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EDITORIAL

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1. Introduction

The importance of sport today is an indisputable fact. There is evidence that physical activity has important effects on health. For example, leisure-time physical activity has been associated with lower risk of heart-disease and all-cause mortality (Arem et al. 2015) and is also associated with lower risks of many cancer types (Moore et al. 2016). In terms of mental health, it has also been proven that physical exercise is significantly associated with self-reported mental health burden. It has even been suggested that specific types, durations, and frequencies of exercise might be more effective clinical targets than others (Chekroud et al. 2018). In the same vein, it has been found that physical exercise determines positive psychological and biological effects that affect the cognitive functioning and promote wellbeing (Mandolesi et al. 2018).

All this social interest in sport and the beneficial consequences that have been demonstrated, have moved the interest to the field of management and economy of sport. In this sense, the promotion of sport, new cultural habits, globalization and the influence of marketing and business management principles on sports organizations and events have generated high-impact research that has increased academic interest in sport and its socio-economic impact. In the same way, research and knowledge generation in this area are important because of the increasing economic investment in sport and sporting events. The International Events Group (IEG) of Chicago, Illinois, estimated that global spending on sponsorship of sports events causes reached a record \$65.8 billion in 2018. The investment has been increasing by an average of 4.5% each year, indicating the impact and interest of the sponsoring companies.

The Sport in Society journal has an explicit interest in publishing manuscripts related to the management, evaluation and measurement of sports-related events. Some of the topics that have been addressed include the perception of quality (Thwaites and Chadwick 2005), participant satisfaction (Murray et al. 2016), sponsorship effectiveness (Wagner and Nissen 2015), participation rates (Lauff 2011) and advertising communication problems related to sports (Kelly et al. 2018). However, we wish to advance knowledge and recognition of sports management by introducing this special issue dedicated to the management, marketing and economics of sport that make a significant theoretical contribution, while at the same time transferring knowledge to the real management of sports organizations.

This special issue presents 10 papers produced by 38 authors representing 11 countries (USA, France, Spain, Lithuania, UK, South Korea, Chile, Australia, Russia, Ecuador, Japan). The authors belong to research groups with a consolidated international research trajectory in the field of management, marketing and economics of sport.

This special issue contains different studies that are clustered into 4 groups of articles: a) management and entrepreneurship in sports organizations, b) gender differences in sports and sports organizations, c) marketing of sports organizations and d) socio-economic impact of sports events.

2. Sport management and entrepreneurship

Escamilla-Fajardo, Núñez-Pomar, Prado-Gascó and Ratten analyse the influence of socio-demographic variables and working conditions on the organizational climate of sporting organizations. This manuscript is titled: “HRM vs QCA: What affects the organizational climate in sports organizations?”. For Escamilla-Fajardo et al., the study of the organizational climate is important because it determines satisfaction, productivity and the commitment of the workers with the company. However, according to the authors, in spite of the importance of this concept in private organizations, there is very scant research in the public sector of the sporting organizations. This study analyses the variables of sex, age, educational level, work status, seniority and the sector of the organization through two methods hierarchical regression models and qualitative comparative analysis (QCA). Its results partially confirm the influence of socio-demographic variables and working conditions on organizational climate. Amongst the most interesting contributions are the different combinations of models with sufficiency analysis that predict the organizational climate in a non-linear way through the application of the QCA method.

In the article “An overview of sport entrepreneurship field: a bibliometric analysis of the articles published in the Web of Science”, González-Serrano, Jones and Llanos-Contreras, present an analysis of the entrepreneurship field, to better understand this area of research, and to propose future research lines to further develop it. To reach this aim, a bibliometric analysis of quantity and quality was performed to analyse the production and to visualize the evolution and trends of this field. The results showed that this area of research has experimented an exponential growth in the last few years, with the USA as the country with the highest number of articles published and Vanessa Ratten as the researcher with the highest number of publications. According to the research topics in this field, education, technology and sport management are very important topics for the field of sport entrepreneurship or sport innovation. Social entrepreneurship is another topic that is not as popular as the ones previously presented but is gaining increased importance. However, the authors highlighted that although sport entrepreneurship is still a novel area of research that shows a growing tendency, more research should be done to consolidate it. Finally, González-Serrano, Jones and Llanos-Contreras suggested as future research lines, to develop more empirical research, to foster the collaboration between researchers of different countries, to perform more research about how other specific types of entrepreneurship could be embedded in sport (social entrepreneurship, transformational entrepreneurship and corporate entrepreneurship) and to develop cross cultural research about sport entrepreneurship.

