
Editorial

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1 Introduction

Sport has its roots in the mists of time as cave paintings found in the Lascaux (France), dating back to time around 15,300 years ago, depicting sprinting and showing wrestling scenes. Sport has followed the evolution of civilisation: testimonies are coming from the Bronze Age passing through the ancient Egyptians up to ancient Greece where, in 776 B.C., the first Olympic Games of the ancient era was there organised. During the

Roman Empire, the sporting activities (especially those engaging with the famous gladiators) were very prominent and these 'public spectacles' became a source of pride for numerous Emperors. In Rome in the first centuries A.D. there were numerous circus and stadiums (as Colosseum and Circus Maximus), full of chariot races and gladiators' fights. For many centuries, the sport has been kept in the shadows and only at the end of the Middle Ages, it came back to the attention of the population, particularly with the famous knightly tournaments in horse-riding species. During the Renaissance a clearer and more important recovery of sport finally arose. In this regard, the so-called 'Calcio fiorentino' represents actually an early kind of football originating in Italy. In Mantua, in 1423, the Vittorino's from Feltre 'Casa Giocosa' hosted the practice of fencing, fighting, horse riding, archery, in several occasions. As well as, in England and in the Netherlands the golf sport was also developed in the meantime. In the second half of the sixteenth century, Girolamo Mercuriali wrote *De Arte Gymnastica*. Likewise in England in 1617 the *Declaration of Sports* was written by James the First, in 1719 James Figg becoming the first British boxing champion. In 1840 the first edition of the Oxford-Cambridge regatta took place, while in 1863 the Football Association was born. In 1894, Baron Pierre de Coubertin restored the Olympic Games during an historic Congress in Paris: this did lead to the organisation of the first Olympic Games of the modern era in 1896, based in Athens (in memory of the Ancient Greece). In 1924 the Olympic Winter Games were introduced. In 1930 the first World Cup was disputed in Uruguay. After the Second World War with the advent of mass media and global communication, the sport has had a notable development so professionalism became prevalent, and this improved substantially the overall sports' popularity. In this period, the sport became a real area of economic activity, a true international kind of industry. For this reason Sport is a social institution that can influence society on a large-scale (Baker et al., 2015).

Sport, today, is one of the most established phenomena in the world, involving billions of people on all five continents. The revenue generated in the global sports market in 2017 are 91 billion of US dollars, in Europe the sports sector produces 2% of the total EU GDP, while the total employment generated by sports activities is 7.3 million units, accounting for 3.5% of total employment in the EU. Despite these impressive numbers, the economic impact of sports industries appears to be often underestimated. This continuous progress confirms that the sports industry is going to remain one of the major and most diverse businesses in the global marketplace. Mullin et al. (2014) refer to sport management as a hybrid field of study that covers numerous other disciplines. The sport industry has been developing rapidly during recent years and promises to continue to expand. Jobs in marketing and promotions as well as in sports information and communication are often accessible. Several employment opportunities exist in professional sports in relation to event management and community relations as well as in reference to financial markets (Howard and Crompton, 1995). Further employment options are also rapidly emerging in sporting goods, sports agents and arena management.

2 Overview

Radio and television broadcasters, as well as new media, make increasing use of sports broadcasting; likewise, production companies frequently resort to the sports world to promote their products or services. Manufacturers of sports equipment and clothing

invest heavily in the promotion of their brand and in the R&D of new technical solutions, which can bring their products to the forefront of international success.

Finally it's clear that the entrepreneurship and sport management disciplines have grown significantly over the last decade (Zeigler, 1987, Parkhouse, 1991; Cunningham, 2013). Particularly, sport management is actually involving in any combination of skills related to planning, organising, directing, controlling, budgeting, leading and evaluating within the context of an organisation or department whose primary product or service is related to sport or physical activity (Pitts, 2001). Sport managers carry out this expertise in a multiplicity of organisational surroundings such as college sports, professional and amateur sports, sport marketing and management firms, sport communications and news media, etc.

An upsurge in the number and variety of sports publications, sports-related internet sites and enhanced mass media presentation and exposure of sports events and activities is ensuing in the need for individuals with special qualifications in sport communications and media (Pedersen and Thibault, 2014). Within this scenario, this special issue aimed at investigating which management tools and accounting systems are likely to be the best choices for managers and entrepreneurs in order to evaluate and measure the economic assessment of tangible and intangible assets within the sport business.

3 A glance to the contents of this special issue

All the works published in the present special issue have been subject to a lengthy double blind review process and revised quite largely before their acceptance for publication.

The nine papers selected offer an insightful and large view of sport management in a global market context. The topics discussed appear to be very well mixed and cover various points of view of the sport management research stream.

Jerónimo García-Fernández, Pablo Gálvez-Ruíz, Brenda G. Pitts, Luisa Vélez-Colón and Ainara Bernal-García (University of Seville) in their paper 'Consumer behaviour and sport services: an examination of fitness centre loyalty' investigate the relationship between perceived quality, perceived value and satisfaction with future intentions of fitness centre clients in Spain. The sample consisted of 1,805 clients at ten fitness centres. The findings indicate that perceived quality consequently influences perceived value and satisfaction, perceived value influences satisfaction and behaviour intentions, and satisfaction influences behaviour intentions. The study brings to the forefront the importance of the perception and continual evaluation of fitness centre consumers.

