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Abstracts

An analysis of homogeneity and heterogeneity of elite sports systems in six nations

This study examines the homogeneity and heterogeneity of elite sports development as a consequence of the internationalisation process in six nations (Belgium, Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and the UK). Nine policy areas or ‘pillars’ identified as important sports policy factors leading to international sporting success are compared. The findings suggest that elite sports policies are becoming increasingly homogeneous, but that there are considerable variations in each of the nine pillars.

Twenty20 cricket: an examination of the critical success factors in the development of the competition

This study examined the Twenty20 cricket competition launched in England and Wales in 2003. The findings identified that the competition has many of the characteristics which current diffusion models believe to be critical success factors. However, most research focused on American and Australian sports, and two key contextual factors are excluded: both timing and weather have been critical factors in the competition’s success.

Communicating with consumers through video games: an analysis of brand development within the video gaming segment of the sports industry

The PGA Tour/Tiger Woods golf series was examined for brand and product placement and found to have 2,100 identifiable brand images, with all but one occurring in the final three years. Brands appearing most frequently included Oakley, Nike, addidas, TW Nike and Tag Heuer. By product category, Nike was leader in equipment (36%) and Oakley in apparel (31%). The results indicate that video games are increasingly seen as viable marketing avenues.

An analysis of spectator motives and media consumption behaviour in an individual combat sport: cross-national differences between American and South Korean Mixed Martial Arts fans

This study compared the motives and media consumption behaviours of American and South Korean spectators of Mixed Martial Arts. Significant cross-national differences were noted in sport interest, vicarious achievement, aesthetics, national pride and violence. Backward regression analyses indicated that sport interest, fighter interest and drama predicted media consumption at the American event, while sport interest, drama and adoration were significant predictors at the Korean event.

The challenges of producing popular sports contests: a comparative study of biathlon and cross-country skiing

This paper analyses how different configurations of stakeholders create opportunities for the production of popular TV sports contests. Based on qualitative methodologies, biathlon and cross-country skiing are compared. The paper concludes that the relative success of the International Biathlon Union is due to a favourable network position in relation to stakeholders. By comparison, the International Ski Federation suffers a weak position within a dense stakeholder network.
Editorial

Sports marketing coming of age

My stint as editor of the Journal began in May 2005. Back then cricket was largely still an antiquated colonial sport, Lewis Hamilton was a teenager, London was just another European capital and the economic downturn was, well, what downturn?

Since then a great deal has changed. In the interim the world has witnessed the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and the 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany, two momentous events for sports marketers. Cricket is no longer the geographic or parochial reserve of a small number, the Indian Premier League possibly having changed the sport forever – an object lesson in how intelligent marketing can reinvigorate even the most unfashionable of sports. And Lewis Hamilton has gone from unknown youth to global superstar, courtesy of his first and second places in the last two Formula 1 World Championships. Experts are predicting that he may even surpass Tiger Woods as the world’s most valuable sponsorship and endorsement property.

Having won the right in mid-2005 to stage the Olympic Games, London will be the host city in 2012. Following Beijing, London will have some careful thinking to do about how to position the Games and market them. And the ambushing battle that has come to characterise many sporting mega-events will be as intensely fought in London as it was in Germany during the FIFA World Cup.

As for the downturn, back in 2005 we should have known it was coming, but many people had no notion that the good times would end. While current economic problems are not going to (should not!) change what sports marketing is or what it is intended to do, the landscape in which decisions are being taken has been changed. In some ways, one might question whether the downturn will hinder the progress of sports marketing over the next few years. If anything, the economic problems make our discipline even more important, helping our beloved sports to survive and compete against other products.

My hope is that the Journal has helped contribute to our understanding of some of the sporting matters we have enjoyed, embraced and confronted over the past three years and more. The calibre of papers and the number of submissions received has grown exponentially, indicating the willingness of the sports marketing community (still swelling in size and stature) to explore the full range of sporting phenomena.

The range and breadth of the commentary, analysis and debate that has appeared in the Journal has been intriguing, at times captivating. Clearly, sports marketing need no longer consider itself to reside in a ghetto somewhere on the outskirts of academia. It’s all grown up, has moved to a more central position and is making an ever more important contribution in a significant industrial sector – just look at the increasing number of ‘mainstream’ business journals now devoting special editions to sport and sports marketing.

I end my stint as editor witnessing the Journal, and our understanding and practice of sports marketing and sponsorship, stronger than ever. In one sense, I am sad to be relinquishing this position, although I will retain a place on the editorial board. In another, now is the time for someone new to take the Journal forward. In Professor Michel Desbordes, I am certain that our publisher has found the ideal person to do this. I wish him well.

Simon Chadwick, Editor
Editorial board

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Interview with Gijs Langevoort
Founder and owner of LanCon

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Instructors, Sport Management Department
SUNY Cortland

Edited by David L. Snyder

In 2000 Gijs Langevoort founded LanCon, a company that provides sports educational seminars, tours and camps showcasing the European model of sport. Langevoort created LanCon as a second career after a successful practice as an orthopedic surgeon, which specialised in sports medicine and arthroscopic surgery, was interrupted by a macular degeneration. In addition to his ownership of LanCon, Langevoort has been extensively involved with numerous Dutch and international sports organisations, and worked in anti-doping at national and international levels for many years. Recently, he was instrumental in the case involving cyclist Michael Rasmussen’s alleged doping violations in the 2008 Tour de France. The findings from the Rasmussen case are helping shape the legal parameters involving the use of scientific methodology to detect and investigate alleged doping violations.

AZ: You founded a company called LanCon. What exactly does LanCon do?

GL: Basically our mission is to facilitate the exchange of ideas between the American and European sports worlds. We do that in several ways. We have the educational component, which comprises seminars and study tours for students studying in sports management and sports medicine. For example, every summer we run a tour through several European countries for American college students. On that tour, they get to hear lectures from top-level executives in European sport.

It is a great opportunity for the students because most would not have access to IOC [International Olympic Committee] and FIFA [International Federation of Association Football] officials in this way. In the LanCon programme the students sit face-to-face with these sports professionals and ask them questions. Some students even get interviews for internships and jobs. We take the students to play-off matches in football, handball and basketball. They get behind-the-scenes tours of some of the greatest sports facilities in the world, and see things that lifelong fans can only dream of. Last summer we helped several students earn internships at the UEFA [Union of European Football Associations] U21 championship for three weeks.

In addition, we host seminars for sports professionals in Europe and the US, and we also bring European sports executives to the US for a tour. Other aspects of the business include creating opportunities for student-athletes to compete overseas. We help send Dutch field hockey players to compete at the college level in the US by hosting a showcase and inviting coaches to come to recruit players. We also attempt to bring American athletes to the European...
leagues, particularly Dutch baseball. Finally, I work as a consultant in sports medicine. Through this work, I also help bring American students in sports medicine or athletic training to Europe for valuable educational experiences.

AZ: How long have you been doing all this work?

