

## **Editorial**

### **From the Guest Editors: Strategy in Sport Management**

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### **Abstract**

This special issue includes six papers specific to Strategy in Sport Management (SSM) research. It offers an opportunity to advance our understanding of the specific themes of SSM. It also addresses subjects particularly critical to the SSM field, including its multidisciplinary, new theoretical perspectives, emerging methodologies and novel strategies in sport management approaches and encourages scrutinising their impact on organisational context. In this editorial we attempt to identify the main SSM research areas and outline a short description of the authors' contributions.

Keywords: sport, sport management, sport marketing, strategy, strategic management

## Theoretical Background

Research in strategy is at a critical crossroads due to the global marketplace and there is an increased emphasis on new theoretical concepts and on testing empirical relationships based on such concepts. But what do we know about strategy in sport management?

The history of sport is debatably richer than any other form of human activity. Sport has generally developed across the world as a ceremony, a celebration, a physical pursuit, a leisure activity and now, increasingly, a business (CHADWICK, 2009).

A business looking for stable revenues, new product development, or international expansion engages in business strategy by determining how to position itself in appropriate markets and in relation to competitors. Strategy relates to sports because a non-sport firm may use sport strategically by advertising, sponsoring (O'REILLY and HORNING, 2013), image and reputation (PARENT and FOREMAN, 2007), corporate social responsibility (HEINZE et al., 2014), partnership (BABIAC, 2007) or female (FINK, 2015) or/and a sport-related business may be associated with a variety of industries, each of which have different economic features and market forces (RATTEN, 2011; RATTEN and BABIAK, 2010).

Sport has inherently competitive values in nature and is entrepreneurial as it continues to adapt based on global marketplace changes (RATTEN, 2011). In addition, stakeholders in the strategic decision making of a sport organization (MIRAGAIA et al., 2014) are other crucial elements in all processes. To be successful over a period of time organizations need to determine the nature of the environments within which the competition is taking place, ensuring that they have resources and capabilities to move successfully through those environments in order to create a sustainable strategy (BEECH and CHADWICK, 2004).

In a fast moving environment, governance remains central to the effective and efficient management of sport organizations (FINK, 2013; HOYE and AULD, 2007). The strategic role and performance of the board, while central to the practice of governance, has been showed to be a weakness in many sport organizations (FERKINS et al., 2005). Changes in sport management have presented major strategic issues to those responsible for governing sport organizations (FINK, 2013; LERA-LOPEZ and RAPUN-GARATE, 2007; MILLER, 2002).

The contribution of the strategic activities in sport management is a topic superficially explored by sport management scholars (RATTEN and BABIAK, 2010). Understanding the factors that both constrain and enable sport organisations to think and act strategically may

provide an empirical basis for sports to build their strategic capabilities (FERKINS and SHILBURY, 2010) and efficiency (BABIAK, 2007; MIRAGAIA et al., 2016)

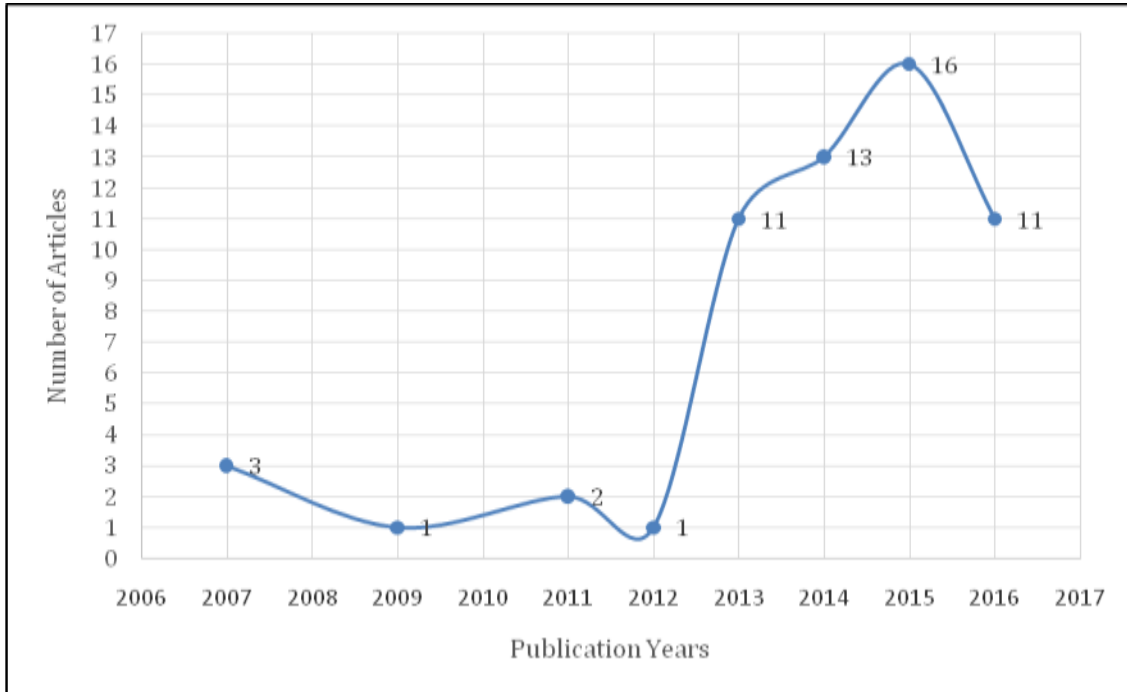
With the worldwide downturn of the economy, there is a need to effectively measure strategy and competitiveness in sport management context (RATTEN and FERREIRA, 2016). The outcomes of this research will critically depend on the conceptualization and measurement of these concepts and their derivative constructs. Thus, in spite of numerous discussions on alternate approaches to measuring strategy, the relationship between theoretical definitions and their consequent dimensions has been generally weak in the sport management context and there is an opportunity for interdisciplinary research about sport business. Furthermore, businesses are facing many challenges, many of which are propelled by increasing competitiveness and for lack of identification of what accurately creates a sport organization's competitive advantage.

