adopting and transferring” into the VSC-specific settings. The similarities in the program's structure and the collected data allow a comparison of the two advisory programs, differing in thematic width.

Findings and Discussion

Both advisory programs examined in this study are implemented during April and May 2024 and the data collection is thus ongoing. The preliminary data implies that participants prefer in-person formats as they experience exchanges with members from other VSCs as particularly valuable. Further, it appears that knowledge might transfer differently depending on the thematic width of the advisory program. Complete results will be available at the conference, where findings will be presented for the first time.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This study is looking to provide empirical data on the conceptualisation, implementation, and analysis of federation advisory programs. Aiming at further exploration of how the design of advisory programs is relevant for knowledge transfer into VSC-specific settings, this study contributes by applying the critical interface perspective to two programs with different thematic scopes (cf. Klenk et al., 2017). Further, the goal is to provide valuable insights for sports federations to design effective advisory inputs to support the organisational development of their VSCs.

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Corporate Social Responsibility in Chinese Sport: A Qualitative Analysis of Stakeholder Perceptions

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Aim and Research Questions

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) involves organisations extending their focus beyond economic objectives to deliver positive social development (Djaballah et al., 2016). Although CSR in sport organisations is well-researched, institutional studies of CSR in sport remain scarce, particularly in the Chinese context (Walzel et al., 2018). There is particularly limited understanding of how CSR operates within Chinese sport organisations, which operate under distinct economic, political, and cultural systems compared to Western sports organisations (Gao, 2009). This study aimed to understand how institutional logics affect CSR decision-making in Chinese sport organisations.

The Chinese Basketball Association (CBA) League was selected as the case study as it is China's commercially largest league attracting over one billion viewers annually. Research on CSR within the CBA League will help scholars and practitioners better understand how institutional logics influence CSR activities in a highly politicised and commercialised Chinese sport context.

Institutional logics are guiding principles influencing the behaviour of actors and organisations within an institutional field (Thornton et al., 2012). Stakeholders with diverse demands and expectations (Djaballah et al., 2016) reflect institutional logics that can shape CSR initiatives. Thus, institutional logics provide a suitable theoretical framework to explain CSR within the CBA League. Consequently, this study addressed the following research questions: (1) What are the institutional logics within the CBA League? (2) How do these logics influence CSR within the league?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

There is substantial scholarly research on CSR within Western nations (Carlini et al., 2021) showing that national context influences practice, highlighting the need for analysis of other major international sport markets. Research in Chinese sport so far has typically focussed on fan perceptions ignoring the CSR decision-making processes of sports organisations, creating a need to move beyond fan-centred research to understand broader stakeholder expectations. Attitudes and behaviours towards CSR are influenced by institutional logics and sport organisations are no different. For instance, Jäger and Fifka (2020) showed that varying institutional logics lead to differences in CSR perceptions and behaviours, with English clubs focusing more on community-oriented responsibilities, while German clubs adopted a holistic approach. However, no research has examined how institutional logic affects CSR in Chinese sports, making this study an innovative approach to connecting stakeholder expectations, institutional logics and CSR in Chinese sports.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

This study adopted critical realism as its philosophical basis, positing a stratified ontology comprising the empirical (participant interview responses), actual (researcher interpretation), and real domains (theoretical explanation). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 22 stakeholders, including governmental bodies, broadcasters, sponsors, the CBA Company, CBA clubs, player agents, and fan associations. Interview questions centred on perceptions of the CBA League, CSR within the league, and expectations, with additional emergent questions. Interviews were conducted from June to January 2024. Thematic analysis guided data analysis under the critical realist framework (Wiltshire & Ronkainen, 2021).

Results/Findings and Discussion

Four underlying institutional logics influencing CSR activities within the CBA League were identified. First, state logic legitimised CSR activities promoting national interests. Second, the logic of sport for good focused on actions promoting fairness and

positive societal impact. Third, the logic of sport for competition emphasised running the games well and winning. Fourth, business logic prioritised profitability.

Each logic influenced distinct CSR approaches. Under state logic, nationalist CSR initiatives included supplying talent to Team China and adjusting schedules for national team commitments. The logic of sport for good underscored organisational and public CSR, such as ensuring fair refereeing and contribution to the community. The logic of sport for competition prioritised performance outcomes which undermined public CSR implementation as sporting success was placed above social responsibility. Business logic encouraged public CSR endeavours with corporate sponsors as a marketing strategy.

The interplay of multiple stakeholder expectations, institutional logics and their accompanying expectations creates institutional complexity (Raynard, 2016), complicating CSR decision-making within the CBA League. Tensions arise, for example, between state and business logics when national interests clash with commercial considerations that require strategies to navigate conflict in a highly politicised environment.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implications

This study identified four institutional logics within the CBA League, each representing a value orientation impacting different types of CSR demonstrating how different logics may support or oppose particular CSR types.

The main contributions are threefold. First, this study provided a more comprehensive understanding of stakeholder attitudes towards CSR in Chinese sport. Second, it highlighted how CSR decision-making in Chinese sport organisations does not follow traditional models identified in previous research. Third, the findings offer a basis for comparative analyses in other Chinese professional leagues to identify additional institutional mechanisms and responses.

Practically, this study emphasised the dynamic relationship between different institutional logics and CSR, suggesting that (inter)national sponsors and broadcasters need to consider various factors in their

business practices within Chinese professional sports (e.g., understanding potential state logic implications) and plan commercial contracts accordingly. Further, other Chinese or similar Asian professional sports leagues can refer to the CBA League's handling of different logics implications, maximising the legitimacy of different CSR types to access external resources.

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Sustainability and Sport Management

Track chair: Pascal Stegmann

The Dual Impact of Sports Organizations' Environmental Initiatives on Members' Well-being and Climate Change Attitudes

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Aim and Research Question

Recognizing the interplay between climate change and public health, this study focuses on the impact of sports organizations' environmental initiatives on members' subjective well-being (SWB) and climate change attitudes. The consequences of climate change will affect our daily lives. Air pollution, heat, or water pollution can be detrimental to mental health and decrease SWB (Bernard et al., 2021). A key role in fighting climate change and improving SWB can be attributed to sports organizations. These can, e.g., attenuate the adverse effects of sport activity via environmental initiatives that could inspire their members and change their attitudes (European Commission, 2024). This study aims to examine the effect of environmental initiatives of sports organizations on members' well-being and climate change attitudes.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The connection between environmental initiatives and members' SWB can be viewed from two competing perspectives – one suggesting a negative and the other a positive association. Drawing on the theoretical tenets of pro-social behavior, organizational initiatives aiming at protecting and improving the natural environment can be viewed as altruistic and pro-social. The goal of these initiatives is the protection of the environment, which would benefit others (e.g., animals, people, and society; Zawadski et al., 2020). Individuals involved in such altruistic behavior tend to experience a warm glow effect, which increases their SWB.

However, the well-being effect of such initiatives can also be negative due to their costly nature. Acting environmentally friendly is often associated with costs such as time,

money, or inconvenience (Schmitt et al., 2018). The costs of pro-environmental behavior can lead to a decrease in SWB (e.g., cycling in the rain and not taking a car; Schmitt et al., 2018; Zawadski et al., 2020). However, recent research has found that behaviors perceived as costly are often considered more effective in improving the environment (e.g., purchasing energy-efficient appliances versus simply turning off the lights when leaving a room). Consequently, these actions may contribute more substantially to SWB, as individuals engaging in such behaviors may regard them as more meaningful (Venhoven et al., 2020; Zawadski et al., 2020).

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

The analysis uses survey data from the 2022 Eurobarometer, including 27 European countries and 6,311 members of sports clubs, health/fitness clubs, sociocultural clubs, and/or others. SWB (dependent variable) was captured with respondents' life satisfaction. It was measured on a four-point scale similar to previous research (Huang & Humphreys, 2012). Furthermore, individuals were asked to state their level of agreement, on a four-point scale, with three statements capturing the possible benefits of fighting climate change: creating new jobs and innovations, improving one's health and well-being, and reducing future ecological damage costs. For climate change attitudes, as an additional dependent variable, a mean index was created, since the scale shows good reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.763).

The independent variables of interest are environmental initiatives conducted by sports clubs, where respondents were asked to indicate which environmental initiatives are conducted by their sports organization. Control variables include demographics (nationality, gender, age, partnership, and employment status), volunteering, and sports activity. Since the two outcome variables (climate change attitudes and life satisfaction) are correlated, a seemingly unrelated regression model is preferred to assess the associations of various environmental initiatives with members' SWB and climate change attitudes.

Results, Findings, and Discussion

Sports organization members reported on average less than one (0.80) environmental initiative of their organization. The environmental initiatives most frequently stated were working on reducing waste (24.6%), promoting the use of green energy (17.0%), promoting measures to increase energy efficiency (15.7%), promoting sustainable transport (12.1%), and serving food with sustainable criteria (10.6%). On average, respondents' attitude towards climate change is 3.32 and life satisfaction is 3.23.

The findings of the seemingly unrelated regression model indicate significant positive correlations of members' climate change attitudes with the total number of environmental initiatives (0.035) and specific initiatives like promoting green energy (0.098) and waste reduction (0.051). The coefficients indicate that promoting the use of green energy has a stronger effect on climate change attitudes than waste reduction or the total number of initiatives. However, the environmental initiatives of sports organizations are not significantly associated with their members' life satisfaction. These findings suggest that sports and fitness clubs can play a critical role in shaping members' attitudes towards climate by engaging in environmental initiatives, and these initiatives do not occur at the expense of members' well-being.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

While organizational environmental initiatives are instrumental in shaping members' attitudes towards climate change, they do not affect or reduce members' SWB, suggesting that environmental protection does not come at the expense of SWB. For policymakers, this means that sports organizations represent a relevant context to promote environmental protection and public health, as climate change attitudes can be built without sacrificing the SWB of members.

Is There An Attitude-Behaviour Gap In Surfing?

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Aim and Research Questions

Being environmentally conscious (e.g., showing environmental activism) must not be particularly related to an all-encompassing environmentally friendly behaviour in individuals. For example, there is evidence that there exists an incongruence between being committed to environmental protection at home, and not exhibiting environmentally friendly behaviour in a tourism context, in particular concerning travelling (e.g., Juvan & Dolnicar, 2014). This gap between the intention and actual action is referred to in the literature as "attitude-behaviour-gap", which states that a positive attitude towards something (e.g., the environment) is not a direct predictor of behaviour in this sense.

To study the attitude-behaviour gap is particularly interesting in sports and contexts that are especially exposed to such incongruities. In so, participating in surfing, where people are highly connected to nature and the water, in a landlocked country like Switzerland, the results are particularly interesting as surfing in Switzerland is always associated with travelling. Thus, the study aimed to investigate the relationship between environmental awareness and the consumption and travel behaviour of Swiss surfers.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

There seems to be a correlation between participation in outdoor activities with a positive experience of nature and environmentally conscious behaviour (Larson et al., 2011; Rosa and Collado 2020). This correlation has also been proven specifically for surfing (Borne, 2018; Larson et al. 2018). However, the evidence for this hypothesis is limited. Among other things, it has been criticised that much of the environmentally relevant surfing literature comes from the surfing community itself and tends to present surfing as nature-friendly (Hill & Abbott; 2009). In addition, surfing has also a negative

impact on the environment, for example through frequent and long trips and the production of sports equipment (Langseth & Vyff, 2021; Wicker, 2019).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

This study is based on a quantitative online survey of Swiss surfers in 2023. The population of this study is made up of all surfers who surf for at least 14 days a year and live in Switzerland. The questionnaire was distributed in collaboration with Swiss Surfing via email, newsletter, and social media. In total, the convenience sample consisted of N=300. Consumption and travel behaviour were surveyed before environmental awareness to minimise distortions caused by priming and social desirability. Environmental awareness was measured by a validated scale from Kleinhüchelkotten et al. (2017). The data was analysed descriptively and using multivariate methods.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Swiss surfers travel around 8500 kilometres abroad on surf trips every year. The average surf trip lasts 13 days. 12% always offset their carbon emissions when travelling, while 37% do so occasionally. The remaining 57% consistently refrain from compensating. Active surfers own on average 3 surfboards and 2 wetsuits.

A large proportion of the community sees itself as environmentally friendly and tries to reduce waste and meat consumption, for example. However, when it comes to more far-reaching measures such as reducing air travel or getting involved in environmental organisations, the willingness is significantly lower. The general environmental awareness of surfers living in Switzerland is rather high with a mean value of $M = 5.89$ ($SD = .83$) on a scale of 1-7. However, Spearman rank correlation does not show any significant relationship between environmental awareness and total kilometres travelled per year. There is also no correlation between environmental awareness and the purchase of surfing equipment (boards & wetsuits). On the other hand, a positive correlation was found between environmental awareness and carbon offsetting. However, the results support the assumption that there is an attitude-

behaviour gap between personal attitudes towards the environment and actual behaviour.

Conclusion, Contribution and Implication

The current study findings indicate the existence of an attitude-behaviour gap in the Swiss surf community. Although surfers have a high level of environmental awareness, this is primarily reflected in their behaviour when it comes to so-called “low-hanging fruits” such as carbon offsetting. Practising the sport at the right spots at the right time is too important and the decision not to travel corresponds to a personal high-cost situation. Swiss surfers therefore accept the cognitive dissonance by deciding against their convictions in terms of travel behaviour (cf. Schrems & Upham, 2020).

Summing up, these results emphasise the importance of addressing the issue of sustainability in surf communities more intensively. Surfing associations and clubs should localise the important topics and create a basis for implementing effective sustainability strategies and measures. One possibility to sensitise athletes would be to provide tools for monitoring personal carbon footprints in connection with sporting activities (such as a CO₂ calculator for surf-related mobility and surfing equipment) and to identify possible courses of action for reducing CO₂ emissions.

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Green Clubs, Happy Members? Exploring the Relationship Between Environmental Sustainability, Satisfaction, Commitment, and Loyalty in Non- Profit Sports Clubs

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The fundamental interplay between sports and the natural environment defines Sport Environmental Sustainability (SES), also known as Sport Ecology (McCullough et al., 2020). This recently developed research field is currently dominated by studies that investigate the environmental effects of major sporting events, sports facilities, professional sports leagues, and clubs, as well as international sports organizations (Cury et al., 2022). Existing research has made valuable contributions in enhancing our understanding of the motivations and proactive measures taken by various sports organizations in their endeavors to address climate change. These measures encompass a range of strategies including waste reduction, adoption of energy-efficient lighting, and implementation of sustainable facility improvements and designs. Moreover, existing studies have also focused on examining the outcomes of these measures on several key stakeholders like fans, and employees. For instance, current research has provided compelling evidence that environmental efforts undertaken by sports organizations can have positive effects on fan engagement and environmental behaviors (Casper et al., 2017). However, the existing body of literature has predominantly concentrated on professional sports and their respective fan bases. Yet, non-profit sports clubs (NPSCs) are also increasingly developing environmental sustainability initiatives like their professional counterparts (Hugaerts et al., 2022). Consequently, there is

a growing necessity to broaden the analysis of environmental sustainability to other organizations of the sport industry and other stakeholder groups beyond fans like club members.

Despite the importance of considering stakeholder expectations for organizations in their quest for loyalty and legitimacy, studies have largely overlooked stakeholders' expectations regarding environmental sustainability (Babiak & Trendafilova, 2011). Given that stakeholders wield considerable influence over decision-making processes, ultimately shaping the ability of sports organizations to act, it is relevant to give more attention to stakeholders' perspectives of pro-environmental strategies within sports organizations. This consideration becomes even more critical in the context of NPSCs, where member engagement and loyalty are vital components for achieving their sustainable and non-profit goals (Cuesta-Valiño et al., 2021). These organizations, characterized by their intrinsic relationship-based nature and interaction with sports club participants, operate with limited resources, depend heavily on annual membership fees, and rely on volunteers for various roles (Misener et al., 2020). Therefore, understanding and fostering member loyalty within NPSCs is of paramount importance.

Accordingly, this study aims to investigate members' perceptions of their sports club's environmental initiatives and their consequent impact on commitment, satisfaction, and ultimately, loyalty towards the club. Grounded in Social Identity Theory and drawing on literature in SES and CSR, we hypothesize a positive correlation between members' perception of environmental sustainability and their satisfaction and commitment to the sports club. These factors are known as antecedents of members' loyalty (Lacey & Kennett-Hensel, 2010; Walsh & Bartikowski, 2013). Research questions include: (i) "How do members perceive environmental initiatives?", and (ii) "What impact do these perceptions have on their loyalty to the club?". Additionally, the study will explore the moderating impact of factors such as members' personal norms, and level of environmental consciousness.

The methodology employed in this study is grounded in a quantitative approach, utilizing a cross-sectional research design. An online

survey targeting members from NPSCs in Belgium was conducted from December 2023 to February 2024. A total of 1,751 participants completed the survey. The data analysis – which is currently ongoing – is conducted using the SEM method, and the results will be available at the time of the presentation at the EASM conference.

This study will develop new knowledge on environmental sustainability in amateur sport clubs, particularly in relation to members' perspectives, which is relatively overlooked in the SES literature. Theoretically, the contribution of this study will consist in providing evidence of the relationship between environmental sustainability, satisfaction, commitment, and loyalty in NPSCs. Practically, the results are expected to provide valuable insights for the management and eventually the marketing strategies of NPSCs facilitating the design of effective sustainability initiatives aligned with stakeholders' values. In conclusion, this research highlights sports clubs as a relevant platform for societal change and provide a novel focus to contribute to a more comprehensive perspective to SES research.

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“We Are Primarily a Mountain Sport Club” – The Role of Sport Clubs’ Organisational Identity for the Implementation of Environmental Policies

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Aim and Research Questions

In Europe, over 60 million people practice sport in a club. While organised sport brings numerous benefits, it also has environmental impacts, for example through travel habits or habitat destruction (McCullough et al., 2020). National sport federations, representing sport clubs and advocating in sport policy, could play a vital role in addressing environmental sustainability (ES). To utilise the potential of nonprofit sport organisations in promoting an environmentally sustainable sport development, implementing environmental policies seems to be a crucial issue. Especially when implementing policies in their member organisations, sport federations rely on the collaboration of their sport clubs. However, sport clubs are autonomous and serve their members’ interests. Therefore, transitioning from policy generation to effective implementation in multilevel settings can present complex challenges (e.g., Fahrner & Klenk, 2018). Thereby, organisational identity (OI) may play an important role in how policies are interpreted and acted upon by various organisations included in the implementation process (Stenling, 2014). Thus, this study aims to explore the extent to which ES fits with the OIs of sport clubs and how OIs shape the interpretation of and action in relation to environmental policy implementation from national sport federations to sport clubs.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The study is based on the theoretical framework “sport programme implementation as translation and organisational identity construction” by Stenling (2014). The concept of translation suggests that sport policies are open to (re)construction and describes the active import and adaptation of policies to the receiving context (e.g., Czarniawska & Sevón,

1996). Therefore, when analysing policy implementation in sport clubs, it is advisable to focus on the perspective of the clubs as policy implementers and their diverse characteristics (Skille, 2008). OI answers the question of “Who are we as an organisation?” and might help to understand, why organisations translate policies the way they do (e.g., Glynn, 2008). Thereby, receivers of policies might have varying OIs and the translations of the same policy might look differently in various organisations.

OI plays a role in translating state-implemented sport promotion policies to organised sport (Stenling, 2014). Additionally, sport clubs demonstrate varying OIs, potentially affecting their propensities to act as policy implementers (Stenling & Fahlén, 2016). Corresponding existing research primarily focuses on sport and social inclusion through sport policies. Given the autonomy of sport clubs and their focus on member interests, they are not primarily agents of broader societal goals further from sport, such as ES. Therefore, implementation processes of environmental policies might differ from implementations of policies intrinsic and functional to sport.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

In the context of an in-depth case study, the Swiss Alpine Club (SAC) and the implementation of its climate strategy is analysed. As a nature sport federation, due to the reliance on and exposure to nature of its sport, the SAC might be an especially fruitful case to analyse. As one part of its climate strategy launched in 2021, the development of a CO₂ emissions accounting tool targets the sections (clubs) of the SAC and is therefore a form of multilevel implementation. According to the methodological approach “follow the actor” (Lindberg & Erlingsdottir, 2005), the study targets the SAC as the sender and five sections as the receivers of the environmental policy. 19 semi-structured interviews with key functionaries in the selected sections and the SAC and document analysis of e.g. meeting minutes are conducted. Data will be analysed using inductive coding, applying thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998) for OIs and causation coding (Miles et al., 2020) for translation processes.

Findings and Discussion

Findings are pending as data collection runs from March to May, but analysis will be finished by the time of the conference. Initial insights indicate that although advocating for ES is part of the SAC’s statutes and there seems to be a general understanding in the sections that they have a certain responsibility for environmentally friendly sport practices, ES does not appear to be part of the sections’ OIs. Sections analysed so far identify primarily as mountain sport organisations and display further divergent identities, with some considering themselves as being more progressive, urban, and with well-educated members, and others identifying as traditional, mindful of culture, and rural. The role of these identities for the translation of the analysed environmental policy still needs to be examined.

Conclusion, Contribution and Implication

The results can offer initial insights into nature sport clubs’ OIs and the OI’s role for multilevel environmental policy implementation. It might identify crucial factors for policy makers of federations and public authorities for implementing environmental policies in multilevel contexts and utilising the potential of the organised sport and its leverage in society. Understanding these challenges and opportunities is vital for environmentally sustainable sport development. Additionally, the findings may shed light on the suitability of the theoretical approach for non-sport policies.

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Climate-Friendly On-Site Mobility to Sports and Leisure Facilities – an Analysis of Drivers and Barriers

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Aim and Research Questions

This study aims to investigate what motivates and what hinders sports and leisure practitioners to use climate-friendly on-site mobility and what incentives and offers need to be set in order to favor climate-friendly on-site mobility. Gen Z is becoming ever more important as a leisure end consumer group (e.g., cars are no longer considered a status symbol) while all population groups have greater environmental/climate awareness. At the same time, we are experiencing traffic infrastructure problems for leisure and sports facilities (e.g., overfilled parking lots, overcrowded feeder roads) (European Commission, 2021; Bursa et al., 2022).

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The majority of sports and leisure practitioners have so far preferred to use their own car for on-site mobility (e.g., travel to and from sports and leisure activities) (Bursa et al., 2022), while being aware of their ecological footprint (Mailer et al., 2019). However, sports and leisure practitioners tend to show little willingness to change their behavior significantly, if their leisure experience is impacted in a negative way by using climate-friendly mobility options, neither in terms of travel, nor in terms of sports and leisure (Song et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, there are trends indicating pro-environmental behavior in the field of mobility (Mailer et al., 2019) and the options for climate-friendly transportation have been steadily expanded and improved in cities and

rural areas (Bursa et al., 2022). Furthermore, climate-friendly mobility seems to be accepted and desired by many consumers (Scuttari et al., 2019), although the transition to sustainable mobility offerings and their take-up is complex (Scuttari et al., 2019). Academia calls for research on climate-friendly on-site mobility in general but also in the leisure and sports context in particular (Bursa et al., 2022).

The Motivation-Opportunity-Ability (MOA) model by MacInnis et al. (1991) serves as the basis for this study which aims to determine hindering and motivating factors for climate-friendly on-site mobility in sports and leisure contexts. According to the MOA model, the choice of on-site mobility can be influenced by motivation (the willingness to engage in a certain behavior), opportunity (the circumstances that make it possible or easier to perform a behavior such as local conditions), and ability (individual's capacity) (Hasbullah et al., 2022).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

104 sports and leisure practitioners (61 male, 43 female) were interviewed in 5 Tyrolean ski resorts (Jan - Feb 2024). Semi-structured interviews were conducted during their gondola ride - the interview guideline and the study design were designed to suit the survey location and the time available (interview guideline based on MacInnis et al. (2019), Bursa et al. (2022), Rürger and Mailer (2020)). 60 interviews were analyzed using a qualitative content analysis (MaxQDA) and were categorized according to the MOA model. The following key themes were investigated: hindering and motivating factors for climate-friendly on-site mobility, the ability to use on-site mobility and the opportunity concerning on-site mobility infrastructure.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Motivation: The motivating factors for using the bus were comfort, good bus connections and short distances to the bus stops, as well as not having to search for a parking lot. Factors in favor of the car and against taking the bus were time-savings, insufficient bus connections, comfort, and flexibility. According to Bursa et al. (2022), a free, well-developed bus infrastructure from surrounding communities to the resorts,

tailored to sports practitioners' needs, can explain a high proportion of public transport use.

Opportunity: Digital tools were partly used to search for climate-friendly on-site mobility options, especially Google and Google Maps, as well as destination websites, but apps were used less frequently. Moreover, many tourists obtained information about services such as bus timetables directly from their accommodation. Word of mouth from family and friends also played an important role in obtaining information about mobility options. In general, interviewees reported that the information on on-site mobility was easily accessible. In addition to a high level of satisfaction among sports and leisure practitioners with on-site mobility offers, there were also recommendations for improving offers and information tools: e.g. higher bus frequencies, a park-and-ride system, lockers at the gondola station, or optimization of resort websites.

Ability: Personal preferences, habits, and the number/type of passengers (e.g. children) are more important than costs in the choice of mobility.

(Results are still being analyzed and more details will be presented at the conference).

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implications

Since the choice of on-site mobility is less about costs and more about comfort, time, and flexibility, the positive customer experience should be the focus when optimizing mobility offerings for sports and leisure practitioners (Song et al., 2023). The distance from the accommodation to the bus stops is an influential factor in the choice of transportation.

The use of climate-friendly on-site mobility in a sports and leisure context, such as buses or walking/biking, could stimulate behavioral changes in everyday mobility and counteract increasing levels of inactivity in society (Renninger et al., 2022). This study provides a contribution to the sports community by investigating the motivation of the large target group of sports and leisure practitioners to use climate-friendly on-site mobility. Thus, a positive contribution can be made to the UNWTO's Sustainable Development Goals (European Commission, 2021). The

innovativeness of this work is to investigate climate-friendly on-site mobility to sports and leisure facilities from the perspective of the end consumer rather than the infrastructure.

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SocioEconomic Models of Amateur Sport Clubs: organizational capacity in Europe and South America

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Aim and Research Questions

Amateur Sport Clubs (ASCs) are an essential component of many sport delivery systems around the world. ASCs contribute to the achievement of objectives related to various dimensions, such as sports missions (leisure, training, competition) as well as social missions related or not to sport such as integration, youth, health, leisure, educational. For many years, amateur sports clubs have been facing significant tensions: reduction in public funding, growing instrumentalization by public authorities, increased commercialisation and competition from private sport suppliers. Similarly, ASCs are increasingly confronted with the economic effects of financial and health crises influencing their sustainable development to remain community engagement and participation in sports (Terrien et al., 2023). Furthermore, clubs have also to cope with important changes in volunteering and forms of governance. These multiple external and internal challenges that ASCs have to face result in a transformation of their socioeconomic model, which can lead to a shift in the organization's objectives and to dysfunctions. Thus, the current study aims to explore the organisational capacity of ASCs in European and South American countries.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

While there is a great deal of literature on professional sport, ASC have received relatively smaller attention from the scientific

community. Previous research has highlighted the challenges faced by ASCs such as reduction in public funding, instrumentalization by public authorities, competition from private sport suppliers (Wicker & Breuer, 2013). These challenges stem from the organisational problems faced by associations (recruitment and retention of members, recruitment and retention of volunteers, coaches). It thus becomes essential for ASC to develop their sustainable model (Bradbury et al., 2021, Hall et al., 2003). Development of organizational capacity moves broader concept of socio-economic model. While the economic model is concerned financial resources (Andreff & Scelles, 2016), the notion of socio-economic model needs elaboration beyond the economics perspective: its stakeholders (human resources, alliances and ecosystem (Prouteau & Tchernonog, 2017)). The concept highlights organizational efficiency by combining its resources through different value-creating processes and according to previously defined objectives (Renard & Saint-Amant, 2003).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The proposed socioeconomic model was employed in 5 European countries (i.e. France, Portugal, Lithuania, Luxembourg and Poland) and 5 South American countries (i.e. Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Chile). To develop a reliable and valid scale of socioeconomic analysis, four steps of scale development were conducted (Clark & Watson, 1995): a) the construct definition and content domain; b) item generation and expert review; c) a quantitative study for the purification of the scale; and d) a quantitative study to validate the scale. All items were translated and adapted according to the sociocultural context of each country and transcribed into 6 different languages (Banville et al., 2020).

From this conceptual model, a score card has been developed for measuring the ASC's socioeconomic index based on seven-dimensions. We score each of the seven dimensions on a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 means 'least development' and 100 'most development'. Equal weight was assigned to each dimension, given that all dimensions are important to the socioeconomic analysis. An online questionnaire was used to collect data among local ASCs in each country through

their board members, between March and April 2024. This survey shared on organizational database provided by each partner country. A final set of 3000 surveys were deemed usable for analysis. Data were submitted to descriptive statistics (frequencies, mean values and standard deviations) to characterize the dataset and inferential statistics (two-tailed independent samples test) to identify significant differences between ASCs, using SPSS 28.0. For evaluating the socioeconomic index from each ASC, we used the score-card approach and we computed the mean across all items in each dimension, assigning equal weight to each score.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Expected results are focus on the identification of the socio-economic models of amateur sport clubs in Europe and South America. Based on the findings, we also expect to compare the different socio-economic models in order to identify their strengths/weaknesses and try to identify the models most adapted to the main current challenges. Results are compared to other recent studies on sport organisations models (Escamilla-Fajardo et al., 2021). However performed research covered much wider sample than earlier studies and focuses on ASCs which is still limited in the literature.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The study carried out has enabled ASC to gain a better understanding of the characteristics of amateur sport clubs in terms of socioeconomic model and enable comparisons between countries and continents. This study contributes to strengthening the sport management literature, highlighting concrete actions to be implemented by amateur sport clubs to respond more effectively to the challenges and crises they face. The public policy makers and sports federations involved should find ways of defining support and guidance policies adapted to each model.