GL: LanCon was founded in 1998. Since 2000 we have hosted study tours and taken European executives to the States to lecture at colleges and tour the country. I gained these contacts through my many years in sports medicine. Once my career as a surgeon ended, the relationships I had developed as a doctor helped me to start a new career with LanCon. So although LanCon is young, the ability to offer such unique connections was built throughout my career in sports medicine. I served as a professional and national team doctor and spent decades in the Netherlands and Germany working in sports medicine. Now I continue to build contacts in the industry through my medical consulting at a national and international level.

SZ: What was your role in the Rasmussen case?

GL: Rabobank, the sponsor of the cycling team of which Rasmussen was a member, put together an independent commission to evaluate the course of events involving the team, before, during and right after the Tour de France in relation to Rasmussen. My role was to provide expertise in the fields of anti-doping and medical matters as one of the four members of the Vogelzang Commission.

SZ: The Rasmussen case is certainly not the first doping allegation involving the Tour de France. Stories of drug use by cyclists such as Lance Armstrong and Floyd Landis have made headlines recently, much like Barry Bonds in American baseball. In your opinion, what is the magnitude of unrecognised doping in the Tour de France?

GL: That is hard to say. Being involved in the fight against doping for the past 23 years in several sports, we know that mostly we are one step behind. We try to reduce the possibilities for athletes to use doping by increasing the number of tests and improving the test procedures etcetera. But in the real world, when somebody wants to cheat, he will find a method without being caught. It is our task to make this possibility as small as possible.

AZ: The Vogelzang Report on the Michael Rasmussen Case [herein after referred to as VR] concluded: "It is difficult for enforcement and controllability to keep pace with the innovative developments in the field of performance-enhancing substances. There is also a risk that the continuous attention paid to doping and the administrative red tape will play a predominant role and will consequently not help the sport of cycling to move forward." In particular, what forward momentum is in danger of being limited by these efforts and, in your opinion, if cycling’s popularity was waning, would WADA [World Anti-Doping Agency] consider less stringent control efforts?

GL: The decrease in the number of positive cases certainly can be considered as a result of the improved anti-doping programmes of the UCI [International Cycling Union] and WADA. So I think it is very unlikely that these organisations would reduce control methods. Also, in other sports the trend is not to reduce but to increase the numbers of tests.
AZ: That said, does the attention on these doping cases hinder the growth in popularity of cycling?

GL: I don’t think so. Although it is negative attention, it is still attention. While doping is a part of the sport, it is not all-consuming. The world of cycling has taken steps to be even more intolerant of doping. The 100% doping system that was adopted last year by the commission has been updated as a consequence of the Rasmussen case. After the report, it was clear that the regulations regarding whereabouts information needed further development. The UCI decided that all the pro teams had to adopt the Anti Doping Athletes Monitoring System [ADAMS]. The UCI president indicated that there is widespread agreement to use ADAMS, which will go a long way towards closing the loopholes that Mr. Rasmussen exploited. Additionally, the Electronic Passport has been adopted. It is different from the previous system because it sets individual limits for each rider based on his own normal profile, so it will be much easier to detect blood manipulation on a case-by-case basis.

AZ: The report also found: “The authority to issue regulations in the field of whereabouts information varies from country to country. The Danish anti-doping authority is relatively strict; other doping authorities are less prominently active.” [VR p.15] How common is it for a dishonest athlete from a country that is very strict on testing to seek alternate citizenship so that they may have better chances of competing unfairly? Given these differences in regulation, do you think that athletes from countries with weaker doping restrictions have an advantage in international competition?

GL: I could not produce a single athlete who has changed residency on the basis of a country’s strictness in testing protocol. However, the likelihood that an athlete will encounter problems with anti-doping controls is far less for athletes residing in countries with weaker policies, as opposed to those athletes competing in strictly regulated countries. For instance, in the case of Rasmussen, he was expelled from his national team not because he had violated UCI regulations, but because he had violated the ethical standards of the Danish federation. They don’t want a cyclist with a licence from another country because they know that the doping policies may not be as strict. There are just too many variables. Rasmussen was on the national team and had a licence from Mexico, so they didn’t allow him on the team in 2004-05. Then he changed his licence to a European country and was allowed back on the team.

SZ: As a follow-up to that question, which countries have the strongest and weakest doping policies and why? Which sports have the strongest and weakest doping policies and why?

GL: In the history of the fight against doping, six countries worked very closely together to develop a standard in anti-doping before WADA even existed. These countries are Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, South Africa, Norway and Denmark. Now we see that in most European countries the government has implemented legislation in the fight against doping. I think that the US has also taken some important steps lately. All international federations have to fulfil the requirements of WADA, and for Olympic sports, the standards are set by the IOC. In addition, most of these have also started adequate anti-doping programmes. In both cases money is a very important issue. The costs of one sample analysis are approximately US$500.

SZ: As a medical official and sports educator, how do you think drug scandals involving elite athletes affect amateurs and young athletes?

GL: In certain doping scandals I think that the attention is far too focused on the substances used, which certainly may influence the behaviour of amateurs and young athletes. That influence is proven in the US. After Mark McGwire announced the name of the substance he used, sales of the product
increased more than 10%. The Senate Hearing Committee investigated the use of the substance following this trend. Therefore, it is very important that the anti-doping committees throughout the world have a very strong programme in preventing doping that effectively illustrates both the short- and long-term health risks. I think that the problem also points to the importance of more developed educational programmes. For example, I lecture students during the European Sport Study Tour on the specifics of doping threats. It appears to have a great effect, but it is something that would be difficult to truly measure.

SZ: In your estimation, are the consequences of doping conviction severe enough to act as a deterrent to athletes who may view the use of illegal substances as a way to gain a competitive advantage over their competition?

GL: Certainly. According to the new standards, it may entail a suspension for such a long period of time that the athlete’s career is effectively over. There are particulars that vary from sport to sport. In gymnastics, the punishment is five years suspension, track and field is four years, and in most sports the punishment is two years for the first violation. This is quite different from the sanctions that are applied in many professional sports in the US. For instance, in baseball a player can use these substances and miss 50 games, which is a two-month or maybe a three-month suspension. In international sport, you would lose two years.

So far, American pro sports have not really put an effort into creating strict sanctions to reduce the use of forbidden substances. By the way, the substances are not illegal, but forbidden in sports. There are only a few substances which are actually illegal; most are legal, but forbidden in sports. Of course, it is also very important to consider each case as a distinct situation because the circumstances may differ greatly. Therefore FIFA strongly advocated changing the old code so that individual cases might be reviewed as such. For example, you cannot compare the use of an anti-cough medicine by a 17-year-old ignorant athlete with several months of steroid use from an athlete who knows exactly what he or she is doing. In the first case, a mild sanction may be in order, while in the second, a severe sanction is appropriate.

I have a couple of stories that might help illustrate my point. A professional handball player complaining of swollen ankles was advised by his father, who had experienced a similar problem while playing professional soccer, to take a diuretic before a long flight. The athlete did so, tested positive, but was not participating in a sport with weight categories, or even for which weight loss was advantageous in any way. The consequences are totally different for his having taken the diuretic, thus illustrating why individual case management is necessary. Also, in cases of emergencies, some athletes have to be given substances that are on the doping list in order to survive an acute situation. If the athlete was not allowed to take the banned substance, the doping officials might find themselves testing a corpse. I feel in these cases the athlete should not be punished. An athlete with hypertension taking a diuretic, or taking beta blockers for heart arrhythmia, or Benadryl for an allergic reaction, should definitely not be sanctioned for doing so.