The specific focus of this special issue was on the emerging perspectives in strategy by exploring the strategy foundations in a Sport Management context. To generate new theoretical and empirical advances in strategy, it is essential to develop an integrated, empirically-tractable account of how such phenomena influence strategy formation, resource allocation, strategy implementation, market efficiency, and sustained competitive advantage.

### **Mapping in SSM**

In order to provide research themes depicted in SSM as a theoretical background, we identified the journal, authors and research topics through an intellectual structure of research on SSM.

Citation data was collected from the "Current Contents Connect" included on the online databases of Thomson/Reuters-ISI. A survey was conducted by the expression: Strateg\*AND "Sport Management". As inclusion criteria's only the references in English language were used within in "Business and Economics" research areas, and only the typologies of articles and review were selected. As a result, a total of 58 references were found highlighting the number of research published on this topic in the last ten years (Figure 1).



**Figure 1**–Evolution of n° of articles through the last 10 years

The first articles emerge in 2007 (BABI<sup>AK</sup>, 2007; LERA-LOPEZ and RAPUN-GARATE, 2007; PARENT and FOREMAN, 2007), and between this period and 2012 the number of publications is quite low. The significant growth can be seen in the last four years, highlighting a total of sixteen articles published in 2015. Only on these four years (2012 - 2016), have there been published a total of 51 articles, highlighting the relevance of this topic for the scientific community. Table 1 shows the authors that have most publications about this subject. Analysing the origins of the authors of the 58 references, we would highlight the relevant role played by USA (25 references), Australia (24 references), and Canada (7 references).

**Table 1 – TOP 25 Authors according the number of publications**

<b>Nº Articles</b>	<b>TOP 25 Authors</b>
3	Cuskelly G Doyle J.P Fairley S Filo K Funk D.C Hutchinson M
2	Berg B.K ; Bouchet A; Fink J.S; Kitchin P.J; Lovegrove H; Newland B.I; Parent M.M; Shilbury D; Sotiriadou P; Westerbeek H; Wicker P
1	Walker M; Warner S; Washington M; Werner K; Williams A.S; Woratschek H; Wright PM; Zdroik J

In order to identify the main sources of studies on SSM journals that have the greatest influence in shaping the content and the search field were identified four cases (Table 2), with the most references corresponding to the Sport Management Review (49 references), and Journal of Sport Management (7 references).

**Table 2– Journals in the SSM field**

<b>Journals</b>	<b>No. Articles</b>	<b>% of 58</b>
Sport Management Review	49	84.483 %
Journal of Sport Management	7	12.069 %
International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal	1	1.724 %
Management Decision	1	1.724 %

Another important indicator corresponds to the most cited articles. From the analysis it was possible to identify the references that until now received special attention from the scientific community (Table 3).