Corporate Social Responsibility in Chinese Professional Football: Insights into Consumer Perception and its Antecedents and Outcomes

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Aim

The primary aim of the current research is to build a theoretical and empirical framework for corporate social responsibility (CSR), explaining the pathways of football consumers by assessing the structural model for CSR perception and its antecedents (i.e., club capability and CSR informativeness) and consequences (i.e., attitudes and behavioural intentions). Additionally, this study also examines the moderating role of perceived fit and involvement on the paths.

Theoretical Background

Grounded on the theoretical paradigm of sustainable development, globalisation theory, positive youth development theory, and sense of community theory, Wang et al. (2023) developed and validated a CSR measurement scale with five dimensions: economic, youth, community, environmental, and cultural responsibilities. Grounded on the competitive advantage theory (Barney, 1995) and the mass communication theory (McQuail, 2010), corporate capability and CSR informativeness are proposed as antecedents of CSR perception. Following the definition of corporate capability (Barney, 1995), CSL club capability refers to CSL clubs' expertise in producing and delivering football-related products and services. According to the CSR communication theory (Kim, 2019), CSR informativeness is one of the fundamental aspects of successful CSR communication. In this study, CSR informativeness is defined as information that should be conveyed in CSR communication regarding a club's CSR efforts such as CSR commitment, motives, impact, and the presence of third-party endorsement. Based on Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) theory of reasoned action, the hypothesised link between each of CSR dimension and attitude is established, as well as the hypothetical relationship between attitudes and

behavioural intentions (i.e., attendance intention, WOM intention, merchandise purchasing intention, and media consumption intention). Lastly, this study proposes perceived fit between CSR perception and attitude as a moderator on the relationships between CSR perceptions and attitude based on the theory of meaning transfer (McCracken, 1986), and involvement with the club as a moderator on the paths from attitude to behavioural intentions based on the elaboration likelihood model (Petty & Briñol, 2011). To sum up, it is hypothesised that club capability and CSR informativeness are determinants of CSR perception, which in turn, affects consumer attitudes and behavioural intentions. Perceived fit and involvement are proposed as moderators on the paths.

Methodology

Data collection was completed online through a survey company (Zhushang) in China. The questionnaire was sent out by the company to the CSL-related groups (e.g., CSL community groups, CSL fans groups, CSL interested groups, and CSL communication groups) through the popular Chinese online social media such as WeChat, QQ, Douyin, and Sina Weibo. The measures for club capability, CSR informativeness, CSR perception, attitude, behavioural intentions, perceived fit, and involvement were employed from existing studies (e.g., Kim, 2019; Rayne et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2023, etc.). A 7-point Likert scale, ranging from one (strongly disagree) to seven (strongly agree), was employed to assess each item. A two-step procedure (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) using structural equation modelling was employed to assess the quality of the measurement model and to examine the established hypotheses.

Results/Findings and Discussion

In the first stage, CFA showed a good model fit: $\chi^2/df = 1.03$, RMSEA = .01, NFI = .94, RFI = .94, IFI = .98, and CFI = .98. The composite reliability values ranged from .84 to .92, demonstrating the internal consistency of the measures (Hair et al., 2010). Convergent validity was established as AVE values (.62 ~ .67) for all variables exceeded .50 and all factor loadings exceeded the .707 threshold (Hair et al., 2010). The square roots of the AVEs ranged from .83 to .96, surpassing their respective correlation values ranged from .26

to .82, which confirmed discriminant validity of the measures. In the second stage, SEM revealed an acceptable model fit ($\chi^2/df = 1.42$, NFI = .93, RFI = .92, CFI = .98, IFI = .98, TLI = .88, RMSEA = .06). The path analysis supported 23 out of 28 hypotheses at the .05 probability level. As hypothesised, club capability had a significant effect on five CSR perceptions (economic, youth, community, environmental, and cultural responsibility; $p < .01$). CSR informativeness was significantly related to all dimensions of CSR perception ($p < .001$). Youth, community, environmental, and cultural responsibility had positive significant relationships with consumer attitude, while economic responsibility had no significant effect on attitude. Furthermore, partial moderating effects were found for perceived fit and involvement.

Conclusions

By developing the CSR structural model, this research significantly advances the understanding of CSR within the Chinese professional football industry. By examining the drivers of consumer CSR perception and its consequential attitudinal and behavioural outcomes, the empirical validation of the conceptual framework provides valuable insights into football consumers' psychology and behaviours in China, with a better understanding of consumers' psychological and decision-making processes. Besides, it offers practical guidance for club managers in designing effective CSR strategies and fostering sustainable development.

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Corporate Social Responsibility and Legitimacy Management in Charitable Sport Foundations: Evidence from Major League Soccer Clubs

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Aim and Research Questions

This study aims to examine the strategic corporate social responsibility (CSR) and legitimacy management of Major League Soccer (MLS) clubs and their associated community foundations by addressing the two following research questions (RQs):

RQ1) What are the core CSR initiatives promoted by the league and implemented by the 29 MLS clubs and their community foundations?

RQ2) What are the salient legitimization strategies associated with CSR implementation and communication processes?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The theoretical framework of this study is grounded in legitimacy theory (Suchman, 1995). Legitimacy is an inherent mechanism for organisations to conform to societal norms and standards. In the MLS context, the establishment of club-affiliated community foundations is a notable phenomenon that demonstrates the extent to which clubs have normatively institutionalised philanthropy into their organisational culture. This study emphasises the role of foundations as a prominent CSR delivery mechanism for football clubs (Zeimers et al., 2018) yet remains relatively under-investigated (Hyndman & Liguori, 2024). Managerial perspectives suggest that legitimacy is a strategically manageable organisational resource, with foundations considered as a primary vehicle for CSR practices due to their

dynamic affiliation with their core clubs (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2022).

An emerging research stream has explored organisational and strategic issues related to football clubs and charitable foundations (e.g., Anagnostopoulos et al., 2017; Anagnostopoulos et al., 2022; Hyndman & Liguori, 2024), yet a prominent research gap still persists with regards to how those entities legitimise CSR initiatives and promote beneficiary impacts amongst stakeholders (Inoue et al., 2013; Kolyperas et al., 2016). Although foundations operate as separate non-profit entities with distinctive strategic features and an influential role in legitimising their founding clubs' philanthropic works (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2022), the extant CSR vis-à-vis football literature has not adequately appraised the notion of legitimacy management from both strategic and theoretical viewpoints.

Methodology

To address RQ1, we examined the key CSR initiatives promoted by MLS Works, which is the league's charitable arm dedicated to executing CSR-oriented programmes, and the CSR initiatives promoted by the clubs and foundations. This web-based content analysis was guided by the codebook of Profumo et al. (2024) which offers a comprehensive checklist of football-specific CSR activities across six key areas: 1) community development, 2) philanthropy, 3) promotion of football and other sports, 4) health, 5) education, and 6) environment.

To address RQ2, we are conducting case studies on specific MLS clubs with exemplary CSR practices using interviews with expert respondents in charge of their clubs' CSR functions (e.g., community relations or foundation managers). The interviews will provide insights into legitimization strategies associated with the CSR implementation and communication processes of the clubs and foundations.

The content analysis is complete, and ethical approval has been granted for the interviews planned for Summer 2024. The conference presentation will include the findings of both the content analysis and case studies.

Findings and Discussion

Regarding RQ1, our content analysis indicates that MLS consistently endorses four key initiative areas: 1) Soccer for All, 2) Kick Childhood Cancer, 3) Greener Goals, and 4) Special Olympics Unified Programme. At the club level, the CSR information communicated by the 29 clubs largely correspond to the four key areas, signalling a normative approach and an isomorphic behaviour towards CSR engagement. However, there is a notable variety in the extent to which certain clubs engage with more and different activities within each area, indicating a diversification trend in their CSR portfolios. In particular, 10 clubs (e.g., Austin FC, FC Cincinnati, FC Dallas, LA Galaxy, New York City FC, San Jose Earthquakes, etc.) have highly active foundations and stand out with a variety in CSR activities beyond the league's key areas.

Regarding RQ2, the interviews aim to emphasise the strategic role of foundations in facilitating and coordinating CSR activities. This perspective is established on the notion that foundations have unique organisational functionalities and strategic goals to serve as a prime CSR delivery mechanism for their core clubs (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2022; Zeimers et al., 2018). In addition to their isomorphic and normative approach, the case studies will explore how foundations demonstrate legitimisation strategies in CSR implementation and communication processes.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This study explores the strategic linkages between CSR engagement and legitimacy management in the organisational contexts of MLS clubs and their community foundations. This study extends the horizon of legitimacy theory in the niche sport philanthropy area to reiterate the growing normative and strategic importance of CSR practice in the North American football industry. For both academics and practitioners, this study not only provides insights into the strategic role of foundations in CSR engagement for legitimacy building purposes, but also contributes a meso-level analysis of the strategic alignment and dynamic across the league, clubs, and foundations.

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Green Supply Chain Management in Football

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As stressed by the Sport for Climate Action initiative of the United Nations, “meeting the scale of the [environmental] challenge requires action by all sectors, including the sport sector to achieve the goals of the Paris Climate Change Agreement” (UNFCCC, 2018): in this regard football organisations are increasingly called to display environmental leadership by engaging in environmental protection. Despite increasing efforts for a greener football sector, football lags behind other industries' response to integrate environmental practices in management and operation mechanisms. Under this perspective, the European ERASMUS + funded FREE KICKS project aims at improving environmental sustainability within football organisations and their supply chains. The project aims at supporting football organisations since they often lack a coherent environmental strategy and governance and operational capabilities to assess and reduce their environmental impacts within their operations and supply chains (Trendafilova et al., 2014; Todaro et al., 2022).

Despite the increasing commitments, little is known about how football organisations are tackling environmental issues (Daddi et al., 2022; Todaro et al., 2022). Moreover, the topic of green supply chain management is still one of the most underexplored in football. Only few studies and documents focus on recommendations and on the importance of supply chains management of football organisations to mitigate the direct and indirect environmental impacts of football events (UEFA, 2024; Khanna et al., 2024; Daddi et al., 2022; Todaro et al., 2022).

To fill this gap, the present abstract contributes to literature by identifying environmental governance gaps and needs, as well as improvement opportunities, of football organisations from a supply chain perspective. To do so, we interviewed 5 football organisations from 5 different countries and 2 continents (Europe and South America): FC Porto (Portugal), Malmö FF (Sweden), Racing Club (Argentina), the Real Betis Balompie

(Spain) and the Romanian Football Federation (Romania). Moreover, we interviewed their contractors to gain a broader understanding of the dynamics and environmental impacts of the supply chains. Three common types of contractors were identified for each football organisation: the suppliers of catering services (food & beverage), cleaning services and turf maintenance. These are key services for football organisations which also have a relevant impact on the environment. Specifically, Life Cycle Assessment (LCAs) studies carried out in the frame of FREE KICKS project highlighted the relevance of food and beverage as well as cleaning sectors of football events, whereas turf maintenance is an under investigated topic in sport sustainability management with few studies. Thus, we developed 4 different semi-structured interview protocols: one for each club's procurement manager and one for each operation manager of their three types of contractors. A total of 20 interviews were carried out from April 2023 to February 2024.

Results showed that all organisations involved in the sample have consistently placed a strong emphasis on environmental sustainability in recent years. However, we identified 7 main areas for green supply chain management improvement: Strengthening the formalisation of environmental management responsibilities across organisational positions, coherently with the sustainability strategy; Strengthening the formalisation of sustainability governance commitment towards the supply chain; Strengthening the awareness on supply chains environmental impacts and enhancing the use of sustainable products and services; Strengthening environmental transparency and traceability in supply chains; Strengthening environmental clauses in supplier contracts; Strengthening supplier sustainability assessments; Strengthening supply chain sustainability-oriented stakeholder engagement and external communication.

Based on these needs, we also provided 11 recommendations for improving environmental sustainability supply chain management among football organisations: Formalisation of a sustainability managers and a sustainability department, coordinating supply chain management strategies within the organization; Development of a sustainability report with focus on sustainable

supply chain management; Implementation of environmental management systems (EMSs); Enhancement of environmental training to managers and purchasing departments; Development of a sustainable purchasing policy; Development of a sustainable supplier selection procedure; Enhancement and implementation of environmental clauses in contracts with suppliers; Development of a monitoring procedure for suppliers; Development of an environmental audit protocol; Engagement with suppliers to foster sustainability awareness and higher transparency of data; Policy on sponsorship for sustainability: developing environmental sustainability criteria for aiding selection of commercial partnerships

Moreover, results show significant differences in environmental awareness and degree of internalization among different football supply chains. Specifically, the food supply chain appears more advanced in the sustainability journey compared to the cleaning and turf maintenance.

Our innovative study delves into the supply chain management of top football organisations in different countries and continents. By carrying out 20 semi-structured interviews, we highlighted differences and similarities among football organisations and their contractors. In particular, we identified 7 common improvement main areas for improvement and 11 common recommendations to green the management of football supply chains. This study provides useful insights for any football organisation willing to advance in environmental sustainability and to mitigate its direct and indirect environmental impacts.

Green Play: Setting the Research Agenda for Environmental Sustainability in Sport Sponsorship

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Aim and Research Questions

Many companies and institutions have recently directed much emphasis towards environmental sustainability. Among them, many that engage as sponsors. However, there has been little research that links environmental sustainability with sponsorship. Therefore, the aim of this research is to systematically review the literature regarding environmental sustainability and sponsorship to identify general research gaps. Thereby, the paper provides a research agenda for environmental sustainability in sport sponsorship.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

In this regard, general literature reviews on sponsorship by Cornwell & Maignan (1998) and Cornwell & Kwon (2020) served as guidance. As the authors underlined the importance of the interrelation of various actors, the concept of the sport sponsorship engagement platform (Buser et al., 2020) formed an essential perspective for evaluating the studies from the literature search. Regarding environmental sustainability, a broad range of concepts including triple bottom line value system, corporate social responsibility, environmental social governance, sustainable development goals and circular economy was incorporated.

Lately, research on environmental sustainability in sports management has gained traction (e.g., Trail & McCullough, 2020; Gammelsæter & Loland, 2023; Mallen & Chard, 2011, McCullough et al., 2020). However, Breitbarth et al. (2023) note that it still lacks behind compared to other fields. On top of that, there are barely any studies focusing specifically on sport sponsorship. As a general approach to environmental

sustainability in sport management, Cury et al. (2022) reviewed literature through a meta-analysis, identifying bibliographic patterns as well as methods and theoretical frameworks.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Compared to the approach of Cury et al. (2022), this literature review concentrates on sponsorship as a single topic within (sport) management to derive a more specific agenda. It was conducted as a systematic literature review, more specifically as a scoping review following the approach of Xiao and Watson (2019). This method enables to draw a more comprehensive picture of the status quo in a field. This paper applies a search term that includes a variety of key words relating to both sponsoring and environmental sustainability. Five of the most relevant databases in management literature (Science Direct, Web of Science, EBSCO, Taylor and Francis, SAGE) were employed. The inclusion process for the studies was structured in several steps, starting with an initial screening of the abstract, followed by a full-text analysis for the papers that were deemed relevant.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The application of the search term produced 2,135 publications of which only 28 actually focused on the relation of environmental sustainability and sponsorship. Only a quarter of these publications particularly concerned sport sponsoring, emphasizing the importance of further research. The 28 papers were allocated to the steps of the sponsoring process model adapted and slightly modified from Cornwell & Kwon (2020). Moreover, the papers were differentiated by the level of aggregation regarding actor relationships, thus creating a research gap table with two dimensions. The allocation was done independently by three researchers in a two-round process ensuring a high reliability.

With regards to the sponsorship process, the allocation revealed that a majority of the studies examined customer responses on the sponsorship. To a much lesser extent, they analyse target audiences and objectives, the initial decision, and the contract content as well as activation. Subsequent decisions were disregarded. From an actor relationship perspective, most studies observed dyadic or triadic relationships of one of sponsor,

sponsee, customer, or employee. Other actors as well as multi-actor networks were neglected.

The research gap table offered guidance for the development of an agenda for sport sponsorship research in the context of environmental sustainability. The agenda is based on concepts from other related fields as well as the collected sponsorship studies. Each step of the sponsorship process was addressed with recommendations and complemented with exemplary research questions.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The systematic literature analysis reveals a focus on investigating customer responses to sponsorship. To date, there have been no studies on how important environmental sustainability is for sponsorship contracts, although companies are increasingly obliged by law to take measures to ensure environmental sustainability. Furthermore, the impact of environmental sustainability on sponsorship objectives and target groups in sport has not yet been analysed. Moreover, the influence of environmental sustainability in the network of sponsors and sponsees on sponsorship contracts and activations has also not yet been studied. The paper presents an overview of the established research in each of the five steps of the sponsorship process in relation to environmental sustainability. By identifying relevant research gaps, this study serves as a starting point for important research projects on promising and socially relevant topics in sponsorship, especially in sport. Consequently, the paper also serves management practice, which is dependent on research into socially relevant issues for its management decisions in sponsorship.

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Climate Risks in Formula 1: “Drive to Survive?”

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Aim and Research Questions

Formula 1, with its global footprint, is exposed to many different natural environments and climate risks. Given the cancellation of Imola’s 2023 race due to flooding, there is a need for the FIA, Formula 1, and the teams to be more aware of the climate scenarios they face in each race location to ensure safety as well as competitive success. This presentation addresses this concern by assessing the boundary conditions for safe racing, determining the climate risks which exceed those boundary conditions, and providing recommendations for adaptation to reduce climate vulnerability for Formula 1.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Across the sport industry, there is known concern for the risk that climate change poses to future sport events. For example, the Winter Olympic Games face a reduction in suitable host cities as a result of rising temperatures (Scott et al., 2015). We also need to consider the risks faced by athletes, officials and spectators as these risks will be specific to each sport (Schneider & Mueke, 2021). Therefore, examining each sport individually is critical. What makes Formula 1 a special case to examine is its increased risk resulting from exposure to 22 different locations globally in the 2023 season (24 for 2024).

Subsequent concerns related to climate change and the natural environment may include air pollution, extreme weather events, greenhouse gas emissions, and natural disasters (Bernard et al., 2021). Given that these hazards are known, there is an opportunity for adaptation which can reduce the sensitivity to these hazards and therefore the overall risk to sport (Orr & Inoue, 2019). Thus, if these hazards are identified, estimated, and appropriate measures taken, Formula 1 may mitigate its climate risk. This research also addresses an important call for more research on climate change, sport events, and elite-level performance as indicated in the work of Orr and colleagues (2023).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

This study used a multi-step approach to assessing climate risk in Formula 1 which built descriptive analyses for each race location. Using the 22 races from the 2023 season as well as Shanghai and Johannesburg as potential sites, interviews with medical professionals working motorsport, technicians, and race officials were conducted to establish boundary conditions for safe racing at each race location (Ross & Orr, 2022). The points of analysis for climate risk were determined to be: temperature, air quality, precipitation, flooding, extreme events, and future climate projections. Data for these were collected through public sources (e.g., NOAA for temperatures) for the last decade (2013-2023). Occurrences of the safe boundary conditions being exceeded were noted. Lastly, reports from the IPCC and national weather agencies were reviewed for the likelihood of conditions to worsen as a result of climate change and for the frequency and risk of natural weather events (e.g., wildfires, mudslides, and sandstorms). Data were aggregated to provide a descriptive analysis of climate risk to each of the 24 race sites.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Across all race locations, the most common climate risk was extreme heat (present for 19 of the 24 locations) with flooding (16 locations) and poor air quality harming breathability (10 locations) presenting high concerns as well. Heavy rains were noted at 7 locations, but unpredictable, fast-moving storms could potentially increase this number to 12

locations. The most at-risk race location is Singapore with risks from heat, precipitation, and flooding, followed by Qatar with heat and poor air quality. Only two race locations were considered to have no immediate climate risks: Spielberg, Austria and Monaco. Established boundary conditions and a site-by-site breakdown of all 24 race locations will be shared in the presentation. Formula 1 does demonstrate a unique vulnerability to climate change as a sport both for people as well as by location (Schneider & Mueke, 2021). Similarly to the Winter Olympic Games research from Scott and colleagues (2015), there are climate risks that will make some race locations more uncertain as hosts in the future.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

Most of the Formula 1 sites are at increased risk of vulnerability to climate hazards and adaptations will need to be considered to ensure the safety of athletes, officials, and spectators (Schneider & Mueke, 2021). Through adaptation, Formula 1 could decrease its climate risk (Orr & Inoue, 2019). These adaptations may include heat acclimatization plans, monitors studying air quality and the use of KN95 masks when air quality is poor, weather radars and warning systems beyond those already employed, monitoring river levels and raising equipment (particularly electrical equipment) to avoid floods, as well as adjusting the calendar to avoid extreme climate risks in each location.

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A Specific Environment And Specific Regulations Within Swiss Professional Football

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Aim and research Question

Swiss professional football has a very specific environment. First of all, this is linked to the country's non-presence in the European Union, but also to its socio-cultural dimension. The country has indeed seen a strong presence of foreign players, particularly from large waves of immigration. Moreover, Switzerland also has a small market of 8.5 million inhabitants in three languages. Hence the fact that TV rights, sponsorship, stadium attendance and merchandising are necessarily more modest than in the big five countries. Moreover, there is an enormous competition between football and hockey. Finally, the weak regulation of the league does not allow Swiss professional football to move into another dimension, both sporting and, above all, economic. This forces clubs to develop different forms of income and a new managerial expertise. So how do Super League clubs go about developing sports models in such a specific context?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

the Durand model shows that there are (Durand and al. 2005) different expertise depending on the local potential of the clubs. To this end, based on this model, we seek to understand the territorial context in which clubs operate and whether specific regulation is carried out by the league. Secondly, we aim to compare and understand the competition between hockey and football in a specific territorial environment and a small market (Bayle and al. 2019) In a third time, we study the models of Super League clubs on the labour market and more specifically on the transfer market, in a unique context, where player transfers are an essential part of a club's business model. Indeed, according to Andreff & Staudohar there are two different funding models for the clubs. The SSSL model (Spectators-Subsidies-Sponsors-Local) which was maintained between 1960 and 1995 and finally the MMMMG model (Media-Merchandising-Magnates-Market-Global)

emerged in a market dynamic where profit was not important enough in the first model where clubs spent more and needed more resources. So, what is really the situation for Swiss clubs? What is their business model and how is it regulated by the league? Is this regulation specific to a specific context?

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

To do so, based on our data (1995-2020) relating to Swiss football and hockey (2014-2020), we are seeking to find out the various areas of expertise of Swiss professional football clubs with regard to the competition with hockey clubs in a specific context. We describe the specific characteristics of the different models adopted by the football clubs of the first division in Switzerland in order to draw up an empirical typology between the different football clubs. Our analysis considered both external factors (independent variables), such as a club's local potential, measured in terms of its market environment and its stadium, and internal factors (dependent variables), measured via a club's marketing, managerial and sporting expertise. We used the data to attribute a performance rating, ranging from 1 (lowest rating) to 5 (highest rating) in increments of 0.5, to each club. We then normalised these ratings by applying the following formula: $X_{\text{normalised}} = \frac{X - X_{\text{min}}}{X_{\text{max}} - X_{\text{min}}}$

Results

These are as follows:

- The Hegemonics (FC Basel, BSC Young Boys) Switzerland's top clubs, which represent Switzerland in European competitions and have had the best budgets in recent years thanks to their sporting success, but also their economic success through player transfers;
- The Flagships (FC Luzern, FC St. Gallen, FC Sion, FC Thun), which are the representatives of an entire region and have little competition on their soil with hockey clubs. They are regular first division clubs and have positioned themselves as training clubs;
- The Under-exploited potential (FC Servette, Lausanne-Sport, FC Zurich, Grasshopper Club), These clubs operate in Switzerland's biggest business cities. However, they do not manage to take advantage of their geographical location, mainly because of the strong competition from hockey clubs, but also because of their poor national sporting results;

- Heterogenous Small Local Clubs (NE Xamax, FC Lugano), who have few financial resources and who concentrate on the local market for the bulk of their player transactions, which are most of the time based on loans and on players at the end of their contracts.

Discussion and Conclusion

Faced with this heterogeneity and an increasing competitive imbalance, this research shows the different expertise of the clubs and their needs in the economic aspect. While wondering what the implications may be for the Swiss league and for the clubs in view of the Super League regulation. Swiss football clubs face a strong competition with hockey clubs and the Transfers have become a major element for clubs, both in sporting and economic terms. It is therefore essential for a club to develop expertise in this area in order to benefit from it, particularly in economic terms, given the low revenues of Swiss football clubs. Empirically, we have attempted to show how clubs operate in a specific context and market (Switzerland) and how clubs approach the transfer market economically. The results of our resource-based study support the hypothesis that organizations (clubs) create value by combining internally developed resources with complementary resources acquired on the market. The resource-based view explains differences in performance in terms of differences in resources within a given industry. However, it raises the question of how companies use resources to create value and thereby gain a competitive advantage that may enable them to improve their performance. That said, the interplay between resources, capabilities, luck and the achievement of competitive advantage through market asymmetries has hardly ever been studied from a resource-based perspective.

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Managing Stakeholder Tension in the Hosting of a Major Ski Sprint Event in a Norwegian City

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Aim and Research Questions

The World Ski Sprint Cup has been held in the centre of the city of Drammen for almost twenty years. The effective delivery of the event requires the cooperation a range of governmental and civic stakeholders. In recent years there has been increasing criticism of the event resulting in growing tension between stakeholders. The critique (often reflected in the local newspaper) is focused on issues such as: the movement of between 15,000 and 20,000 cubic meters of snow produced by snow cannons and transported to the center by bio diesel trucks; the volume of garbage generated at the event; the disruption caused by the closing of roads; elitism; and the opportunity cost of municipal support. The aims of the research are: (a) to identify the stakeholders associated with the event and to determine the form that the interaction between stakeholders takes and (b) to analyse how tensions, particularly those between the local community, the municipality and the organisers are managed.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

One of the most insightful theories used to analyse the interrelationship of actors is stakeholder theory (Freeman et al. 2018, Mitchell et al., 1997) which in Fassim's application gives the theory a strong analytical capacity. Fassim, differentiates between different forms of stakeholding and acknowledges the potential for movement between these forms. He categorises stakeholders into stakeowners, stakewatchers, stakekeepers, and stakeseekers, a categorisation that is used in the analysis of this case. This differentiation is relevant when considering the complex relationship between stakeowners and stakeholders in this event. Also relevant to our

analysis is Mitchell et al's. (1997) observation that stakeholder activism depends on the possession of three characteristics: urgency (a motive for action); power (control over resources needed by the stakeowner); and legitimacy (derived, for example, from contract, election or membership). A fourth characteristic for effective stakeholder activism is a high degree of homogeneity of interests and objectives – a characteristic that is often missing from groups such as residents and business owners.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Fifteen stakeholder interviews will be the primary source of data. 10 interviews have been completed and all 15 will be completed by the end of May. A purposeful sample of the stakeholders starting with the stakeowners (Fassin, 2012) has been selected. The interview guide consisted of six main sections: (a) what is your role/stake in this event; (b) what are the costs and benefits to your organization/community and to Drammen of hosting this event; (c) who are the important stakeholders for this event; (d) what are your objectives for the event; (e) how do you interact with other stakeholder groups; and (f) what do you consider to be the current challenges to the successful delivery of the event and how are these challenges being managed. Less formal discussions were held with spectators and citizens met on the days before, during and after the event. The interview data were supported by extensive field observations and participation on different stakeholder meetings. Data were subject to content analysis manually, a process for systematically analyzing all types of messages, and specifically pattern matching was used.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Preliminary results of our study indicate that stakeholders collaborating on hosting the event have diverging expectations in relation to the role of the municipality in regard to resources and manpower and also what the event means to the city. Furthermore, the municipality had to deal with the problems of representing residents' concerns and supporting the organisers. Specific issues included the following: 1) increasing concern with the environmental impact of the event which provided a focal point for more

generalized opposition from some residents and also a general concern about a city centre-based sprint; 2) restructuring within the municipality resulted in a division of responsibility for the event and created a set of internal stakeholders who had to be 'managed'; 3) increasing concern within the municipality (local political parties) about the cost (and opportunity cost) of the event for a relatively low income city.

Conclusion, Contribution and Implications

Our study highlights the challenges for stakeholders in hosting a complex city centre sport event at a time when: 1) there is increasing concern with environmental impact; 2) the municipality is under increasingly severe financial pressure; and 3) responsibility for the event within the municipality has been divided. The stakeholder network has become more complex in recent years and requires more investment of managerial time in its management. Stakeownership is contested between the event rights owners and the municipality and interests classified as stakewatchers and stakeseekers have become more active and interventionist. The contribution will be the analysis of the strategy adopted by the municipality to manage increased stakeholder activism.

