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## **Editorial: Entrepreneurship and sport business research: synthesis and lessons: introduction to the special journal issue**

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## **1 Introduction**

Academic research interest in sport entrepreneurship and innovation is a recent phenomenon but the practical significance has a long history (Ratten, 2018). The sport industry is characterised by an increasing interest in entrepreneurship and innovation. This has resulted in the expansion of sport related products and services into other industries because of entrepreneurial development (Miragaia et al., 2017). However, to

date there is still much to learn about entrepreneurship in sport and the key role it plays in the global economy (Ratten and Ferreira, 2017a, 2017b). This introductory article to the special issue examines the literature that exists on sport entrepreneurship and innovation. The importance of taking an entrepreneurial approach in sport business research is examined and future research direction stated. Sport entrepreneurship research offers important implications for both theory and practice (Ratten, 2017a). This special issue contributes to the field of sport management and marketing by moving beyond being concerned with the existence of differences in the sport industry to include entrepreneurial behaviours. The key purpose of the articles in the special journal issue is to understand the directions sport entrepreneurship research is taking to uncover new approaches that can be illuminated by research.

Sport entrepreneurship has started to develop as an interdisciplinary field that combines sport management and entrepreneurship (Ratten, 2017b). In practice, there still is much disconnection between sport management and entrepreneurship research that has led to limited approaches that require adaptation to reflect different theoretical bases. Sport entrepreneurship research is shifting from being a nascent area to being a central theoretical foundation in the sport business literature (Gonzalez-Serrano et al., 2017). The interest in sport entrepreneurship research will continue to flourish due to more technological innovations being utilised in sport and also the increased importance of sport in society. The entrepreneurship is not just in new innovations but also in the processes of existing organisations (Franke and Shah, 2003). More sport consumers are being entrepreneurial and this provides avenues for greater levels of co-creation (Luthje, 2004). Therefore, sport entrepreneurship research is an attractive context for understanding the co-creation process amongst multiple stakeholders.

Sport entrepreneurship scholarship needs to push beyond the current boundaries of looking at existing technologies to focus more on emerging innovation (Santomier et al., 2017). This will enable better forecasting about what types of new media technologies and other innovations will affect the sport industry (Brison et al., 2017). It is also crucial to continue looking into existing sport innovations to see the changing nature of the industry that has resulted from new business models (Fueller et al., 2007). This will enable a reflection on the impact and significance of innovation to the sport industry (Schreier et al., 2007). The future of sport entrepreneurship lies in the insightful thinking about future changes. This enables serendipitous discovery of new theories about sport entrepreneurship that incorporate novel thinking. Pagararo (2014, p.2) states disruptive innovations “involves a new product or service that leads to a new way of doing business, one that is both different, and in conflict, with the current way of operating.” Developments in sport from new technology include the use of social media and internet communications that provide a better viewing experience. Consumers and fans are looking at new ways of communicating about sport due to information technology innovations (Pagararo, 2014). Sport consumers are using technology in different ways depending on their needs and expectations (Finch, 2011; Pinch and Henry, 1999). This has led to more interest in user innovation as a way to develop new products and services. Some sport innovations such as fantasy sport develop from user interactions (Goff et al., 2002). Electronic sports (e-sports) have developed from increased interest in electronic gaming, which has forced new ways of thinking about how to define sport. There are electronic game tournaments that are growing rapidly and changing the definition of sport in society.

Entrepreneurship is an essential part of sport and provides a perspective through which sport is understood (Goorha, 2017). As sport has internationalised and become more commercialised entrepreneurship enables a way for sport to be filtered. The complex sport environment has challenges due to new digital technology and increased interest in live events (Gerke, 2017). It is difficult for organisations to get a handle on entrepreneurship in sport due to the variety of applications (Reid, 2017). This makes it hard to predict where sport is going to be entrepreneurial. However, by acknowledging sport by its nature is entrepreneurial researchers can help share future developments (Trabal, 2008). This enables sport entrepreneurship to investigate different innovations and to examine its effects. Sport entrepreneurship researchers who explore new innovations can incrementally build better theory (Winard and Anagnostopoulos, 2017). This is useful in linking the practical experience of sport with more impactful innovations that have major effects.