SZ: What actions do you think are most important in curbing forbidden drug use in sports?

GL: In my opinion, it is very important to educate young athletes about the risks of doping. But it is even more important to educate them that there are means that can be used in training that can also enhance their performance, such as certain special diets, training methods, and also the use of advanced equipment.

AZ: According to the VR: “In 2007, the International Association of Professional Cycling Teams asked that cyclists sign a waiver which would require them to provide DNA samples for testing in the event that they were to become suspect for the use of performance enhancing drugs.” [VR, p.14] How far from wide-scale use of this testing method is WADA
in all professional sport? What changes would this generate concerning whereabouts issues?

GL: At this point, DNA testing has only limited value that is useful in certain circumstances, and is therefore not a reliable tool for exposing cheaters. For now, it is merely reliable in proving that the urine tested came from a particular athlete. In the past, some athletes have put old urine in their bladders, and for exposing this, DNA testing is crucial. Perhaps in future we will find DNA more useful in a broad-spectrum application.

AZ: The VR also noted: “Blood test may also serve to measure the riders’ hormone levels, as this indicates whether a particular rider is over-trained.” [VR, p.25] Is it possible that this same technology can be employed to implicate athletes for the use of human growth hormones [HGH]? If so, based on your experience, how long (if ever), is it before such a method of testing will be used in the World Baseball Classic?

GL: It will be possible to detect the use of HGH. Already now the laboratories have found an analytic method to discover Dynepo, which is an EPO [erythropoietin] substance with almost the exact same structure as the human EPO, erito, a hormone that is produced by the adrenal glands which stimulates the production of the red blood cells in bone marrow. Because the red blood cells transport oxygen, you will increase endurance by increasing the number of red blood cells. So therefore EPO has implications for all endurance sports. It is very hard to say anything about the World Baseball Classic. If baseball really wants to put effort into getting back into the Olympics, it should implement an anti-doping programme in the Classic that adheres entirely to the WADA and IOC standards and regulations.

Biographies

Dr. Gijs Langevoort consults for numerous international and national sports federations. He is a member of the Medical Commission of the ISF. He currently serves as a board member of the Dutch Basketball Federation and is a former board member of the Dutch Centre for Doping Control. Langevoort is a former member of the commission Top Sport of the Dutch Olympic Committee. He is a former vice-president of the Royal Dutch Baseball and Softball Federation and served as the Medical Commission Chairman for the International Handball Federation at five Olympic Games.

Aaron R. Zipp is in his second year of teaching in the Department of Sport Management at the State University of New York [SUNY] College at Cortland. Previously he served as International Programmes Liaison for LanCon. Working in the US and abroad, he helped develop sports management study tours in western Europe. These undergraduate and graduate level experiences are now offered with no major restrictions to all students in and out of the SUNY system (and state) with SUNY Cortland as an accrediting institution. He currently teaches a capstone course in strategic management and acts as an undergraduate international coordinator.

Sarah Schmidt Zipp is in her second year at the State University of New York College at Cortland. She serves as the undergraduate internship co-ordinator and is responsible for facilitating and supervising approximately 120 full-time internships per year. She currently teaches pre-internship courses and has taught classes in sports marketing, intercollegiate athletics administration and foundations of sport management. Her industry experience is primarily in college athletics. In addition, she has spent time as a marketing co-ordinator for the Landstede Hammers in the Netherlands, and consulted with LanCon as a programme coordinator for study abroad initiatives.
An analysis of homogeneity and heterogeneity of elite sports systems in six nations

Keywords
elite sports systems
elite sports policies
elite sports development

Executive summary
As a consequence of internationalisation, elite sports systems from different nations have been copied all over the world. Accordingly, in their search for the best pathway to success, elite sports systems and policies of different nations are converging to uniform models of elite sports development. But there is room for diversity. This paper explores to what extent elite sports policies in six nations (Belgium, Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and the UK) have become more homogeneous, and where differences emerge.

The study uses a framework of nine policy areas or ‘pillars’ that were identified as important sports policy factors leading to international sporting success. Data is collected through individual researchers in each nation, using semi-structured written questionnaires. 46 critical success factors are compared in order to detect the main similarities and variations in the sample nations for each pillar.

Abstract
This study examines the homogeneity and heterogeneity of elite sports development as a consequence of the internationalisation process in six nations (Belgium, Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and the UK). Nine policy areas or ‘pillars’ that were identified as important sports policy factors leading to international sporting success are compared. The findings suggest that elite sports policies are becoming increasingly homogeneous, but that there are considerable variations in each of the nine pillars.
The results endorse the opinions of other authors that homogeneity has increased, but also show that there are considerable variations in each of the nine pillars, and that large differences emerge in the way elite sports policies are implemented in the different nations. It appears that the best-performing nations in the Olympic Summer Games (Italy, the UK and the Netherlands) also spend the highest amount of money on elite sport. Differences are found in the priorities made by nations for elite sport (like Canada, the Netherlands and Italy) compared to sport for all (Norway, Belgium) and the number of sports that are targeted for elite sport. Furthermore, all nations provide financial support for athletes, but the range of support, the criteria and the purpose vary considerably. Financial support for coaches is still slow in developing in the sample nations. All the nations, except Belgium, have structural coach education systems for the highest level of elite coach and several career development services. Only in Canada and Italy is a coach qualification required in sports clubs.

In conclusion, it was stated that generally little variation was found in the global organisation of elite sports policies, and there is a trend towards institutionalisation and centralisation of elite sport. However, the internationalisation process has also led to increasing distinctions because nations implement policies differently, fitting within their own cultural background and their priorities in elite sport. Finally, it was stated that some questions remain internationally unsolved in elite sports policies, indicating that still no consensus is found on the theory of sports policy factors leading to international sporting success.

Introduction

The discussion of internationalisation is a global one, which certainly also affects elite sports development. As borders have become more porous, as more information is available on elite sports systems and policies through the internet, and as nations strive for the same goal of ‘winning more medals’, it is an evident consequence that nations imitate and copy elite sports systems from each other. This is related to the increasing competition in high-performance sport and the awareness that standing still means going backwards, because elite sporting success is determined by the velocity of sports developments of rival nations (De Bosscher et al, 2008). Accordingly, many nations have sought to increase their success by adopting a more strategic approach to elite athlete development and by copying best practices from other competitors. Australia and Canada were among the early adopters of some aspects of the high-performance systems of former communist nations and subsequently, Australia, and especially the Australian Institute of Sport, has been a powerful model for many other nations. In many nations this has led to an increasing trend towards institutionalisation of elite sport and increased government involvement in many sports, especially those that are less ‘attractive’ to the commercial market and the media (Bergsgard et al, 2007).

Consequently the elite sports systems of leading nations have become increasingly homogenous. Several authors state that, more than ever before, they are based around a single model of elite sports development with only slight variations (Clumpner, 1994; Bergsgard et al, 2007; Green & Houlihan, 2005; Oakley & Green, 2001). On the other hand, some authors argue that internationalisation has not led to the disappearance of differences but to increasing heterogeneity (Dejonghe, 2004).