**Table 3** -Distribution of citations (top 25)

Author(s)/ Year	Article Name	Journal	Citations N° <i>Web of Science</i>
LERA-LOPEZ and RAPUN-GARATE (2007)	The demand for sport: Sport consumption and participation models	<b>JSM</b>	28
BABIAK (2007)	Determinants of interorganizational relationships: The case of a Canadian Nonprofit Sport Organization	<b>JSM</b>	25
CHADWICK (2009)	From outside lane to inside track: sport management research in the twenty-first century	<b>MD</b>	15
PARENT and FOREMAN (2007)	Organizational image and identity management in large-scale sporting events	<b>JSM</b>	15
FINK (2013)	Theory development in sport management: My experience and other considerations	<b>SMR</b>	8
SHILBURY (2012)	Competition: The Heart and Soul of Sport Management	<b>JSM</b>	8
O'REILLY and HORNING (2013)	Leveraging sponsorship: The activation ratio	<b>SMR</b>	7
RATTEN (2011)	Sport-based entrepreneurship: towards a new theory of entrepreneurship and sport management	<b>IEMJ</b>	7
FINK (2015)	Female athletes, women's sport, and the sport media commercial complex: Have we really "come a long way, baby"?	<b>SMR</b>	5
FILO et al. (2015)	Sport and social media research: A review	<b>SMR</b>	5
EDWARDS (2015)	The role of sport in community capacity building: An examination of sport for development research and practice	<b>SMR</b>	5
KUNKEL et al. (2014)	Exploring sport brand development strategies to strengthen consumer involvement with the product - The case of the Australian A-League	<b>SMR</b>	5
PARENT et al. (2014)	The theory and practice of knowledge management and transfer: The case of the Olympic Games	<b>SMR</b>	5
DAWSON and PHILLIPS (2013)	Coach career development: Who is responsible?	<b>SMR</b>	5
INOUE et al. (2013)	Enhancing the benefits of professional sport philanthropy: The roles of corporate ability and communication strategies	<b>SMR</b>	5
WICKER and BREUER (2014)	Exploring the organizational capacity and organizational problems of disability sport clubs in Germany using matched pairs analysis	<b>SMR</b>	4
EIME et al. (2015)	Integrating public health and sport management: Sport participation trends 2001-2010	<b>SMR</b>	3
HOULIHAN (2014)	Achieving compliance in international anti-doping policy: An analysis of the 2009 World Anti-Doping Code	<b>SMR</b>	3
MACDOUGALL et al. (2014)	'Game, Set, Match': An exploration of congruence in Australian disability sport sponsorship	<b>SMR</b>	3
CUSKELLY and HOYE (2013)	Sports officials' intention to continue	<b>SMR</b>	3
DOYLE et al. (2013)	Exploring sport brand double jeopardy: The link between team market share and attitudinal loyalty	<b>SMR</b>	3
OJA et al. (2015)	Conceptualizing employee identification with sport organizations: Sport Employee Identification (SEI)	<b>SMR</b>	2
EDWARDS and WASHINGTON (2015)	Establishing a "Safety Net": Exploring the Emergence and Maintenance of College Hockey Inc. and NCAA Division I Hockey	<b>JSM</b>	2
HEINZE, SODERSTROM and ZDROIK (2014)	Toward Strategic and Authentic Corporate Social Responsibility in Professional Sport: A Case Study of the Detroit Lions	<b>JSM</b>	2
PARRIS et al. (2014)	Action sports athletes as entrepreneurs: Female professional wakeboarders, sponsorship, and branding	<b>SMR</b>	2

**JSM:** Journal of Sport Management; **SMR:** Sport Management Review; **MD:** Management Decision; **IEMJ:** International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal

The five articles containing the greatest number of citations are respectively:

1. Lera-Lopez, F., & Rapun-Garate, M. (2007). The demand for Sport: Sport Consumption and Participation Models. *Journal of Sport Management*, 21 (1), 103-122. **(28 citations)**
2. Babiak, K. (2007). Determinants of Interorganizational Relationships. The Case of a Canadian Nonprofit Sport Organization. *Journal of Sport Management*, 21 (3), 338-376. **(25 citations)**
3. Chadwick, S. (2009). From Outside Lane to Inside Track: Sport Management Research in the Twenty-first Century. *Management Decision*, 47(1), 191–203. **(15 citations)**
4. Parent, M. M., & Foreman, P. O (2007). Organizational Image and Identity Management in Large-scale Sporting Events. *Journal of Sport Management*, 21(1), 15–40. **(15 citations)**
5. Fink, J. S. (2013). Theory Development in Sport Management: My Experience and Other Considerations. *Sport Management Review*, 16 (1), 17–21. **(8 citations)**

### **Contents of this Special Issue**

For this Special Issue, we have selected six papers that make us think about how to lead the managing of strategy in a sport context and which offer insights to any organization where strategy is a critical capability.