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Integrating Integrity: Environmental Communication in Sport

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Aim and Research Questions

Integrity in sport is a widely discussed topic, highlighted by instances of doping, corruption, and match-fixing (Gardiner et al., 2017). However, a new issue of integrity has recently emerged, instigated by increased attention toward environmental sustainability efforts in all sectors, including sport. While many sport organizations implement environmental initiatives and communicate about them, scholars observe discrepancies between honest action and their communication (Lesjø & Gulbrandsen, 2017; Miller, 2017). Such discrepancies delay honest climate action and raise concern towards the legitimacy and transparency of sport organizations.

When environmental communication is not substantiated by real action, stakeholders may overestimate sport organizations' efforts to address climate change. If the genuine intentions of sport organizations in their environmental efforts can be questioned, misleading environmental communication parallels that of other sport integrity issues. While unethical environmental communication in sport is previously researched, the concept's potential to threaten integrity in sport is still underexplored. Therefore, this study expands the concept of integrity in sport by including unethical environmental communication, and asks: how should integrity underpin environmental communication in sport organizations?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Discrepancies between environmental communication and action are evident in FIFA's partnership with oil company Aramco (Sim, 2024), as they simultaneously assert care for the environment. Similar discrepancies are evident in unsubstantiated carbon neutrality claims of the Olympics (Boykoff, 2021). These cases challenge the

integrity of the sport organizations, given that integrity is defined as transparent, trustworthy, and non-corrupt practices (Gardiner et al., 2017).

Scholars have found a low commitment towards climate engagement in sport organizations, with limited and inconsistent signaling across communication platforms, and general absence of tangible environmental goals (Hugaerts et al., 2022; McCullough et al., 2020). At the same time, few studies have proposed how environmental efforts should be communicated by sport organizations, based on current environmental initiatives (McCullough et al., 2020).

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

This study followed an exploratory qualitative research design with data generated through analysis of semi-structured interviews with six leaders of Norwegian Sport Federations (NSFs), representing small, medium, large sized organizations, in terms of memberships. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis as proposed by Clarke and Braun (2017), from which 20 codes emerged, further divided into 11 themes, and presented below as four themes.

Findings and Discussion

The first theme, «Understanding Integrity,» revealed participants' emphasis on integrity and stressed that the term, together with transparency is integral part of their daily life and work in the NSFs. They indicated that Norway, and their NSFs, are role models and leaders on matters of integrity in the international sport context. The second theme, «Status of Environmental Strategy,» showed care for the environment as a priority, but with a general vagueness around NSFs' environmental strategies, suggesting a lack of specific direction.

The third theme, «Perceived Challenges,» highlighted the difficulty of quality environmental engagement at the grassroots club level, deemed a great obstacle to sincere action. The fourth theme, «Environmental Communication,» indicated consensus that maintaining organizational integrity requires environmental communication to be underpinned by honest action. Avoiding

«window dressing» and refraining from discussing environmental efforts, to preserve credibility, were emphasized.

These findings should be considered in the context of Norway and the Norwegian volunteer-based sport system. Participants' integrity perceptions resembled those of Norway in general, with high measures of public trust and indicators of good governance observed both in sport (Geeraert, 2018) and in society at large (OECD, 2023).

As seen in other international contexts, NSFs lack in prioritizing care for the environment and communicate vaguely. This is an integrity concern, further impacting stakeholder engagement and moral obligations. If sport organizations under-communicate their environmental engagement, they fail to demonstrate the importance of climate action and that it should be engrained in organizational behavior. By not acting on moral duties and obligations, organizations miss the chance to present themselves as legitimate members of society and fall short on utilizing the engagement potential sport has to mitigate climate change.

Conclusion, Contributions and Implications

This study has raised question as to how integrity should underpin environmental communication in sport organizations. It is stressed that alignment between environmental actions and communication is critical. A key contribution of this study is a broader perspective on integrity. By considering integrity in the context of environmental communication in sport, it becomes clear that under-communication of environmental efforts can be as unethical as overcommunication. Only through ethical environmental communication can sport organizations succeed in driving social change. This implies that sport organizations must adopt a new understanding of their role in society in promoting environmental efforts, and hence must engage in ethical activities and actively communicate about them. Such communication is not just intended to strengthen the integrity and legitimacy of sport organizations, but further has indispensable value for society at large.

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Fan Perceptions of Environmental Sustainability Initiatives in Football

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Aim and Research Questions

Green Football Weekend (GFW) (February 2nd–5th 2024) encourages action and pledges from fans to tackle climate change in football. The aim of this study, working with GFW, is to evaluate the campaign and understand fan's interpretation of environmental sustainability (ES) in relation to football. The research questions are to understand fans' awareness of GFW and barriers in adopting more ES practices.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Sport is developing environmentally driven initiatives to encourage pro-sustainable behaviours amongst fans (Casper et al., 2017; Trail & McCullough, 2019). Furthermore, sports organisations may increase fans' awareness of environmental issues, inspire them to discuss it with others (McCullough et al., 2022) and engage if their team asks them to (Casper et al., 2017). Furthermore, until recently, support to increase ES awareness has been lacking (Trail & McCullough, 2019).

Despite this, there are challenges and barriers for organisations and fans. Some initiatives have been found to alienate fans, often due to politics (Kellison & Cianfrone, 2020) and not always translate into their personal life (Casper et al., 2017). To this end, we consider the adapted Value Belief Norm framework (Caspar et al., 2020) to explore how environmental initiatives can promote positive changes in fan behaviours. Understanding constraints, both external and internal, is also of importance for organisations, as they play a role in how fans engage at home or in sport in ES (Caspar et al., 2020; Trail & McCullough, 2019).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Two data points were gathered; first semi-structured opportunistic interviews (Neville and Reicher, 2011) were conducted before games outside the grounds of four stadiums on GFW. In total, 41 short interviews were conducted lasting on average 1 minute 42 seconds, with 4 rejections. This approach was taken for fan convenience (Neville and Reicher, 2011). Topics discussed included GFW awareness, ES perception and barriers, with a content analysis employed.

Secondly, a survey was disseminated by GFW (n=239), with the data then provided to the researchers. The survey focused on awareness and impact of GFW and ES related issues. This data will be analysed before the conference.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Fans in our study reported lack awareness of what their club are doing to become more environmentally sustainable, alongside limited GFW awareness. This perhaps suggests that football clubs in England are having difficulties in disseminating education and awareness to fans on ES.

Furthermore, we found the availability of plant-based products at stadiums, the availability of recycling outside grounds and perceived hypocrisy from clubs as barriers to fans being more ES at football. Understanding these in greater depth, participants highlighted clubs and players travelling unsustainably when fans are expected to do the opposite, highlighting hypocrisy. Additionally, GFW 2024 focused on plant-based consumption; however, our participants identified a lack of options and quality of such options at games. Therefore, we find that reducing barriers to engagement in ES initiatives is crucial to creating norms and values amongst fans.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

To conclude, we identified that there is a challenge to create awareness of GFW and club's ES efforts. Furthermore, fans discussed barriers to ES, including plant-based meals, recycling, and hypocrisy. Therefore, increasing awareness of campaigns and reducing barriers for fans, is vital for

campaign success. To facilitate the awareness, making sustainability part of what it means to be a football fan may facilitate ES behaviours to sustain both within and outside of the football ground.

This study contributes to the understanding of ES initiatives and Value Belief Norm framework, identifying the importance of reducing barriers to fans engaging in ES is crucial in developing environmental norms and values. To this end, we provide practical implications for sports organisations to reduce barriers, such as recycling around stadiums and availability of plant-based meals, which show club's willingness to ES.

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Environmental Sustainability and the Olympics: A Critical Analysis of Past, Present, and Future

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In 1995, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) adopted environmental sustainability (ES) as the third pillar of Olympism (Cantelon et al., 2000). Since then, the IOC has steadily worked to encourage increasingly higher standards for achieving ES at Olympic events (Leopkey & Parent, 2012; Schue et al., 2021). The Olympics create significant ES challenges for organizers, primarily because of the facilities required for competitions, the thousands of spectators who travel to attend the games, as well as the vast number of natural resources needed to host the event. The Olympic Games in Lillehammer, Rio, and Beijing have been noted for their poor environmental sustainability outcomes. Meanwhile, the games in Sydney and London have had some success in achieving ES goals, but even in these cases, ES has remained a challenge (Briese, 2001).

Research examining ES in the Olympic movement has largely focused on examining specific Olympic Games, fan behavior, Olympic host nation plans, and event legacy planning. Some have focused on sustainability more broadly, including social, economic, and environmental parts of the Olympics. However, a review of this literature is needed to guide future studies and direct sport scholars' attention toward understanding ES and the Olympics in more detail. Therefore, the goal of this study is to review the literature on ES and the Olympics, focusing specifically on studies that address the natural environment as it relates to both summer and winter Olympic games.

The review was completed following the steps outlined by Arksey and colleagues (2005) with the suggestions from Westphaln and colleagues (2021). Relevant articles were identified utilizing SPORTDiscus, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar. Sample search terms included "Olympics environment," "Olympic Games environment," "Olympics

sustainability,” “Olympic Games sustainability,” “Green Games,” “Green Olympics,” and “Green Olympic Games.” These search terms were used in different combinations and configurations. The search process produced 107 scholarly articles focused on ES and the Olympics. Once these initial studies were identified, the authors worked to reduce the original article count by focusing only on those that fit the inclusion criteria: 1) being published in a peer-reviewed journal, 2) having primary data collection, and 3) manuscripts published in English. The articles also must have focused on the Olympics and ES, rather than on sustainability more broadly. Once this inclusion criteria were applied, 61 articles remained for analysis.

Findings indicate the majority of studies (49.18%, n=30) focus on Olympic games taking place in the summer while only a minority focus only on the winter Olympic games (21.31%, n=13), which may be a cause for concern as winter Olympic games also have the potential for significant environmental impact (Cantelon & Letters, 2000). In addition, from a methodology perspective, content analysis (27.87%, n=17) was the predominant study design in which the focus was on analyzing IOC documents or Olympic host city documents related to ES. Only very few studies have focused on collecting primary data related to the Olympics and ES (see Konstantaki et al., 2021 for an example), which may show a gap in the field that requires additional attention. Overall, the goal of this review of current scholarship is to identify trends and gaps in the literature. The findings provide useful guidance for researchers to progress the work on ES and the Olympics into the future.

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Sustainability in Sport Events: Carbon Footprint in a Canoe- kayak Competition

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Aim and research questions

The aim of this research project was to analyse the carbon footprint of the Canoe/Kayak Slalom World Cup held at the Olympic site in Vaires-sur-Marne from October 5th to 8th, 2023. This type of analysis has already been carried out for sporting events (McCullough & al., 2023; Ito & al., 2022; Piccerillo & al., 2023), but many of them only focus on transport, which has the largest CO₂e emissions. Our aim was to determine the total CO₂e emissions of this event by considering a full range of indicators, not only travel. This approach enabled us to compare our results with those of other studies of similar events, ensuring a thorough and comparative analysis (Goldblatt, 2022; Sharma, 2023).

The focus of this research was to understand which indicators have the most significant impact on CO₂e emissions for this event, and why are they so significant? When comparing these indicators with those of other studies on the subject, do we identify any notable similarities or differences? What other methods of calculation and data collection are used to assess CO₂e emissions? Are there any external factors or contexts specific to this World Cup that might influence the results?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The origin of the carbon footprint is based on the ecological footprint and is usually associated with a specific amount of gas emissions related to climate change (Rees & Wackernagel, 2023). The most universal definition is grounded on the work of Weidmann and Minx (2007) and is framed as: “The carbon footprint is a measure of the exclusive total amount of carbon dioxide emissions that is directly and indirectly caused by an activity or is accumulated over

the life stages of a product.” In general terms, a carbon footprint focuses on processes and practices related to the emissions of CO₂ and measures the quantity of carbon (or equivalent gases) resulting from specific activities (East, 2008). Calculating carbon footprint has been recognized as a valuable indicator in the field of greenhouse gases and carbon emissions management (Wiedmann & Minx, 2008). The most common approach to calculating an organization’s carbon footprint is based on emissions factors. Sport events in particular are responsible for massive levels of air travel and carbon heavy stadium construction, thus negatively contributing to the environmental impact. For example, the global sports industry is estimated to be responsible for approximately 350 million tons of CO₂e (Sharma, 2023).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Data were collected through questionnaires sent to spectators, teams, and volunteers during the event at the future Olympic and Paralympic venue in Vaires-sur-Marne. Missing data were provided directly by the French Canoe and Kayak Federation (FFCK). The data collected were converted into kilograms of CO₂e using the carbon footprint files V.23.0 and V.8.8 (October 2022) of the French ADEME (Agency for the Ecological Transition). This methodological approach resulted in the collection of representative samples, thus ensuring reliable data for the development of the carbon report. We created several visualisations of the data, one highlighting the CO₂e producing sectors and another focusing on the producer groups. This allowed us to analyse the data from two distinct angles, providing a deep and varied understanding of the event’s carbon footprint.

As part of our study, we also categorized our various items into scopes. Scope 3 includes travel (litres), transfers (kilowatt/hour), purchases (units), meals (units), waste (tonnes), overnight stays (units), and emails (units). Scope 2 includes energy consumption (water (liter), electricity (kilowatt/hour), fuel for pump operation (liter)) and in Scope 1 fixed assets (building (m²), IT (unit), vehicle (unit)). This categorization gives us an idea of the scope of activity of the French Canoe/Kayak Federation (FFCK), which organizes the event. The vast majority of CO₂e emissions

are therefore in scope 3, which characterizes potential indirect greenhouse gas emissions.

Results/ Findings and Discussion

The results confirm the trend reported in several previous studies, highlighting the high consumption of CO₂e related to mobility (Ferrisi, 2024; Gouguet, 2015; Triantafyllidis et al., 2018). Consumption is around 310 tCO₂e for all modes of transport, which is around 44.7% of total CO₂e emissions. However, our study also revealed the importance of an indicator rarely considered until now: the retransmission of the event. Indeed, broadcasting has a significant impact on the environment due to the process of content creation and distribution. For example, Tuff (2016) pointed out at the editorial and creative challenges the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) faces when informing different audiences. Our results indicated that the streaming and YouTube broadcast of the canoe-kayak events alone accounted for 38.8% of the total CO₂e emissions generated by the entire event (695 tCO₂e). We were able to calculate it thanks to WatchTime, which we converted into gigabits and then into kilowatt-hours to determine the energy consumption. Then, using an ADEME file (based on the GHG protocol), we obtained the coefficient for each country in kgCO₂e per kilowatt-hour. This allowed us to calculate the CO₂e consumption for each country based on its kilowatt-hour consumption. To do this, we multiplied the energy consumption (KWh) by the coefficient in kgCO₂e/KWh to obtain the total CO₂e emissions from broadcasting. These findings underscore the necessity to incorporate a holistic approach to sustainability in sport event planning, which encompasses not only logistics and mobility, but also all production processes, including media dissemination.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This study offers an innovative perspective on assessing the carbon footprint of sporting events, bringing a new focus to the impact of media broadcasting, a significant aspect of sustainability but often overlooked. By providing new data and in-depth analysis, it enriches the reflection on the sustainability of sporting events and sheds light on the potential actions to reduce their carbon footprint.

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In search for ‘climate positive’ sport events: Assessing carbon emissions impact for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic Games

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Aim and Research Questions

The 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, to be hosted in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, are the first to be contractually obliged to be delivered as “climate positive”. Sustainability and climate commitments have been increasing in recent Olympics, with the Tokyo 2020 Games officially achieving carbon neutrality, and subsequent Games all committed to delivering similar goals (Ito et al., 2022). However, while there are sustainability assessment tools in literature, no specific event orientated assessments exist to facilitate decision-making around the two principal levers for mega-event carbon management, emissions minimisation (carbon reduction) and carbon offsets (carbon compensation) (Herold et al., 2024; Herold et al., 2020). In addition, surprisingly, the sustainability planning in order reach carbon positive Games is only in its early stages, thus providing an opportunity for researchers to develop critical carbon assessment schemes and frameworks for sport mega-events that can be used as foundation to reach carbon positive Brisbane Olympic Games in 2032. In response, this study aims to a) assess the carbon emissions impact of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic Games and b) propose concrete actions and a framework to achieve climate positivity.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

In March 2020, the IOC announced that all future Olympic Games will be Climate Positive from 2030, just before the 138th session of the IOC in June 2021, where a full 11 years before the event, Brisbane was awarded the rights to host the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games (Heynen & Vanaraja

Ambeth, 2023). The decision for Climate Positive Games was intended to “lead both the global effort to combat climate change and to leave a tangible, positive legacy for the planet” (IOC, 2020). As the next host city awarded the Games after this announcement, Brisbane 2032 is thus the first to have committed to this Climate Positive outcome, via its Host Contract (Tham, 2023). Delivering a Climate Positive Olympic and Paralympic Games means going beyond Net Zero, a concept where emissions of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere are balanced by compensation (via carbon capture and offsets) (Loveday et al., 2022). Climate Positive goes beyond this balance by compensating for more than 100% of the residual emissions related to Olympic activities (QDES, 2022), with defining carbon positive as: a) minimising and compensating the direct and indirect emissions related to the Games, and b) implementing long-term zero-carbon solutions for the Olympic Games and beyond.

Research Design

This study employs a mixed-method approach to address the research aim. First, based on the categories of IOC Carbon Footprint Methodology for the Olympic Games (IOC, 2018) and secondary data, we calculate the carbon footprint for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic Games. More specifically, we use existing datasets (e.g. 2021 Tokyo Olympics) and extrapolate the carbon emissions based on the Brisbane 2032 context. Second, applying a qualitative research approach consisting of a review of academic, industry and grey literature, we examine the carbon minimisation, capture and offset potential for relevant categories to assess how climate positivity can be achieved.

Results

Not yet available. We are in the early stages of the project, but will have solid results that can be presented at the EASM conference. We expect to have concrete carbon footprint numbers per category as per IOC methodology and incorporate them into multiple pragmatic scenarios (e.g. ranging from positive to negative policy developments/implementation).

Conclusion, Contribution and Implication

The long lead time of Brisbane 2032 provides the opportunity to create a positive legacy to accelerate Queensland's emission reduction and renewable energy targets (IOC, 2021). The Brisbane 2032 bid documents contain a commitment to minimise Games' emissions as much as possible, with the Brisbane 2032 host website stating: "Brisbane 2032 aspires to create a legacy for the people of Queensland and Australia by leveraging . . . the Games as a catalyst to enhance social, economic, and environmental outcomes for our communities" (Queensland Government, 2022). This study may be able to contribute to, and influence, the discussions about the climate positive strategy for Brisbane 2032, and the broader discourse about the composition of Net Zero strategies for events.

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Evaluation Of The Sustainability Impact Of The UEFA EURO 2024 – Analysing The Expectations Of Residents In The FrankfurtRheinMain Metropolitan Region

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Aim and Research Questions

European Football Championships are among the most important major sporting events in the world (alongside the Football World Cup and the Olympic Games). UEFA has made the claim that EURO 2024 will be the most sustainable European Football Championship to date (UEFA, 2023).

The aim of the study is to determine the importance of UEFA's sustainability claim for the population and their expectations regarding the sustainability of the upcoming Championship as part of a comprehensive impact analysis in the FrankfurtRheinMain metropolitan region.

The research question examines how the level of residents' expectations regarding the ecological sustainability impact of the EURO 2024 influences the following factors:

- 1) interest in the EURO 2024
- 2) happiness that the EURO 2024 is hosted in Frankfurt
- 3) current overall evaluation of ecological sustainability in the FrankfurtRheinMain Metropolitan region

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

On the one hand, the number of articles on the sustainable impact of major sporting events has steadily increased in recent years (Mair et al., 2021). And publications have already appeared that provide an assessment of the EURO 2024 sustainability measures (Pfeffel et al., 2023).

On the other hand, research on the impact of sports-mega events especially on the affected

metropolitan region has not been extensive, even though the importance of metropolitan regions when considering the possibilities and opportunities these have to offer to sports-mega events has been pointed out (Trosien and Fronk, 2003). A study from 2016 examined the rejected referendum to host the Olympic Games 2024 in Hamburg (Trosien et al., 2016). If the entire metropolitan region of Hamburg had been included in the referendum, the result would have most likely been positive.

Focussing on the residents of a metropolitan region – here FrankfurtRheinMain – in the assessment of sustainability measures and gaining insights on their expectations will allow an evaluation on the effectiveness of the UEFA's sustainability campaign.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

This study is part of an extensive research project analysing the social, economic, and environmental influences of the EURO 2024 in the FrankfurtRheinMain metropolitan region (Trosien et al., 2024). The data collection is divided into two parts. Prior to the EURO 2024, the ex-ante data collection in the form of expert interviews and survey questionnaires is carried out, developing and formulating hypotheses on the impact of the EURO. The data collection started in February and was completed in March 2024, with a sample size of $n = 1225$. The questionnaire was a multi type question design, with the majority of questions providing 5-point Likert Scales.

Based on results of the ex-ante phase, the research grid for the tournament and ex-post phase will be developed, which is carried out during and after the tournament.

Findings and Discussion

To investigate how the level of residents' expectations regarding the ecological sustainability impact of the EURO 2024 influences several factors, a correlation analysis was carried out based on the ex-ante questionnaire.

Firstly, the residents' level of interest in the EURO 2024 is positively correlated with the level of residents' expectations regarding the ecological impact of the EURO ($r=0.3$). Hence, residents who believe that the EURO will have

a negative impact on the environment also show less interest in the sports-event (and vice versa).

The level of happiness that the EURO 2024 is hosted in Frankfurt showed a positive correlation with the level of the expectation regarding the ecological impact of the EURO ($r=0.3$). Looking at the result from the other way around, residents who believe that the EURO will have a negative environmental impact are less happy that Frankfurt am Main is hosting the sports-event.

The highest correlation could be observed between the residents' current overall evaluation of ecological sustainability in the FrankfurtRheinMain Metropolitan region and the level of the expectation regarding the ecological impact of the EURO ($r=0.53$). Following, residents' who already believe that the ecological sustainability is not addressed enough in the metropolitan region tend to have negative expectations regarding the ecological impact of the EURO as well.

Demographic variables (age, gender, income, level of education) did not show any correlation with the level of expectations regarding the sustainability impact of the EURO 2024.

These initial correlation analyses will be extended. Multivariate data analysis techniques will be conducted (e. g. cluster analysis and principal component analysis) to reveal patterns among the survey participants.

Contribution and Implication

The study extends the research of the sustainability impact of sports mega events to a regional level. Analysing the expectations of residents with regard to the UEFA sustainability claim ex-ante and comparing whether these expectations have been met ex-post will allow a critical socio-economic assessment of the UEFA's success in reaching their sustainability goals.

Furthermore, the study can also derive recommendations for the development and increased attractiveness of the region for future major sporting events.

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The Development of a Model and Framework for Assessing Sustainability Performance in Major Sports Events: A Delphi Study

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Aim and Research Questions

Major sports events (MSEs) have attracted increasing academic interest over the past few decades, particularly as scholars delve into critical discussions on sustainability and the undeniable impacts those events have on the environment, society, and economy (Müller et al., 2021). While certain sports organisations have developed their own frameworks for evaluating their events, others have adopted existing approaches such as the Triple Bottom Line (Elkington, 1997). Scholars have also employed a wide range of tools to quantify these various impacts (Cerezo-Esteve et al., 2022; Mair et al., 2023). However, there is a recognized need for comprehensive frameworks that allow for systematic evaluation and comparisons across SMEs (Mallen & Chard, 2011). Our study, aims to address this gap by creating a conceptual model and a framework, drawing inspiration from Raworth's (2017) doughnut model. The study is part of a larger project titled "Sports For the Planet", funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF).

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The sustainability discourse surrounding MSEs has revealed significant gaps in existing literature. Despite various case studies on

MSEs, the literature lacks a holistic definition of sustainability, often focusing on a single event. While economic challenges like budget overruns are acknowledged (Flyvbjerg et al., 2021), there is a lack of research on other economic dimensions of sustainability. Social sustainability receives even less attention, with limited longitudinal studies (Minnaert, 2012) and neglect of critical issues such as displacement (Davis, 2011).

While some attempts have been made to develop models (Raj & Musgrave, 2010), existing research often fails to integrate social, economic, and environmental aspects into a cohesive framework (Wolfe et al., 2024). This fragmented approach neglects the complexity of sustainability and the multifaceted outcomes of MSEs, necessitating interdisciplinary collaboration to craft a feasible and operationalizable model of a sustainable MSEs. Previous studies by Muller et al. (2022) underscore the necessity of such models to cater to diverse stakeholders, including policy-makers, event organisers, potential host cities, media, and citizens. This definition deficiency is exacerbated by vague and opportunistic interpretations of sustainability, such as risking accusations of greenwashing (Boykoff & Mascarenhas, 2016). In light of these shortcomings, our paper aims to address these lacunae by constructing and comparing a model and a framework for evaluating sustainability in MSEs, building upon the groundwork laid by Muller et al. (2021) and Raworth, K. (2017).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

For the study, the Delphi technique has been used which consists of "a structured group communication method for soliciting expert opinion about complex problems or novel ideas, through the use of a series of questionnaires and controlled feedback" (Day and Bobeva, 2005). The research team invited 166 experts to participate in the Delphi Panel after conducting desk research to identify potential experts in sustainability/sports events and established specific inclusion/exclusion criteria. Three 'waves' of questionnaires were sent to the experts, between April and June 2024, aiming to sequentially define sustainability in the context of SMEs and identify its main dimensions in the first wave, confirm these definitions and dimensions while introducing

the main indicators in the second wave, and finally, confirm the indicators in the last wave. The first “wave” focused on defining a sustainable SME based on three predefined principles; minimise harm, do no harm, and leave a positive impact where the experts had to choose one of those approaches for environmental, social, economic and governance. Following that a point allocation system was introduced to “weight” various dimensions and sub-dimensions of sustainability. The second and third “waves” followed a similar logic for confirming subsequent results and introducing indicators for measuring the respective dimensions. Data collection is currently in progress and will be accomplished by the end of June 2024, allowing the research team to analyse the data and develop the framework and the model accordingly.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Based on previous research, a particular emphasis on the environmental sustainability component compared to the other elements, is expected to emerge from the Delphi panel (Mallen et al., 2010). In addition, an inconsistent but balanced approach across the sustainability elements would be anticipated; minimising environmental harms were necessary, leaving a positive social legacy, while ensuring the economic viability and good governance of sports events. However, disputes may emerge at this stage, as the majority of our participants are highly familiar with a “flat” conception of sustainability, seeing environmental, social and economic dimensions as equal and interchangeable. Due to the background of the participants in the sustainability sphere, a more realistic rhetoric is expected, avoiding overpromises, and focusing on the most tangible and easily operationalised dimensions and respective indicators.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The present study aims to address the lack of conceptual work on SMEs sustainability transition by developing a conceptual model and indicator framework, validated by a large Delphi panel, which will pave the way for their systematic evaluation and analysis. As a result, researchers, policy-makers and practitioners can use it as a powerful tool to measure the sustainability performance of future SMEs.

The Revision of the Vilnius Definition of Sport and the Methodology for Constructing Sport Satellite Accounts (SSAs) in the EU

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This presentation is linked to the work undertaken on behalf of the EACEA and the European Commission in order to update both the Vilnius definition of sport and the methodology that underpins the construction of the Sport Satellite Accounts in the EU.

Aims and Objectives

The purpose of this research is twofold. First, it aims to explore the CPA codes of economic activity in the National Accounts to evaluate the pertinence of existing economic activities related to sport and to identify any new activities that have become relevant to the sports economy in the aftermath of the pandemic. The second goal is to update the methodology of the European Sport Satellite Accounts to align them with the methodologies and results of other Satellite Accounts, such as those for Tourism and the Environment.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Harmonised sports satellite accounts have been developed in Europe since 2006. They were based on an agreed ‘Vilnius’ definition, that identified the economic codes that have a significant association with sport, providing in this way a path for investigations. The initial definition underwent a major revision in 2012 to meet the reclassification in the official statistics. In 2022 the European Commission established a Task Force on the harmonisation of Sport Statistics and Sport Satellite Account Methodologies to consider additionally available data, meet the new questions of the stakeholders, revise the Vilnius definition and harmonise the SSA methodology. The main outputs of SSAs globally are in the UK, the EU countries, Australia and Japan. Further economic evaluations have occurred in the

past in New Zealand. Sheffield Hallam University is also cooperating with Japan (Sport Universities and the Development Bank of Japan) for their SSA, which is informed by the Vilnius definition and the EU methodology. The Australian evaluation of the sport economy (<https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/05/sports-industry-economic-analysis.docx>) follows a similar logic to the Vilnius Definition in establishing the shares of the sport economy per economic activity.

Research Design Methodology and Data Analysis

A significant improvement lies in the fact that we have incorporated the specifications from the European System of Accounts . This enables us to ensure methodological comparability with other satellite accounts, such as the tourism satellite accounts. We achieved this by introducing the concepts of 'Characteristic' and 'Connected' goods. The latter replace the previously common distinction between core, narrow and broad definition of sport. Following consultations, the Characteristic goods were defined as the ones with direct relationship to participation, including sport services, sport education and police and military sports. A Template was constructed in order to assist with the data requirements and guide investigations. Another innovation is the distinction between active sports and passive sports consumption. This distinction will become increasingly important in the future in order to reconcile results from the SSA with ever lower participation rates in sport and to draw the right conclusions in terms of economic policy. It is also a methodological requirement for the evaluation of the Social Returns of Investment in sport.