The aim of this paper is to find proof for these statements and to analyse whether there is room for diversity in elite sports systems. Literature on elite sports development has been fast-growing during the last decade. All these studies generally sought to find similarities and trends in the elite sports systems of different nations. Yet there is also a general need to look for differences between nations, in order to find out what makes nations excel in elite sport (Oakley & Green, 2001). This paper will attempt to demonstrate in what respect elite sports policies have become more homogenous and heterogeneous, by comparing elite
sports systems and policies in six nations: the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium (Flanders and Wallonia were kept separate), Norway, Canada and Italy. Although many studies indicate a high level of homogenisation of elite sports policies, no study analysed this point in more depth and tried to determine precisely where elite sports systems differ. Furthermore, many international comparative studies on elite sports policies remain essentially descriptive and lack a comparative level, due to the complexity of international comparisons (Henry et al, 2005). This paper aims to initiate a method to go beyond the descriptive level of comparison by disaggregating nine sports policy areas into detailed critical success factors (CSFs) that have been objectively measured and compared in six sample nations.

Theory development: a conceptual model of sports policy factors leading to international sporting success

As a basic analytical framework for international comparison, we used a "nine-pillar model of sports policy factors influencing international success" that was conducted from previous research (De Bosscher et al, 2006). This was developed because of an identified gap in research and the lack of an empirically grounded, coherent theory on the sports policy factors determining international sporting success. There are only a few references in the literature giving a framework of key success factors (Clumpner, 1994; Oakley & Green, 2001; Larose & Haggerty, 1996; Green & Houlihan, 2005). Furthermore, studies are restricted to a descriptive level and do not go into depth on the CSFs of different policy areas. It was the final aim of this model to find out more about the relationship between those factors that can be fashioned by policies (inputs and throughputs) and the final goal (outputs) of any elite sports system, and thus to develop a framework that can be used for the international comparison of elite sports policies.

In this research, inductive procedures were used to consolidate all relevant sources from a comprehensive body of literature on the former Soviet Union and East Germany (e.g. Broom, 1991; Douyin, 1988; Krüger, 1984; Riordan, 1989; Semotiuk, 1990) and more recently on the organisational context of countries in elite sport (e.g. Clumpner, 1994; Digel et al, 2004, 2006; Green & Houlihan, 2005; Larose & Haggerty, 1996; Oakley & Green, 2001; Stamm & Lamprecht, 2000). This literature was supplemented with studies at the micro-level that attempt to understand success determinants for individual athletes instead of comparing nations (e.g. Conzelmann & Nagel, 2003; Duffy et al, 2001; Gibbons et al, 2003; Greenleaf et al, 2001; van Bottenburg, 2000). Additionally, in order to increase the content and context validity of the theoretical framework, two experimental studies were conducted, one with international tennis coaches from 22 nations, and one with 114 Belgian elite athletes and 99 coaches. Both surveys used simple open-ended questions to detect the key success variables in policies, and inductive procedures to cluster all relevant data into interpretable and meaningful key themes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

It was concluded that all key success drivers which can be influenced by policies can be distilled down to nine key areas or 'pillars', situated at two levels: inputs (Pillar 1) and throughputs (Pillars 2-9) (see Figure 1). The pillars presented in Figure 1 are nine general elite sports policy dimensions for which it can be assumed that all the factors influenced by sports policies can be classified under one of these pillars. Five researchers from three nations were involved as a
group of experts to discuss this classification from the inductive analysis. It was indicated in this research that: “Its function is not deterministic: rather it aims to identify pivotal issues and to generate crucial questions in a benchmark study of elite sports systems” (De Bosscher et al, 2006, p.209). This model therefore provides only a tentative theoretical conclusion on sports policy factors leading to international sporting success. It was concluded that it is impossible to create one single model for explaining international success, and that different systems may all be successful (De Bosscher, 2007). Furthermore, validation of the model is required, using factor analysis to reduce and cluster the different CSFs. Nevertheless, it was a useful analytical framework, based on a comprehensive body of literature and

![FIGURE 1 SPLISS-model: theoretical model of nine pillars of sports policy factors influencing international success (De Bosscher et al, 2006)](image-url)
preliminary research, operationalising nine pillars into specific detailed success indicators that allowed a more analytical and objective comparison of the pillars than other existing studies did so far. In this respect this research tried to go beyond the descriptive level of comparison. The aim is to compare these nine pillars in six sample nations, and in particular to look at similarities and variations in the development in each pillar.

It should be noted that the focus of this study is at the national overall sports level, in particular covering sports where there is a tendency of high government involvement. It can be assumed that the theoretical model may differ from sports organised on a market-led basis, where governments are generally less involved, or in nations like the United States, where elite sports development is delegated to sports organisations (Sparvero et al., 2008). Separate studies are needed to analyse this point.

Method

An international comparison in six nations
An exploratory international comparative study was set up in six nations: Belgium (separated into Flanders and Wallonia), Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway and the UK. Each of these nations was merely selected because of the engagement of researchers, who knew the elite sports structures in their country well and who were able to find funds to complete the research in their own country.

Taking the complexity of international comparative research into consideration (Henry et al., 2005), the study was coordinated by an international consortium group of researchers from three nations (Flanders, the Netherlands and the UK). The consortium, who all had experience in research on high-performance sport, was involved as a team of experts during each stage: to refine the conceptual model, to define success indicators and translate them into measurement questions, for supervision of the objectivity of the data analysis, and for internal validity and reliability (e.g. De Pelsmacker & Van Kenhove, 1999).

Furthermore, it was important to discuss the operationalisation of the success indicators from an international perspective so that they can be applied in a broader sports and cultural context. This methodology of involving experts is suggested in several works on qualitative research methodologies (see, among others, De Pelsmacker & Van Kenhove, 1999; Gliner & Morgan, 2000).

The researchers of the four other nations (Canada, Norway, Italy and Wallonia) were involved – albeit to a lesser extent – in the process of researchers’ reliability and controlling for construct validity of the research instruments.