## **2 Shortcomings in the existing literature**

The study of sport entrepreneurship has been neglected in the traditional entrepreneurship literature although entrepreneurship as a discipline is relatively new. Sport has historically been viewed more from a psychology or organisational standpoint but has recently been asserted more in the entrepreneurship domain. Entrepreneurship is the activity that will push the sport industry forward (Potts and Ratten, 2017). However, virtually no research exists on certain types of entrepreneurship theory in a sport context. The potential impact of entrepreneurship on sport needs to be examined in order to answer some relevant research questions. There is an absence in the existing literature about specific entrepreneurship theories developed for a sport context. Whilst sport-based entrepreneurship theory is gaining momentum there needs to be more recognition of theoretical frameworks especially for sport. Most existing research on sport entrepreneurship has focused on individuals whilst ignoring the impact of other societal and cultural variables. There needs to be more understanding of what is really happening when entrepreneurship occurs in sport.

There is a diverse array of views about the role of entrepreneurship in society. Entrepreneurial opportunities involve the actions that are embedded in certain beliefs that new business ventures can be created. This involves ideas about gaps in the marketplace that can be filled by new ideas. Entrepreneurship can be driven by necessities that make business ventures needed for means of survival. Opportunity driven entrepreneurship involves the choice to form a business venture without regard to survival needs. The difference between necessity and opportunity driven entrepreneurship is similar to the push and pull concept in entrepreneurship. By necessity individuals are pushed into entrepreneurship whilst by the spark of imagination individuals can be pulled into entrepreneurship. In the sport context, both types of entrepreneurship are relevant due to the existence of professional sport teams focusing on business needs and the existence of amateur or non-profit sport entities.

### **3 Overview of articles in the special journal issue**

The first article titled 'Intellectual capital assets and brand value of English football clubs' by João Leitão and João Baptista focuses on the role of knowledge in sport. The second article titled 'Motivation and high performance sports events: an exploratory investigation of the motives underlying repeated participation' by Konstantinos Koronios, Marina Psiloutsikou, Athanasios Kriemadis, Georgia Gkatsis and Marina Mavromati examines the effect of high performance sport on entrepreneurship. The third article titled 'Like it or not? The differences between and success factors of sports providers' use of social networking sites' by Joris Corthouts, Astrid Denys, Erik Thibaut and Jeroen Scheerder focuses on the role of emerging technology and entrepreneurship in sport. The fourth article titled 'Explicating professional boxers' narrative dynamics towards competitive aggressiveness and potential market entry' by Antti Kauppinen examines entrepreneurial changes in a sport context. The fifth article titled 'Psychological contract fulfilment and innovative work behaviours of employees in sport-based SBEs: the mediating role of organisational citizenship' by Christopher R. Barnhill and Natalie L. Smith examines how entrepreneurial cultures are important in sport. The sixth article titled 'Topics and research trends of health clubs management: will innovation be part of the fitness industry research interests?' by Dina Alexandra Marques Miragaia and Magda Sousa Constantino focuses on the role of the fitness sector in promoting innovation.

### **4 Future research**

There are multiple opportunities emerging for future research from this special journal issue. Firstly, there needs to be more research about the extent of entrepreneurship in sport. This would help build insights into the concept of sport entrepreneurship and how it is adapted based on context. Sport entrepreneurship implies economic capital but it also requires social and cultural capital. Thus, the role of sport entrepreneurs past activities and networks requires more research attention. Research about entrepreneurial ventures between global sport entities has received less attention. Due to the internationalisation of sport organisations the role of cross-border entrepreneurship is more relevant. Research about international sport entrepreneurship is more relevant and could focus on the political and legal issues in these markets.