Results, Findings, and Discussion

The results are mainly in the form of a new Vilnius definition and rules that govern the construction of SSAs. This is the approach that is expected to be followed in the next ten years. The presentation will show the CPA codes that have been abandoned and the new codes that have been introduced in the new version of the Vilnius definition. It will further illustrate the methodological template one country must follow to construct an SSA, emphasizing the distinction between Characteristic and Connected Goods.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication.

This research is expected to contribute to a better management of sport economic policy across the EU. For example, beyond the national SSAs there have been two Pan-European Accounts for the EU, including then the UK. The latest one, published in 2018, showed that the UK's sport industry generated 2.2% of the national GDP, and 3.8% of employment. The fact that the percentage generated for employment was greater than the percentage associated with GDP (or GVA) implied that sport is an efficient generator of employment, in the sense that a given investment in sport (if the demand exists) would generate more employment than an average sector of the economy. It was concluded that sport can be used as a policy tool to lift employment, especially in a period of economic crisis and recession. The fact that the UK has a system of accounts, enabled a quick response in the evaluation of the effect of Covid (see for example the case of Golf), affecting policy.

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Highway To Hell* Or A More Environmentally Sustainable Organising Of Elite Sport – The Case Of Sweden

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Aim And Research Question

The carbon footprint of sport is substantial. It has been estimated that sport globally contribute with up to 350 million tonnes of CO₂e (Goldblatt, 2020), equalling 2.5 times the Nordic countries joint emission of 137 CO₂e. Already emphasised in 2007 by the European Commission (EC, 2007, p. 10), sport organisations have been slow to admit responsibility. Nevertheless, it has recently been reiterated from within football by the European Club Association's Board Member, ExCo Lead, and CEO of Malmö FF Niclas Carlén (interview, Jan. 11, 2023), and most recently "officially" recognized in ECA's Sustainability Strategy (ECA, 2024). Until now, sport has mainly focused on social sustainability (e.g. inclusion) and on low hanging fruits in relation to eco sustainability (e.g. waste management and energy consumption). In unison with Gammelsæter and Loland (2023) this research argues that the necessary but hard decisions on how to make a real contribution to global cooling remains to be seen. One possible measurement reducing GHG emissions would be for sport to challenge its traditional organisational competition structure. Such challenge should be directed to all types of sport and sport events, but the focus of this research is the Premier League of Sweden (Allsvenskan).

The aim of this research is to challenge Allsvenskan's current organizational competition structure by proposing an alternative model reducing the current GHG emissions. The research question is: Without reducing the number of teams and fixtures, what would be required to reduce Allsvenskan's total GHG emissions from transport to away matches with 50%?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Drawing on Gérard (Gérard et al., 2017), this research suggests that Swedish sports' climate

commitment, or lack thereof, should be read through a multi-level, mechanism-based analysis to better understand the relationship between field-level logics and societal pressures. This allows for an analysis of the extrinsic and intrinsic pressures and leverage levels, such as the Swedish governments discourse about an – "ambitious and effective climate policy to reach all the way to net zero emissions by 2045" (Regeringen, n.d.), together with the Swedish FA's, the Swedish Professional Football Leagues' (SEF) and European football governance's climate policies and the accompanying discourse.

Sports' total GHG emission is a complex combination of transport, material, products and energy purchases, use and consumption, together with sales of merchandise, food and drinks. Nonetheless, a literature review will show that transport accounts for the largest part – 61 % – of GHG emission from sporting events (Tóffano Pereira et al., 2019, p. 169). Whilst the part of the fans is considerable, if not the largest, this research will focus on the teams' transport patterns, and reducing the fans part of the GHG emissions will be but a positive externality.

While SEF's sustainability work has so far focused on social sustainability, the Swedish FA aims to «reduce the environmental impact of football by improving the environmental management of football events and the overall level of environmental awareness in the football world» (LifeTackle, 2022). This is a major task when Malmö FF, one of the 16 Allsvenskan teams, will travel a total of 6200km, or as an example, will contribute at an away match against AIK from Stockholm round trip with 3374700/3438150 (biodiesel/diesel) gCO₂eq emissions, based on a combination of bus + regular economic flight. However, considering the aforementioned commitment and a general idea of good governance focusing on norms, values, trust and social responsibility, as opposed to control mechanisms (Persson, 2011, p. 380), there seems to be no turning back.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The subsequent analysis is based on Allsvenskan 2024's 16 teams' GHG emissions produced by transport to away fixtures and Malmö FF will represent the Ideal Type. Firstly, independent of actual choice of

transport, each of three possible options –air travel, train, and/or bus – is approached as the main mode of transport, when possible. This is done because the first and greenest choice of transport may be set aside during tight match schedule. In the case of train and air travel, each mode is combined with buss as the mode of transfer. Secondly, Malmö FF is given the possibility to present the actual mode of transport. Thirdly, a game schedule reducing the GHG emissions will be based on a formula inspired by fencing pools.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The result is not finalised. Malmö FF's actual first choice of transport mode in relation to destinations is yet to come in, but the preliminary results points at the possibility to halve the GHG emissions related to domestic matches. However, with a will to break with traditions of organising football fixtures, the contribution and implications of this research is far greater than national leagues.

The author guarantees that all results will be tested and ready before the conference start date.

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Can Elite Sport Ever Be Sustainable? Exploring Degrowth As A Possible Pathway To Enhance Sustainability Practices In Elite Sport

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Aims and Research Question

Dealing with climate change and its bidirectional relationship with elite sport is among the most significant challenges in sport management (McCullough, 2023), as is the need to consider other aspects of environmental degradation, such as plastic and other types of waste pollution. Indeed, a vast number of sport organizations (e.g., IOC, FIFA) have embedded strategies and action frameworks to address climate change's impact on elite sport (e.g., developing alternatives to be less weather-dependent in ice hockey; McCullough, 2023), and vice versa (e.g., decreasing elite sport's environmental footprint by recycling or preserving biodiversity; Gammelsaetter & Loland, 2023). Although current practices in sport management are criticized, and the question raised as to whether elite sport's sustainability efforts are far-reaching enough (Orr & Inoue, 2019; McCullough, 2023), much research tends to be within the realm of traditional approaches to sustainability (e.g., Triple Bottom Line), with only limited research exploring alternative, but more radical approaches to sustainability in elite sport, such as Degrowth (Gammelsaetter & Loland, 2023). Thus, the present work aims to build upon previous literature introducing Degrowth to elite sport and discuss and evaluate its suitability against predominant approaches to sustainability.

Theoretical background

Elite sport has a profound societal impact (e.g., by promoting grassroots level sport, by entertaining fans), as it is uniquely positioned

to influence diverse stakeholders in active and passive sport (De Bosscher et al., 2021). However, it also contributes to unsustainable practices, e.g., through the building of sport stadia, athletes' or fans' mobility, and the promotion of sports goods (Gammelsaetter & Loland, 2023), which consequently has led to elite sport acknowledging that action needs to be taken to tackle its unsustainable practices, most notably its detrimental effect on the environment (e.g., due to legitimacy of elite sport; Gammelsaetter & Loland, 2023). However, the current engagement of elite sport in sustainability is primarily driven by the supremacy of economic aspects and elite sport's belief that profit and (economic) growth can be decoupled from environmental degradation (Parrique et al., 2019). Accordingly, sport prefers to opt for schemes such as carbon offsetting rather than questioning unbridled growth and profit (McCullough, 2023). Contrastingly, sports academics emphasize elite sport's unique societal role and their potential to take a more proactive stand in tackling unsustainable practices (Gammelsaetter & Loland, 2023). However, so far, elite sport lacks approaches for a more fundamental socio-ecological transformation as described in the Degrowth paradigm (Köves et al., 2021).

Degrowth itself is more likely to be understood as an umbrella term that subsumes different types of sustainability movements that share critiques of growth, commodification, and the belief in decoupling growth from resource depletion (Demaria et al., 2013). Degrowth scholars suggest a transformation towards a society (and economy) rooted in care, conviviality, and the establishment of commons. Among others, it suggests sufficiency and a reduction of throughput over efficient processes and unbridled growth (Demaria et al., 2013).

Research design, methodology, and data analysis

The present study's aim is addressed through conceptual work. In so doing, we use theory adaptation and abductive reasoning (cf. Jaakkola, 2020; Dubois & Gadde, 2002) to develop our argumentation. Thus, we are analyzing cases of critical, current sustainability practices and dilemmas in elite sport before building upon previous literature from sustainability research in sport management and the Degrowth paradigm to

reframe these practices and dilemmas for sport organizations and their stakeholders (e.g., Gammelsaeter & Loland, 2023). The conceptual work is ongoing and will be presented at EASM.

Results/Finding & Discussion

Preliminary insights demonstrate that sport is increasingly aware and willing to address unsustainable practices (e.g., by carbon offsetting, promoting circular economy, or optimizing infrastructure). These measures, however, may not lead to a reduction of carbon emissions in elite sports. Further, these initiatives could also have unintended consequences, such as energy efficiency measures leading to a rebound effect and increasing emissions (cf. Jevons Paradox; Jevons, 1965). Based on this, we begin to explore measures informed by a Degrowth paradigm that could be taken by elite sport and its stakeholders.

Conclusion/Contribution & Implications

The results of our work aim to open a debate about how to sustain elite sports while ensuring that sport can be preserved for future generations and be built upon sustainable foundations (e.g., protecting the environment and creating a more equal society; McCullough, 2023). Immersing elite sport in a logic of Degrowth, might be a more radical and less appealing approach to sustainability in elite sport than the previously implemented, due to the sacrifices it may entail for some (e.g. moving away from prioritising economic benefits). However, as current sustainability initiatives may not be far-reaching enough, the present work adds to further ideation on how the elite sport system can function under more radical approaches to sustainability. The results also inform actors involved in elite sport on how to contribute to socio-ecological transformations.

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Critical Realism as a Lens for Analyzing Beijing 2022 Winter Sports Participation Legacy

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Aim and Research Questions

This paper aims to investigate whether Critical realism (CR) (Byers et al., 2019) could contribute to the analysis of China's winter sports participation legacy of Beijing 2022?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The Olympic culture «Sport for All» (IOC, 2021) propagates the shared vision of previous, present, and future hosts to increase sports participation. Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympics were the first Games to implement a legacy plan shaped by Olympic Agenda 2020/New Norm and the IOC Legacy Strategic Approach (BOCWOG et al., 2021). The cornerstone of this plan was the ambitious «300 million» goal, a hard push to increase winter sports participation in China. The relevant knowledge transfer will likely benefit future organizing committees (OC) and applicant cities and reduce cost risk. Thus, international scholars are interested in learning more about this legacy and have questioned the origins and feasibility of this goal, likely due to limited supporting data, language barriers, and differing social and cultural contexts. Our PRISMA analysis reveals that current literature on legacy offers little empirical evidence on achieving sport participation goals, and rarely conceptualizes «Winter Sports Participation» distinctly. Critical Realism (CR), as a philosophy focused on uncovering underlying realities, could provide a fresh framework to analyze this process. We propose applying CR to study the legacy delivery of the Winter Olympics and Paralympics within non-Western contexts, offering a novel and objective perspective.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

CR is an evolving philosophical framework, that originated from the post-positivist movement with «Bottom-up» features. It facilitates researchers to gain objective and scientific views on realities, which may be different from the authority's opinions. There are rare attempts to apply this ontology in non-Western contexts, especially in a «Top-down» system. This paper adopts a conceptual approach to explore the potential of Critical Realism (CR) in analyzing the winter sports participation legacy of the Beijing 2022 Games. We propose an integrated framework by combining CR with the «Three-Source Model» (Liu & Jiang, 2016) focusing on the Chinese context, a «Top-down» non-Western sports development model. This framework is intended to provide a deeper understanding of the legacy delivery process, particularly within the context of the «Juguo Tizhi» system, the underlying mechanism behind China's «300 million» goal achievement. While not involving data collection or analysis, our conceptual exploration aims to identify potential challenges and opportunities for winter sports participation legacy within the «Juguo Tizhi» framework.

Results/Findings and Discussion

This paper demonstrates the potential of a new framework combining Critical Realism (CR) and the Chinese-originated «Three-Source Model» to deepen our understanding of winter sports participation legacy. Applying CR to the Beijing 2022 case proves both innovative and valuable references, as it allows for analysis beyond surface appearances to uncover underlying mechanisms. However, it's crucial to acknowledge challenges stemming from cultural contexts, varying statistical systems, and the limited availability of data that accurately reflects both the ideal and social realities highlighted within the CR framework.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This paper advances the application of Critical Realism (CR) to the study of sport participation legacy within the Chinese context. Our proposed framework offers a systematic approach for analyzing legacy delivery, facilitating cross-contextual research

with shared criteria. We contribute to existing knowledge by:

- Contextualizing CR: Providing a nuanced understanding of applying CR within China's unique top-down system, large population, and regional diversity.
- Bridging Gaps: Addressing knowledge transfer, enabling researchers to adopt CR for legacy studies in various settings.
- Global Relevance: Illustrating the interplay between elite and mass participation, offering insights for future winter sports mega-event legacy planning.

We believe this new conceptualization opens pathways for future investigation. Studies utilizing this framework can further address the challenges and opportunities posed by Beijing 2022's ambitious «300 million» goal, aiding legacy analysis and participation strategy development for winter sports in diverse contexts.

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The Dirty and Loud Side of the Football Bundesliga – An Analysis of Traffic Data

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Aim and Research Question

Besides the positive impacts of hosting football matches, there exist several negative aspects, such as traffic, noise, and environmental damage (Johnson, 2019). Sports related traffic congestion receives considerable attention since it hurts mobility of local citizens, wastes time and energy, and causes pollution. Several studies analyzed the relationship between sporting events and pollution (e.g., Propher, 2020), but research on this topic has fallen short in German football. Therefore, we analyze observed variations in the traffic counts in the federal state of North-Rhine Westphalia (NRW) of Germany to determine the impact of football games in the two highest German football leagues on traffic on the road surrounding the stadium.

Theoretical and Contextual Background

To explain the relationship between football match attendance and traffic volume, we apply the model of equilibrium of vehicle kilometers traveled (VKT) developed by Duranton and Turner (2011). They propose a total variable cost function for VKT, which depends on the available road capacity and the distance traveled by drivers in a city. If the total number of road kilometers in a city remains constant, the average cost of driving increases because the volume of traffic increases – resulting in an upward-sloping supply curve for driving. This is widely accepted in the literature (Small & Verhoef, 2007).

Bundesliga matches can affect equilibrium VKT in several ways (Humphreys & Pyun, 2018). First, when all fans drive to the stadium from their homes and would not have driven otherwise, the Bundesliga match increases demand for driving in the city.

Second, if all fans travelling to the stadium by car would otherwise travel elsewhere, the total travel demand in the city would remain unchanged, but there could be an increase in traffic around the stadium. Third, after work, fans may walk to the stadium and leave there after the match. In this case, traffic increases after the game only. Finally, fans could take alternative transportation options like public transportation. This traveling form would decrease the demand for car driving and consequently reduce congestion.

Reviewing previous research regarding the determinants of metropolitan VKT, Salon et al. (2012) point out factors like residential density, land use patterns, road and parking pricing, public transport, and the prevalence of telecommuting that influence VKT in metropolitan areas. Therefore, we include variables that may shift the demand curve and control for the existing stock of road lane-kilometers.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

We use monthly traffic count data from (inter)urban roads counting stations in NRW from July 2015 to June 2019 and hourly data from one season played from July 2022 to June 2023. The data were generated from Straßen.nrw and Autobahn GmbH. Further variables include match and attendance data and city-level population, unemployment rate, GDP per capita and the weather, which were all gathered of public accessible websites. We further used different fixed effects to control for unobserved heterogeneity of counting stations, hours, day of the week and month of the year.

The importance of commuter traffic means that traffic patterns on weekends and weekdays differ significantly, and weekday matches usually take place in the evening hours when there are many vehicles on the roads coming from work and causing rush hour traffic. Therefore, we focus on weekday traffic counts.

Several regressions with log-transformed monthly and hourly traffic count data as dependent variables were estimated. For monthly traffic counts, we use the total number of matches played on a weekday for which the counting station is located within or outside a radius of 5 km around the stadium.

For hourly traffic counts, we analyze the traffic before, during and after the game to test the impact of football games on traffic.

Results and Discussion

Using monthly data, we found that each additional football match increases traffic counts by 0.38% on average. For every 1,000 fans who attend a match, the traffic volume at the counting stations increases by 0.012%, which corresponds to an increase in traffic volume per match in one month of 0.24%. The results of the hourly traffic data confirm these findings. For every 1,000 fans attending the stadium, traffic volume increases by 0.12%, which leads to a traffic increase of 5.64% with an average attendance of 47,000. Employment rate, GDP per capita, precipitation and temperature have a negative impact on traffic counts, i.e., a decrease in these variables increases traffic.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The results show that Bundesliga football matches considerably increase the volume of traffic in NRW, which results in environmental pollution and a waste of time. The higher the number of visitors, the higher the volume of traffic, which particularly affects cities with large stadiums. These findings can influence sustainability management on the expansion of public transport (e.g., incentives to substitute car driving) and cycling infrastructure to reduce congestion, time loss, and pollution.

Greenwashing in Sport: Insights, Gaps, and Implications

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Aim and Research Questions

Sport has a unique position to drive social change (McCullough et al., 2016) and modern day hyper-commercialization and sport marketing allows for multifaceted global engagement with fans and stakeholders, including on issues like climate change. Yet, discrepancies between environmental efforts and communication in the sport industry has raised concerns of greenwashing among scholars, NGOs, media, and other stakeholders (Falkenheim & Prewitt, 2022; Wilby et al., 2023).

Despite this, little research has explored how greenwashing is conceptualized in the sport industry, while general management literature has addressed greenwashing for decades. Hence, this study draws both on sport-related greenwashing literature, and on the broader management literature on greenwashing, and pairs this with research on environmental sustainability (ES), and environmental communication in sport, to fulfill two main research aims: 1) propose how greenwashing manifests, and should be perceived, through the sport management lens, and 2) direct the future research agenda on greenwashing in sport. Resultingly, the following research question guides the study: How is greenwashing conceptualized in the general management literature and addressed in the sport industry context?

Theoretical Background

Greenwashing is the act of misleading consumers through deceptive marketing that makes an organization, product, or service appear more environmentally sustainable than it truly is. In sport, organizations have increasingly responded to pressures to adopt more sustainable business practices, prompting an increase in marketing and communication of ES. This has caused concern for the authenticity of such signaling efforts, with questions towards the genuine action underpinning environmental marketing

(McCullough et al., 2020) and greenwashing accusations in sport.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

For this study, a scoping review method (Dowling et al., 2020) is applied. The method is particularly useful for outlining knowledge in fields that are still relatively unexplored, as it can include “a range of study designs in both published and grey literature”, to best make future research recommendations (Dowling et al., 2020, p. 771). Inclusion criteria are studies examining greenwashing, corporate social responsibility, including environmental sustainability, environmental sustainability and sport, green sport marketing, environmental sustainability communication and sport, environmental sustainability signaling and sport, as well as sport and greenwashing. Literature from 1989 to present were included, as 1989 marks the influx of ES in management literature (Vollero, 2022), totaling 54 studies. Data analysis followed the Joanna Briggs Institute scoping review methodology (Peters et al., 2020), thematically analyzed and structured to present results.

Findings and Discussion

Despite acknowledging the importance of environmental initiatives, few studies explore the extent and impact of greenwashing in the sector. Little attention has further been dedicated to the perceived disconnect between environmental communication and action (McCullough et al., 2016; Wall-Tweedie & Nguyen, 2016). However, a number of discussions on greenwashing and sport exist as anecdotal evidence, in the grey literature, and in the media.

In the broader management literature, major research areas include greenwashing categorizations, highlighting selective disclosure, attention deflection, and deceptive manipulation. Other topics concern greenwashing motivations, avoidance strategies, and how organizations appear environmentally focused without genuine action, underpinned by institutional, legitimization, attribution, and signaling theory, to mention a few (Vollero, 2022). Other studies address consumer perceptions and purchase intentions tied to environmental marketing and perceived greenwashing,

finding that consumers are sceptic towards green claims and often able to detect deceptive marketing tactics (Liu et al., 2023). Given these findings within and outside of sport, the need for additional research to clarify the phenomenon of greenwashing in the sport industry and in sport management is stressed. The discussion further highlights challenges of aligning environmental action with communication strategies and underscores the continued need for transparency and accountability in environmental reporting in sport, including guidelines and regulations.

Conclusion, Contributions and Implications

This scoping review contributes to sport management literature by exploring the current status and understanding of greenwashing in sport. Major questions that emerge for the analysis presently are: what types of greenwashing are most prevalent in sport and why, who drives greenwashing action, how should distinctions be made between intentional and unintentional greenwashing, how can organizations communicate more transparently about environmental initiatives, and finally, how will greenwashing practices change as the sport industry advances environmental action, while regulations on green marketing are fortified. As data collection is ongoing, these and other gaps will be further structured and presented as a coherent research agenda at the EASM conference.

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Environmental Threats to Sport Infrastructure: The Case of Waterfront Sport Venues

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Aim and Research Questions

Sea levels have risen by 10.14 cm since 1993 and are projected to potentially rise by as much as 30 cm by 2050 (Sweet et al., 2022). As coastal areas are among the most vulnerable environments due to flooding and coastal erosion (Masselink, 2013), it is imperative that existing and future developments in these regions account for these environmental changes. Despite these challenges, waterfronts remain desirable properties in coastal communities as a product of their finite availability, growing populations, and increasing competition for land (Boland et al., 2017). There are a number of sport venues which are situated along coastal waterfront properties that will need to adapt given the threats posed by climate change. In response, this study considers the question: to what extent are large sport venues built on coastal waterfronts vulnerable to decreased land supply and climate change and therefore sustainable as infrastructure?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Development along waterfronts largely falls into two approaches: revitalizing derelict waterfront spaces (Avni & Teschner, 2019) or sustainable development which accounts for climate change and preservation (Shi et al., 2019). In either case, there is pressure from conflicting goals around economic versus sustainable development (Campbell, 1996). Proper development and planning for coastlines requires balance between these economic pressures and the social needs of the communities while accounting for the unique environmental characteristics of these waterfronts and their susceptibility to change (Bick et al., 2021). The increase of water levels and erosion has increased costs to the public for protecting existing development as well as private costs related to the reinforcement of

properties near waterfronts (Fu & Nijman, 2021). Such changes to the environment impact sport at all levels by creating pressures that must be addressed through proper urban planning and development which has yet to be addressed in full by research (McCullough et al., 2023). It is at the center of this pressure that the sport venues considered exist as public assets with private interests that face a climate threat which does not discriminate.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

A descriptive analysis of 22 stadiums and arenas hosting professional sport teams situated on coastal waterfronts made use of data on urban waterfront design and other metrics from secondary data sources. These venues included 7 in North America (e.g., Kaseya Center, Chase Center) and 15 in Europe (e.g., Stadio Pier Luigi Penzo, New Everton Stadium). Data collected included, but was not limited to: property value, property size, usage, waterfront access, nearby land use, property history, sea-level rise projections at 1.5 C, 2.0 C, and 3.0 C warming, noted coastal protections, and a history of flooding. Sources for this data include public policy and planning documents; sea-level projection maps from National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Climate Central, and the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency; Google Earth; and ArcGIS software (also used for analysis). For each venue, a profile of its past, present, and potential future (by 2050) were crafted to explore how coastal environmental threats would threaten its environmental sustainability.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Fourteen of the venues surveyed would not experience flooding under 1.0 m of sea-level rise and a further 4 more are protected by a human-made interventions. This leaves a 4 with potential for flooding and no known protection available. One of the most vulnerable would be Gayfield Park in Arbroath, Scotland which would be inundated at 0.7 meters of sea-level rise. It is situated along the North Sea under 15 meters from the water with only a small road as separation. A major storm could potentially see this venue severely damaged by flood waters from storm surge even without a sea-level rise concern. Current projections for sea-level rise do place

Gayfield Park in dangerous territory for flooding. More profiles such as this would be offered on the remaining venues as well as adaptation strategies (e.g., coastal protections) to ensure their sustainability.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

While many of the venues appear to not be under immediate threat, their lack of physical infrastructure protections leaves them vulnerable to severe storms and coastal erosion which highlights the lack of proper planning for such events (Bick et al., 2021). Some venues have rightfully considered climate change in development (e.g., New Everton Stadium) or are lucky to be protected by physical infrastructure already (e.g., Stadio Pier Luigi Penzo). There is growing response to climate change, vulnerability, and adaptation in sport, but these are projects that require years of planning and an abundance of resources (Fu & Nijman, 2021). These venues could be re-framed in their planning and development to be less of a vulnerability and more of a part of the solution to climate changed coastal regions. The use of sustainable urban planning frameworks for waterfronts may be part of the solution (Sieber, 1991).

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Climate Change Perceptions and Pro-Environmental Behaviours Among EPL Fans in China and Hong Kong

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Aim and Research Questions

Despite growing global awareness and concern over climate change, gaps persist in understanding how these perceptions translate into pro-environmental behaviours (PEBs). This is particularly true within the context of sports fandom (Amann & Doidge, 2023) and beyond the oft-studied Western European and Northern American contexts (Balundé et al., 2019). For the clubs in the English Premier League (EPL), though sustainability efforts are often locally targeted, its global viewership of approximately 4.7 billion (Cleland, 2017) provides a significant opportunity for encouraging positive attitudes toward climate change and PEBs internationally. Thus, this research aims to explore the social representations of «climate change» and the connection to PEBs among EPL fans in China and Hong Kong (HK). It seeks to address the following research questions:

- RQ1: How do fans represent climate change within these cultural contexts?
- RQ2: What is the relationship between these representations and fans' PEBs?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The potential of professional football clubs in raising awareness of global environmental concerns and the influence that club-based sustainability initiatives can have in international contexts is under-researched. Existing literature suggests that international fans' responses to club engagement strategies, including sustainability initiatives, can be influenced by club brand affiliation (Bodet et al., 2020). Factors such as club distinctiveness and personality congruence can drive fan identification and subsequent support for these initiatives (Lintumäki & Koll, 2023). Moreover, cultural variations in environmental engagement, influenced by

factors such as affluence and value orientations, can play a pivotal role in the reception of sustainability initiatives by international fans (Milfont, 2012). In HK and Shanghai, for example, fans' environmental values might vary due to the historical, social, and economic factors related to British rule in HK (1841–1997) and the impact on the region's cultural development compared to mainland China.

This research employs Social Representation Theory (SRT), developed by Serge Moscovici (1925–2014), to explore how football fans perceive “climate change” and its impact on their environmental actions. SRT seeks to explain how shared ideas evolve through communication, shaping collective cognitions during social interactions. These shared beliefs can also influence behaviours. Thus, SRT provides a suitable approach for understanding how international football fans perceive “climate change” (see, for example, Høijer, 2011) and how this links to their PEBs.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

This study, situated within the critical realist paradigm, employs a mixed methods survey to investigate climate change perceptions among EPL fans in Shanghai (China) and HK. Participants must meet specific criteria: they should be over 18 years old, support an EPL club, and have resided in either Shanghai or HK for at least three years. Data collection, with participants currently being recruited via social media, will conclude in July 2024, aiming for a robust sample size of at least 100 participants from each city (n = 200).

The survey comprises three sections.

1. Word Association: Respondents provide ten terms associated with “climate change.” These responses will then be categorised into themes, defining the social representation field (i.e., the themes that collectively represent “climate change”). Hierarchical classification analysis (HCA) reveals interconnected perceptions. This initial part of the survey aims to address RQ1.

2. PEBs Assessment: Using a Likert scale, participants rate their PEBs based on Sport Positive's (2023) environmental sustainability categories. Mean scores and standard deviations will be calculated for each item, and a one-way ANOVA will facilitate an examination of the differences between the

two samples. Further subgrouping of the samples may also allow for club-based comparisons between the two samples, but this is dependent on the data collected. This analysis, when considered alongside the social representations of climate change is aimed at addressing RQ2.

3. Socio-Demographics: Participants provide relevant socio-demographic information.

Findings and Discussion

Data is currently being collected but will be analysed, interpreted, and written up in time for the EASM 2024 Conference.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This study explores how international sports fans perceive climate change and engage in PEBs. Data collection among EPL fans in Shanghai and HK is expected to reveal diverse climate change perceptions influenced by demographics, geography, culture, and social factors. These perceptions are also expected to correlate with specific PEBs, offering insights into environmental engagement in these two locales. The study seeks to inform strategies for leveraging sports fandom to promote sustainability, with implications for policymakers, environmental organisations, and the sports industry.