Data collection

Mainly qualitative data were collected to answer the research questions that were conducted from the CSFs in the nine-pillar model. This transformation from CSFs into concrete questions was discussed with the consortium group during several meetings and by email until a consensus was reached. This was necessary especially with regard to the international comparability and applicability of the questions in different elite sports systems embedded in a larger general sports system and culture. Data were collected in 2003 and 2004. The cooperating researchers of each nation completed an extensive semi-structured questionnaire with 84 open-ended and closed questions on the nine pillars, the answers to which ran in excess of 30 pages per nation. The instrument was therefore called a ‘researchers’ questionnaire. The open-ended questions were mainly concerned with obtaining an insight into the policy system in each nation. Each pillar started with a general exploratory question to address an in-depth understanding of the specific system and organisation in the country. CSFs were then specified into more detailed sub-questions, in terms of their availability in the nation. With regard to the aim of later quantification of the data, closed questions (mostly dichotomous) were added to ensure a degree of comparability on different sub-criteria. Each question left space for specific remarks and each
TABLE 1: An illustration of the standards attributed to an open-ended (qualitative) question from the overall sports policy questionnaire

CSF 2: COORDINATION OF EXPENDITURES AND ACTIVITIES AT NATIONAL LEVEL (HORIZONTAL DIRECTION): EXPENDITURES ON ELITE SPORT AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL ARE CENTRALLY RECORDED AND COORDINATED, SO THAT NO OVERLAP TAKES PLACE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Availability</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X (HIGHLY AVAILABLE)</td>
<td>Italy: CONI coordinates all expenditure at national level. Norway: OLYMPIATOPOPEN: IDEM (except for the NGBs in football and skiing, which have enough money of their own). Furthermore, the current NOC was formed in 1996 following an amalgamation of the Norwegian Olympic Committee and Confederation of Sports. The Netherlands: NOC<em>NSF is a fusion of the Sports Administration and Olympic Committee; NOC</em>NSF coordinates expenditures from SNS (lottery funding) and VWS (ministry); responsibilities are delineated transparently to ensure clarity of purpose and to avoid duplication; UK Sport is the most influential agency in the UK regarding expenditure on elite sport; the role of the British Olympic Committee is limited to sending athletes to the Olympic Games.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O (PARTLY AVAILABLE)</td>
<td>Flanders: BOIC, BLOSO and minister all spend money on elite sport; these have been coordinated by a steering group since 2003; in Canada elite sport is mainly the responsibility of Sport Canada and also the CCC (Olympic Committee), which have meetings to delineate responsibilities and expenditure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(LIMITED/NOT AVAILABLE)</td>
<td>In Wallonia there is no coordinating agency for the activities of ADEPS and BOIC; ADEPS has no elite sports department; the exact budget on sport and elite sport is not known; expenditures come from government through ADEPS and BOIC and maybe others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
pillar ended with two specific questions concerning (1) main strengths and weaknesses and (2) changes during the past 10 years. These open sections also provided an opportunity for researchers to give more details about possible additional criteria that were not included in our original questionnaires, but that appear to be important success criteria and could thus generate an increased theoretical understanding (Maxwell & Loomis, 2003). The level of detail required to complete the policy questionnaire was such that for each nation the task was a large-scale research project in its own right. The cooperating researchers from each sample nation had to search for existing national surveys, to analyse secondary sources and policy documents about elite sports policy in his or her own nation, and to undertake interviews with the National Olympic Committee and national agencies for sport. Researchers in the sample nations were paid by their own ministries, governments, Olympic Committees or national sports agencies in order to cooperate in this study. The coordination of the research was funded by the consortium group.

In this respect, the length of the questionnaire was not a discussion point when constructing the questionnaire, rather the completeness of the instrument was important to validate the nine pillars into detailed success indicators.

As cross-national research may always cause problems of comprehension of questions in another cultural context, the survey was first completed in Flanders and the Netherlands as a pilot test. After adaptations, these extended documents were sent to the other nations as an example, to ensure the questions were interpreted correctly.

Data analysis
The data obtained was mainly qualitative. Exceptions are the expenditures on sport and elite sport (Pillar 1) and the number of sports participants (Pillar 3). Therefore, a framework had to be carefully developed in order to classify the qualitative data and success indicators in several interpretable CSFs. With regard to the evaluation of similarities and differences between nations, each CSF was then assessed in terms of ‘availability’: highly available, partly available and limited/not available. An example of these standards for a CSF is presented in Table 1.

In order to increase the validity of this standardisation process and to avoid misinterpretation by the researcher of the comprehensive body of information from the sample nations, this analysis was discussed with the consortium group for each CSF during several meetings. Finally, the researchers of all the sample nations were asked to carefully check these CSFs in order to increase inter-observer reliability of the data. Furthermore, it was asked that policy makers and national sports agencies in each nation should check the categories of standards and information provided for their nation. All nations complied with this request. Again, the inclusion of experts to build consensus on the development of clear standards for evaluation was a fundamental characteristic of the methodology in this research (De Pelsmacker & Van Kenhove, 1999). A total of 46 CSFs have finally been used to analyse trends of similarities and diversities respectively in the six nations.
Results: homogeneity and heterogeneity of elite sports systems

This section will compare the availability of the different CSFs in the sample nations and try to find out to what extent elite sports policies in the nine pillars are homogeneous or heterogeneous. The text will focus on a selection of CSFs where striking findings are found.

Pillar 1: financial support
To keep our analysis as simple and consistent as possible in order to make like-for-like comparisons, we have chosen to look just at nations’ public expenditure on sport at a national level, i.e. expenditure derived from central government and/or national lotteries. Pillar 1 is separated for general expenditures on sport and elite sport (Table 2) and expenditures for national governing bodies (Table 3).

Expenditure on sport (CSF2) increased considerably in the four years 1999-2003 in four of the six sample nations, ranging from 30% in Norway to 98.8% in the Netherlands. Italy was the only exception in this regard, with a reduction in expenditure of 27% caused by falling sports gambling receipts in 2003. Expenditures in elite sport have increased even more (CSF4), more than doubling in Belgium (both Flanders and Wallonia) and the UK.

Notably, Table 2 shows that Italy, the UK and the Netherlands stand out as the most serious investors in elite sport (CSF3 and CSF8). Interestingly, these nations can be identified as the best-performing nations in international competition in (Olympic) summer sports (in absolute terms) (De Bosscher, 2007). Differences in the funding of National Governing Bodies (NGBs) generally correspond with differences in other areas of sports expenditure (see Table 3), as these nations also have the highest funding for NGBs for sport and elite sport (CSF6-9).
TABLE 3 Comparison of availability of CSF for Pillar 1B: funding for national governing bodies (NGBs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CSF</th>
<th>ITA</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>NED</th>
<th>CAN</th>
<th>NOR</th>
<th>FLA</th>
<th>WAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSF6: HIGH FUNDING OF NGBs FOR SPORT (€ MILLION)</td>
<td>140.0</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASH TERMS PER HEAD OF POPULATION</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSF7: HIGH AVERAGE FUNDING PER NGB FOR SPORT (€ MILLION)</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSF8: HIGH FUNDING OF NGBs FOR ELITE SPORT (€ MILLION)</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSF9: HIGH AVERAGE ELITE SPORT FUNDING PER NGB (€ MILLION)</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X = Highly available  O = Partly available  □ = Limited/not available

TABLE 4 Comparison of availability of six CSFs for Pillar 2: organisation and structure of (elite) sports policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CSF</th>
<th>ITA</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>NED</th>
<th>CAN</th>
<th>NOR</th>
<th>FLA</th>
<th>WAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSF1: THERE IS AN (ONE) ORGANISATION AT NATIONAL LEVEL WITH SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ELITE SPORTS POLICIES AS A CORE TASK (O = ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR SPORT FOR ALL)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSF2: THERE IS (HORIZONTAL) COORDINATION OF EXPENDITURES AND ACTIVITIES AT NATIONAL LEVEL</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSF3: THERE IS (VERTICAL) COORDINATION OF EXPENDITURES AND ACTIVITIES FROM NATIONAL TO REGIONAL LEVEL</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSF4: THERE IS A MINISTRY AND (CABINET) MINISTER FOR SPORT (BOTH WITH SPORT IN THE NAME)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSF5: LOW NUMBER OF NGBs SUBSIDISED FOR ELITE SPORT PURPOSES (TARGETING FEW SPORTS THAT HAVE A REAL CHANCE OF SUCCESS) (O = 40 – 55)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSF6: INFORMATION AND SERVICES ARE PROVIDED TO NGBs TO DEVELOP THEIR MANAGEMENT CAPABILITY</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X = Highly available  O = Partly available  □ = Limited/not available
Looking for variations between nations, a notable difference can be found in the priorities made by the nations for elite sport compared to sport for all (CSF5). Although in absolute terms the UK provides high funding levels for elite sport, this is only 15% of total sports expenditures, which is much lower than Canada (56.1%), Italy (45.7%) and the Netherlands (32.7%).

