

## Introducing and Analyzing Historical Methodology for Sport Management Studies

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### Session 5: Research Presentation (25-minute)

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11:30 AM - 11:55 AM

The changing nature of sport, its organization, and practices often consists of interconnecting human behaviors and actions. Those in the sport management educational profession often study this phenomenon through, for example, quantitative or qualitative methods. Some suggest sport management scholars should expand their methods of study because they may too narrowly examine those topics important to the field (Chalip, 1997; Park, 1983; Slack, 1997). Hardy (1997) and Jones (1992) indicate sport acts as a special industry like agriculture or medicine because long-term practices direct its development. Appropriately, Jones (1992) and others assert some scholars are beginning to look within larger social, political, and economical areas of study such as labor markets, capital investments, and social or political relations from a historical perspective or methodology because they provide interesting examples or connections (Boyle & Haynes, 2000). Scholars in sport management could similarly take advantage of historical methods in their research. Studying and addressing topics through historical inquiry helps those engaged in sport better understand how it developed into its' contemporary form and predict possible future changes or expectations. Fittingly, historical methods appear as one alternative option to study the diversified areas of study in sport management because it extends benefits beyond entertainment or figurative importance.

Over a quarter century ago, Mandelbaum (1977, p. 11-12) described historical research as the "tracing of various aspects of culture as they arise or change society or as they cross the boundaries separating societies." Park (1983) further identified historical study as embracing the cultural products, which people create like architecture, art, and literature. Historical methods prompt researchers to acquire an active analytical mind because it demands the researcher handle and evaluate various types of sources. Furthermore, historical research appears relevant because it possesses many similarities to other types of normative and interpretive approaches to research and like other forms of study; it seeks objectivity and expects to describe relevant features of a specific phenomenon (McDowell, 2002; Travers, 1969). Overall, historical research appears as the attempt to collect and interpret evidence from valid or authentic sources and to systematically establish, confront, and identify conclusions, trends, and facts about valuable past human social environments and their interconnections or behaviors (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1996; Johnson & Christensen, 2000).

Studying sport through a historical lens benefits the sport management profession because it focuses on uncovering the subtle and unknown, identifying the relationship between past events and current conditions, and advances our comprehension of human culture and its future. McDowell (2002) further acknowledges historical study enable us to identify those events, previously not celebrated, as important to provide us with an opportunity toward a more complete understanding of past social culture and again how the future may be altered.

The purpose of this presentation serves to introduce historical methodology to the sport management profession by outlining its major tenets and comparing it to other methodologies so we can better understand, confront, and identify issues related to sport and sport management. This presentation addresses several issues, which highlight the benefits and limitations of historical study. Those topic areas include: a) a description of general historical research design; b) identification and selection of primary and secondary sources; c) conducting a historical criticism (validity and reliability check); d) data collection recommendations; and e) data analysis procedures. Finally, the presentation seeks to offer guidance to scholars who might need or demonstrate interest in this research approach and how to effectively mix historical methods with other types of methodologies to produce higher quality work. The evolution of the American pro sport facilities will serve as an empirical example to aid understanding.

#### References

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