The ultimate goal of Ko, Kim, Kim, Arai, Rhee and Park in the manuscript “The Impact of Perceived Trustworthiness on Trust and Commitment: A Case of Boosters in a University Athletic Program” is to predict donors’ giving intention in a college athletic program context. For this purpose, the authors develop the organizational trustworthiness scale. This scale consists in three constructs: accountability, integrity, and fairness. The authors propose that the three constructs of the organizational trustworthiness scale influence trust and commitment, and that trust and commitment influence donation intention. Their results indicate that managers of non-profit organizations should increase trust in the organization by improving trustworthiness, but at the same time by improving links with donors. The proposed scale is therefore a strategic agenda that guides decision-makers to initiate activities on accountability, integrity, and fairness towards stakeholders. Specifically, Ko et al. propose that managers transparently provide evidence that the beneficiaries of aid certainly receive the promised benefits, and that managers use early warning systems and management plans in the event of possible reputational crises.

3. Gender differences in sports and sports organizations

Taylor, O'Connor and Hanlon wondered: what are the structural, cultural, and organizational considerations for women rugby league players? The aim of their research was to examine the conditions and the new socio-cultural and organizational environment of rugby league players who promote semi-professional status. Specifically, the authors investigated the expectations, needs and conditions of semi-professional rugby league players in Australia. Among the results found, the authors highlight the implication, emotion and anxiety that the players had to start a competition that until now had been exclusively for men. They also showed their concern to achieve a high quality in order to remain a sustainable competition, successful and thus enjoy acceptance among girls and women. The culture of the clubs that place women's teams will have to change to accommodate these initiatives successfully, but also to specifically support players trying to balance multiple commitments. Finally, the authors recommend that sports leaders use two-way communication to provide clubs with development opportunities and appropriate working conditions.

On the other hand, García-Fernández and collaborators present a study in the fitness sector, CrossFit services. In particular, CrossFit is one of the sports services with the highest growth in sports facilities, but which has not been studied from the point of view of the consumer. That is why this study brings knowledge in one of the activities that has shown greater socialization in the fitness sector. It is known how they create user communities, but it is not known what they think or how they behave. In their study, they analyse what the variables are that can predict consumer loyalty and therefore greater adherence to physical activity. They also show their results depending on the gender of the consumer. In order to answer the research questions, the authors inquire into variables of consumer behaviour and perception: customer engagement, perceived value, satisfaction and future intentions. Although the literature on sports management is well supported by variables such as perceived value or satisfaction, there is not so much evidence in customer engagement. In fact, there is a lack of literature in the analysis of customer engagement in the sports sector. Different authors have studied it in sporting events, but so far it had not been studied in the fitness sector, let alone in a sample of CrossFit participants. Therefore, their study provides greater knowledge of consumer behaviour. The authors use a sample of 520 CrossFit consumers from different sports facilities in Spain. In their analysis, they perform a multigroup analysis by testing a model of relationships between perceived value, customer engagement, satisfaction and future intentions, depending on gender. The results show a positive relationship between customer engagement, perceived value, satisfaction and future intentions. In turn, there were differences between gender depending on the relationship of the variables. These findings provide knowledge about consumer behaviour, and above all, what the variables are that can influence the loyalty of CrossFit users.