Sport provides a unique setting for examining entrepreneurship and innovation. Existing theories in entrepreneurship can be tested in a sport context to see if there are distinctive characteristics of sport. There may also be similarities between sport and other industry settings that should be evaluated through additional research. To do this it seems critical to look at different kinds of sport in order to make better assessments about the role of entrepreneurship. Table 1 discusses some potential research questions relating to sport entrepreneurship by focusing on the entrepreneur and firm level unit of analysis as well as methodological issues.

The interest of sport scholars on entrepreneurship is steadily growing but more qualitative and quantitative studies are required. Qualitative research including in-depth interviews of sport entrepreneurs might help to understand the process of innovation and risk taking needed to be competitive in the sport industry. In addition, case studies of

sport organisations that have begun entrepreneurial business ventures are needed to see the mistakes and lessons learnt. It would be useful to see what kind of entrepreneurial strategies are used by sport organisations in their startup phase. This is due to there being a lack of understanding about how to be entrepreneurial in sport that should be followed up by new research studies. Therefore, the topic of entrepreneurship has become ambiguous in terms of its nature and application in the sport context.

There are few studies examining the drivers or antecedents of sport entrepreneurship. The changes in the sport environment mean there will be different factors affecting entrepreneurship. The political science field needs to be further integrated into the research on sport entrepreneurship. Much of the policy and practice in sport depends on policy makers who evaluate and make decisions. Increasingly the political parties in power have more impact on the types of sport policies that are funded. This means sport entrepreneurship researchers can learn from different political structures. Empirical studies could utilise political science theory as a foundation to study sport entrepreneurship. This would enable a better understanding on how labour policies and competition policies influence the creation of sport entrepreneurship.

**Table 1** Some potential research questions relating to sport entrepreneurship

<i>Entrepreneur level</i>	<i>Firm level</i>	<i>Methodological issues</i>
How does prior sporting experience influence the propensity of individuals to be entrepreneurs?	How does the nature of firm level entrepreneurship differ in the sport context?	Multilevel analysis of interactions between individual, group and community sport entrepreneurs
What common characteristics do successful sport entrepreneurs have?	What is the role of foreign partners and managers in developing sport entrepreneurship?	Comparative studies about cultural differences in sport entrepreneurship
Is there a difference between sport and non-sport entrepreneurs?	What role does venture capital and crowdfunding play in sport entrepreneurship?	Different forms of sport technology innovation and their effect on sport entrepreneurship
Does the pattern of sport entrepreneurship depend on the nature of their previous experience?	How are organisations stimulating sport entrepreneurship?	Multi-method usage in sport.

The general psychology field is largely unexplored in terms of understanding the behaviours and motivations for sport entrepreneurs. The lack of research on sport psychology and entrepreneurship is surprising given the competitive nature of the sport industry. More research is needed on personality traits to understand the functioning of sport entrepreneurs. Contributions could be made to sport entrepreneurship by focusing more on the way environmental factors influence behaviour. This includes longitudinal studies about how entrepreneurial sport business ventures develop over time. In addition, the social networks of sport entrepreneurs needs to be studied more. It is recommended that case studies are utilised to understand the evolution in organisational composition of entrepreneurial sport ventures. This would help in determining the mechanisms sport entrepreneurs utilise in establishing their businesses.

## 5 Managerial implications

Sport managers must be willing and able to have an entrepreneurial intent. Developing entrepreneurship is a difficult task that requires managers to think in novel ways. Sport organisations need to simultaneously purpose entrepreneurial and growth strategy to succeed in the global marketplace. They need to be responsive to market changes by focusing on their competitiveness by developing new products or services. This entrepreneurial strategy needs to look at future trends but continue their existing successful products. This involves planning for the future by integrating an entrepreneurial approach to manage breakthrough innovations. Startups are being more common in the sport industry as a way to facilitate innovation processes. The advantage of startups is that they bring new ideas into the market. This helps build business models that can facilitate economically sustainable enterprises. For startups to succeed they need to have good relationships and transform entrepreneurial opportunities into profit.

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