The rich collection assembles worldwide contributions from several countries. We have split the papers into three clusters: i) *Sport Marketing*; ii) *Sport Strategy and Innovation*; and iii) *Sport Economic Performance*.

#### **Cluster I: *Sport Marketing***

The first paper, “The Influence of Sports Celebrity Credibility on Purchase Intention: The Moderating Effect of Gender and Consumer Sports-Involvement” by Natalie B. Düsenberg, Victor M. Cunha de Almeida, and João G. Barbosa de Amorim, investigates the effects of sport's celebrity endorsement on purchase intention. This study aims to identify the extent to which the sports celebrity's credibility is capable of influencing consumer purchase intention;

the extent to which gender is capable of moderating the effect of a sports celebrity endorsement in purchase intention; and to what extent consumer sports-involvement is capable of moderating the effect of a sports celebrity endorsement on purchase intention. It provide instruments that helps make marketing decisions, since the investment in advertising activities, especially those linked to celebrity endorsements is typically high.

The next paper “Women that Fight: The Female Participation in Mixed Martial Arts Events”, explores the participation of females in MixedMartialArts (MMA) events, Lisiane C. R. Hermes, and Regina Raber, highlighting the perception of the fighters on the current business scenario in this segment. They show that the MMA product planning females is working strategically towards attracting viewers and brand awareness. Furthermore, the findings indicate that the planning of MMA events appears to be receptive and positive with respect to female athletes. Sports marketing perceive an identification, or even curiosity, for this athlete profile from the public, and utilizes this demand as a key element to act and promote strategies.

### **Cluster II: *Sport Strategy and Innovation***

In the second group, we examine a further two papers about Strategy and Innovation, starting with Anne Tjønnndal’s “Sport, Innovation and Strategic Management: A Systematic Literature Review”, which attempts to provide more insight in the current body of research on sport innovation and strategic management. By systematically analyzing the characteristics of the published articles this study demonstrates that sport innovation and strategies for sport innovation is a new, emerging and immature field of research within the sport sciences.

In “The Board President's Role in Controlling the Decision-making Process in Voluntary Sports Organizations”, Jorge A. P. Soares, looks at the president’s influence and his skills in the strategic decision-making process. The study reveals a poorly structured decision-making process, but with a determinant role of the board president in the conduction and manipulation of the decision-making process. In the article, the authors intend to contribute for the change of the relationship between the role of the board and the technical director of sport or sport manager in order to improve better strategic decision-making in the non-profit sport organizations.



### **Cluster III: *Sport Economic Performance***

The first in the final section of papers is by Marco Arraya, on “Resource Categories and Performance in Portuguese Non-profit Sports Clubs”, and proposes to demonstrate the relationship between the categories of resources and organizational performance. The study shows that intangible resources can significantly influence organizational performance while, personnel-based resources influence tangible and intangible resources. Furthermore, the author argues that staff competence, reputation, and financial capital are the most essential resources, and they are core for non-profit clubs and their strategy.

Our final paper is on “Strategic Tool to Estimate the Consumption Patterns of Non-residents Spectators at Sporting Events (*Liga NOS*): Adaptation to Portuguese reality”. Gonçalo Quintal, Gustavo Paibe, Maria J. Carvalho, and José L. Felipe, propose to analyse the phenomenon of consumption patterns of non-residents spectators at sporting events. The study shows the necessity to define marketing strategies, which are more effective and efficient for clubs and host cities, in order to improve the quality in the services provided for spectators of such events.

### **Conclusion and future agenda**

The papers above will give rise to additional research of the importance to further knowledge pushing the frontiers of strategy in sport management. While this set of papers covers some important topics, there are still many gaps. Specific examples of opportunities for further research resulting from the papers in this special issue embrace:

- i) Gender issues have received little attention and it should be more deeply explored including how males and females respond to different stimuli in terms of purchase intentions;
- ii) New studies that qualify the motivations that drive female athletes to pursue specific sports segments, considering cultural issues;
- iii) Development of new technologies, sporting equipment on sport innovation, as well as new strategies for sport innovation and the implementation of strategic management of sport innovation;
- iv) Relationship between the board and sport manager; to develop studies about governance and ethics in sport management;

- v) The influence of a set of strategic resources and dynamic capabilities on sports organizational performance;
- vi) Consumption patterns from spectators of sport events in different cultures and local characteristics.

More generally, there is a need for bigger precision in defining SSM issues in relation to their knowledge frontiers.

With this special issue we tried to take a step forward in contributing to some of crucial questions and dilemmas in furthering our understanding of SSM field.

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