Pillar 2: organisation and structure of (elite) sports policies
As indicated before, this study concerns policies at the national, overall sports level of which the starting point is the tendency to increasing government involvement in elite sports development (Table 4).

The major point of note from Table 4 is that there is generally little variation in the global organisation of elite sports policies in Pillar 2. Some notable differences in the organisation of elite sport are:

CSF1: Although all nations have an organisation at national level with specific responsibilities for elite sport, it appears that UK Sport and Olympiatoppen (Norway) are only responsible for elite sport at national level, whereas NOC*NSF (the Netherlands), Bloso (Flanders), Adeps (Wallonia), CONI (Italy) and Sport Canada (Canada) also have responsibilities for general sports development.

CSF3: Vertical coordination of elite sports activities. Contrary to the other nations, sports and elite sports policies in Canada are to a large extent decentralised at the provincial/territory level with only minimal inventory and coordination of the regional developments.

CSF5: The number of NGBs founded for elite sport varies from 63 in the Netherlands to 30 in Norway and 26 in Flanders.
# TABLE 6 Comparison of availability of four CSFs for Pillar 4: talent identification and development system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CSF1: THERE IS A SYSTEMATIC, NON SPORT-SPECIFIC TALENT SELECTION PROCESS (E.G. THROUGH SCHOOLS)</th>
<th>ITA</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>NED</th>
<th>CAN</th>
<th>NOR</th>
<th>FLA</th>
<th>WAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSF2: THERE IS A NATIONALLY COORDINATED SUPPORT SYSTEM IN SECONDARY EDUCATION</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSF3: THERE IS A NATIONALLY COORDINATED SUPPORT SYSTEM IN HIGHER/UNIVERSITY EDUCATION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSF4: NGBs RECEIVE INFORMATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES TO DEVELOP TALENT PROGRAMMES</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **X** Highly available | **O** Partly available | **Limit** Limited/not available |

# TABLE 7 Comparison of availability of three CSFs for Pillar 5: athletic and post-career support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CSF 1A: ATHLETES RECEIVE DIRECT FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO PAY FOR ALL THE COSTS THEY HAVE (TRAINING AND LIVING COSTS)</th>
<th>ITA</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>NED</th>
<th>CAN</th>
<th>NOR</th>
<th>FLA</th>
<th>WAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSF 1B: ATHLETES RECEIVE A MONTHLY WAGE (INSTEAD OF ONLY PERFORMANCE-BASED AWARDS)</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSF 1C: MONTHLY WAGE IS SUFFICIENT TO BECOME A FULL-TIME ATHLETE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSF 2: THERE IS A COORDINATED SUPPORT PROGRAMME FOR ELITE ATHLETES (APART FROM FINANCIAL SUPPORT) (INCLUDING CAREER ADVICE, COACHING SUPPORT, SPORTS SCIENCE AND SPORTS MEDICINE SUPPORT, ETC)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSF3: ATHLETES CAN RECEIVE POST-CAREER SUPPORT AND ARE ADEQUATELY PREPARED FOR LIFE AFTER THEIR SPORTS CAREER</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENERAL CRITERIA FOR RECOGNITION OF ATHLETES IS: 'ATHLETES IN THE TOP …'</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8-16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>12-16</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **X** Highly available | **O** Partly available | **Limit** Limited/not available |

NA: data not available
Furthermore, not all nations have a minister for sport (CSF4) and some nations, like Italy and Wallonia, are not as well developed in providing services to national governing bodies to develop their management capabilities (CSF6).

Pillar 3: sports participation
Literature is not ambiguous about the relationship between sport for all and elite sport (Green, 2005; Sotiriadou et al, 2008). This study analysed sports participation at two different levels: opportunities for children to engage in sport during school time (physical education; PE) and in sport outside school (sports participation). Table 5 shows the results. Again, there is relatively small variation in Pillar 3 except from Italy. This is explained by its lack of coordination in PE (CSF1, CSF2) and a relatively small base of organised sports participants (CSF6). Furthermore, only a few nations have projects to promote quality in sports clubs (CSF7).

Pillar 4: talent identification and development system
The majority of talent identification issues need to be analysed on a sport-specific basis, as in most nations talented athletes are recruited from the existing participation base of a sport, through federations or clubs. Table 6 presents the availability of a few criteria that have been compared on a national basis.

A system-related scientific selection process, which aims to identify potential elite athletes from outside a sport’s participant base, as was typical in the former communist countries (Riordan, 1989; Fisher & Borms, 1990), and which is still available in Australia (Oakley & Green, 2001), is not used in any of the sample nations (CSF1). With regard to talent development we found similar developments on elite sports schools in Norway, the Netherlands and Belgium (both Flanders and Wallonia) (CSF2). However, differences are found in the way these elite sports schools are implemented: on a centralised or decentralised basis, training programmes coordinated by club or federations, and financial support. Furthermore, Flanders is the only ‘nation’ providing a coordinated study support system at higher education level, with financial support for universities, athletes and NGBs (CSF3).

Pillar 5: athletic and post-career support
The logical extension of the talent development phase is the production of elite athletes capable of competing at the highest level. Table 7 presents the availability of the three CSFs that have been compared.

It is apparent that sports authorities are taking a holistic view of athletes’ careers. Funding for living and sporting costs linked to the minimum wage is in place in all nations (CSF1A & B), and athletes can also access a range of other lifestyle support services (such as social security, mental coaching, sports science, medical support and equipment) and post-career support (CSF2, CSF3). Belgium is the only exception with regard to the latter. The main variations between nations are found in the range of this direct financial support (varying from performance-based payments or monthly wages ranging from averages of €1,000 to €1,700 a month) and the criteria to be recognised (varying from athletes belonging to the top 20 of the world in the UK, top 16 in Canada, top 12 in Belgium, to the top 8 in the Netherlands and depending on each sport in the other nations). Furthermore, a notable difference is found in the objectives of the direct support provided (CSF 1C). Whereas the athletes from the Netherlands, Wallonia and Flanders receive a wage for full-time training, access to funding is subject to ‘means testing’ in the UK, which means that there is no bottom limit to the funding. Consequently, almost half of the UK athletes (46%) are in some form of employment to supplement their income.

Pillar 6: elite sports facilities
All the sample nations have high-quality elite sports accommodation, mostly including hotel services and easy access to regular elite sports training facilities for athletes (Table 8, CSF1).