4. Marketing of sports organizations

The paper titled "Be congruent and I will be loyal: the case of sport services" by researchers Alguacil, Sánchez-García and Valantine deals with a subject that remains unaddressed in the context of sports services, which is brand image analysis. The paper analyses the influence that variables related to the brand can have, specifically congruence, credibility and trust, in the generation of more positive attitudes by users and consequently in the improvement of their levels of loyalty. The results indicate that brand variables, in addition to showing influential relationships between them, are a good precedent for attitudes towards the brand and loyalty to be favoured. This research provides new evidence on business reality, specifically in relation

to the management of sports services. The fact of knowing information about the proposed relationships allows managers to improve their marketing strategies, establish working guidelines to make these strategies more effective and efficient, and focus on concrete elements that have been shown to favour the achievement of the interest variables. In this case, valuable information is provided to understand, to a greater extent, the process for achieving the loyalty of users of sports services, which benefits the sustainability of the entity and ultimately the users, who receive a service that better meets their needs.

Russia's 2018 FIFA World Cup was the context under which Alonso-Dos-Santos, Velasco-Vizcaíno and Pérez-Campos examined how fans' feelings of patriotism and fans' acquisition of knowledge from social media influence sponsorship. Specifically, the manuscript titled "The influence of patriotism and fans' fulfilment of sponsorship activation in the sponsor's image transfer process" uses the image transmission process as a theoretical mechanism to study the influence of the aforementioned variables. The authors point out that both constructs influence the attitude towards the sponsor and the purchase intention and propose specific actions to improve the image transmission processes. For example, they propose corporate social responsibility actions to increase the attitude towards the sponsor and periodic actions on social networks co-creating value together with athletes and participants. The authors hope in the future to be able to extrapolate their results to other events, sports disciplines and examine how cultural factors influence the image transmission process.

5. Socio-economic impact of sporting events

In the contribution titled "The social impact of participative sporting events: A cluster analysis of marathon participants based on perceived benefits", Hautbois, Djaballah and Desbordes analyse the social impact on the participants of a participative sporting event from an integrated point of view. The authors approached the study from a multidimensional point of view based on the perceived benefits around three axes: city image, sport participation, and psychosocial benefits. A cluster analysis showed three groups of participants based on a combination of eight factors: performance-focused, self-challengers and happy loafers (participating sports tourists not physically prepared for the event). The results of this research will allow sports event organizers to design parallel services and activities to increase the satisfaction of recurring users and attract new participants.

The article titled "Applying Importance-Performance Analysis to Residents' Perceptions of Large Sporting Events" authored by Parra-Camacho, Añó Sanz, Ayora Pérez and González-García uses Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) to study residents' perceptions of the impacts of a major sporting event. The results showed that the development of sport was the dimension on which organizers of sporting events should focus, while maintaining their efforts to improve image and international recognition. On the other hand, urban and infrastructure development and socio-cultural development are areas to which organisers should give low priority, while the area of socio-economic development is considered a waste of resources. The researchers also observed differences according to the origin of the family residence, attendance at the event, interest in sport and support for the event. The results of the study make it possible to observe and determine which areas require improvement, which should continue to receive attention, which should be less attended to and which are considered a waste of resources. These results help guide managers and organizers of sporting events in developing strategies that improve the social impact of the sporting event and that allow organizational resources to be allocated to areas that require improvement and must continue to receive attention.

The paper "Socio-economic factors that affect the demand for tickets in all Brazilian league tiers" examines the determinants of demand for tickets in all Brazilian League tiers focusing on

the role of socio-economic aspects have attracting attendees. Barajas, Gasparetto and Rodríguez investigate if socio-economic factors have a different effect on different levels of competition and whether the historical success of clubs influences the demand for tickets in the Brazilian context. The authors employ panel data linear regressions as econometric modelling working with seasonal-level data. Interaction terms evaluate the impact of Human Development Index and historical success on each tier (1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th). The authors evidence that current and historical success of clubs are the main drivers for attracting fans to the stadium in the Brazilian League. Moreover, the outputs indicate that the impact of historical success and the socio-economic factors become stronger on lower tiers. One of the most relevant contributions of this research is the creation of the Historical Success Index, the indicator showed that historical sporting successes have a positive impact on fans today by increasing attendance at stadiums.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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