
Editorial

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1 Introduction

Sport organisations are operating in times of increased internationalisation, which has changed the way business is conducted (Dos Santos and Moreno, 2020). This new norm for the sport industry is to focus on the international market, which is reflected in management practices. Consequently, whilst sport organisations need to be contextually embedded in their local communities they also need an international outlook. This can enable them to be more strategic about challenges they face as a result of a more competitive marketplace (Helkkula et al., 2012). In addition to increased emphasis on competitiveness, sport organisations are expected to develop their talent pool using international networks (Ratten, 2019). This ensures the best people are chosen regardless of their geographic location. To do this can be difficult because sport organisations now compete with each other for the best people (Jones et al., 2017). The priority on excellence, along with increased availability of human capital, presents a challenging problem.

Sport management studies have focused on a range of concerns regarding the international marketplace, including cultural, economic and social issues (Miragaia et al., 2018). However, there has been limited research on sustained internationalisation and innovation in sport management. This includes a few studies on applying strategic, innovation and entrepreneurship theories to international sport management. This is surprising as in practice the use of these topics is evident in various parts of the sport industry. I think these topics are particularly relevant to sport as it provides a way to obtain novel findings. This can help sport organisations to address ways of improving their position in the international market. Moreover, it can enable sport policy-makers to play a more prominent role in readdressing differences amongst sports in terms of their international patterns.

To study sport management, Harris et al. (2020) suggest four main approaches: organisation theory, organisation behaviour, strategic management and governance. Organisation theory involves considering the design and structure of an organisation to

understand its dynamics. This approach is traditionally the way organisations have been studied and has been used in a sport context to understand cultural effects. Organisational behaviour focuses on the intricate workings of an organisation in terms of its performance and leadership position. This is useful in understanding why some organisations might be perceived as better workplaces. Strategic management is a newer theory in the sports field as it focuses on specific direction or actions organisations can take in the market. This enables them to increase their competitive position by focusing on strategic goals. The governance approach stresses the systemic interactions evident in an organisational context. This means analysing the role of governments on sport organisations and the interdependencies amongst stakeholders, thereby recognising that the sport industry is heavily regulated and subject to international policy considerations.

Value co-creation is an essential part of the sport industry owing to the need for multiple stakeholder support and can help to explain internationalisation patterns. Compared with other industries, the sport industry relies on support from both the public and private sector. This means there needs to be consideration for different stakeholders when making any decisions regarding sport. In addition, there are regulatory pressures on sport entities from the local, regional, national and international level. This high amount of interconnectedness means value needs to be created through the interaction of different stakeholders. Vargo and Lusch (2016, p.8) defined value co-creation as “the actions of multiple actors, often unaware of each other, that contribute to each other’s wellbeing”. The way value is created often occurs in a network or ecosystem structure (Grohs et al., 2020).

Stakeholders in the sport industry include athletes, customers, caterers, leagues, media, sponsors, suppliers and volunteers. It can be hard to define value due to it having a subjective meaning (Gronroos and Voima, 2013). This results in subjective assessments of value having an emotional and personal component (Figueiredo and Scaraboto, 2016). In the context of sport services, there are different types of consumer value from social to altruistic. This means that value-creating sport services should consider a consumer’s interaction with a sport. Community practices can create value through social networking and impression management (Schau et al., 2009). Social networking refers to collective activities that provide valuable information. By interacting with others, social networks provide a way to find out what is happening in the marketplace and what consumers think about current trends. This provides a way to realise value by encouraging engagement with others. Impression management refers to how sport products and services are viewed by others. Reputation building is part of impression management as it enables a sport entity to influence how it is perceived in the marketplace. By sustaining value amongst community members, it can create a positive image with others. This can lead to an enhanced or improved use of sport services.

Value co-creation uses both operand and operant resources. Operand resources are physical in terms of actual products or services whilst operant resources normally take the form of knowledge or skills (Grohs et al., 2020). International sport management is based on the interaction of multiple actors who contribute to the value creation process. Often these actors are unaware of each other but work in a synergistic manner for the benefit of the sport industry. This special issue demonstrates how international sport management revolves around value co-creation and highlights how continual interactions are needed to foster innovation. In order to gain deeper insights into international sport management it can be helpful to take a value co-creation perspective. This special issue has implications not only for researchers but also for managers of sport entities.