When looking more closely at some details of CSF1, we found that none of the nations has a complete
network of elite sports accommodation including an administrative headquarters closely linked to NGBs, such as in Australia (Oakley & Green, 2001), but the UK and Norway probably come closest. Notable variations are found in the availability of a close link with the NGBs (only in Italy, the UK, Canada and Norway) and of centralised medical services (doctors, physiotherapists, dieticians and mental coaches available on a regular basis) in each centre and sports science support, which are present only in the UK, Norway, and recently in Canada. Finally, some nations solve training facility problems by providing easy access to regular training facilities (CSF2), and only Italy, the UK and Norway have well developed databases of elite sports infrastructure.

**Pillar 7: coaching provision and coach development**

Pillar 7 concerns two general features: the opportunities for coaches to develop their skills at the top level, and the provisions to support individual living circumstances of coaches (Table 9).

Our findings reveal that the sample nations have generally similar strategies to develop high-level coaches (CSF1). All the nations except Belgium...
**TABLE 9** Comparison of availability of five CSFs for Pillar 7: coaching provision and coach development

<table>
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<tr>
<th>CSF1A: THERE IS A STRUCTURAL COACH DEVELOPMENT COURSE AND COORDINATED CERTIFICATION SYSTEM</th>
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<th>CSF1B: THERE EXISTS AN ELITE COACH QUALIFICATION WITHIN THE COACH DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM (AT LEAST FOUR LEVELS OF COACH TRAINING), WITH A DURATION OF AT LEAST ONE YEAR</th>
<th>ITA</th>
<th>UK</th>
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<th>CSF1C: THERE ARE SEVERAL OTHER SERVICES TO IMPROVE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF COACHES, SUCH AS A COACH PLATFORM, OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION, AND REGULAR REFRESHER COURSES</th>
<th>ITA</th>
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<th>CSF2: DIRECT FINANCIAL SUPPORT IS NATIONALLY PROVIDED FOR COACHES TO BECOME FULL-TIME</th>
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<th>CSF3: COACHING QUALIFICATION IS REQUIRED/RECOGNISED IN SPORTS CLUBS</th>
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<th>CSF4: THERE IS A TRADE UNION FOR COACHES PROVIDING A STATUTE FOR COACHES</th>
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<th>CSF5: THERE EXISTS A COACHES AND ELITE COACHES DATABASE</th>
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* Highly available  
O Partly available  
☐ Limited/not available

* this CSF has recently been realised

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**TABLE 10** Comparison of availability of four CSFs for Pillar 8: international competitions

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CSF1: PROVISION OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENTAL FUNDING FOR THE ORGANISATION OF INTERNATIONAL EVENTS</th>
<th>ITA</th>
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<th>CSF2: NATIONAL COORDINATION OF EVENT ORGANISATION AND FUNDING</th>
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<th>CSF3: LONG-TERM PLANNING OF EVENT ORGANISATION</th>
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<th>CSF4: PROVISION TO NGBs OF ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE ON THE BIDDING FOR AND ORGANISATION OF MAJOR INTERNATIONAL EVENTS</th>
<th>ITA</th>
<th>UK</th>
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* Highly available  
O Partly available  
☐ Limited/not available
provide an elite coach qualification of at least one year’s duration, and several other services in order to support coaches in developing their career at the highest level, such as a coach platform, coach magazines, web-based and other information exchange opportunities.

The recognition of the coaching career in terms of direct financial support and full-time coaching is still slow to develop in all nations, but is steadily emerging and may be a trend for future homogeneous development (CSF2).

An interesting aspect is found in Canada and Italy (CSF3), where a coach qualification is obligatory in sports clubs (only for competition sport). However, the implementation of this requirement mainly depends on the NGBs. Furthermore, a trade union exists only in the Netherlands, providing a statute for coaches (CSF4). Finally, a database of coaches, both for sport for all and elite sport, only exists in the Netherlands and Canada (CSF5).

Table 10 shows that only in the UK and the Netherlands is the organisation of international events coordinated nationally (CSF2). Also, a long-term event strategy exists (CSF3) through the UK World Class Events Programme (WCEP) and the Dutch Information Centre for Elite Sport Competitions. In Italy, Norway and Wallonia there is no coordination of funding or support for major sports events (CSF2). Furthermore, only a few nations provide assistance to NGBs on the bidding for major international events (CSF4).

### Pillar 8: international competitions

It has been shown in many studies of the Olympic Games (e.g. Bernard & Busse, 2004; Johnson & Ali, 2002; Kuper & Sterken, 2003) that the organisation of international events in the home country has a positive effect on international success (see Table 10).

Table 10 shows that only in the UK and the Netherlands is the organisation of international events coordinated nationally (CSF2). Also, a long-term event strategy exists (CSF3) through the UK World Class Events Programme (WCEP) and the Dutch Information Centre for Elite Sport Competitions. In Italy, Norway and Wallonia there is no coordination of funding or support for major sports events (CSF2). Furthermore, only a few nations provide assistance to NGBs on the bidding for major international events (CSF4).
Pillar 9: scientific research on elite sport
Scientific research is one of the key elements of the former communist nations and currently in the Australian Institute of Sport (Duffy, 2000) and was also found as an essential ingredient to success in Digel et al.’s (2006) study. All the sample nations provide funding for research on elite sport (Table 11, CSF1).

Italy is the only nation with a national research centre, as part of the National Olympic Institute (NOI), the Instituto dello Sport (since the 1970s), providing psychological, medical and biomechanical support for athletes (CSF2). Although there is no dedicated research centre in the Netherlands and Canada, considerable attention is paid nationally to the coordination, collection and dissemination of scientific research, and information about elite sport through the Elite Sports Expert Centre (TEC) (the Netherlands) and the Sport Information Resource Centre (SIRC) (Canada) (CSF3). Only in Flanders and Wallonia is a communication network to disseminate scientific information to coaches and NGBs lacking (CSF4). The integration of academic research with sports practice is a long-standing problem in many countries, and is only partly available in Norway, Flanders and Italy (CSF5).

Discussion
This paper has compared elite sports policies in six nations, with the aim of detecting similarities and differences between nations. The findings reveal that there are truly areas of homogeneous development, but nevertheless variations in elite sports policies are still apparent. In this section we will try to find explanations for these findings.

