Scoping Reviews in Sport Management: Methods, Protocol and Lessons Learnt

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Method - Design (Other)
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It has been nearly 15 years since Weed (2005) recognized the increasing need for research synthesis within the field of sport management. In drawing upon Forscher’s (1963) analogy of ‘Chaos in Brickyard,’ he argued that research synthesis is an essential part of the research process that had not been embraced by sport management researchers. Since these remarks, there continues to be a growing recognition and utilization of approaches to synthesizing research evidence within other fields. There has also been significant methodological advancements in terms of methods and protocols synthesizing research (e.g., PRISMA, Cochrane Review). Despite these advancements, systematic-based attempts to synthesize research within the sport management domain still remain limited.

This protocol paper draws upon a continuously expanding methodological tradition of research synthesis which is commonplace in other disciplines such as health and management (Grant & Booth, 2009). In particular, we draw upon the scoping review protocol and methodology literature that has become increasingly popular over the past decade and has recently led to the establishment of a Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses for scoping reviews (PRISMA-ScR).

We seek to advance the discussion surrounding research synthesis within the sport management domain by introducing scoping reviews as a potentially useful approach to synthesizing research. To this end, we report the findings of a preliminary study into the general adoption of systematic-based reviewing within the field, introduce the methods and protocol of scoping reviews, and highlight the lessons learned from two scoping studies that have recently been conducted within the field (Dowling et al., 2018; Inoue et al., 2015).

Method and Findings

Findings provided further evidence that a very limited adoption of systematic-based reviews exists in the field. In order to help address this issue, we introduce the method and protocol of scoping reviews by briefly outlining Arsey and O’Malley’s (2005) framework including Levac et al’s (2010) and Colquhoun et al’s (2014) protocol extensions and clarifications and discuss the benefits/value of scoping reviews. This is proceeded with an outline the lessons learned from two recently published scoping reviews that have been conducted within the field of sport management and provide some general tips and specific recommendations for those seeking to carry out scoping studies.

Discussion

Our contribution to the sport management literature is threefold. First, we build upon the work of Weed (2005) specifically and general discussions surrounding research synthesis within the field by offering the scoping review as an alternative approach to research synthesis. A second contribution is the provision of practical insights into the difficulties and challenges of carrying out scoping reviews. Finally, our broader intention is to highlight the role of scoping reviews specifically and research synthesis in general as a potential way for sport management researcher(s) to demonstrate the contribution of the sport management domain to other fields and consolidate evidence to inform policy and practice more effectively.