2 Overview of articles

The first article, titled ‘Understanding sport media spectators’ preferences: the relationships among motivators, constraints and actual media consumption behaviour’ by Konstantinos Koronios, Panagiotis Dimitropoulos, Athanasios Kriemadis and Andreas Papadopoulos, discusses the role of international markets in affecting sport media consumption. The second article, titled ‘Converting sporting capacity to entrepreneurial capacity: a process perspective’, is by Kevin Hindle, Jonas Hammerschmidt, Céline Viala, Sascha Kraus, Paul Jones and Ferran Calabuig-Moreno. This article focuses on the role of sport entrepreneurship in the international market by taking a process approach. The third article, titled ‘Economic performance in Spanish sports clubs: entrepreneurial orientation of professional and non-professional teams analysed through fsQCA’, is by Paloma Escamilla-Fajardo, Juan M. Núñez-Pomar and Vicente Prado-Gascó. The article discusses the role of internationalisation for managers of international sport clubs. The fourth article, titled ‘Credibility to attract, trust to stay: the mediating role of trust in improving brand congruence in sports services’, is by Mario Alguacil, María Huertas González-Serrano, Ana María Gómez-Tafalla, Rómulo Jacobo González-García and Sergio Aguado-Berenguer. This article highlights the role of internationalisation in the branding efforts of sport clubs. The fifth article, titled ‘The glocalisation of sports: a study of the influence of European Football Leagues on Nigerian society’, is by Paul Agu Igwe, Abiola Deborah Akinsola-Obatolu, Chinyere Augusta Nwajiuba, Obiamaka Priscilla Egbo, Olaleke Oluseye Ogunnaike and Kenneth Chukwuma Nwekpa. The authors discuss how European football has internationalised to other geographic markets in order to increase spectator rates. The sixth article, titled ‘Owned streaming platforms and television broadcast deals: the case of the World Rally Championship’, is by Samuel Tickell and Tom Evens. The article focuses on car racing and the internationalisation path it has taken. The seventh article, titled ‘Global hierarchy of team-sport leagues based on internet searches and revenues: Europe vs. America’, is by Alice Aguiar-Noury and Pedro Garcia-del-Barrio. In this article the authors discuss the role of digitalisation on sport international management strategies. The eighth article, titled ‘From data to dollar: using the wisdom of an online tipster community to improve sports betting returns’, is by Arne Gruettner, Thiemo Wambsganss and Andrea Back. The article highlights the importance of technology in improving the spot service experience. The ninth article, titled ‘Reaping the digital dividend? Sport marketing’s move into esports: insights from Germany’, is by Kilian Kramer, David Wagner and Barbara Scheck. The article stresses the role that digital marketing can play in the internationalisation of sport clubs. The tenth article, titled ‘Sport as a vehicle for implementing corporate social responsibility: firms listed on the Warsaw and Moscow stock exchanges’, is by Christos Anagnostopoulos, Samuel López-Carril and Jolanta Żyśko. The article focuses on the role of change in terms of how sport can impact social issues in society. The eleventh article, titled ‘Organisational productivity: perceptions about the influence of workplace physical activity programs on performance, wellness and worker satisfaction’, is by Dina Alexandra Marques Miragaia and João Miguel Simões Aleixo. It focuses on the role of productivity in influencing perceptions about international sport management.

3 Managerial implications

In this section, proposed specific guidelines for sport managers that foster collaborative value through international approaches are discussed. Sport managers strive to be competitive by deriving value from economic or social means. To achieve economic value, sport managers need to use international markets in a new way. This means finding potentially lucrative markets that have been overlooked or developing new ones. Given the population changes and increasing middle class in Asia and Africa, these geographic areas should be considered in more depth. Hiring athletes or marketing people from these areas can help to build the sport's reputation. This is important as socio-demographic changes are shaping the way sport is viewed and consumed. Specific countries can be targeted as a way to offer a platform for future development.

The internationalisation of sport is evident in many different ways, from the recruiting of players, marketing partnerships to direct investment. The reasons for this are due to sport being an integral part of society and helping to increase social cohesion. Sport has been viewed as a global language owing to the way it transcends boundaries in terms of cultural and religious differences. Leisure activity is now viewed as an essential component of an individual's wellbeing. There are also mental health benefits to leisure activity in terms of decreasing loneliness and sense of isolation in the community. Sport as a concept differs globally depending on the cultural perceptions and social stereotypes. Some countries place an emphasis on certain sports, such as car racing or tennis, owing to historical conditions. Other countries are more interested in nature sports owing to their geographic position. Thus, when talking about international sport management, we need to be mindful of these cultural differences. Some sports, such as football, can differ in the way they are played and defined but are still the most popular global forms of sport.

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