Breaking Down Silos: A Professional Development Workshop on Methodological Diversity in Sport Management Research

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Method - Other (Other)
60-minute symposium, roundtable, or workshop
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In recent years, diversity has become an increasingly salient topic in sport management, exploring issues related to race, gender, sexual orientation, age, and body weight, among others (see Burton, 2015; Sartore & Cunningham, 2009; Singer, 2005; Walker & Melton, 2015). However, despite repeated calls to promote new or innovative approaches (see Amis & Silk, 2009; Frisby, 2005; Olafson, 1990; Slack, 1996), relatively little work has focused on methodological diversity in sport management research itself. Research in other fields has suggested the value of approaching complex topics from multiple perspectives and using diverse methods (Johns, 2003; Mingers, 2001). In fact, across fields, one consistent criticism of the research process is the creation of methodological and disciplinary silos, which rarely interact with each other (Hansen-Ketchum & Halpenny, 2010; Macfarlane, 2006). Sport management research is not immune to this division, nor is it short of calls to bridge the gaps (see Barnes, Cousens, & MacLean, 2007; Dittmore, Mahony, Andrew, & Phelps, 2007). As Doherty (2012) reminded us in her Ziegler lecture: “it takes a village to solve the complex problems in our world” (p. 1).

One way to address these methodological divides may be through professional development workshops at sport management conferences. Quality research design and implementation are necessary to achieve quality findings in our work. As such, continuing education is crucial to improving the overall quality of research (Ioannidis et al., 2014). In fact, professional development and continuing education workshops are commonplace at conferences and annual meetings for several of sport management’s “parent disciplines” (e.g., Academy of Management, Administrative Sciences Association of Canada, American Bar Association, American Marketing Association, Association of American Colleges & Universities, SHAPE America). It is worth noting that critical reflection and interaction with experienced researchers and peers are important predictors of professional learning (Rees, Baron, Boyask, & Taylor, 2007). Given the value of research-related capacity building, this workshop is designed to address these research silos and encourage increased use and understanding of various methods.

Purpose
This workshop seeks to address the need for increased methodological diversity in the field in two ways. First, we will provide a brief introductory discussion and opportunity for critical reflection on the importance of multiple broad categories of research in sport management. This discussion will trace the development of methodological silos, the importance of exploring complex phenomena from multiple perspectives, and a call for increasing the use of multiple or mixed-methods approaches to research in the field. Second, this workshop will provide opportunities for capacity building through breakout groups facilitated by expert scholars.

Methodological Diversity Breakout Groups
Breakout groups will provide a basic overview of foundational concepts underlying broad categories of research methods and the chance for deeper discussion or specific questions. In particular, these groups will provide a general understanding of the method’s strengths and weaknesses, appropriate use, foundational works, and resources for further understanding. After a general introduction and overview to the workshop, attendees will be presented with the opportunity to attend a breakout group of their choice, lasting 35 to 40 minutes. Importantly, attendees will be encouraged to join a breakout group that discusses methods they do not often use themselves, thereby gaining exposure to another perspective; however, attendees will be given the option to join any group, thereby also allowing deeper and more technical discussion of methods they use regularly. In the last 10 minutes, all breakout groups will
come together to share the most salient bits or takeaways from their group’s discussion.

Quantitative Research Methods
Much of the research in sport management has employed traditional inferential statistics to test hypotheses, characterize populations, and develop measures of various phenomena (Kim, Chelladurai, & Kim, 2015; Kim & Park, 2017). Given the general acceptance of these methods, relatively little has been written about their general use in the field. However, several scholars have analyzed methodological deficiencies in the field, including the use and reporting of power analyses (Parks, Shewokis, & Costa, 1999) and issues related to nonresponse (Jordan, Walker, Kent, & Inoue, 2011). Therefore, this breakout group will focus on foundational logic and appropriate use of quantitative techniques, including discussion of common errors in data collection, preparation, analysis, and reporting. This group will be facilitated by George Cunningham and Matthew Walker.

Qualitative Research Methods
In the last decade, there has been an increased focus on the development, use, and acceptance of qualitative methods in sport management (Hoeber & Shaw, 2017; Kim, Chelladurai, & Kim, 2015). For example, calls for use of qualitative methods have often been included in larger calls advocating new and critical approaches to sport studies (e.g., Amis & Silk, 2005; Frisby, 2005; Inglis, 1992; Singer, 2005). As such, qualitative research is increasingly accepted in sport management journals. Given this growth, several authors have recently called for the use of diverse approaches to qualitative studies (e.g., Kerwin & Hoeber, 2015; Morse & McEvoy, 2014; Rinehart, 2005; Shaw & Hoeber, 2016). Due to the growth and difficulties related to qualitative research in the field, this breakout group will focus on issues of acceptance (e.g., difficulties in publication), quality, and innovation (e.g., moving beyond the semi-structured interview). This group will be facilitated by Larena Hoeber.

Mixed and Emerging/Hybrid Methods
Given the established strengths and weakness of both traditional qualitative and quantitative designs, there have been calls to increase the use of mixed-methods designs in sport management research (e.g., Rudd & Johnson, 2010; van der Roest, Spaaij, van Bottenburg, 2013). Despite these calls, mixed methods research in sport remains underutilized (Abeza, O’Reilly, Dottori, Seguin, & Nzindukiyimana, 2015). However, employing both qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study can triangulate findings in manner that either approach would be otherwise incapable of (Hussein, 2009). Mixed methods research is not without its own difficulties, however, including the proper integration of multiple paradigms (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007). Another way that sport management scholars have sought to address the relative weaknesses of traditional methods has been to occasionally propose and used novel methodological approaches (e.g., Ciomaga, 2013; Hoeber, Snelgrove, Hoeber, & Wood, 2017; Hayduk & Pickett, 2017; Quatman & Chelladurai, 2008). While these methods vary considerably, each attempts to address methodological gaps by employing innovative logic or leveraging technological advances. Therefore, this breakout session will explore strategies for bridging the qualitative/quantitative gap, either through mixed methods or another novel approach. With regard to mixed methods, topics for discussion may include issues related to the struggle between depth of findings and logistical constraints (e.g., funding, time, research culture, page limits). The session will also discuss emerging methods, which may include a basic overview of the underlying logic and use of certain methods, as well as exploration of difficulties in undertaking such projects (e.g., logistical/computing constraints, publication biases). This group will be facilitated by Orland Hoeber, Emily Newell, and Drew Pickett.

Conclusion
Researchers both in sport (e.g., Sherry, Schulenkorf, Seal, Nicholson, & Hoye, 2016) and outside of it (e.g., Crawford & Himmel, 1999) have called for the increased diversity of methods in research for a variety of reasons. Among them are increased relevance to research topics and the ability to more completely understand complex phenomena. This workshop, therefore, is designed to provide exposure and a forum for discussion amongst researchers regarding methods that are new or relatively unfamiliar. Consistent with conferences in the larger parent disciplines, this workshop is designed to offer the opportunity for professional development. Therefore, this workshop serves as one step in addressing the numerous calls for methodological diversity in the field of sport management.