



introduction

The purpose of this book is to highlight what we believe to be the key concepts which relate to the management of sport. Many of the concepts come from a field of study known as 'organization theory' which is increasingly being used in research on the management of sport. Some of the concepts are much broader than those found in organization theory, such as the disciplinary areas of marketing/sponsorship, funding/finance, and sports law. We have set out to produce a book of key concepts which relates to the management of sport and is aimed primarily at students and academics. Undergraduate or postgraduate students can use this introductory text to gain an overview of concepts that have been and are currently being investigated by researchers and to begin to understand some of the research which has already been conducted. Practitioners in the management of sport may also be interested in this text as it identifies key issues in the management of sport that have very practical implications as well as giving a history of research and academic interest.

The concepts we present in this book as 'key' in the field of sport management are, as we have said above, primarily derived from organization theory. We have done this for several reasons. First, there has been a growing amount of research conducted using organization theory to understand the management of sport and so any person interested in studying sport management should be aware of this current knowledge base. Second, the area of organization theory covers a significant range of concepts and theoretical perspectives, which have been influential in developing current knowledge of the management of sport. And finally, it is organization theory which is our area of interest and expertise and thus we feel able to provide the reader with a thorough introduction to the numerous interesting concepts which have emerged in this area of study. However, before we begin exploring the key concepts it will be worthwhile to furnish the reader with some further details about organization theory and its significance both to sport management and conducting research in this field.

ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

Organizational theory is an area within the field of business/management studies, concerned with the structure, processes, and design of organizations and their subunits. It is relevant to our understanding of sport organizations because we know little about the structural arrangement of these organizations and the influence that that structure may have on various organizational processes. Researchers who work in this field look to identify commonly occurring patterns and regularities in organizations or their subunits. Research, which examines issues related to organizational size, change, effectiveness, environment, structure and design, decision making, technology, power and politics, conflict and culture, encompasses all these organizational theory topics.





Researchers may use a variety of theoretical perspectives, which will include but are not limited to resource dependence, institutional theory, contingency theory, population ecology, and the life-cycle approach. Unfortunately it is beyond the scope of this book to explore all of these different perspectives for the various concepts introduced. For a thorough introduction to these issues in relation to the management of sport organizations, the reader is referred to Slack and Parent (2006).

While researchers who use organizational theory are concerned with issues of theory (that is to say, with pushing back the frontiers of knowledge about organizations), those who study the management of sport should not be concerned that the subject area has no practical application. On the contrary, scholars in this area frequently work with practising managers; the central focus of a large percentage of the research they undertake will be to discover ways to help managers in their jobs. For those who study the management of sport, organizational theory can provide a better understanding of how sports organizations are structured and designed, how they operate, and why some are effective and efficient while others are not.

Understanding sport organizations from an organization theory perspective can help those who study sport to analyze the problems they face and in turn prepare them to respond with appropriate solutions. Much of the work that is undertaken about the management of sport is not organizational theory based, rather it is more concerned with the actions of individuals within the organization (e.g., studies covering motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment), which is an organizational behaviour approach. Researchers should not think that these two approaches are contradictory: they are instead complementary. Students who are interested in organizational theory approaches should investigate work by Slack and colleagues who have examined a wide variety of important issues in the management of sport, including change, decision making and strategy. For a contemporary view of the history of studying organizations, the reader is referred to March (2007), and for some thoughts on the future of organizational theory, see Czarniawska (2007).

Organization theory and behaviour offer key insights into the management of sport from a structural and interpersonal perspective. Yet other broader areas of research have also contributed to our understanding of the management of sport, such as economics, operations, law, ethics and marketing. So as to provide the reader with a sufficiently focused view of research on the management of sport and still be inclusive of the growing diversity of this field, we shall include concepts from these wider knowledge bases.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The concepts presented in this book are those that appear mainly in the journals which are relevant to the management of sport organizations, including sport-specific (such as the *Journal of Sport Management* and the *European Sport Management Quarterly*) and general management/business/economics periodicals (such as *Organization Studies* and *Administrative Science Quarterly*). While some of the concepts covered have received extensive attention from the research community,





it is beyond the scope of this text to provide comprehensive and critical literature reviews for all the concepts that are of relevance to the management of sport. Instead we define each concept before going on to introduce some of the research which has been conducted, and where appropriate, we suggest some criticisms of the work and where future research may focus. By doing this we demonstrate how 'gaps' in the literature can indicate where a lack of knowledge exists. For each concept, a basic definition is provided within a text box and the general business and management literature is usually relayed before demonstrating how the concept has been explored by sport management scholars. In some instances, where appropriate (e.g., sport sponsorship) and owing to the specific nature of the concept in relation to sport, we address only literature from the management of sport.

We include 'mainstream' literature and sport-specific literature where possible to demonstrate to the reader that when conducting research into the management of sport it is necessary to recognize literature in the general field of management and organizations as well, rather than make assumptions that sport organizations are dissimilar to other organizations. This is particularly important for those researchers thinking of publishing their work, as it encourages them to think about the relevance of their research to both the management of sport and the management of organizations more generally, thereby increasing the audience and sources of publication for their research. For broader concepts, outside of the organization theory field, we illustrate some of the key concepts which have been identified in the literature and which are contemporary to the practising sport manager. As indicated above, owing to the very broad nature of some concepts we are restricted to identifying a few relevant concepts but would not suggest that we have by any means provided an exhaustive account of all the research conducted.

All of the concepts in this book are interrelated and in order to understand one concept it will often be necessary to refer to several others as well: as a result we highlight these interrelationships by placing concepts that appear elsewhere in the book in **bold** and then reiterate these at the end of each concept. Also, at the end of each entry the reader will find a short list of suggested reading. These may cover key references used in the preceding discussion of the concept, or be in addition to those references already provided. However, we would encourage the reader to explore the full list of references for each concept provided at the end of each entry and to seek additional reading by using the section on 'Keeping Up To Date' where we provide a short discussion of how the reader may keep abreast of current research on the management of sport by identifying appropriate journals, trade magazines and other publications where work and practice are reported. This is done in order to acknowledge the constantly changing nature and development of research on the management of sport, as well as to encourage students or academics to use the contents of this book as a starting point and the recommended publications as sources which will provide access to the most current and up-to-date research being conducted on the concepts presented. Finally, each reference list is organized in order to enable the reader to have a clear idea of those readings that are particularly relevant to every concept in the book.



A NOTE ABOUT CONTENT

It is important for the reader to recognize that the content of this book does not represent 'literature reviews' for each concept, as this is beyond the scope of the *Key Concept Series*. We have provided an indication of some of the research which has been done on each concept and would acknowledge that for those interested in a particular concept, some further reading and searching for literature would be required in order to develop a fuller understanding and begin more systematic critiques of the themes, theories and perspectives found within this literature. For illustrative purposes, we provide some criticisms of the current research and where appropriate make suggestions for how research may be advanced with future studies. We have therefore provided an introduction to the research on each concept rather than an exhaustive or systematic critical review of each of these.

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