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Do Professional Sport Organisations Walk the Talk? An Investigation of Tensions Related to Corporate Social Responsibility Implementation Structures

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Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this study is to explore and identify tensions that professional sport organisations (PSOs) experience when implementing corporate social responsibility (CSR). Such tensions may arise from different organisational structures carrying out CSR. Research shows that a charitable Foundation can provide co-creation and enhanced CSR implementation (e.g., Castro-Martinez & Jackson, 2015), although questions remain as how this and other organisational structures relate to CSR implementation (Kolyperas et al., 2016). For example, it is still largely unknown what the role of collaboration, autonomy, and resource sharing between PSOs and their Foundations is in attaining a more strategic and sustainable CSR engagement. This study will be the first in aiming to understand the tensions regarding CSR implementation in different PSOs, and whether these tensions relate to differences in organisational structure.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Professional sport, while often demonstrating positive impact on health and society (Smith & Westerbeek, 2007), has sometimes been overshadowed by ethical scandals, resulting in its legitimacy being questioned (Raimo et al., 2021). Scholars in sport management have extensively studied CSR, that is considered an ideal strategy to counter this potentially bad image and maximise sports' social impact (Rith & Spinelli, 2024). By implementing CSR, PSOs commit to behave socially responsible and ensure to balance doing good, doing well, and avoiding harm. Despite the positive impact of CSR, some studies have investigated tensions arising from the coexistence and integration of the sometimes contradictory sporting, economic, and social objectives (e.g., Raw et al., 2022). An example of this is when

PSOs invest in CSR programs on environmental sustainability, while at the same time entering into a sponsorship contract with an environmentally unfriendly partner. Influenced by the organisation's institutional environment and the urge to be responsive to external pressure (Khan & Lockhart, 2022), tensions can lead PSOs to pursue over-promising communication, not accurately reflecting their actual performance (Talpur et al., 2023).

This study employs the paradox framework of Lewis (2000) to explore how and when these tensions unfold and how PSOs manage them. The first phase of the framework is about paradoxical tensions, defined as "contradictory yet interrelated elements that exist simultaneously and persist over time" (Smith & Lewis, 2011, p.382) and translated in three categories, i.e., self-referential loops, mixed messages, and system contradictions. The second phase of the framework is about reinforcing cycles, that initially reduce but eventually intensify tensions, such as splitting or repression. The third phase of the paradox framework is about managing tensions, and describes possible responses, such as acceptance, confrontation, and transcendence.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

Based on Lewis' (2000) paradox framework, this study explores the nature of tensions, reinforcing cycles, and their management in four purposefully selected Belgian professional soccer clubs. The sample includes one PSO managing its CSR in-house (type A), one with a charitable Foundation embedded in its structure (type B), one with a separate Foundation (type C), and one also having a separate Foundation, partly funded and supported by the city it is affiliated with (type D).

For each PSO, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 1-3 internal stakeholders, directly associated with the PSO's CSR initiatives (e.g., Foundation staff, club managers). The interviewees were encouraged to discuss the benefits, goals, communication, difficulties, and evolution they perceive regarding the PSO's CSR implementation. As such, the interviews allow for an in-depth understanding of the stakeholders' perspectives concerning CSR management and its underlying tensions.

The process of data collection has been concluded. The analysis of the interviews is currently ongoing. Initial codes are deductively created from Lewis' (2000) paradox framework and an inductive content analysis strategy allows for the development of additional codes.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Preliminary insights show varying tensions within and between PSOs. For example, in PSO type A, we observe conflicting priorities regarding social and commercial objectives. In PSO type D, tensions arise at the level of prioritisation in activities aligned with local municipal policies, whereas in type C, prioritisation of activities exhibits greater autonomy. Further analysis is needed to draw conclusions from this. The final findings will be presented and discussed during the conference.

Conclusion, Contribution and Implication

This study adds to our understanding of strategic CSR implementation in different organisational structures and the associated tensions. As such, it provides theoretical contribution to the sport management literature, by investigating how PSOs CSR implementation differs across organisation types and how this creates tensions. It will help PSOs manage the tensions, enabling them to more fully leverage their social potential.

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Understanding Key Drivers Of Sustainable Travel Behaviour – A Focus On The European Association Of Sport Management Conference

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Conferences are an important part of academia, providing attendees with networking opportunities, developing new collaborations, and discussing new research ideas. However, like major sport events their environmental impacts can be significant, particularly travel carbon emissions (Neugebauer et al. 2020). It is, therefore, crucial for sport (and sport management conferences) to respond to and address current and emerging sustainability challenges (Breitbarth et al., 2023). EASM and organisers of other sport management events are increasingly interested in understanding and reducing their environmental impact. Previous research has analysed conference travel emissions and options to reduce these; however, less is known about attendees' attitudes, drivers and barriers towards reducing their travel footprint. Our study addresses this knowledge gap and answers the following research questions: How did attendees travel to EASM 2022 and what was their travel footprint?; What factors influence attendees' intentions to reduce their travel footprint?

Travel mode choices are complex. Based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1999), the Model of Goal Directed Behaviour (Perugini and Bagozzi 2001) and Norm-Activation-Model (Steg and DeGroot 2010), this research incorporates cognitive, normative and affective drivers into a comprehensive model to examine attendees' behavioural intentions to reduce their conference travel footprint. It proposes that cognitive factors (i.e. attitudes and perceived behavioural control) directly affect behavioural intentions. Personal responsibility and social norms activate

personal norms (Bamberg & Möser 2007), which in turn evoke positive and negative anticipated emotions (Onwezen et al. 2013) leading to behavioural intention to make sustainable behaviour changes.

Data was collected from EASM conference attendees at the 2022 annual conference in Innsbruck, Austria with the support of the Local Organising Committee. The online survey included questions on travel modes, reasons for travel choice, and perceptions towards reducing the environmental impact of conference-related travel using previously validated scales. A total of 165 fully-completed surveys were received (response rate of 40%). Scale reliability and validity were confirmed applying confirmatory factor analysis. Covariance-based Structural Equation Modelling using 10,000 bootstrap samples and bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals was adapted to test the conceptual model including direct and indirect effects. The model predicted 54% of the variance of behavioural intention to reduce the environmental impact of conference-related travel.

Overall, attendees travelled 2.6 million km to and during the conference generating 193 tons of CO₂e. Air travel accounted for 80.1% of European attendees' total emissions, and 98.3% for attendees from outside Europe. Normative and affective factors primarily drive attendees' intention to reduce their travel footprint. Personal norms are activated by their beliefs around responsibility ($\beta=.676$, $p<.001$) but also social norms ($\beta=.346$, $p<.001$) and anticipated positive ($\beta=.746$, $p<.001$) and negative emotions ($\beta=.496$, $p<.001$) derive from personal norms, that is emotional responses are evoked from internalised moral identities. Emotions and perceived behaviour control had a significant impact on behavioural intention (PAE: $\beta=.384$, $p<.001$, NAE: $\beta=.249$, $p<.001$, PBC: $\beta=.260$, $p<.001$). In contrast, attitudes and social norms were found to have no significant direct influence on behavioural intention.

This study contributes to our understanding of key drivers of sustainable behaviour change in the context of academic conference travel. Although cognitive, attitudinal and habitual factors are prevalent in the literature, our study adds to the theory by incorporating emotions and norms to broaden our understanding of attendees' intention to make sustainable travel choices. It demonstrates

that personal norms and anticipated emotions are central to reducing attendees' travel footprint, alongside reducing perceived barriers to switching to more sustainable transport options. It is recommended that conference organisers raise awareness of the environmental impact of conference-related travel and ensure that future travel communications have an emotional appeal.

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Game Changers: Environmental Sustainability Change Processes in Sport Organizations

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Aim and Research Questions

Human activities have precipitated a climate and environmental crisis that significantly threatens our global community, with sports organizations notably contributing through their use of fossil fuels, facility heating, and waste production (Mallen & Dingle, 2022, p. 136). According to Benn et al. (2014, p. 5), sport organizations must address the issues they have created by altering their operational and behavioral practices. This study investigates the transformation of sports organizations in responding to climate and environmental challenges. It aims to understand how environmental change is implemented, examining the effectiveness of the processes involved, the role of the Action Now sustainability program, and the uniformities and variances in organizational approaches to climate and environmental issues. The central research question asks: «How do sports organizations implement changes to enhance their climate and environmental efforts?»

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

This study draws on Kotter's (2012) theory of change processes to analyze how sports organizations address climate and environmental challenges. It integrates theories of legitimacy and DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) concept of isomorphism to explore the motivations behind organizational changes. Furthermore, it uses a variety of scholarly sources, including the application of systems theory by Judge and Elenkov (2005) to link organizational change capacity with environmental performance. Other research such as the studies by Orr and Inoue (2019) and Cury et al. (2023, 2024), along with Babiak and Trendafilova's (2011) contributions, provides insight into the adaptability to climate change, the drivers of environmental actions, and the role of economic incentives. Collectively, these frameworks and studies offer a comprehensive

understanding of the dynamics and effectiveness of environmental change initiatives within sports organizations.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

This study is grounded in a qualitative research design. Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews with eight participants representing different sports organizations, each with a team in the highest-level Norwegian football league (Eliteserien) 2024. The sample includes both organizations that have participated in the Action Now program, and organizations that did not. Action Now is a program focusing on sustainability in local communities, centred around sport organizations. Thematic analysis was employed to code the data and identify significant patterns, thereby creating an understanding of the complex interactions between organizational change and environmental actions within sports organizations.

Results/Findings and Discussion

The preliminary findings indicate a high level of reflection among all organizations on their impact on climate and the environment. However, climate and environmental efforts vary among the sports organizations. All organizations have introduced initiatives related to electricity consumption and waste management. Other initiatives include the reduction of rubber granulate emissions to the environment, reduced waste production, and transportation-related measures.

Regarding the factors influencing these environmental efforts, strategic considerations, responsibility towards climate and environmental issues, external expectations, and a management that views environmental efforts as crucial have been identified as drivers.

Informants emphasized the importance of incorporating environmental strategies into strategic and actionable plans. The partners of the sport organizations are instrumental in the execution phase, providing vital resources and facilitating economic benefits.

However, the organizations also face multiple challenges in implementing environmental initiatives, including high costs, limited

employee understanding, restricted action scopes, and a lack of eco-friendly options. The ease of sustaining environmental efforts correlates with their integration level within the organization. The employee attitudes are shifting. However, younger employees are typically more receptive to such initiatives.

Some organizations have assessed or planned further measures to enhance ongoing projects, while others prioritize pioneering new innovative solutions.

The findings of this study indicate increased awareness of climate issues and the difference sports organizations can make among the participants in the program. Participants further appreciate the program's tools for structured sustainability work. As a result of participation, some organizations point to specific measures and new partnerships. However, no correlation has been observed between participation in Action Now and progress in environmental work.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The full results and conclusions of this study will be presented at the upcoming conference. The findings highlight the critical role of strategic planning, management commitment, and collaborative partnerships in enhancing environmental performance. In additions, the variability of environmental practices among different organizations and the effectiveness of interventions like the Action Now program is explored. This study contributes to a broader understanding of environmental change processes in sport organizations as well as their drivers and potential challenges. The implications of this research extend to providing strategies for sports organizations aiming to improve their sustainability practices. These are further useful to inform policy recommendations and strategic planning to foster a more sustainable sports industry.

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Understanding Social Sustainability: A Systematic Literature Review Towards Developing a Framework of Indicators for Staging Future Mega Sport Events

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Aim and Research Questions

This research aims to explore the role of Social Sustainability in the context of Mega Sport Events (MSEs). The organization of MSEs in non-authoritarian or non-autocratic countries is increasingly met with strong opposition from local communities. We also observe that host cities are scaling back on infrastructure investments that traditionally constituted the main legacies for residents. To find the necessary local support to stage an MSE, organizers need to give more importance to their social heritages.

Recognizing the importance of Sustainable Development, this study examines the theoretical foundations and practical applications of the underexplored facet of Social Sustainability. Despite its significance, Social Sustainability remains ambiguously defined and underappreciated within academic discussions. This research highlights the need for a better balance between societal, economic, and environmental factors in organizing MSEs.

We look to answer the following questions:

- What key Social Sustainability indicators emerge from academic literature?
- Which stakeholders impact / are impacted?

Theoretical Background

From a theoretical angle, Social Sustainability has often been discussed against the stakeholder theory (Freeman, 2010), given that the Social Sustainability concept and the stakeholder theory take 'value creation' as a theoretical anchor (Khosravi & Izbirak, 2019; Morais & Barbieri, 2022). For this, we pay particular attention to the importance of the

connection between Social Sustainability and stakeholder types. Gursoy and Kendall (2006) state "... for a mega event to be successful, the understanding and participation of all stakeholders in the process is crucial".

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

We conducted this research using a systematic literature review approach, following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses method. From an initial selection of 4,089 peer-reviewed articles, we ultimately analyzed 40. The main inclusion criteria were: publication between 2018 and 2023 and the presence of clear indicators with the aim of defining Social Sustainability.

To preliminarily assess the validity of this framework, we conducted a document analysis of the Candidature Files for the Olympic Games in Paris 2024. We used these to evaluate, contrast and compare the insights from the literature review. The Paris Candidature Files consists of 3 documents: Vision, and Strategy (40 pages); Governance (18 pages); Candidature Questionnaire (76 pages).

Results/Findings and Discussion

It is important to highlight that we conducted transdisciplinary research to better address the gaps in social legacy studies by uniting the views and understandings of diverse scholars and practitioners.

The first outcome is a list of indicators, either tangible or intangible, which can be grouped in seven themes: Economy, Feel Good, Public Engagement, Social Capital & Social Cohesion, Social Equity, Training & Education, and Urban Design.

A second finding emphasizes the crucial need to further identify and recognize the diverse stakeholders impacted by an indicator. We want to highlight the significance of aligning the definition of a Social Sustainability indicator with its ramifications for various stakeholders. This connection will be essential to understand how to measure the overall impact later on.

Staging MSEs transcends the boundaries of simple sport event management, as the

implications for the city and its citizens are profound and far-reaching. It was, therefore, crucial to undertake a literature review that was not confined to any specific context. In the following stage, our aim was to contextualize the applicability of this framework within the scope of an MSE. To this end, we analyzed the Candidature Files for the Paris Games. The results indicated that while most indicators from the framework, based on academic literature, were referenced in the Candidature Files, they were often discussed with minimal detail, which sharply contrasts with the environmental goals of the Games. Additionally, we identified new indicators associated with sports legacy. Others were not referenced at all.

Conclusion, Contribution and Implication

The proposed framework, aids organizers in formulating strategies and communication channels as they will better understand the various social factors that individuals or groups might consider when determining their position on supporting or opposing the hosting of an MSE by their city. The framework also suggests the need to further research the different stakeholders, as each of them is impacted differently. Overall, the relationship between Social Sustainability and stakeholders is that both encourage organizations to consider a wider range of impacts, focusing on long-term benefits.

Our theoretical framework addresses the existing gap in the concept of Social Sustainability by adopting a multidisciplinary approach and grounding itself in stakeholder theory. The multidisciplinary aspect allows for a more holistic understanding of Social Sustainability, which could lead to more robust analysis and assessment of social impacts. Furthermore, this framework is now better equipped to establish a basis for quantifying and measuring social indicators as we establish a direct relationship between an observed impact and affected stakeholders.

Further research applying the framework to more diverse (sport) events would help validate and enrich it.

Exploring the Environmental Impacts of Sport: a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) of a Multi-day Sport Event

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The recognition of environmental sustainability as a pivotal concern has necessitated the integration of comprehensive environmental impact assessments in the management of sports events (Marrucci et al, 2023). The Carbon Footprint (CF) measurement has emerged as a predominant tool for practitioners in the sport industry, specifically in relation to climate change and sports events (UEFA, 2024; Khanna et al., 2024; Daddi et al., 2022; Loewen and Wicker, 2021; Pereira et al., 2019). Despite the valuable insights provided by CF analysis, its narrow focus on greenhouse gas emissions may overlook broader environmental considerations. This is where the Environmental Footprint (EF) methodology, encompassing a wider spectrum of environmental impacts, including water use, land use, and biodiversity, presents a more holistic approach to environmental assessment. The EF framework encourages a comprehensive evaluation of an event's environmental impact beyond carbon emissions, identifying environmental sustainability hotspots and improvement actions which do not stop on climate change. However, the adoption of the EF methodology in the context of sports events is notably less prevalent, a gap highlighted by the scarcity of literature and case studies on EF's application in this field. Moreover, to the best of our knowledge, only Ecological Footprint assessments have been conducted on a multi-day sports event (Collins et al., 2012), with no EF studies available for this type of events. To fill this gap and enrich literature, we carried out the first Environmental Footprint of a multi-day Sport Event. The case study relates to the World Mountain and Trail Running Championships held in Innsbruck in June 2023 (WMTRC-2023). The event had a timeframe of 10 days, involving 1067 athletes, 501 members of the staff, and 50.000 supporters.

The environmental impacts were calculated with the LCA software SimaPro 9.5.0.0 and the Environmental Footprint (EF 3.1) method. The time frame of the study is 10 days, and the boundaries precisely involved: production and end of life of temporary infrastructure, as well as the transport to the event site; energy and water consumption associated to the sport competition processes; production and end of life of food and beverages associated to the sport competition (bars and kiosks and catering including an average menu served at the event), included packaging consumed for the distribution; production and end of life of the staff and athletes clothing and other perishable equipment; production of tickets and promotional material associated to the sport competition (paper, plastic, glass, metal.); waste generated during the WMTRC-2023; transport of the supporters attending to the sport competition; transport of the athletes and related technical staff; transport of the rest of the staff (organisers, volunteers.); accommodation of athletes, support staff and supporters.

The study provided the absolute results for 16 environmental footprint impact categories, namely: Climate change (carbon footprint), Acidification, Ecotoxicity (freshwater), Particulate matter, Eutrophication (marine, freshwater, terrestrial), Human toxicity (cancer, non-cancer) Ionising radiation, Land use, Ozone depletion, Photochemical ozone formation, Resource use (fossil, minerals and metals), water use. Results were then normalized and weighted to show the overall environmental impact provided by the single most relevant environmental impact categories. Results show that climate change (carbon footprint) accounts for 34% of the overall environmental impact, followed by Resource use, Fossils (19.39%), Photochemical Ozone Depletion (7.16%), Resource Use, mineral and metal (6.46%), Particulate matter (5.94%), Acidification (5.91%) and Eutrophication, terrestrial (4.28%). The results for the WMTRC-23 were further analysed to determine the key life cycle phases and processes which contribute most to the overall environmental footprint. Results show that more than 70.5% of the overall environmental impacts come from mobility, with mobility of athletes contributing to 52.8% and mobility of supporters to 17.7% to the result. This is as most of athletes travelled by plane, whereas most of the fans were locals.

Accommodation accounted for 19.3% of the overall environmental footprint.

This study provides the first EF insights of a multi-day sport event. The case study also confirms the results in the literature highlighting that mobility is the most impactful environmental source in sport events (Khanna et al.,2024). However, in this abstract, we would like to highlight the importance of measuring the environmental footprint rather than solely focusing on the carbon footprint. If only the carbon footprint of the event were considered, it would encompass just 34% of all environmental impacts. This narrow focus on carbon would disregard 66% of the environmental impacts. The Environmental Footprint analysis revealed that the event affected the environment also in terms of resource use, acidification, and eutrophication as well. We think that recognising the presence of all environmental impacts through an EF study could facilitate the implementation of systematic environmental management initiatives in the future. Such initiatives could mitigate not only the impact on climate change but also on the broader environment and ecosystems. We suggest that sport organisations and sport event's organisers begin to measure all their environmental impacts rather than only the carbon footprint, to move towards real environmental sustainability in sport.

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An Exploratory Analysis Of Interorganisational Relationships Towards Circular Economy And Their Motives: Insights From Smaller Players In The Sporting Goods Industry

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Aim and Research Questions

Since sporting goods firms use large amounts of resources and contribute to environmental degradation, sport brands have started to engage in strategies to alleviate their negative environmental impact (Becker et al., 2022). While firm-level initiatives on new products/services can be well-intended their overall impact is mostly insignificant. The circular economy (CE) literature proposes a systemic approach to tackle the problem of linear production and consumption holistically (Aarikka-Stenroos et al., 2021; Fehrer et al., 2023; Gerke et al., 2024). The basis for a systemic approach is interorganisational relationships (IOR) and different levels of cooperation (Aarikka-Stenroos et al., 2021; Kuhlmann et al., 2023). The aim of this research is to investigate CE strategies of smaller players in a given industry that are embedded in IOR. Taking an exploratory approach, we uncover how smaller firms leverage IOR to achieve positive sustainability outcomes through CE strategies contributing to the incremental constitution of circular ecosystems.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

New contexts for IOR are constantly emerging, for example circular economy and circular business models rely heavily on IORs. The complexity of relationships between various actors in circular ecosystems requires further research and can provide evidence to explore goals, types, decisions, implementation, development, and context of IORs. CE is defined as "a regenerative system in which resource input and waste, emission, and energy leakage are minimised by slowing, closing, and narrowing material and energy loops" (Geissdoerfer et al., 2017, p. 7), or as "an

industrial system that is restorative or regenerative by intention and design” (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2013, p. 7). Most CE studies have focused on methods at the micro level or policies at the macro level rather than reshaping socio-economic systems at the meso level (Winans et al., 2017). However, systemic change taking into account not only environmental but also social and economic imperatives is needed to implement CE principles on a larger scale in the long-term (Fehrer et al., 2023). An approach for implementing CE on a systems level is by designing and implementing circular business models (Bocken et al., 2016). Business models concern not only what happens inside a firm (e.g., product design) but more so what happens at the intersection with other actors in the environment of the focal firm, hence within IOR. The systemic service ecosystem approach even emphasises the broad involvement of systemic actors in a process of institutional change rather than focusing on firm-level resources and decision-making (Fehrer et al., 2023).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

We opted for a single case study research design with multiple embedded units of analysis (Yin, 2009). The context is the global sporting goods industry with a focus in the sample selection on smaller players that focus on circular strategies and that have obtained sustainability labels (e.g., BCorps). Following a netnographic approach, we collected 740 documents during 2020 from sporting goods firms’ websites, social media accounts, and journalistic websites. Data were imported into Nvivo for inductive analysis screening for IOR structures (number and type of organisations in IOR), type and intensity of cooperation within IOR, content of IOR-based circular strategies, and motives for cooperation for CE.

Results/Findings and Discussion

Based on an initial analysis, we found eight different types of IOR-based collaborations aimed at CE with one or multiple partners. These IOR-based collaborations include the following: collaboration with competitors and industry peers; large multi-organisational and international networks; NGO/NPO collaborations; research collaborations; subcontractor training; supplier and

subcontractor monitoring; supplier partnerships; and supply chain collaborations.

The content of the IOR-based strategy dealt with the practices happening within the IOR. We identified eight practices: develop knowledge that contributes to sustainable solutions, designs, and practices; develop sustainable material and material properties; engage in renewable energy projects; engage with customers to give products a second life; engage with local communities; ensuring compliance to environmental standards; ensuring compliance to ethical manufacturing standards; and provide information to consumers about sustainability efforts.

The data reveals six motives for which firms engage in IOR to achieve CE strategies. These motives are to meet climate targets, preserve natural environments, reduce overall industry's impacts on the environment, respect animal welfare, social improvement, and structural change.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

Our research findings show that IOR-based cooperation is important for systemic and structural change towards CE within the context of an industry. During our data collection and data analysis we noticed many individual level efforts of firms and customers and much research focusing on this type of engagement. Nevertheless, our research allowed to reveal a wide panel of IOR-based collaboration towards CE. Different configurations of IOR provided the environment for different kinds of IOR-based CE practices and strategies to emerge and flourish. The investigated sports apparel firms had a variety of motivations from simply preserving the environment and meeting climate targets to reducing the overall impact of the industry on the environment. Other motivations included animal welfare and social improvement as well as the explicit desire to bring about structural change in the entire industry.

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Navigating the Playing Field: Reimagining the Sports Industry in the Face of Accelerated Climate Change

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Aim and Research Questions

Does faster-than-expected climate change represent a feasible challenge or an irresolvable dilemma for the sports industry? The study acknowledges the historical neglect of nature in sports and its promotion of over-consumptive behaviour and emphasises the need for the sports industry to reduce its environmental impact. Therefore, the paper tries to challenge the idea that a sporting event's financial worth should supersede its effects on the community and environment. It proposes a leading role for sport in mobilising climate action and tackling climate-related concerns, especially if sustainability can be placed at the forefront of future mega-sport events. It aims to challenge the prevailing belief in constant economic growth by proposing integrating Degrowth principles into sports to support the shift towards sustainable practices.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

At a time defined by environmental and social issues, the sports industry has become an unexpectedly significant yet active front in the fight against climate change. Beyond its economic impact, sport's popularity impacts our daily lives and habits with billions of people participating and watching worldwide (Miller et al., 2003). It creates a special responsibility and the sports sector has acknowledged its role in both contributing to environmental issues (McCullough et al., 2020; Szathmári and Kocsis, 2020) and fostering innovative solutions that have a bidirectional relationship, however, those are often adaptations without a proactive stance (Orr & Inoue, 2019). However, given the climate change-related challenge, societies tend to emphasize ecological perspectives when discussing economic issues (Köves et al., 2021). The sport and sustainability discourse attempts to combine the notions of ecological economics and Degrowth (Latouche, 2009;

Kallis et al., 2012), which emphasise the constraints of natural systems (Hall, 2012) and challenge the widely held belief that constant economic growth is both desirable and possible (Daly, 2014). Sports researchers also tend to argue that the leadership of sports should incorporate self-imposed limitations on elite sports (Gammelsaetter and Loland, 2023). What is unclear for the sports industry is how sufficient action should be interpreted and played out in the future. In the context of the Degrowth paradigm, this essay seeks to define how sports might serve as a Degrowth-specific venue for tackling climate change.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The study presents an innovative participatory mixed-method technique that entailed backcasting and a Delphi survey involving 21 sports experts worldwide (including eight senior representatives from national sports federations, eight delegates from sports management and media, five academic scholars, and representatives from Estonia, Hungary, India, Italy, Norway, Spain, and the UK) in a meaningful discussion about the strategic awareness of climate change. Three interconnected phases made up the futuring research. Backcasting with economics students (step 1) was used as the foundation for the Delphi expert panel (steps 2-3) to create a vision, normative scenarios, consensus and steps for action about the creation of future sustainable sports (Köves et al., 2021).

Results/Findings and Discussion

The discoveries emphasise the importance of (i) sharing resources, (ii) adopting a community-focused approach, and (iii) achieving a balance between participants' 'commodification' and technological progress when reassessing the role of sports in addressing climate change. Three main pathways to challenge the idea that a sporting event's financial worth should supersede its effects on the community and environment have been identified: two using the Delphi consensus element, and the third the dissensus-based version. The first pathway based on the expert consensus highlights (i) the gradual integration of the elements of the sharing economy (linked to the theory of Degrowth) into the world of sport in terms of sports infrastructure, equipment, competition

planning, transport and logistics. The second consensus pathway refers to (ii) the use of community-centric and low-impact sports practices that increase local communities' involvement and decision-making power, fostering a clearer idea of the interconnectedness between supporters, consumers, and participants. The third pathway defined by expert dissensus highlights (iii) disparities in beliefs about technological advancement. While the backcasting participants were tech optimists, seeing technological innovations as the solution to climate change challenges, the expert panel was divided about technology's beneficial influence on sustainability. They agreed that technological innovation is critical for transitioning to a more sustainable future. However, there are significant differences in how this may occur.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

The findings focus on the pressing requirement for the sports sector to take a proactive stance and could have a considerable impact on the ongoing debate about the need for a systemic overhaul of sports that draws upon the principles of ecological economics and Degrowth. Further research should analyse the sports sector's influence on climate change. Understanding stakeholder views in the community and sports sectors on different pathways to Degrowth should be one of the aims, with particular emphasis on investigating the consequences of technological innovation and its influence on the fundamental values associated with the sport.

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Co-Creation Of Value Among Brands And Customers To Promote Circularity – A Case Study Within The Sportswear Industry

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Aim and Research Question

One major focus of sportswear brands in the context of sustainability is circularity. While it is well established in literature that circular business models can only succeed through co-creation of value among brands and its customers (Mostaghel und Chirumalla 2021), research to date lacks comprehensive insights into how brands can engage with their customers in circular activities. To address this research gap, this study's research question is as follows: How can brands promote circularity through co-creation of value with their customers?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Under the concept of value co-creation, customers have become active resource integrators and push for green branding efforts (Zhou et al. 2021). To meet customers' call for more sustainability, one major focus of brands is circularity (Calvo-Porrall und Lévy-Mangin 2020). The circular economy (CE) concept aims at avoiding the waste of resources, materials and products and using all outputs as inputs for other processes (Merli et al. 2018). Customers play a vital role in a CE as they need to be interested and involved in resource recirculation and must be educated on the environmental benefits of sustainable but more expensive products (Kazemina et al. 2016). However, achieving a CE is a complex task as it requires the cooperation of many participants, and especially customers, who need to engage in a systematic value co-creation process from the outset (Urbinati et al. 2017). Therefore, circular efforts often fail as brands struggle to understand how to engage with customers in circular activities (Hultberg und Pal 2021).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

We used a multimethod research approach to collect data by conducting interviews and enhancing findings through a quantitative online survey (Tashakkori et al. 2021). This study utilizes a single case study approach examining the interactions between PUMA and its customers. We deliberately chose a brand from the sportswear industry owing to its extraordinary identification potential, unusually high loyalty, and well-established traditions, which result in strong engagement among the brand's stakeholders. As PUMA is one of the most well-known sports brands worldwide, customer interactions are manifold. Using Microsoft Teams, we conducted interviews with sixteen employees of PUMA, nine customers and six business partners. Interviews lasted between 21 and 44 minutes, were transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using ATLAS.ti. Following the interviews, we analyzed data from a quantitative online survey of a PUMA circularity project to back up and enhance our qualitative findings. In total, 236 responses were collected from customers involved in the project.

