Community sport events are often used as vehicles for building social capital (Schulenkorf, Thomson, & Schlenker, 2011). Prior research has provided substantial evidence regarding the capacity of sport event participation to foster bonding and bridging social capital among sport event participants (Sherry 2010). Despite the fruitful findings from prior qualitative research, very few quantitative inquiries have been made to examine social capital in sport event settings. A main reason for the paucity of quantitative social capital studies in the present sport management field is the absence of a robust measurement instrument. This measurement limitation hinders large-scale empirical examinations of social capital and its relationships to various concepts (e.g., sport event participation, satisfaction, and behavioral outcomes). As such, the development of a quantifiable measurement for event-specific social capital can carry significant implications, as it allows for a better understanding of the social value of sport event participation. To facilitate the instrument development, this study aims to provide a standardized and systematic measurement framework that offers directions for future development of a valid social capital measurement for sport event participants.

To guide the present study, Putnam’s (1995, 2000) social capital framework was adopted. Putnam (1995, 2000) conceptualized social capital as a multi-dimensional construct composed of three core elements (i.e., trust, reciprocity, and network) and two types (i.e., bonding and bridging). Based on Putnam’s framework, various social capital measurement has been developed across fields. Accordingly, a thorough review of pertinent literature (including 101 articles, books, and measurement tools on the topic of social capital) has been undertaken to assist the development of the social capital measurement framework.

In consistent with Putnam’s conceptualization, the proposed measurement framework for social capital from sport event participation consists of three main categories (i.e., trust, reciprocity, and network) and two subdimensions (i.e., size and strength) subsumed under each category. Specifically, the size of trust stems from Fukuyama’s (2001) concept “the radius of trust” and concerns the number of sport event (co-) participants whom can be trusted by the respondent, whereas the strength of trust concerns the degree to which other event participants can be trusted. The size of reciprocity refers to the number of event participants with whom the respondent exchange favors, whereas the strength of reciprocity refers to the regularity and intensity of mutual assistance between event participants. The size of network speaks to the number of contacts the respondent maintains with other event participants, whereas the strength of network manifests as the psychological closeness and interaction frequency between event participants. Taken together, the size of trust, reciprocity, and network indicates the “breadth” of one’s social relationships, which links to the concept of bridging social capital; whereas the strength of trust, reciprocity, and network signals the “depth” of social relationships, hence links to the concept of bonding social capital. Building upon the proposed measurement framework, data will be collected from sport event participants during November to December 2018. Scale development validation tests will be performed to finalize the sport event participation social capital instrument.