Moving to a research in the field of horse racing, Steven S. Vickner in his work 'On estimating the determinants of yearling thoroughbred prices' used information for 3,562 thoroughbreds listed in Keeneland's 2011 September yearling sale with a novel perspective respect to the existing literature. The developed model controlled for other observable characteristics of the yearlings, individual seller reputation effects, and the structure of the auction.

Drawing on a call for more research on the role of sports consumer behaviour, Hossein Abdolmaleki, Zahra Sadat Mirzazadeh and Ebrahim Alidoust Ghahfarokhi in their work 'Identify and prioritise factors affecting sports consumer behaviour in Iran'

respond to that call by analysing the factors affecting sports consumer behaviour in Iran. The study is a quantitative-qualitative research. They found that the marketing mix (product, price, distribution channels, promotion and advertising, service quality and brand personality), psychological factors (attitude, motivation, emotion, perception, past experience, and consumer personality), individual factors (income, age, gender and education level), social factors (family, reference groups, social class and opinion leaders) and cultural factors (culture and religion) are all influencing consumer behaviour.

In their work, 'An analysis of critical success factors on hosting the professional golf tournaments using analytic hierarchy process – Korean experts' perspective', So Won Yoon and Sung Eun Kim address a relevant issue: the success of sports tournaments can be beneficial to the organisations and event venues involved because of their potential to attract viewers, tourists, sponsors as well as investors. They investigate critical success factors for hosting professional golf championships in Korea using the Delphi method. The top priority for success factors on hosting golf tournaments was determined to be spectator dimension, followed by promotion, competition environment, and operating dimensions.

Sujana Adapa's work titled 'Strategic corporate social responsibility or responsible performance of sporting organisations in Australia' aims at stimulating reflections upon how Australian national sporting organisations communicate corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices in their strategic plans. A total of 42 strategic plans of Australian national sporting organisations were qualitatively content analysed. The authors identified that rather than focusing on the strategic orientation of CSR, sporting organisations need to embrace an integrated theoretical framework to communicate responsible performance of sporting organisations (RPSO) to various stakeholders.

The last four articles are focused on soccer. Mohammad Keshtidar, MohammadAli Sahebkarana, Mahdi Talebpour and Maziyar Kalashi in their paper titled 'Investigating the effect of brand identity and character on brand loyalty of football team fans' aimed at understanding the effect of brand identity and character on brand loyalty between Esteghlal and Persepolis team fans in Mazandaran province. The results showed that the fitting indicators of the model for brand identity and brand personality on brand loyalty in Persepolis and Esteghlal fans are good. The authors point up on paying attention to brand character and identity can increase Mazandarani football fans' loyalty to Persepolis and Esteghlal.

Imene Ben Yahia and Mohammed Al-Emadi in their paper 'Exploring the determinants of 2022 FIFA World Cup attendance in Qatar' investigate the determinants of attendance at the upcoming FIFA World Cup in Qatar. They consider pull and push factors as antecedents of desirability to attend this mega-event, and particularly shed light on the perception of the host country as a pull factor. The perception of the host country has a positive impact on desirability and is a better predictor than travel motives or event motives. No significant effect of the support for the national team on desirability was found. The results also show that the constraints of time or money have no impact on the relationship between desirability and attendance intent. The findings of this research offer insights into sport marketing and show promise for event management committees, event marketers and researchers alike to develop an understanding of mega-event marketing.

Carlo Regoliosi's work titled 'Shedding light on the profitability of Italian professional football clubs where a different business model is performing' provided some evidence that football clubs. Particularly Italian professional clubs in the 'Serie A' league, can be investigated with the lenses of the ordinary business and that there exist economical and governance patterns that are worth investigating to better understand their conditions of economic durability. From the analysis identified in this paper, the emerging core activity driving to higher levels the operating performance of football clubs is poorly described in the accounting model currently provided by all the listed and not listed clubs. The income statement should at least highlight the balance of the two main activities performed by Italian football clubs: the result of the provision of sporting events to the public, and the result of players' registration rights trading. This research may represent a seminal work for future contributions in the area of business and accounting research on football clubs

The collection of papers is closed by Daniela Coluccia, Stefano Fontana and Silvia Solimene with the paper 'An application of the option-pricing model to the valuation of a football player in the 'Serie A League''. This paper is based on the Tunaru et al. contribution, a real option-based model. The aim of the paper is the financial evaluation of a goalkeeper of Serie A League club. The model depends on the relationship among the player's and team's performance and the club's turnover and it tries to estimate the economic value of the players, which is a fundamental factor in the football business.

4 Conclusions

The editors are greatly appreciative of the number and quality of submissions for this special issue. We recognise, however, that this special issue represents a starting point for providing a strong foundation for future research in the area of sport marketing and management. Academic researchers and practitioners would both benefit from working together more closely: academics could add rigor to practitioners' decision-making and practitioners could help academics maintain a focus on issues of strategic and tactical importance. A special thanks to Dr. M.A. Dorgham, Editor-in-Chief of the *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing* for his guidance and support and to all the reviewers and colleagues who actively participated in setting up this special issue.

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