Results/Findings and Discussion

We find that engaging customers in circular activities requires brands to consider five key aspects. First, brands must think about ways to transparently inform and educate customers. Customers must have easy access to information on the circularity efforts of the brand, which makes the use of digital means indispensable. Second, brands need to collaborate closely with customers along the product lifecycle. It does not create any value if sportswear brands develop new, circular products but customers are neither buying nor returning them at the end of their life cycle. Hence, customers must be involved in the process of developing circular products and have the ability to provide feedback. Third, brands have to motivate customers to engage in the co-creation process using appropriate incentive structures. Fourth, innovation is key to achieve circular loops, offer customers circular products and engage them in innovative circular activities. Fifth, brands must build strong relationships with recyclers, retail accounts and other strategic sustainability partners to further improve recycling processes, introduce takeback

schemes, and jointly seize circular opportunities.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This study contributes to literature by examining in detail how sportswear brands can promote circularity through co-creation of value with their customers. While research to date has emphasized the importance of customers in the context of circularity (Calvo-Porrall und Lévy-Mangin 2020), this study is the first of its kind to examine what a brand has to consider when seeking to engage with its customers in circular activities. This is relevant as engaging with customers on the topic of circularity builds trust, facilitates knowledge sharing and ensures that brands get customers' support when introducing new circular initiatives, services and products (Geissdoerfer et al. 2018).

This study enhances the repertoire of managers by helping them to understand better what to consider when designing a circular business model. Recently, sportswear brands have begun to focus their efforts on designing and operating circular business models (Pal und Gander 2018). However, they are lacking the knowledge how to best interact with customers on this topic and motivate them to engage in circular activities. This study addresses this shortfall and thus helps companies to define and implement strategies that will facilitate circularity through co-creation of value.

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How to reduce sports teams employees' turnover intention? The Effect of ESG Management on Sport Teams Employees' Psychology Capital and Turnover Intention: Moderating Effect of Perceived Fan Support

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Aim and Research Questions

The current study aimed to identify the factors that can reduce turnover intention among sports team employees. To fulfill the purpose of the study, ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) management, Psychology Capital, and the conception of Perceived Fan Support were selected as the main theoretical framework. The research questions were as follows. 1) Does ESG Management affect (i) Psychological Capital (ii), or Turnover Intention? 2) Does Psychological Capital affect Turnover Intention? 3) Does Perceived Fan Support moderate the relationship between ESG Management and Turnover Intention?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

ESG management is a framework that considers the impact that organizations have on communities and economies. It is being embraced worldwide by more organizations to achieve sustainability, and to create value for both society and their stakeholders. By integrating environmental, social, and governance considerations into operations, organizations can improve their reputation, and enhance relationships with stakeholders, employees, customers, alongside the wider community (Lokuwaduge et al., 2017). ESG management is predominantly applied in the sports industry. Among the various sports-related organizations, sports teams that consist of professional players, fans, and employees are more affected by climate change (e.g., sports event facilities), social engagement (e.g., sports fans) and governance. To enhance the effectiveness of ESG management, it is crucial to consider internal factors such as human resources management. Previous research has mainly

concentrated on the external advantages of ESG management. However, it is crucial to acknowledge the significance of internal factors as they propel organizational success and sustainability. The significance of human resource management has been highlighted, particularly in recent times. A growing global concern among employees within organizations is known as 'Quiet quitting'. This phenomenon is spreading rapidly, leading to an increase in employee turnover intention (Pevce, 2023). Quiet quitting occurs when employees fail to find meaningful work within an organization or conduct low psychology capital. Since sports team employees require expertism in sports knowledge (Hartenian, 2003) while understanding their fans, maintaining a low turnover rate helps to preserve valuable knowledge and expertise within the team. Therefore, our study expects that ESG management will affect psychological capital and reduce turnover intention. Additionally, as sports fans are the essential driving force for sports teams, we speculate that perceived fan support will moderate the relationship between ESG management and turnover intention.

Research Design, Methodology, and Data Analysis

To address the proposed research questions, 357 data were collected from employees of Korean sports teams that have already implemented ESG management practices. Participants were recruited with responses from an online questionnaire. The survey consisted of a total of 28 items, 1) ESG Management (9), 2) Psychological Capital (12), 3) Perceived Fan Support (3), and 4) Turnover Intention (4). Data analysis, frequency analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, reliability analysis, path analysis, and multi-group analysis were conducted.

Results and Discussion

The measurement of each variable ranged over .9 Cronbach's alpha values. CFA results ($\chi^2/df=2.052$, $p<.001$, CFI = .953, TLI = .953, RMSEA= .054) revealed a good model fit. SEM results ($\chi^2/df=2.56$, $p<.001$, CFI = .949, TLI = .944, RMSEA= .059) also indicated a good model fit. Using maximum likelihood estimation, SEM was performed for path analysis and the results were as follows: 1) ESG management positively influenced

psychology capital ($\beta=.245$, $p<.001$). 2) ESG management negatively influenced turnover intention ($\beta=-.102$, $p<.05$). 3) Psychological capital did not influence turnover intention ($\beta=.087$, $p=.069$). 4) Moderated effect of perceived fan support was not significant. The difference between the high perceived fan support model ($n=166$) and the low perceived fan support model ($n=191$) was not significant ($df=1$, $cmin=.011$, $p=.917$).

Conclusion, Contributions and Implications

This study explored the effects of ESG management, psychological capital, and perceived fan support on turnover intention among sports team employees. The findings indicated that the use of ESG management can reduce turnover intention. These results supported previous research that evaluated the relationship between ESG management and employee turnover (Garsaa & Paulet, 2022). This study did not find that either psychological capital or perceived fan support influenced turnover intention. Despite this, psychological capital and perceived fan support are significant factors in predicting turnover intention. Subsequent research should consider various factors to identify the employees' turnover intention. Overall, this research provides valuable insights for sports team employees seeking to implement effective ESG management strategies.

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Workshops

Track chairs: Tim Ströbel, Kostas Alexandris

Decolonizing the Self, Reflexive Praxis for Sport Scholars

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There is growing literature on ‘reflexivity’ for sports management scholars employing decolonial or racially nuanced critical methodologies (Rich & Misener, 2016; Vadeboncoeur et al., 2020; Chen, 2021). The literature expands on the importance of reflecting on how insider-outsider relations, Whiteness, and modernity-coloniality (respectively) affect scholars’ relationships to the research and research participants. However, there is limited literature on how to convert this reflexivity into practice in the sport management context.

Singer (2005) calls on sport management scholars to rethink the relationship between race and sports management and use these race-based epistemologies to challenge the hegemonic structures of Eurocentric knowledge systems. What does it mean to educate victims of modernity-coloniality (Giraldo, 2016) in a colonial system and then ask them to use this education to ‘dismantle’ that same system? According to Lorde (2003), this means change will be minimal. The framework may be dismantled, but its patriarchal and Eurocentric components remain obstacles to epistemological justice. The decolonial feminist option, however, introduces intersectionality as a social critical theory in praxis (Hill Collins, 2019). It also broadens the conversation of decoloniality to offer a plurality of knowledge systems and praxis to challenge Eurocentric systems (Kamyuka, 2023).

Thus far, the literature recognizes that ‘reflexivity is not enough’ and that scholars need to move toward reflexive practice (Vadeboncoeur et al., 2020.) Therefore, this workshop uses a decolonial feminist lens to promote the reflexive practice of ‘decolonizing of the self’(DOS) (Kessi 2020). DOS is an act of resisting a single narrative of who you are

based on institutional and societal constructs of identity, i.e., race, gender, ethnicity, etc.

This workshop is an interactive presentation that explores the concept of decolonizing the self as a reflexive practice for Management scholars. Drawing on critical management education and decolonial theories, the workshop shares a proposed a framework that encourages participants to critically reflect on their own identities, worldviews, and positionalities within systems of power and privilege. Through a series of experiential activities and reflective exercises, scholars will engage in a process of decolonization aimed at challenging dominant narratives, dismantling oppressive structures, and introducing epistemic justice and liberation to their research practices.

Workshop flow:

1. Introduction

Welcome participants and introduce the workshop's theme: decolonization of the self. Explain the importance of this topic in the context of personal growth, social justice, and collective healing.

2. Icebreaker Activity: Positionality locator

Provide participants with paper and markers. Ask them to create a visual map of their identities, including aspects such as race, ethnicity, gender, nationality, religion, language, geographic location of their institute.

Then think about these identities in relation to their research context and research participants.

Facilitate a brief sharing session where participants discuss their maps and what they reveal about their identities and the relational power dynamics they potentiate.

3. Understanding Decolonization

Define decolonization and its relevance to coloniality.

Discuss how colonization has influenced personal identities, beliefs, and behaviours. Introduce key concepts such:

Liminality

Epistemic freedom

Enfleshed ways of knowing

4. Exploring Decolonizing of the Self

Lead participants through a guided reflection-reflexivity exercise. (Reflect, refusal, representation)

Encourage them to identify aspects of their identities and beliefs that have been shaped by colonial influences.

Provide prompts for self-reflection, such as: «How have dominant narratives shaped my self-perception?» or «In what ways do I perpetuate colonial ideologies in my thoughts, actions or research?»

5. Strategies for Decolonizing the Self

Share theoretical, epistemological, and practical implications of DOS

Reflection – e.g. Coming into the ‘plural - self

Refusal - e.g. Epistemic freedom in creative craftsmanship of methodology

Representation – e.g. not just who but what you represent

Restoration – e.g. diversifying and engaging with life affirming work (liminagraphy)

Share personal restoration stories -

6. Interactive Activity: Restorative Visioning and Liberation

Specific action strategies for scholars at different stages of their career, as these may look different for a junior scholar compared to a full professor given both have access to different levels of institutional power.

Divide participants into small groups.

Prompt them to envision what liberation from colonial influences looks like for themselves personally.

Ask them to identify common themes amongst visions

Encourage them to convey the theme(s) in creative expression through drawings, poetry, or prose.

Each group shares their vision with the larger group. And adds it to the larger picture board.

Social Inclusion In and Through Major Sports Events – Moving Forward

Horbel, Chris (1); Langbein, Elke (2); Schwarz, Daniela (2); Legg, David (3); Strittmatter, Anna-Maria (4)

1: Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, Norway;

2: TUM School of Medicine and Health, Germany;

3: Mount Royal University, Canada;

4: Örebro University, Sweden

Relevance and purpose of the workshop

Inclusion in sports refers to the practice of ensuring that everyone, regardless of their abilities, gender, race, or age, has an equal opportunity to participate in sports events. Rooted in the belief that sports are a human right, this concept has gained emphasis recently. Many sports organizations now promote diversity and inclusion, acknowledging the benefits they bring (Corthouts et al., 2020).

«Exclusive events like the Paralympic Games and Special Olympics promote inclusion for people with disabilities. These events, founded on the principles of social inclusion, equality, and respect for diversity, provide a platform for sporting excellence and participation for those often marginalized in traditional sports. They also are held with the intent to encourage greater inclusion of the specific disability into greater society. Thereby, they provide a platform for sporting excellence but also promote social inclusion, equality, and respect for diversity. They aim to foster an environment of acceptance and challenge attitudes, demonstrating that people with disabilities should have equal opportunities to excel in sports and society (Inoue & Forneris, 2015).

Other major sport events have also pursued inclusion but using slightly different approaches. The Commonwealth Games included athletes with disabilities for the first time in 1994 in exhibition events, and officially included Para-events on the program in 2002 (Misener, McGillivray, McPherson & Legg, 2015). Similarly, the Canada Games started including events for both physically and intellectually disabled athletes in the 1990s.

Each model of inclusion in sports has its pros and cons, particularly regarding the hoped-for goal of social inclusion. While numerous factors can influence these events' impact on social inclusion, it is still worth considering which model is the most effective. A specific area of interest is the effect of Major Games' inclusion efforts on social entrepreneurship, potentially leading to greater social inclusion. We adopt Ratten's (2010) definition of social entrepreneurship as "the use of social issues to create change in the sports context. Social entrepreneurship uses sport as a way to encourage solutions to social issues" (p. 561).

Against this backdrop, the workshop is aimed at the following objectives:

- Identifying inclusive events that can serve as best practice for the social inclusion transition of major sport events.
- Finding ways to share knowledge and enhance inclusion initiatives linked to major sports events within the Paralympic Games and Special Olympics with the aim to inspire the inclusion strategies of a wider range of major sports events (e.g., reintegration of people with disabilities into working life)
- Developing a research agenda on social entrepreneurship and social inclusion in and through major sport events.
- Establish and broaden an interdisciplinary network of researchers, practitioners, and policy makers to promote social entrepreneurship and social inclusion in and through major sport events.

Format and "Flow" of the Workshop

The workshop will take place in an interactive format featuring panel debates, inspirational talks, and group discussions. Participants will engage in reflection and discussion tasks in both small groups and larger assemblies. The workshop format will also facilitate networking and idea development among an interdisciplinary group of researchers and practitioners experienced in major sports events and social inclusion.

Initial short presentations by academic experts and a panel including experienced practitioners are aimed to inspire the group discussions on the following themes:

1. How multi-sport events can be leveraged to increase inclusion.

2. How inclusion can be measured resulting from multi-sport events.
3. How social entrepreneurship can be incorporated into multi-sport events.
4. How social entrepreneurship can be used to increase social inclusion.

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Sport Events, Human Rights and Advocacy: Partnerships for Research Impact

McGillivray, David (1); Biscaia, Rui (2); Florence, Andrea (3); Misener, Laura (4); Preuss, Holger (5)

1: University of the West of Scotland, United Kingdom;

2: University of Bath, United Kingdom;

3: Sport and Rights Alliance;

4: Western University, Canada;

5: Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany

Non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations have sought to enshrine progressive and ethical principles, protocols, and practices into the governance arrangements for mega sport events (McGillivray, et al 2019). These organisations have monitored, published, and intervened to address abuses across the world (Næss, 2020). In the context of mega sport events (MSEs), these organisations have sought to hold organisers and host governments accountable for the impact of their activities on affected individuals and groups (Horne, 2018). Building on the work of the Sport and Rights Alliance (SRA), coalition organisations like the Centre for Sport and Human Rights (CSHR) have brought together key actors including Amnesty International, Transparency International, and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) to devise and implement policies and procedures within the institutional arrangements of MSEs. Focused on affecting positive change within and through sport, advocacy organisations rely on monitoring and research to collect evidence that informs their lobbying and advocacy work. However, the role of academic actors within this landscape is poorly understood.

The proposed workshop will feature a panel of contributors representing academic and non-academic actors in the sport event and human rights field. Given the context of the 2024 Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games, we will focus on how sport events can represent a powerful platform to advance advocacy for human rights, both on the field of play (progressing rights agendas within sport) and in the surrounding host city (progressing rights agendas through sport events). We will

hear from academics from the EU-funded EventRights project (<https://eventrights.net/>) and representatives from the Sport and Rights Alliance coalition and to focus of the workshop will be to address the following questions:

1. How can researchers and research organisations work to inform, or collaborate with, advocacy organisations in the mega sport event and human rights space while navigating challenges related to independence and academic rigour?

2. How can advocacy organisations working in the sport event and human rights space enable research evidence to be translated more effectively into policy actions?

3. What examples of good practice exist for research evidence informing advocacy in the space of sport events and human rights?

In terms of format, the workshop will be chaired by Dr Biscaia and commence with short provocations from named contributors (Prof McGillivray, Prof Misener, Andrea Florence & Prof Preuss), followed by facilitated discussions and audience Q&A. It is also our intention to record the workshop and draw on discussions to write a commentary paper to be submitted to ESMQ and to have a piece published on the website of our partners, the Sport and Rights Alliance.

In Practice and Education: Using the Power of DISC for Skill Development, Research, Employability, and Teaching

Mueller, Jacqueline (1); Masen, Elizabeth (2); Ridinger, Lynn (3); McNiff Villemaire, Jillian (4); Box, Rebekah (2)
1: Loughborough University London, United Kingdom;
2: Athlete Assessments, Australia;
3: Old Dominion University, Virginia, United States of America;
4: Flagler College, Florida, United States of America

Relevance and Purpose

This workshop intersects academia and practice, focusing on the use of DISC Profiling in sport management education, research, and practice. DISC is an online assessment used around the world by athletes, coaches, and sport managers to reveal insights into preferred styles of behaving. Gaining a deeper understanding of your own and others' preferred behaviours is critical for developing stronger relationships, enhancing performance, and improving communication.

Over the last decade, Academics have been utilising the power of DISC for teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, as well as in research projects (e.g., Langdon et al., 2023; Masen et al., 2022). DISC is also applied in consulting work and professional development within the sports industry (e.g., Deutscher Fußball-Bund; European Handball Federation; Division I, II, & III U.S. Colleges; Major League Baseball; National Basketball Association; Rugby Australia); however, it is still an underutilised tool due to lack of awareness and uncertainty on steps required for successful implementation.

Addressing this gap and demonstrating the wide-ranging benefits, this workshop will share best practice on utilising DISC in teaching, research, and industry, for academics and practitioners alike (i.e., Research or Practice in Coach/Athlete Development, Undergraduate Teaching, Postgraduate Teaching, Executive Leadership Development, Communication, Team, and Relationship Building).

Format and Flow

Prior to the workshop, EASM Attendees will have the opportunity to complete their own Sports ManagerDISC™ Profile Report (at no cost) to get tangible insights into the process and results.

The workshop will begin with the «DISC Card Game,» a development tool designed to introduce DISC in a playful and interactive manner. This ice-breaker activity will allow workshop participants to develop self-awareness into their own DISC behaviours and learn about their and others' unique style and strengths.

Next, five lightning style presentations of approximately five minutes each will follow. Each presentation offers an overview of the usability of DISC for a chosen focus (teaching, research, practice), outlining insights into best practice, and key learnings.

The workshop concludes with an extended Q&A opportunity with the three presenters and two conveners, in which participants can get specific responses from experts and discuss potential implementation challenges.

In summary, workshop participants can receive their own Sports Manager DISC Profile, participate in an experiential learning activity, and acquire expert insights. They will leave with an in-depth understanding of how they can use the power of DISC in their teaching, research, or enterprise activities.

Publication of Work

If accepted, the workshop conveners are highly interested in publishing their work in the EASM Sport Management book series. Additional contributions to this book will potentially include Professor Sarah Leberman (Massey University, New Zealand), and Dr Jim Strode (Ohio University, USA); as well as two ongoing MSc research projects underway by Loughborough University and Athlete Assessments. These contributions are not included in this workshop due to not attending the Paris conference or the research being currently underway.

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Sustainable Management in Sport Organisations

Könecke, Thomas (1); Ahonen, Aila (2)

1: KU Leuven, Belgium;

2: JAMK University of Applied Sciences, Finland

The workshop builds on the the Erasmus+ project “Sustainable Sport Management (SSM)

The relationship between sport and the environment has long been established. But it was not until rather recently that most leading sport organisations have pledged to commit to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Building on the impetus from the 2021 COP climate summit in Glasgow, nearly 300 international and national sport organisations have signed up to the UN Framework for Climate Action in Sport (<https://unfccc.int/climate-action/sectoral-engagement/sports-for-climate-action>). The framework requires organisations to pledge commitment to climate targets, to plan and proceed with action and to report on their actions. This represents a strategic change in sport organisations’ policy and operations with far reaching political, social and economic consequences.

Yet, despite some advances, ‘sustainable thinking’ across the sport sector is still in its infancy, and we know very little about its interpretation and implementation by national and international sport organisations. This is an issue of major importance as some 160 million regular sport participants in Europe (40% of the EU population, Eurostats, 2018) actively interact with the environment in or through sport and leave their carbon footprint. Some 35% of the EU population attends live sporting events (Eurostats, 2018), which has a considerable effect on the natural and social environment as well.

Sport organisations, therefore, have a responsibility to conduct their business in a sustainable manner by putting in place sound governance and management principles and practices. Never mind the declared commitment to the global climate targets by major governing bodies of sport such as the IOC, FIFA and World Athletics (WA), there is still a great deal of work to be done in

converting policy objectives into practice, changing organisational culture and educating officials, athletes and spectators.

This workshop addresses a key issue in the implementation of sustainability in sport organizations at all levels, which is that we still only have very limited knowledge about the challenges that national and international sport organisations face when trying to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The contributions to this workshop will mainly be on results of the Sustainable Sport Management (SSM) project that is currently funded by the European Union's Erasmus+ programme. In the SSM project, six universities from Europe and the USA with European and world sport organisations including European Non-governmental Sport Organisation (ENGSO), European Association for Sport Management (EASM), World Athletics (WA) and International Federation of Match Poker (IFMP-an e-sport). In the workshop, selected results of the research conducted in the project will be presented that is supplemented by one presentation from outside of the SSM-project to give the workshop a broader scope. The two presentations not stemming from the project focus on a professional football club (because the SSM-project did not look at clubs) and on the willingness to pay for sustainability in sport because this was also not within the scope of the project.

Proposed format and presenters of the workshop

Part 1:

Presentations on empirical academic research with a focus on the results (not so much the pertinent literature or the method – 3 presentations of 10 minutes)

Presentation 1: Sport Organisations' Implementation of Sustainability Strategy, Vassil Girginov, Brunel University

Presentation 2: Sustainability in Sport Management Education, Christian Tolstrup Jensen, Malmö University

Presentation 3: Willingness to Pay for Sustainability in Sport – A Look at Different Studies, Thomas Könecke, KU Leuven

Panel discussion with presenters and representatives from the SSM project: 20 minutes

Part 2:

Presentations on case studies with a focus on the results (not so much the pertinent literature or the method – 3 presentations of 10 minutes)

Presentation 1: How can a rally event be sustainable? The case of WRC Rally Finland, Aki Laaksonen, Jamk University of Applied Sciences

Presentation 2: Sustainability for humans, animals and the planet. The case of Swedish Equestrian Federation, Karin Book, Malmö University

Presentation 3: Institutional pressures to adopt sustainable practices in German professional football – The case of Eintracht Frankfurt, Sandy Adam, Leipzig University & IFAA GmbH

Panel discussion with presenters, project partners and possibly other experts: 20 minutes

Participants and submissions

The workshop is aimed at both academics and practitioners. Presented case studies give some practical insights into the implementation of sustainability in sport organisations. We also recommend PhD and Student seminar participants to participate in this workshop as well and will promote it amongst them.

Critical Engagement with EDI in Sport Management: Identifying the Issues

Walpole, Caron (1); Book, Karin (2); Shibli, Simon (3); Downward, Paul (1); Kitchin, Paul (4); Donnelly, Paul (4)
1: Loughborough University, England;
2: Malmo University, Sweden;
3: Sheffield Hallam University, England;
4: Ulster University, Northern Ireland

Workshop description and relevance

A core tenet of sport development and management research has focused on increasing the involvement (playing, spectating, working) of marginalised communities into sport and sport organizations. Under the auspices of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives, work has targeted people marginalised from sport and physical activity because of their age, race/ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, economic means, beliefs, or gender. Described as a 'wicked issue' for policy makers and managers, multiple barriers to sport involvement exist for specific groups and the individuals within them. Further impacting this analysis is the need to understand how these intersections impact at macro, meso and micro levels where individuals and sport organizations exist (Cunningham, 2023).

Building on the momentum generated by EASM 2023 in Belfast and aligned to the 'Sport Management and Social Inclusion' theme of EASM 2024 in Paris the convenors propose a workshop for scholars interested in the management of EDI with the aim of initiating a collaboration to develop a social justice agenda for EDI by identifying both the extent and the experience of these issues within the context of sport organizations. In this workshop, the convenors will seek to address questions around this topic which include, but are not limited to;

- How does sport management critically engage with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion? How should sport management critically engage with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion?
- How is the concept of EDI measured and scrutinized in sport management? What novel ways could reveal the extent and/or experience

of various intersections increasing or decreasing involvement?

- How have we conceptualised inequality and exclusion within sports organizations, and is this required to change?
- How have policy makers and sport managers responded to these challenges? What balance has been struck between grassroots, community-led approaches and top-down, policy-led approaches?

Based on Shibli's (2023) Belfast keynote on the 'outrageous inequalities' in sport and physical activity, this workshop aims to support research that presents a nuanced view of the barriers marginalised people experience. These experiences are commonly shared across many local and international environments, but they are not homogenous and, in this context, we welcome contributions from any locale however large or niche. Furthermore, these perspectives should move beyond active participation into other aspects of sport involvement such as spectating, volunteering, officiating and administering or managing sport.

As convenors, we argue that EDI underpins the fabric of the European Association for Sport Management's vision to be the driving force for developing sport management in Europe. We will use our "privileged position" (Denison et al., 2020, p. 398) to support Fink's (2016) encouragement for sport management scholars to strive "toward the discovery of changes that positively transform sport organizations" (p. 5). We seek to develop the learning from this workshop into a collaborative group with an initial goal of developing a position paper outlining the challenges and a research agenda.

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The desired format and ‘flow’ of the Workshop

Following a very brief framing/introduction by the convenors, the workshop will combine presentations in 20 x 20 Pecha Kucha presentations with a managed active workshop approach. This workshop will involve all participants in framing key take home messages and provide recommendations for policymakers and sport organizations. As an aim of the workshop, the convenors will seek to establish a collaborative group that will draw on their specific or generic EDI focus to work toward increasing intersectional understanding of EDI in sport management. To access this, participation in this workshop would be strongly encouraged.

Barriers To Inclusion For Disabled Football Fans: Implications For Inclusive Managerial Practices In English Football

Penfold, Connor (1); Kitchin, Paul (2); Darby, Paul (2)

1: University Campus of Football Business, United Kingdom;

2: School of Sport, Ulster University, United Kingdom

Aim and Research Questions

Attention on the accessibility of sporting venues in sport management research has been focused almost exclusively on managerial views (Paramio-Salcines & Kitchin, 2013; Kitchin et al, 2022; Penfold and Kitchin, 2020), with few exceptions that consider the perspectives of disabled fans (Garcia et al., 2017; Southby, 2013). As such an important voice is missing in the academic analysis and the management practice of accessibility. In this paper we ask two questions: what barriers do disabled football supporters encounter leading up to, during and after their matchday experience and what can managers do about it?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The study was informed by the social-relational model of disability (Thomas, 2007; 2010) which provides a ‘third way’ between the medical and social models of disability. This relational focus acknowledges the external barriers that disabled people face whilst considering the lived, embodied reality of living with impairment. Guiding our approach to examining the lived experiences of disabled football fans were key social-relational concepts, such as structural disablism, psycho-emotional disablism, impairment effects and internalised oppression. Also incorporated into this framework is ableism (Campbell, 2009), which we posit is essential for management studies as it emphasises the actions of nondisabled people and the primacy of ‘normalcy’. Both ableism and social-relational model concepts underpin the oppression of disabled people in contemporary society (Brighton et al., 2023).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

A netnographic research design involving 33 online semi-structured interviews with match-going disabled fans of lower league English football clubs and observations from online fan message boards, was employed to investigate these fans' experiences of inclusion and explore the barriers they encounter leading up to, during and following their matchday experience. Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis informed the data analysis for addressing disabled fans' experience and a secondary managerial reading of the data was employed to identify fan-informed recommendations on improving their experiences.

Findings and Discussion

The experiences of disabled fans in English football fandom reveal that significant improvements have occurred since the turn of the 21st century but barriers remain. Better physical access to stadiums has enhanced social inclusion, facilitating interaction and providing better views of the game. Disabled supporters talk about clubs with superior accessibility, which then influences their loyalty. Accessible stadium experiences empower fans to exercise choice, enhancing their sense of inclusion and connection with their chosen club. Live football attendance offers vital social interaction opportunities, fostering community and belonging for disabled people.

However, attending away matches poses significant challenges due to accessibility concerns enhanced by inadequate facilities and negative staff attitudes. Obtaining tickets and accessible parking spaces present hurdles, while limited accessible transport options hinder independence. Within the venue, ableist segregated seating areas and inadequate provision for away supporters create feelings of exclusion and discrimination. Disabled fans often encounter discriminatory practices from both stadium staff and fellow supporters, impacting their psycho-emotional wellbeing and facilitating these oppressive acts being internalised. Continued efforts are thus needed to improve accessibility and inclusivity in football stadiums.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implications

Stadium managers and customer experience staff can enhance the matchday experience for disabled fans by prioritizing accessibility, empowering choice, and fostering social interaction. This includes ensuring good physical access, which include tiered seating with good sight lines, and promoting inclusive environments.

Addressing barriers to planning and participation, such as improving ticket booking processes and providing accessible transportation, is crucial to creating an inclusive environment that could also encourage new attendees. All managers who are concerned with inclusion need to ensure that facility quality is improved, including accessible seating areas for a diverse range of disabled fans and their families.

Staff awareness and operational training are fundamental not only to support and communicate effectively with disabled fans but to enable staff and managers to reflect on the attitudes that produce and reproduce disability. Discrimination and exclusion must be combated through proactive measures and strict protocols. Embracing inclusive practices and collaborating with disability advocacy groups can further enhance accessibility and inclusivity.

