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## **Editorial**

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What are the key concepts in sport management today? To sport governing bodies, funding, sponsorship and professionalisation may be the key concepts with which they struggle and contend with everyday. Small sport organisations and sport clubs may agree that funding, membership, leadership/motivation and events are key considerations to their operation. Manufacturers of sports equipment would undoubtedly be concerned with efficiency, corporate responsibility and/or new markets. Having only considered three different groups, we can see that it is not altogether easy, if not impossible, to identify 'the' key concepts in sport management. Arguably, 'change' is key to describing the sport industry, as it evolves rapidly from amateur to professional and from simple to complex in terms of stakeholders, business models and management.

Indeed, in this industry which, reportedly will experience growth rates in 2008 of 3.1%, reaching a total market size of £21.2 billion, exceeding corresponding rates of change expected for gross domestic product (GDP) in the UK during the same time (Sport Market Forecasts, 2008), we find a very wide range of concepts, which are key for a wide range of reasons. The sport industry includes organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors that interact in a dynamic exchange resulting in competition, cooperation and at times partnerships. Unfortunately, the scope of this issue does not permit inclusion of all concepts, which may be considered important or 'key' to the many stakeholders in our field. However, included in the following pages are articles on a select range of key concepts, which through their grounding in relevant literature, encourage readers to think about the complexity of understanding contemporary sport management by highlighting some of the diversity in the subject area as evident through academic enquiry. We can consider sport management research to fall into three broad categories: rational (concentrating on 'practical' business issues/questions), critical (moral and ethical values considered more important than functional imperative) and a third category, which is not intended to be directly comparable to the first two, emerging (which may also be either functional or critical). This suggested categorisation is explained below.

Barros and Douvis offer a comparative analysis of efficiency in two football clubs from the small European countries of Portugal and Greece. A very practically focused paper, the authors offer advice to clubs on improving productivity through managerial policy. The key concept of efficiency is measured using the Malmquist productivity index. Taking a broader approach within the economics of sport, Buraimo and Simmons paper follows and provides an analysis of the impacts of market size and competition for fan base matchday attendance in English Premier League during the period 1997–2004. The authors have methodologically built upon previous studies to provide a more robust

discussion of the effects market size and team competition and offer some thought provoking discussion and suggestions for future research based on their findings.

The papers by David Rowe and John Harris are exemplary of the critical category of research in sport management, yet, for different reasons. The first paper in this issue is concerned with power as a key concept within the context of media and sport. David Rowe provides a stimulating critical discussion of the impact media has had on sport. This paper can therefore be considered 'critical' due to its consideration of alternative views and its ability to challenge accepted views. Through content analysis of the sport pages of Australian newspapers, Rowe highlights the construction, reinforcement and extension of the media's power in sport and encourages our critical and moral reflection of the management of media influence in sport. His contribution also highlights related concepts important to power such as gender and discrimination, which require further attention by academics and industry. Next, John Harris provides an excellent contribution to the gender debate in sport management with an examination of the problems with women's rugby in Wales. Offering a different methodological approach than the previous paper, Harris allows female rugby players to speak and provides an interesting critical insight into governance in the sport. Important key concepts here are that of image and inequality. This work can be considered 'critical' in its methodological assumptions which serve to empower research 'subjects' rather than use.

The emerging category consists of research, which focuses on concepts and/or contexts, which have not received the same proportion of academic attention as, for example, the public or commercial sectors of sport. Here, we have papers, which focus on the voluntary sector and voluntary sport organisation operation/interaction with the public sector imperative, which drive them. For example, Edwards, Mason and Washington examine provincial sport organisations in Canada and the pressures, which influence their decision-making processes. The final paper focuses more broadly on research conducted in voluntary sport organisations and offers an overview of studies conducted in this area. Drawing on the work of scholars from North America, Europe, Australia and Asia, the paper makes suggestions for future research on this crucial part of the sport industry.

Overall, this special issue offers the reader a wide selection of concepts, which are considered key to understanding our ever-changing field of sport management. Furthermore, the authors have identified how these concepts may be addressed in future research. From the rational approach to analyse organisational efficiency to recognising how a critical view encourages recognition of key concepts such as power and gender and the suggestion that more work is needed across the voluntary sport sector, it is evident that there is much work to be done within the academic community given the significant growth and change within the sport industry.

The literature reviewed in each paper in this issue also demonstrates diversity in the field as each utilises different theoretical and methodological perspectives. As a result of the constant questioning of our methods and our theoretical perspectives, the author believes that sport management research has improved substantially in quality over recent years. What we focus upon in sport management research has moved beyond functional approaches, aimed at rationalistic and commercial priorities to also acknowledging the ethical, political and diversity issues inherent in our field. The author hopes this issue reflects this broad range of views and methods, which make up the field of sport management. Some of the concepts presented by the authors in the following pages have a long and rich history, such as 'media', in sport and in sport management research. While others represent those sometimes difficult to address issues such as, gender and

bias. Regardless, the authors within have made a great contribution to our field by presenting some thoughtful and still practical suggestions for consideration and for future research.

**References**

Sport Market Forecasts (2008) *Key Note: Market Review 2008*, Key Note Publishers, Middlesex.