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Competitive Balance and Competitive Intensity in Men’s and Women’s National Team Football: An Analysis of UEFA Euro and its Qualifiers

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2: Université de Rouen, France

Aim and Research Questions

Maintaining high levels of competitiveness is a key objective for organisers of sporting contests. Yet, limited research comparatively evaluated competitiveness of men’s and women’s sports tournaments. This study compares the evolution and determinants of competitive balance (CB) and competitive intensity (CI) in UEFA (Union of European Football Associations) men’s and women’s Euros from their respective initial editions (1960 for men, 1984 for women) to 2022. CB corresponds to a tournament structure which has relatively equal playing strength between members (Forrest & Simmons, 2002), while CI corresponds to the degree of competition within the tournament with regards to its prize structure (Kringstad & Gerrard, 2004). This study aims to answer two research questions:

RQ1: How have CB and CI compared over time within and between UEFA men’s and women’s Euros and their qualifiers?

RQ2: What are the determinants of CB and CI in UEFA men’s and women’s Euros and their qualifiers?

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Consistent with evolutionary biology and the so-called Gould (1983) hypothesis, which has previously been applied to professional sports leagues (Schmidt & Berri, 2003), the primary determinant of CB and CI in national team football is the difference of talent pool size across countries (Scelles, 2021). As suggested by Scelles et al. (2024, p. 4), “The basic idea is that the differences in the population of talent (i.e., the talent pool) across countries lead to differences in players’ abilities from one country to another. Consequently, when countries with considerably different talent

pool sizes participate in the same competitions, lower levels of CB and CI within those competitions are more likely.” The literature often employs a country’s population as a proxy of talent pool (Kuper & Szymanski, 2012; Scelles & Andreff, 2019; Wan et al., 2020). Another determinant of CB and CI is the number of teams participating in the competition (François et al., 2022). Increasing the number of teams deteriorates CB and CI if the additional teams are of lower sporting standards compared to others. However, this is not always necessarily the case and teams can improve their sporting standards over time.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

CB and CI were measured at the intra-match level. CB was also assessed at the end of the match through goal difference. A total of 4,334 games (2,931 for men; 1,403 for women) were analysed. Statistical tests were conducted to compare intra-match CB and CI within and between men’s and women’s Euros over time. Separate regressions were tested for men and women to explain absolute goal difference, with determinants including the difference in the natural logarithms of countries’ populations, dummies for each edition of Euro to capture both temporal and competition format variations (e.g., effect of increasing the number of participating teams), and home advantage as a control variable.

Results/Findings and Discussion

In men’s football, no clear trend emerged in the evolution of intra-match CB and CI, suggesting that supposedly weaker national teams joining the competition over time gradually caught up with stronger ones. For women, there was a gradual deterioration in intra-match CB and CI over 2001-2022, attributed to the increasing number of participating teams. Over 1984-2022, men experienced more balanced and intense games than women, despite a higher number of teams. Similar results were found when comparing women’s (1984-2022) and men’s (1960-1996) competitions from their respective first editions, instead of considering the same period for both men’s and women’s Euros. Regressions confirmed the positive impact of the difference in countries’ populations on goal difference (i.e., the negative impact on CB) for both women and

men. However, population differences alone accounted for over 20% of the variance in men’s football but just over 3% in women’s football. One possible explanation may be the comparatively more recent development of women’s football. Nonetheless, population differences alone explained less than 4% of the variance in women’s football over 2011-2022, suggesting that the talent pool aligns more closely with the country’s population in men’s than in women’s football. Euro edition dummies confirmed the intra-match analysis, while no significant home advantage was identified.

Conclusion, Contribution, and Implication

This study evidences the differing CB and CI (RQ1) and impact of population (RQ2) in UEFA men’s and women’s Euros and their qualifiers. It contributes to the understanding of CB and CI in sports and additionally provides valuable insights for scholars interested in gender studies. Overall, it indicates that UEFA and national associations should pursue their efforts to develop the men’s and women’s game. In particular, given the low explanatory power of population differences for women, national associations should intensify their efforts in encouraging more girls and women to participate in the game at the grassroots level. Furthermore, our findings support the recent decision by UEFA to reintroduce a women’s nations league at the elite level.

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Challenges in the Evaluation of Diversity and Inclusion: A Gaelic Athletic Association Case Study

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Aim & Research Questions

Over the past two decades, diversity and inclusion (D&I) have emerged as pivotal concerns for both national policymakers and sport organisations (Cunningham, 2019; Shaw, 2019; Spaaij et al., 2014, 2020). A confluence of political, economic, legislative, and social pressures has underscored the importance of addressing D&I issues, fuelled by growing evidence that increasing diversity can support significantly enhanced organisational performance (Cunningham, 2017; Doherty et al., 2010). Interest in D&I initiatives has grown within the sports sector, prompting a re-evaluation of policies and practices aimed at fostering inclusivity and equity.

The study also addresses the need for additional empirical research on the effects of diversity and inclusion-related practices in sport organisations, as highlighted by Turconi, Shaw, and Falcous (2022). This study aimed to examine diversity and inclusion in the context of a large, amateur volunteer-led sporting organisation, namely, the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), with a specific focus on evaluating the impact of its GAA for ALL programme (GAA, 2018). The GAA has a membership of over 590,000 individuals affiliated to 2,050 clubs (GAA, 2023).

GAA for All is a family of initiatives in the GAA encompassing Wheelchair Hurling and Camogie, Football for all, Fun and Run, All Star programme, Inclusive clubs and intercultural activities. Each of these has been designed to provide opportunities for

participants of all ages and abilities to take part in modified forms of Gaelic games, and experience a sense of enjoyment, success, and belonging. Traditionally, these programmes have been monitored through an output-based system, which identifies the quantities involved and engaged in each programme; however, this current study focussed on evaluating outcomes and impacts of the Games for ALL programme on participants, their families, clubs, schools, and communities.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Promoting diversity and inclusion in organizations is crucial but challenging, as acknowledged by Storr (2021) and Turconi, Shaw & Falcous (2022) in sports contexts. Embedding D&I principles into organisational cultures requires committed leadership. Training on unconscious bias and inclusive behaviours enhances awareness and skills, while mentorship and sponsorship programs support marginalised groups. Tracking diversity metrics and gathering employee feedback, as noted by Cunningham (2019), are essential for measuring progress. By fostering inclusive environments, organisations can leverage diverse talent and drive innovation.

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

An online questionnaire was distributed to volunteers who are responsible for delivering inclusive activities in GAA clubs. Of 129 attempts, 64 respondents completed the survey. Qualitative semi-structured interviews were undertaken with 22 members of staff and volunteers (12 male and 10 female), over the age of 18, from different levels, roles and leadership positions, across different organisational locations. The interviews were led by four researchers from the partner institutions involved in the study, two female, two male, each with academic and practice-based experience concerning diversity and inclusion issues in sport coaching and management. Thematic analysis of the interview transcripts was then undertaken, following the model developed by Braun and Clarke (2006).

Results/Findings & Discussion

The survey revealed high levels of satisfaction with the training and support on offer through the programme, with 86% of respondents reporting increased levels of confidence and 84% stating that their leadership skills had improved as a result of their participation as coaches or mentors. There were strong indications of a desire to continue coaching, with 85% stating their intent to do so.

From a coach development perspective, the majority of respondents agreed that the programme had helped them to feel part of a broader network (65%), that the delivery of the programme was effective (65%) and that the programme had supported delivery within their club (59%). Respondents were less certain in relation to the impact of the programme on their own children. Only 39% reported that participation had helped them to support their child's development (with 45% remaining neutral). Nevertheless, 64% reported a positive impact on their own personal development, agreeing that the programme had helped them feel more prepared for the future.

Interviews with 22 staff and volunteers revealed a number of high order themes which explain the progress of the scheme to date and identify ways in which it might be refined to improve outputs and outcomes for coaches and participants. The most significant volume of comments (n = 148) related to support for clubs, with volunteer capacity being cited as the most important barrier to progress (n = 50). The leadership of the programme was identified as making a significant positive contribution to its success (n = 102), with the work of the GAA's lead officer being singled for particular praise. Other themes identified in the analysis included issues around adapting competitive formats (n = 25), networking among coaches and mentors (n = 24) and ongoing efforts to embed inclusive activities within clubs at local level (n = 19).

Conclusion, Contribution & Implication

These findings will be used to inform policy, strategy, and practice relating to diversity, and inclusion within the GAA.

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Exploring Intersectionalities in Sport Participation in England

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Aim and Questions

Promoting sport participation in the UK is a central feature of sports policy because of the desirable outcomes that it can deliver. Notably these are identified to be physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development, and sustainable economic development (Cabinet Office, 2015). It has been recognised in the latest UK sports strategy, that these benefits are not equally attainable because of inequalities in sports participation. Specifically, ‘... it is concerning that the disparities in participation between certain groups have continued to widen. Lower activity levels are reported for women, those aged 75 and over, disabled people, people with long-term health conditions, and for some ethnic groups’ (DCMS, 2023, p.21). What is lacking in the policy discussion, is evaluation of the impact of these factors on participation individually, and also collectively through their interaction, on different types of sport activity. A better understanding of this can help to set priorities for sports organisations and policy. Consequently, this presentation will address the question:

How significant are intersectionalities for sport participation?

Theoretical background and Literature Review

Based on foundational theoretical perspectives including sociological theory (Bourdieu, 1984) and economic theory (Becker, 1965), analyses of sport participation in sport management has a long tradition (Taks & Scheerder, 2006; Downward & Rasciute, 2010) and motivated a large empirical literature in which individual and socio-economic characteristics of sports participants have been extensively researched (Downward & Muniz, 2019). What is less researched is an understanding of how such factors interact through intersectionalities – the multiple interlocking social categories that influence sports activity - and this is particularly the case in quantitative analysis (Lim et al, 2021).

Studies have tended to focus on generic collective profiles of participants (Downward and Riordan, 2007), or examined interaction effects of covariates measuring relevant social characteristics (Nobis & El-Kayed, 2019). Problems with these approaches are that they theoretically privilege a specific set of null base categories and, do not provide a clear sense of the overall extent of intersectionality by not locating it at the level of the social system. In contrast, multilevel modelling analysis in which individuals are located in strata that combine the sets of characteristics of concern address these issues (Merlo, 2018).

Research Design, Methodology and Data Analysis

The research draws on the Active Lives Survey (ALS) covering 2018-2019 (n=173,719) (though the data will be updated in time for the conference) measuring individual participation in a variety of forms of sport including, traditional sports, health and fitness activities, and recreational cycling in England. Multi-level regression analyses are undertaken, including a large set of individual level variables, but also social strata constructed from the combinations of characteristics of inequality noted in UK sport policy.

Results, Findings and Discussion

As well as confirming the importance of inequalities according to distinct characteristics of individuals – as fixed effects – the models identify that intersectionalities are significant independent (random) effects on participation. The intersectionalities are more likely to be associated with reductions in the probability of men's participation and particularly with ageing and non-white ethnicity in fitness activities. For leisure cycling the opposite is the case such that the intersectionalities are more likely to be associated with a reduction in women's cycling, with disability and non-white ethnicity being compounding factors

Conclusion, Contribution and Implication

The results are the first to formally explore the overall impact of intersectionalities in sport and highlight the importance of collectively addressing the barriers to participation. However, the distinct impact of

intersectionalities in different sports needs to be accounted for.

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Measuring And Managing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion In The UK's Major Publicly Funded Sports Organisations

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Aim and Research Questions

This paper reports on a programme of national level research in the UK designed to measure and manage the diversity of major publicly funded sports organisations. There are two specific research questions. First, to what extent are these sports organisations representative of the communities that they serve? Second, what interventions can organisations implement to embed equality, diversity and inclusion so that it is a systemic component of organisational governance?

Literature Review

Whilst the benefits of taking part in sport and physical activity are increasingly used to demonstrate social value (for example Sport England, 2021), participation data reveal stubborn patterns of inequality as to who benefits. Furthermore, recent evidence on the workforce in sport and physical activity (SIRC 2021, Perrett Laver 2020) shows that these inequalities also play out in the paid workforce as well as the volunteers who form the boards of many sporting bodies. In short, data consistently reveal the underrepresentation of: women, people from ethnically diverse backgrounds, people with a disability, and people from lower socioeconomic groups. To address the issue, the two largest national agencies for sport in the UK, Sport England and UK Sport, revised their Code for Sports Governance in 2020 to make it a mandatory requirement for the major partners they funded to devise a Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP). This paper examines some early findings from the process and highlights issues raised as sports organisations embarked on their DIAP journey.

Research Design and Data Analysis

The research can be framed as action research as the presence of the research team was to

support participants to develop their DIAPs. Some 130 Tier 3 System Partners completed a detailed online inventory, known as the Partner Support Questionnaire, which collected quantitative and qualitative data about their EDI processes and included the uploading of relevant documentation. Responses were 'triaged' to determine the level of support to be provided, which typically was two days of a researcher's time to help the System Partners to use EDI good practice to develop their DIAPs, which were subsequently moderated for approval by their relevant funders.

Results, Findings and Discussion

In practice, there are large differences in the scale of the System Partners, which suggests that DIAPs should be bespoke to the nature and culture of organisations and proportionate to their scale. There was no case for a 'one size fits all' approach and the development of generic templates. For most organisations (90%) the Senior Leadership Teams have fewer than 10 members, which legislates against reporting the diversity of this group because of GDPR concerns that individuals might be identifiable from their responses. Addressing this issue will be best achieved using a sector-wide approach like the 2020 Perret Laver survey.

The presence or absence of diversity is difficult to determine at organisation level because applying low proportions of minoritised groups to low absolute numbers of people in a group, tends to result in statistical anomalies. Furthermore it is also apparent that representation does not necessarily equal inclusion. However, the aggregate picture demonstrates that as sector underrepresentation of certain groups is present amongst board members, senior leaders and the wider workforce, which in turn means that change is needed to improve diversity. A key finding, in this regard is that staff turnover is relatively low and thus the speed by which representation can be improved is slow. One sport made the honest assessment that 'our sport is at least a generation away from being truly diverse'. By employing more inclusive recruitment procedures, some organisations have been able to demonstrate that new recruits are more diverse than the existing staff.

Conclusion, Contribution and Implication

The Partner Support Questionnaires have proven to be a useful source of data from which to obtain a snapshot of the approach taken to diversity data amongst 130 System Partners. There is now a baseline against which progress can be measured over time. For many System Partners collecting and publishing their diversity data may have GDPR implications and statistical limitations concerning their ability to be representative of the wider populations they serve.

Enhancing Delivery and Outcomes of International Sport Management Education: From Theory to Practice

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Purpose

The purpose of this workshop is to expand the discourse for optimizing delivery and learning outcomes associated with international sport management education. Preliminary data from a North American think tank on international education will be communicated, then augmented by workshop participants to elicit curriculum ideas and practices regarding international education from a European and broader international perspective.

Significance

The workshop capitalizes on location and timing of the XXXIII Olympiad by directly addressing the goals of Olympism regarding the relevance and uses of sport to build international appreciation and understanding. This includes cultural engagement, intercultural competencies, development of students' global citizenship skills, and appreciation of socio-historical underpinnings of differences among sport systems.

Format

The workshop will start with a short presentation describing four existing theoretical and practical approaches for enabling and understanding student learning, particularly with reference to intercultural learning and personal development. 1) The

Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC) (Bennett, 1986, 1993) suggests five levels: denial, polarization, minimization, acceptance, and adaptation. Based on cognitive development stage theory, the IDC suggests that students' progress through five stages in their intercultural development. 2) Global citizenship comprises three dimensions: social responsibility, global competence, and global civic engagement (Morais & Ogden, 2011; Schattle, 2008). The model suggests students develop global knowledge, attitudes, and action from education abroad. 3) Autobiographical memory (Brewer, 1986; Bluck & Alea, 2011) is another useful approach for enhancing the way students use their education abroad memories in their lives to shape future career and education decisions after studying abroad. 4) The 4x3 Holistic Model of Study Abroad provides a useful tool for integrating theory, design, implementation, and reflection toward supporting successful holistic education abroad experiences (Gillespie et al., 2010; Springer et al., 2020).

Next, preliminary ideas from a North American perspective regarding different international sport management practices will be presented as additional background on the workshop task of further developing these initial ideas.

Finally, using a small group discussion format, insights from European and other international education practices will be solicited and integrated into the discussion. Contributions might include workshop participants' goals, practices, experiences, and evaluations regarding international education, which may include formats such as short and long-term study abroad, short and long-term student exchanges, short and long-term faculty exchanges, guest speakers, visiting scholars, global issues courses, and infusion of international content into coursework. The ideas generated and specific tools/practices will be shared among the workshop participants such that participants garner both philosophical and practical insight to more fully optimize international sport management education.

Anticipated Outcomes

The workshop will begin the process of building a global knowledge base to enhance learning outcomes from varied international

sport management education experiences. As the first of a series of comparable workshops to be conducted across the globe, the workshop enables elaboration of theory and formulation of effective practice for international sport management education, particularly in terms of learning outcomes, curriculum design, student growth, and program evaluation. The results from the workshop will be targeted for publication in ESMQ and other outlets.

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Authors index

- Abdollahkhani, 348
Adámik, 116, 372
Adnan, 244
Ahn, 29, 70, 210, 436
Ahonen, 3, 603
Aicher, 282, 444, 445
Ajiee, 110
Akoum, 171
Alexandris, 3, 115, 437, 438, 442, 454, 455, 460, 461, 462, 597
Alshamari, 189
Amano, 402
Anagnostou, 514
Anastasiadou, 462
Anderlan, 235
Anderski, 3, 422, 430, 431
Andrew, 3, 75, 100, 107, 472, 474, 578
Antoine, 3, 117
Antonopoulos, 351, 352, 412, 413
Antonucci, 79
Aoyama, 72
Aphra, 35
Arguello Roa, 237
Arsova, 488, 556
Bae, 217, 390
Baker, 3, 125, 182, 186, 202, 284, 285, 311, 340, 404, 430, 431, 444, 479, 489, 542, 591, 615
Balaska, 437, 439, 442
Ballouli, 344
Baly, 558
Bamuhair, 62
Bär, 21
Barefoot, 500
Barrett, 610
Barros Filho, 240
Bass, 58, 223, 422, 482
Bastien, 3, 117
Bates, 275, 378
Bauers, 231, 232
Bayle, 316, 324, 330, 336, 356, 398, 493, 494, 549, 551
Behrem, 90
Behrens, 3, 198, 402, 403, 416, 417
Benson-Rea, 436, 589, 591
Biscaia, 3, 204, 212, 219, 240, 327, 328, 400, 401, 415, 431, 434, 481, 486, 507, 508, 601
Blassneck, 439
Bodemar, 111, 305, 497, 498
Boedeker, 50
Bogina, 482
Bonal Sánchez, 273
Bond, 49, 277, 290, 298
Book, 1, 3, 94, 155, 175, 294, 358, 389, 398, 604, 605
Borrie, 279, 610
Bostock, 520, 521, 569
Botwina, 130
Bourbilleres, 154
Brand, 3, 187, 188, 191, 192, 194, 207, 219, 223, 225, 226, 236, 269, 396, 402, 403, 406, 407, 408, 410, 414, 416, 417, 420, 421, 430, 431, 432, 433, 435, 436, 463, 514
Brandt, 3, 213, 215, 231, 232, 327
Bräuninger, 44
Bravo, 193, 320, 446, 449
Breedveld, 311, 459
Breidenstein, 284
Breitbarth, 294, 478, 545, 546, 561, 582, 583
Britt, 344
Brodmann, 564
Brownlee, 435
Büchling, 507
Buck, 3, 256, 257, 258, 286, 287, 560
Bühren, 529, 573
Buning, 303
Burch, 489, 490, 525
Burillo, 135, 273, 275, 455
Burrmann, 258
Burton, 86, 105, 398, 457, 512, 513
Buser, 523, 545, 546
Bush, 100
Butler, 93, 94, 106, 492
Byers, 3, 170, 171, 517, 519, 571, 572
Byun, 3, 349
Cain, 168, 169
Calapez, 124
Callan, 168
Calo, 59
Campbell, 77, 78, 183, 229, 230, 403, 555, 576, 577, 606, 607
Caneppele, 564
Cansiz, 555
Cao, 297
Carin, 538
Carminati, 152
Carter, 30, 31, 264
Case, 85, 99, 104, 107, 117, 155, 159, 202, 224, 228, 277, 288, 294, 305, 310, 316, 318, 324, 325, 329, 344, 352, 356, 364, 374, 376, 377, 384, 393, 398, 400, 407, 428, 431, 454, 456, 457, 460, 471, 476, 559, 567, 576, 591, 593, 610
Chae, 458, 595
Chahardovali, 42
Chalastra, 437
Chan, 3, 45, 193
Chang, 177, 190, 204, 205, 367
Chen, 38, 41, 85, 119, 120, 154, 155, 171, 193, 194, 211, 288, 360, 361, 367, 368, 518, 519, 572, 598
Cheng, 29, 39, 41, 185, 187, 188, 261, 401, 505
Choi, 28, 29, 226, 229, 484, 518, 519
Christophe, 141
Chul Won, 245
Cingiene, 538
Claringbould, 63, 351
Clarke, 30, 31, 49, 50, 69, 72, 87, 96, 105, 112, 119, 120, 129, 131, 133, 140, 148, 159, 161, 162, 232, 239, 253, 254, 265, 269, 287, 290, 295, 296, 302, 306, 307, 309, 317, 319, 326, 327, 328, 331, 335, 413, 463, 464, 473, 495, 497, 498, 499, 553, 554, 555, 607, 611, 612
Clements, 610
Collins, 3, 22, 89, 100, 101, 105, 206, 207, 235, 236, 311, 546, 559, 582, 583, 587, 588, 598
Constandt, 3, 339, 370, 371, 372, 394, 418, 580
Coray, 530
Corr, 126, 280

Correia, 320, 401
 Costa, 432, 437, 439, 440
 Daddi, 3, 544, 587, 588, 589
 Daehnke, 387
 Dai, 38, 42, 47, 155
 Danylchuk, 418, 419, 615
 Darby, 31, 606
 Darcy, 56, 85, 97, 98, 100, 101, 102, 103, 162, 166,
 453, 519, 607
 De Alemida, 283
 De Bosscher, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 340, 341,
 476, 478, 569, 570
 De Clerck, 325, 342
 De Cock, 580
 De Jans, 393, 394, 418
 Del Arco, 454
 Deliautaite, 384, 406
 Deng, 200, 201, 356, 591
 Denstadli, 474, 475
 Derom, 3, 169, 313, 321
 Descheemaeker, 310
 Dickenson, 395, 396, 400
 Dickson, 3, 26, 27, 84, 85, 110, 147, 163, 164, 328,
 422, 440, 457, 508
 Dillard, 195
 Dimmer, 510
 Din, 69
 Dixon, 51, 253, 262, 263, 313, 314, 412, 413, 419,
 501, 503, 505, 556, 615, 616
 Do, 3, 26, 32, 67, 96, 117, 130, 137, 167, 188, 191,
 206, 229, 233, 239, 273, 380, 406, 410, 417, 418,
 439, 466, 508, 540, 580
 Doh, 233
 Doherty, 3, 32, 70, 71, 88, 89, 95, 96, 103, 260, 261,
 262, 263, 302, 331, 354, 421, 521, 610
 Donnelly, 3, 247, 248, 605, 610
 Dowling, 3, 25, 98, 270, 271, 307, 308, 314, 315,
 323, 324, 349, 350, 575
 Downward, 3, 45, 81, 82, 445, 605, 612, 613
 Dreher, 593
 Du, 50, 51, 98, 211, 444, 613
 Duan, 158, 395
 Duchac, 106
 Duclos-Bastías, 449
 Dwyer, 196, 480, 482, 483, 616
 Dzikus, 488
 Egoavil, 292
 Eleni, 437, 442, 460
 Elmoose-Østerlund, 88, 89, 324, 355
 Emsley, 360
 Endo, 72
 Erin, 35
 Evens, 418
 Eyckmans, 586
 Fahlén, 88, 89, 316, 535
 Fahn, 258
 Fahrner, 3, 336, 337, 534, 535
 Farrag, 213, 214, 244, 288
 Fazio, 466
 Feller, 165, 349
 Fernández Luna, 273
 Fernandez-Luna, 135
 Ferrauti, 213
 Florence, 601
 Fogel, 353
 Fortuna, 114
 Fouquaert, 325
 Francis, 3, 26, 108, 276, 410, 417, 471, 474, 480,
 546, 554, 585
 François, 608, 609, 610
 Fratangeli, 114, 128
 Fu, 260, 261, 400, 577
 Fuller, 141, 142, 197, 422
 Fűrész, 97, 272
 Gaedeke, 198
 Gammelsaeter, 178, 304, 569, 570
 Garcia, 3, 237, 308, 493, 494, 606
 Garcia-Arjona, 3, 493
 Gasparetto, 79, 80, 290
 Gerke, 3, 113, 436, 546, 589, 591
 Geurin, 3, 399, 489
 Ghafouri, 3, 54, 93
 Ghanem, 288
 Gholipoor, 54
 Giani, 382, 383
 Gibson, 289, 295, 296, 437, 439, 615
 Girginov, 3, 161, 162, 272, 288, 289, 290, 308, 309,
 329, 330, 604
 Giulianotti, 62, 223, 224, 267, 276, 277, 576
 Godfrey, 71, 90, 92, 286, 576
 Gogishvili, 153, 174, 564
 Gohritz, 88, 89
 Gordon, 55, 157, 158, 195, 212, 232, 486, 501
 Grady, 3, 174, 344, 345, 346, 347
 Graham, 556
 Grappendorf, 57, 58
 Green, 126, 158, 263, 270, 271, 280, 408, 414, 415,
 448, 532, 544, 545, 555, 557, 570, 577, 585, 615
 Gregg, 369, 370
 Griffiths, 36, 284, 412, 413, 585
 Grohall, 565
 Grohs, 152, 153, 219, 416
 Guan, 268
 Guo, 136, 202, 209, 481, 482
 Gupta, 196, 223, 224, 250, 396, 425, 510, 511
 Haas, 320
 Hadley, 509
 Haegele, 167
 Hairwassers, 370
 Han, 29, 136, 171, 218, 226, 233, 245, 326, 367,
 390, 391, 425, 572, 578
 Hanlon, 61, 82, 83, 84
 Happ, 78, 536, 537
 Hardie, 253, 260, 556
 Hardyns, 342, 343, 352
 Harris, 3, 30, 31, 88, 89, 254, 276, 277, 288, 304,
 305, 308, 457
 Hart, 379, 380, 388, 513
 Hautbois, 3, 172, 173, 292, 527
 Havran, 272
 Hayday, 115, 171, 489, 490, 572
 Heidenreich, 3, 327
 Hennessy, 65, 139, 141, 193
 Hermanrud, 84
 Herskedal, 178
 Hill, 154, 155, 220, 221, 309, 376, 391, 425, 498,
 501, 530, 531, 598
 Hillyard, 264

Hindman, 63
 Hindmarsh, 262, 397, 398
 Hoff, 132
 Honari, 93, 192
 Hong, 32, 130, 134, 139, 149, 161, 162, 215, 410,
 426, 505, 506, 578, 579
 Horbel, 3, 236, 553, 584, 599
 Horgan, 3, 247, 248, 610
 Houlihan, 73, 270, 271, 316, 551
 Hovemann, 231, 232
 Howell, 547
 Hoye, 148, 302, 303, 305, 308, 309, 338, 339, 431,
 447
 Huml, 50, 51, 179, 501, 503, 505
 Hur, 3, 45, 46, 411, 481, 482
 Hutchinson, 37, 38, 39, 555
 Hwang, 220, 221, 435, 436, 573
 Hyatt, 398
 Hyun, 115, 219, 390
 Ibsen, 88, 89, 324, 355
 Ikramullah, 262
 Iraldo, 544, 587, 588, 589
 Ivan-Baragaño, 135
 Iván-Baragaño, 454
 Iwama, 176
 Jacobs, 418
 Jakar, 576, 578
 James, 3, 35, 36, 57, 97, 167, 181, 210, 211, 212,
 214, 215, 217, 218, 220, 221, 223, 227, 228, 230,
 235, 236, 238, 240, 241, 242, 344, 381, 404, 405,
 444, 494, 542, 569, 578, 600
 Jang, 28, 208
 Jarck, 88, 89
 Jarjabka, 272
 Jarosz, 33
 Jensen, 104, 105, 447
 Ji, 226, 245, 385, 395
 Jiang, 170, 171, 203, 204, 225, 226, 349, 519, 571,
 572
 Jiménez Díaz-Benito, 454
 Joachim, 361, 362, 363
 John, 3, 35, 105, 117, 198, 220, 236, 262, 344, 346,
 398, 425, 464, 573
 Johnston, 102, 197
 Joli, 491
 Jolly, 77, 126, 190, 280, 282
 Jones, 107, 108, 109, 157, 158, 376, 383, 517, 542
 Jung, 28, 130, 134, 139, 326, 439, 482, 484, 613
 Jurgeleviciute, 428
 Kaden, 231, 232
 Kajos, 227
 Kamyuka, 255, 598
 Kaneko, 163
 Kang, 70, 190, 215, 318, 377
 Kaplanidou, 289, 290, 295, 314, 442, 559
 Karagiorgos, 3, 460, 461
 Karg, 204, 212, 271, 478, 480
 Kargar, 93
 Kaspar, 515
 Kassis, 432
 Kawakami, 176, 177
 Kay, 100, 101, 264, 265, 468
 Kehinde, 110
 Keiper, 367, 379, 435
 Keller-Meier, 3, 314, 323, 329, 354, 397
 Kelly, 135, 137, 222, 223, 248, 319, 340, 414, 415,
 439, 440, 512, 513, 563
 Kendelényi-Gulyás, 340
 Kenyon, 445, 576, 578
 Kerwin, 148, 258, 262, 263, 264, 285, 286, 334,
 335, 336, 354, 390
 Keshkar, 93, 94
 Kexel, 206
 Khan, 56, 384, 385, 581
 Kihl, 305, 306, 318, 320, 321, 342, 343, 351, 352,
 456
 Kim, 3, 20, 28, 29, 37, 39, 45, 46, 48, 50, 51, 115,
 123, 134, 139, 143, 144, 146, 147, 167, 176, 177,
 185, 186, 187, 188, 210, 211, 215, 216, 217, 218,
 219, 221, 225, 226, 229, 230, 233, 240, 242, 246,
 247, 262, 263, 282, 290, 292, 346, 347, 401, 403,
 410, 423, 424, 426, 427, 433, 458, 478, 481, 486,
 495, 498, 501, 505, 506, 509, 520, 521, 540, 541
 Kitchin, 3, 35, 36, 605, 606, 607, 608
 Kiwomya, 75
 Kleissner, 565
 Knauer, 515
 Ko, 3, 20, 67, 158, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190,
 204, 218, 221, 223, 241, 314, 415, 481, 482, 491,
 492, 564, 582
 Koch, 340
 Koenig-Lewis, 3, 582
 Kokolakakis, 565
 Kolo, 545
 Kolyperas, 130, 430, 431, 542, 543, 580, 581
 Könecke, 23, 144, 174, 213, 215, 338, 533, 554,
 557, 603, 604
 Konstantopoulos, 3, 564, 582
 Kornakov, 33
 Kraft, 529
 Kristiansen, 157, 158, 551
 Kühner, 562, 563
 Kulasekara Pandian, 181
 Kurscheidt, 3, 21, 213, 215, 327
 Kwak, 208, 240
 Kwon, 215, 390, 423, 545, 546, 547
 Laaroussi, 300
 Lachance, 148, 149, 305, 316, 334
 Lane, 247, 410
 Lang, 3, 314, 323, 329, 330, 354, 397, 398, 551, 564
 Langbein, 599
 Lee, 28, 29, 37, 39, 50, 52, 134, 150, 177, 210, 219,
 229, 238, 239, 240, 245, 263, 271, 277, 279, 307,
 321, 322, 349, 380, 387, 388, 390, 391, 400, 401,
 402, 403, 426, 427, 435, 436, 482, 484, 521, 579,
 613
 Lefebvre, 3, 143, 305, 420, 421
 Legg, 98, 568, 599, 600
 Leguina, 135
 Lehner, 44
 Lemke, 586
 Lenz, 44
 Léonard, 532
 Leon-Quismondo, 135
 Lesch, 334, 335, 336
 Leveridge, 102
 Li, 28, 29, 39, 41, 59, 120, 121, 122, 128, 134, 183,
 206, 207, 482, 486, 518, 519, 575

Lianopoulos, 432, 433
 Lim, 24, 28, 29, 149, 215, 216, 217, 229, 335, 371, 410, 411, 424, 426, 595, 612, 613
 Lin, 193, 246, 247, 505, 538, 595, 610
 Lintumäki, 235, 578, 580
 Llewellyn, 331, 471
 Llopis-Goig, 458, 459, 600
 Lock, 3, 19, 101, 138, 184, 212, 238, 239, 240, 452, 453
 Locklear, 615
 López-Carril, 124, 389, 390, 450
 Loughborough, 62, 67, 73, 75, 81, 102, 185, 187, 191, 202, 209, 225, 238, 256, 264, 286, 308, 400, 414, 445, 467, 480, 489, 514, 525, 540, 551, 578, 602, 605, 612
 Love, 66, 107, 472, 505, 506
 Lu, 190, 225, 268, 318, 319, 387, 388, 456, 503, 505
 Lumley-Smith, 578
 Lupinek, 435, 436
 Lyu, 445
 M. Herold, 583
 Macintosh, 354
 Mainer, 472
 Maleske, 95, 96
 Mamo, 167, 473, 474, 494
 Manjunath, 181, 381
 Manley, 3, 100
 Manoli, 191, 412, 413, 465, 467, 468, 514
 Mari, 86
 Markus, 3, 21, 213, 327, 562, 564
 Marquez, 93, 94, 209, 210, 211, 363
 Marshall, 82, 472
 Martin, 43, 55, 63, 77, 200, 231, 235, 254, 258, 372, 474, 561, 564, 582, 594
 Martinez, 500, 570, 580, 581, 593
 Martini, 152
 Masen, 602, 603
 Mason, 62, 67, 256, 264, 286, 350, 351, 507, 508, 615
 Matsuoka, 190, 402
 Maxwell, 56, 103, 104, 105
 Mayer, 157, 158, 336, 338
 Meier-Röhn, 44
 Mekaoui, 171
 Meneses, 338
 Menghini, 466
 Meng-Lewis, 123
 Mercado, 165
 Merten, 143, 144, 249, 250
 Metelski, 33
 Mićiak, 117, 372
 Mighten, 75
 Millar, 3, 95, 96, 269, 353
 Miloch, 381
 Miranda, 240
 Misener, 3, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 102, 103, 109, 162, 165, 166, 255, 261, 302, 331, 342, 343, 352, 421, 448, 521, 533, 534, 598, 599, 600, 601
 Misikaite, 406
 Moesch, 3, 530, 569
 Mohammadi, 93, 94
 Molderez, 586
 Mongeon, 332
 Morgan, 3, 69, 100, 248, 293, 394, 520
 Morrow, 159, 160, 457
 Moser, 523
 Mousavi, 191
 Moxey, 37, 393, 394
 Mueller, 3, 209, 602
 Müller, 140, 141, 152, 153, 159, 160, 171, 172, 173, 174, 564
 Munsch, 558
 Mura, 128, 429
 Murtas, 412
 Mustafa, 244
 Mustafi, 549
 Mwambwa, 598
 Naess, 408
 Næss, 86, 87, 410, 498, 601
 Nagel, 3, 88, 89, 144, 200, 219, 249, 250, 258, 292, 314, 316, 323, 324, 329, 330, 336, 354, 355, 356, 390, 391, 397, 398, 523, 524, 525, 534
 Naraine, 143, 144, 398, 431
 Narayanan, 223
 Naylor, 102, 328, 508
 Nesseler, 474, 475
 Newland, 444
 Newman, 42, 43, 118, 332, 334, 501, 502
 Nichols, 163, 164, 381
 Nickolai, 206
 Nite, 50, 255, 327, 328, 350, 387, 388, 498, 499
 Nosari, 382, 383
 Novi, 3, 544, 587
 Ntovoli, 460, 461
 Obiegbu, 238
 Odlin, 589
 Oh, 70
 Øhrmen Johnsen, 551
 Oja, 37, 50, 51, 337, 498, 500, 501
 Opstad, 551
 Orr, 130, 534, 547, 548, 569, 570, 576, 584, 585, 591, 593
 Oshiro, 253, 406, 408
 Ourania, 460
 Overbye, 48, 50
 Paarsch, 416
 Paek, 37
 Palmero, 365
 Papaioannou, 437, 439, 442
 Pappous, 97, 98, 162, 163, 164, 170, 171, 571, 572
 Paramio-Salcines, 3, 458, 459, 606, 607, 608
 Park, 28, 30, 158, 185, 186, 187, 188, 256, 278, 284, 292, 390, 406, 408, 424, 426, 427, 468, 505, 506, 514, 515, 577
 Parra-Camacho, 449, 450
 Partington, 277, 290
 Patil, 32, 63
 Paule-Koba, 126, 278, 280, 282
 Pedroso, 240
 Pelcher, 547, 554, 575
 Penfold, 606, 608
 Peng, 119
 Pennock, 331
 Perechuda, 538
 Pérez González, 273
 Pérez-González, 274, 275, 454
 Persson, 3, 380, 567
 Petrie, 398

Pfeffel, 3, 198, 206, 223, 562, 563
 Philippe, 491
 Piggin, 63, 540, 541
 Piller, 3, 534
 Portaluri, 128
 Pradier, 491
 Praet, 313
 Preuss, 3, 54, 161, 162, 164, 165, 601
 Pyun, 3, 67, 185, 187, 188, 191, 256, 445, 480, 540, 541, 573
 Qin, 159, 160, 456, 457
 Rahman, 130, 185, 186, 436, 560
 Rajagopal, 564
 Ram, 414
 Ran, 121
 Rappai, 97
 Rattray, 139
 Ratz, 198, 562, 563
 Raw, 478, 580, 582
 Read, 227, 228, 525
 Reed, 387
 Reghunathan, 238
 Reichel, 3, 213
 Ribeiro, 3, 124, 460, 461, 462, 538, 568, 589
 Rich, 3, 100, 102, 316, 396, 441, 598
 Ridinger, 207, 236, 494, 495, 602
 Rindermann, 560
 Rith, 542, 543, 580, 582
 Rizzo, 152
 Rocha, 3, 45, 53, 159, 160, 241, 242, 288, 289, 290, 457
 Rochon, 42
 Rogers, 69, 141, 464
 Rogstad, 84, 115, 137
 Romsa, 77, 283
 Rong, 450
 Ross, 3, 128, 129, 130, 139, 158, 174, 241, 401, 415, 491, 492, 547, 548, 576
 Rossi, 36, 37, 393, 394, 415
 Røsten, 84, 137
 Rouhas, 547
 Ryder, 369, 388
 Sancino, 152
 Sanders, 179
 Sant, 95, 96, 350, 351
 Santana, 119, 120, 237, 295, 397, 398
 Santos, 295, 296, 538
 Saraiva, 486
 Sarkoohi, 404
 Šarlák, 115, 117
 Scelles, 118, 119, 539, 608, 609, 610
 Scheerder, 89, 133, 144, 324, 334, 336, 355, 458, 459, 532, 533, 554, 600, 612, 613
 Schlesinger, 88, 89, 144, 314, 316, 323, 324, 329, 330, 336, 354, 356, 373, 397, 398, 400, 401, 523, 524, 525, 573
 Schmidt, 95, 96, 128, 129, 141, 142, 144, 199, 249, 250, 507, 510, 511, 531, 563, 608, 610
 Schnitzer, 235, 537, 582
 Schöttl, 536
 Schulz, 301, 314, 323, 329, 354, 397, 398, 488, 556
 Schunk, 23
 Schut, 2, 3, 558
 Schwarz, 180, 599
 Schyvinck, 342, 343, 352, 580
 Scola, 195
 Scott, 97, 98, 102, 207, 288, 289, 318, 319, 353, 486, 547, 548, 549
 Sellars, 280
 Semiao Carmo Simpson, 467
 Seymour, 388
 Shapiro, 107, 189, 196, 207, 209, 211, 217, 236
 Sharpe, 3, 69, 85, 251, 394
 Shibli, 3, 92, 145, 310, 311, 312, 340, 341, 478, 570, 605, 614
 Shin, 30, 221, 261, 268, 390
 Shioume, 469, 470
 Shoji, 176
 Shonk, 181
 Siegfried, 3, 88, 314, 323, 329, 354, 397, 523, 534
 Siegl, 545
 Sigvartsen, 266
 Simmons, 57, 58, 211, 395, 396, 608, 609
 Sipos-Onyestyák, 517
 Sisa, 517
 Skey, 467
 Skirbekk, 84, 137, 139
 Slavov, 615
 Smismans, 313
 Smith, 49, 58, 66, 87, 93, 94, 96, 98, 99, 100, 130, 132, 164, 183, 235, 236, 270, 271, 276, 278, 280, 324, 337, 339, 360, 361, 472, 480, 513, 556, 575, 580, 581, 582, 607
 Soebbing, 45, 82
 Solberg, 474, 475
 Solstad, 111, 348, 349, 584
 Son, 188, 408, 456
 Song, 149, 177, 209, 229, 390, 410, 411, 536, 537, 538
 Souvenir, 342, 343, 351, 352
 Spence, 23, 353
 Spera, 79
 Spindler, 23
 Spinelli, 542, 543, 580, 582
 Spyridopoulou, 437, 442
 Staley, 470, 476
 Staskeviciute Butiene, 384, 406, 428
 Stegmann, 3, 143, 144, 198, 200, 217, 219, 249, 250, 422, 431, 528, 569
 Stenling, 88, 89, 316, 534, 535
 Stensland, 57, 58, 179
 Stieger, 314, 323, 329, 354, 397, 398
 Stokowski, 106, 107, 126, 127, 128, 207, 278, 280, 282
 Straume, 104
 Strittmatter, 3, 111, 112, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 316, 359, 599
 Ströbel, 3, 26, 27, 144, 200, 219, 249, 250, 392, 422, 430, 431, 593, 597
 Strode, 57, 58, 97, 602
 Sun, 480
 Svensson, 3, 108, 109, 260, 261, 268, 287, 288, 399, 484, 520, 521
 Szabó, 517
 Szathmári, 3, 569, 570, 591, 593
 Taks, 45, 263, 289, 290, 321, 430, 431, 447, 448, 450, 612, 613, 615
 Tallon, 56

Tamburini, 466
 Tang, 155, 297, 494
 Taniyev, 157, 158
 Taylor, 3, 51, 58, 69, 82, 83, 84, 89, 90, 92, 101,
 105, 114, 141, 197, 254, 261, 276, 303, 353, 407,
 410, 417, 453, 471, 474, 480, 501, 503, 505, 546,
 554, 576, 585
 Terrien, 117, 118, 141, 538
 Theodorakis, 131, 132, 432, 433, 454, 455, 462
 Theus, 420
 Thompson, 26, 27, 109, 143, 144, 305, 306, 307,
 395, 396, 431, 505
 Thurston, 73, 202
 Tickell, 408
 Tingle, 284, 603
 Tjønndal, 84, 137, 138, 325, 326, 447, 448
 Tomiyama, 450
 Topoleski, 435
 Tozzi, 37, 393, 394
 Traberg, 553, 574
 Trendafilova, 128, 129, 130, 281, 282, 533, 544,
 547, 554, 556, 558, 575, 584, 585
 Trosien, 562, 563
 Trujillo-Jenks, 381
 Tsiolis, 462
 Tsordia, 432
 Tugçe, 35
 Turnbull, 384, 385, 610
 Ulrich, 200, 510, 513
 Uzun, 576
 Valantine, 3, 374, 384
 Valenti, 608, 609, 610
 Valiyeva, 84
 Van Bottenburg, 311
 Van Bussel, 353
 Van Eekeren, 522, 523
 Van Hoecke, 321
 Van Waes, 586
 Varmus, 115, 116, 117, 372, 428, 429
 Vegara-Ferri, 449
 Verschuuren, 493
 Vestergren, 555
 Vicentini, 128
 Villemaire, 369, 388, 602
 Vokey, 555
 Wagner, 48, 50, 58, 59, 141, 257, 466, 493, 494
 Walker, 3, 72, 139, 157, 158, 185, 186, 258, 262,
 263, 264, 288, 289, 433, 547, 576
 Walpole, 286, 605
 Wang, 39, 41, 47, 50, 67, 119, 122, 155, 171, 204,
 211, 263, 400, 401, 437, 439, 486, 525, 540, 541,
 572, 575, 579
 Watanabe, 45, 177, 547, 593
 Wayne, 95, 374, 503
 Wegner, 108, 290
 Werthner, 69
 Westmattmann, 130, 132
 Wetzl, 235
 Wheaton, 37, 200, 202, 303, 305, 393, 394
 Wicker, 3, 30, 31, 45, 95, 96, 102, 103, 104, 334,
 335, 336, 342, 343, 352, 458, 459, 520, 521, 529,
 531, 532, 539, 587, 588
 Willem, 3, 109, 325, 336, 339, 342, 343, 352, 372,
 522, 543, 580
 William, 141, 226, 295
 Winand, 133, 144, 249, 250, 321, 520, 521, 523,
 543
 Witcomb, 73
 Woodhouse, 388
 Woratschek, 3, 235, 236, 545, 546
 Wu, 119, 120, 192, 395, 422, 423, 505
 Xu, 132, 225, 226, 358, 402, 484, 486
 Xue, 118, 188, 193, 194, 472, 507, 508
 Yamaguchi, 72, 451
 Yan, 39, 45, 297
 Yang, 29, 47, 121, 122, 149, 155, 176, 334, 336,
 389, 390, 403, 406, 408, 410, 417, 578
 Yasui, 176
 Yfantidou, 437, 439, 442
 Yilmaz, 185, 187, 188, 480
 Yoda, 237, 452
 Yoo, 20, 177, 426, 427
 Yoon, 28, 29, 190, 218, 509
 Yousef, 244
 Yu, 136, 204, 205, 209, 258
 Yuan, 39, 159
 Yuhei, 146
 Yun, 193, 221
 Zafeiroudi, 437
 Zardini Filho, 161, 162
 Zare, 500, 501, 517, 518, 519
 Zeimers, 143, 144, 148, 305, 421, 496, 520, 523,
 532, 533, 542, 543, 554
 Zhang, 39, 41, 87, 115, 191, 202, 225, 263, 459,
 519, 615
 Zhao, 121, 122, 123, 210, 211, 400, 401, 521
 Zheng, 538, 578, 595
 Zhou, 133, 155, 170, 289, 290, 571, 593, 595
 Zhu, 39, 121, 122, 123, 297
 Zimmer, 50, 107, 379

Institutions index

- Accadis Hochschule, 198, 200, 206, 223, 510, 562, 563
Allameh Tabataba'i University, 54, 93
Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, 522
AOS Corporation, 450
Arcadia University, 509
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 432, 437, 442, 460, 462
Athlete Assessments, 602
Auckland University of Technology, 102, 110
Audencia, 589
Baylor College of Medicine, 50
Belmont University, 253
Bielefeld University, 334, 336, 529
Bournemouth University, 70, 238
Bowling Green State University, 126, 280
Brock University, 146, 148, 305, 307, 316, 334, 353, 398, 441
Brunel University, 286, 288, 604
Cardiff University, 582
Centre for Research and Technology-Hellas, 460
Chemnitz University of Technology, 88, 329, 354, 573
Clemson University, 106, 126, 253, 260, 280
Corvinus University of Budapest, 227, 272, 569, 591
Coventry University, 460
Criminal Law and Social Law, 342
CY Ileps - CY Cergy Paris Université, 171
Dalian University of Technology, 39, 297
Democritus University of Thrace, 432, 437, 442, 462
Doshisha University, 72, 176
East Carolina University, 157
East Tennessee State University, 132
Economove, 565
EDHEC Business School, 510
Fairleigh Dickinson University, 458
Flagler College, 369, 388, 602
Florida State University, 42, 211, 472, 547
Fontys University of Applied Sciences, 370
Foro Italico, 114
Gaelic Athletic Association, 247, 610, 612
Gangwon National University, 208
Gannon University, 435
George Mason University, 615
Georgia College & State University, 126, 280
Ghent University, 325, 342, 370, 418, 580
Graduate School of Sport Sciences, 402
Griffith University, 161
Haagse Hogeschool, 311
Hanyang University, 390
Hanze University of Applied Sciences, 420
Hellenic Open University, 432, 437, 442
Heriot-Watt University, 159
Highpoint University, 615
Hofstra University, 63
Hong Kong Baptist University, 505
Høyskolen Kristiania, 408
Humboldt - Universität zu Berlin, 258
Hungarian University of Sports Science, 340, 517
Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, 84
IST University of Management Düsseldorf, 88
James Madison University, 181, 381
JAMK University of Applied Sciences, 603
Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, 54, 164, 601
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 586
Kedge Business School, 117
Keele University, 555
Kennesaw State University, 106
Konkuk University, 424, 426
Korea National Open University, 28, 505
Kristiania University College, 86
KU Leuven, 23, 338, 532, 603, 604
La Trobe University, 26, 110, 148, 422
Lead City University, 110
Leeds Beckett University, 90, 269, 275, 277, 290
Leipzig University, 198, 231, 604
Lithuanian Sports University, 384, 406, 428
Liverpool John Moores University, 262
Loughborough University, 62, 67, 73, 75, 81, 102, 185, 187, 191, 202, 209, 225, 238, 256, 264, 286, 308, 400, 414, 445, 467, 480, 489, 514, 525, 540, 551, 578, 602, 605, 612
Louisiana State University, 37, 260, 498, 500, 520
LTT Sports, 33
LUNEX, 59, 249, 538
Macromedia Munich, 44, 545
Malmö University, 294, 447, 567, 604, 605
Manchester Metropolitan University, 32, 63, 119, 146, 237, 452, 608
Maynooth University, 35
Meiji Yasuda Life Foundation of Health and Welfare, 176
Molde University College, 104
Montclair State University, 435
Mount Royal University, 599
National Taiwan Normal University, 193
National Tsing Hua University, 367
New York University, 444
Nord University, 137, 325
North Dakota State University, 70
Northumbria University, 206, 412
Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, 111, 553, 574, 584, 599
Norwegian School of Sports Sciences, 88 497
Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 474
Ohio University, 57, 97, 374, 602
Old Dominion University, 167, 374, 494, 602
Örebro University, 301, 303, 599
Osaka University of Health and Sport Sciences, 450
Paris Saclay University, 292
Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, 449
Poznań University of Economics and Business, 33
Prince Mohammad Bin Fahad University, 244
Pukyong National University, 70
Qatar University, 189, 244, 288
Queensland University of Technology, 560
RheinMain University of Applied Sciences, 23
Ritsumeikan University, 163
RMIT, 82
Roanoke College, 157
Rowan University, 547

Ruhr University Bochum, 88, 529, 573
 S. Anna School of Advanced Studies, 544, 587
 Sacred Heart University, 132
 School of Kinesiology Western University, 598
 Seeburg Castle University, 416, 515
 SEIBU LIONS, 176
 Seoul National University, 149, 215, 229, 377, 410,
 424, 426, 484, 595
 SETU, 65
 Shanghai University of Sport, 209, 395
 Sheffield Hallam University, 75, 269, 310, 565,
 566, 605, 610, 614
 Shizuoka Sangyo University, 469
 Soochow University, 47, 155
 South Dakota State University, 77, 283
 SpEA, 565, 566
 Special Olympics, 102, 543, 599, 600
 Sport and Rights Alliance, 601
 Sport New Zealand, 102
 Sungkyunkwan University, 573
 SUNY Cortland, 20
 Swinburne University of Technology, 478
 Swiss Federal Institute of Sport Magglingen, 470,
 476
 Technological University of the Shannon, 247
 Teesside University, 412
 Temple University, 404, 503, 509, 542
 Texas A&M University, 50, 219, 233, 253, 260,
 379, 498, 501, 582, 615
 Texas Tech University, 484
 Texas Woman's University, 381
 The American College of Greece, 432
 The Hague University of Applied Sciences, 569
 The Open University, 123
 The University of Suwon, 149, 410
 Tongji University, 225
 Trinity University, 284
 Troy University, 280
 TU Chemnitz, 323, 397
 TUM School of Medicine and Health, 599
 UC Louvain, 520
 Ulster University, 3, 25, 27, 29, 31, 35, 36, 37, 41,
 42, 43, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 57, 58, 60, 66, 71, 80,
 82, 84, 85, 86, 87, 90, 92, 94, 96, 98, 100, 102,
 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 109, 115, 116, 118, 120,
 122, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 138, 139, 142, 144,
 147, 152, 153, 158, 160, 162, 164, 171, 173, 174,
 175, 186, 188, 192, 194, 200, 202, 204, 207, 210,
 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 219, 220, 221, 226, 228,
 230, 232, 234, 236, 239, 240, 241, 242, 245, 247,
 249, 250, 252, 258, 261, 263, 264, 271, 282, 284,
 286, 288, 290, 302, 303, 309, 311, 314, 315, 316,
 319, 321, 322, 324, 326, 328, 330, 334, 336, 337,
 338, 339, 343, 345, 347, 350, 351, 352, 356, 359,
 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 367, 369, 370, 372,
 378, 379, 380, 381, 384, 385, 387, 388, 390, 391,
 394, 396, 397, 398, 399, 401, 403, 405, 407, 408,
 409, 415, 417, 421, 423, 427, 429, 431, 433, 435,
 436, 438, 439, 447, 448, 450, 451, 453, 455, 456,
 457, 459, 461, 464, 468, 471, 472, 474, 478, 480,
 481, 482, 484, 486, 490, 492, 494, 496, 500, 501,
 502, 503, 505, 508, 510, 511, 513, 514, 515, 517,
 519, 521, 527, 528, 532, 533, 534, 537, 541, 542,
 543, 544, 546, 547, 548, 551, 552, 554, 556, 557,
 561, 568, 570, 572, 579, 581, 582, 583, 585, 588,
 591, 592, 593, 595, 596, 598, 600, 602, 603, 604,
 605, 606, 607, 608, 610, 612, 615, 617
 UMass–Amherst, 498
 Umea University, 88
 University of Colorado Colorado Springs, 444
 Universidad Autónoma, 458
 Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 124
 Universidad de Murcia, 449
 Universidad de Valencia, 458
 Universidad Europea de Madrid, 135, 273, 402,
 454
 Universidad Internacional de La Rioja, 273, 454
 Universidad Peruana de Ciencias Aplicadas, 305
 Universidade de Lisboa, 320
 Universidade Europeia, 320
 Universitat de València, 449
 Université Catholique de Louvain, 118, 143, 305,
 532
 Université de Caen Normandie, 141
 Université de Lausanne, 549, 598
 Université de Libonne, 538
 Université de Lille, 538
 Université de Rouen, 608
 Université Gustave Eiffel, 486, 491, 558
 Université Mykolas Romeris, 538
 Université Nicolaus Copernicus, 538
 Université Paris Saclay, 117
 Université Rennes 2, 493
 University Campus of Football Business, 606
 University College Dublin, 512
 University Münster, 408
 University of Alberta, 45
 University of Applied Sciences Augsburg, 560
 University of Auckland, 589
 University of Bath, 100, 240, 601
 University of Bayreuth, 21, 26, 213, 231, 327, 422,
 430, 545, 593
 University of Bergamo, 191, 412, 467, 514
 University of Bern, 88, 143, 314, 323, 329, 354,
 397, 422, 523, 530, 534, 569
 University of Bologna, 170, 571
 University of Bristol, 37, 393, 394
 University of Calgary, 69
 University of Canberra, 251
 University of Central Arkansas, 233
 University of Central Missouri, 482, 484
 University of Cincinnati, 57, 179, 503
 University of Colorado - Colorado Springs, 308
 University of Connecticut, 42
 University of Copenhagen, 48
 University of Crete, 462
 University of Derby, 569
 University of Edinburgh, 547, 576
 University of Florida, 20, 68, 108, 146, 204, 221,
 295, 367, 439, 498, 501, 576, 615
 University of Genoa, 542
 University of Georgia, 444, 489
 University of Hertfordshire, 168, 387
 University of Innsbruck, 235, 536, 582
 University of Kansas, 37, 195, 482, 484
 University of L'Aquila, 128
 University of Lausanne, 117, 141, 564, 582, 598
 University of Lisbon, 124

University of Louisiana at Monroe, 385
University of Marketing and Distribution Sciences, 72, 451
University of Massachusetts Boston, 195
University of Michigan, 30, 95, 96, 208
University of Milano-Bicocca, 152
University of Minnesota, 268, 318, 456
University of Missouri - Columbia, 365
University of Montana, 435
University of Münster, 130
University of New Brunswick, 170, 571
University of North Florida, 20, 369
University of North Texas, 509
University of Northern Colorado, 37
University of Ottawa, 321, 332, 615
University of Palermo, 406
University of Pécs, 97, 272
University of Pernambuco, 240
University of Queensland, 303
University of Rome Foro Italico, 128, 466
University of South Australia, 422
University of South Carolina, 42, 45, 126, 165, 189, 196, 217, 344, 346, 363, 547
University of South Eastern Norway, 348
University of South Wales, 360
University of South-Eastern Norway, 551
University of Southern Denmark, 88
University of Southern Mississippi, 387
University of Stavanger in Norway, 474
University of Stirling, 130, 134, 139, 159, 288
University of Taipei, 367
University of Technology Chemnitz, 314
University of Technology Sydney, 56, 122, 361, 362
University of Tennessee, 488, 505, 547, 556, 558, 615
University of the Incarnate Word, 284
University of the West of Scotland, 99, 601
University of Thessaly, 437
University of Toronto, 547
University of Tübingen, 336
University of Turin, 382
University of Warsaw, 130
University of Waterloo, 331
University of West Florida, 547
University of Westminster, 262
University of Žilina, 115, 372
University Rennes 2, 154
Utrecht University, 310, 351, 352, 522, 523
Victoria University, 61, 82
Virginia Commonwealth University, 196
Vlerick Business school, 586
Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 72, 310, 313, 321
Wake Forest University, 471, 503
Waseda University, 121, 356, 402, 454
Washington State University, 484
Wayne State University, 95
West Virginia University, 320, 449
Western Carolina University, 57
Western Sydney University, 56
Western University, 32, 88, 99, 255, 331, 601
WHU Otto Beisheim School of Management, 249, 507
Woosuk University, 245
Yonsei University, 245, 349

Zhejiang university, 12

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