In general, it is clear that many nations are searching for the best pathway to success, which is basically the same everywhere. We could indeed find general common developments in the availability of many CSFs in the sample nations. This finding may support the opinions of other authors who found that variations between nations are decreasing compared to several decades ago (e.g. Bergsgard et al, 2007; Houlihan & Green, 2008; Oakley & Green, 2001). One crucial indicator of convergence of sports systems is the extent to which a broad range of countries with different political, socio-economic and cultural profiles adopt similar policy goals (Houlihan & Green, 2008). An exception was sometimes found in the availability of CSFs for Flanders and Wallonia, for example with regard to general career support and post-career support (Pillar 5), provision of elite coach qualification, general services for coaches (Pillar 7), and a network of communication with regard to scientific information (Pillar 9). Interestingly, if we look at the performances of the sample nations, Belgium is the only nation that performs below expectations for both summer and winter sports (De Bosscher, 2007). This finding may suggest that these CSFs are typical characteristics of convergence in high-performing nations. Furthermore, the analysis of the six sample nations clearly showed that there are also other considerable variations. Hence, this finding may support authors stating that internationalisation and globalisation has meanwhile led to increasing heterogeneity of elite sports systems (Dejonghe, 2004). The increasing homogeneity found in many studies may also be related to the fact that no research has been able to analyse policies in so much depth that all the key variations can be detected. In this respect, this survey aimed to separate general characteristics of elite sports systems in high-performing nations (i.e. the nine pillars) into specific CSFs that can be compared objectively. Although this kind of qualitative research remains descriptive, this article has tried to arrange 46 concrete CSFs at an analytical level in order to find evidence on the statements regarding homogeneity and heterogeneity made in the literature. This analytical approach may be informative, both from a policy and a methodology viewpoint, regarding more descriptive studies on elite sports policies (e.g. Digel et al, 2006; Bergsgard et al, 2007; Green & Houlihan, 2005). This analysis may certainly make researchers think again about the supposed homogeneity of elite sports systems, which
is being described as a convenient truth in the literature. The target of many nations is now to
discover the characteristics in policies that distinguish successful nations from less successful nations who in
essence may use the same ingredients of success. Further in-depth research is recommended to analyse
this point.

There are basically four reasons why a range of variations between elite sports systems can be found.

First, there are many other factors leading to success than the ones discussed in this paper at meso-level
(or policy level). Many studies have shown that macro-level factors, such as population, wealth, area,
etc, ‘explain’ more than 50% of international sporting success (e.g. Bernard & Busse, 2004; De Bosscher,
2007; Johnson & Ali, 2002; van Bottenburg, 2000). For example, small nations with little population in the
sample of this study such as the Netherlands (16 million), Flanders (6 million) or Norway (4.5 million)
may look for a more systematic approach towards talent identification and development (Pillar 4) than
larger nations such as Italy (58 million) or the UK (60 million) with a track record of success who may have
historically taken a relatively relaxed approach to talent development, believing that talent will emerge
naturally. Country-specific characteristics may therefore explain variations between nations. As
another example, it is obvious that nations with high mountains and snow will develop different strategies
for winter sports than nations without. These factors, however, cannot be influenced by policies, but
certainly need to be taken into account when elite sports policies are compared.

Second, nations are searching for their unique ways to become successful as it fits in their own cultural
and political background, and therefore implement success ingredients differently. In this respect, this
study does not attempt to explain elite sports policies in their broader historical context as is done by
Bergsgard et al (2007) and Houlihan & Green (2008). This paper focuses solely on meso-level factors. Also,
we do not presume to claim a comprehensive understanding of all the complex factors that influence
success. Whereas nations try to learn from successful elite sports systems and copy certain elements, the
policies that are steering these systems are much more difficult to imitate. Examples are found in the
complex state structure of Belgium and to a lesser degree the UK, and in the regionalised sports system
in Canada. The political structure of these nations does not allow key success drivers to be implemented
equally as in other nations. From this point of view it can be concluded that there are clear variations in the
way policy is implemented even among the best-performing nations in international competition.

Another point made by Houlihan & Green (2008) is the concept of path dependency, which suggests that
initial policy decisions can determine future policy choices. As regards elite sports development, it might
be argued that while it may be possible to adopt an elite-focused policy, the range of policy instruments
that could be adopted to achieve its implementation might be path-dependent.

A third explanation for variation, partly related to the previous one, is that differences or similarities in
comparative research often also depend on the perspective of nations on elite sport. For example,
Norway has shown fair resistance towards the establishment of a talent identification system at a
young age (younger than 13 years old) because of the ‘regulations for children’s sport’, indicating that play
and socialisation in sport are more important than competition (Bergsgard et al, 2007). This reveals the
presence of strong democratic tendencies in the Norwegian sports system. The results in our study
indeed showed that Norway, Wallonia and Flanders differ considerably from the other nations because of
their sport-for-all oriented policy. Although these nations/regions have clear goals and have in some
way developed a relatively similar high-performance sports system, the pathway to the podium is a more
explicit and possibly overriding concern in the UK, the Netherlands, Italy and Canada. The former nations are
not prepared to pay the same price as the latter and consequently may look for cheaper ways to the
podium or strategies that fit within the overall culture.
Clearly, these sorts of issues have implications for the degree of homogeneity across nations. It should also be mentioned that the acceleration of the institutionalisation of high-performance sport (with higher government involvement) is more recent in Norway and Belgium than it is in Italy, Canada and the Netherlands.

Fourth, it can be argued whether there is consensus among nations about the sports policy factors leading to international sporting success. Policy makers of different nations are searching for the existence of a ‘Bible’ on high-performance sport, while there is more than one way to skin a cat. There is still a lack of conclusive literature on the effectiveness of elite sports systems. Although this survey may reveal that some policy systems (e.g. of the Netherlands and the UK) are more complete than others – in terms of availability of CSFs in nine pillars – it appears that nations not performing well in one or a few policy pillars can still be successful in Olympic sports (e.g. Italy). Studying effectiveness of elite sports systems is much more complicated and would require further research at other levels. It is not possible to find causal relationships with only six nations and without doing an experiment where one factor is controlled while others are changed. It may therefore be assumed that there are different models at the meso-level to explain elite sporting success, and that it is unrealistic to look for a convenient truth about the production of elite-level athletes. Even within elite sports policies – and independent of the broader cultural or political context – nations may differ in their opinion towards key success drivers. Some questions still remain unsolved for policymakers. Some examples are questioned below.

**Pillar 5:** Should nations indeed provide funding of athletes that is sufficient to train on a full-time basis, as suggested by both Digel et al (2006) and Houlihan & Green (2008) and as found in the Netherlands and Belgium, or should athletes be integrated into society during their sporting career and thus be prepared for life after sport by means of stimulating them for part-time work, as is the viewpoint of UKSport?

**Pillar 2:** Should nations target a few priority sports with real chances of success, as is advised in different sources in literature (e.g. Clumpner, 1994; Digel et al, 2006; Houlihan & Green, 2008; Oakley & Green, 2001) and as is a key element of policies in many top nations such as the UK and Australia, or should policies invest in a diversity of sports such as in the Netherlands? Here, 63 National Sport Organisations are funded for elite performances, compared to 26 in Flanders, 30 in Norway, 36 in Wallonia and 40 in the UK. The Netherlands appears to have the highest number of athletes (per million inhabitants) ranked in the world top eight (343 athletes in Olympic sports, which is a factor of 21.4 per inhabitant) – three times more (per inhabitant) than Canada, five times more than the UK, and 10 times more than Flanders and Wallonia. It also has the highest number of top-three ranked athletes. It may be debated whether investing in diversity rather than priority could be more effective in terms of long-term athletic development for a broad portfolio of sports.

**Pillar 4:** Should nations strive for national coordinated systems facilitating the combination of elite sport and studies, such as in many European nations (European Commission, 2004) or not (such as in the UK and Italy)? And if they do, should these systems be centralised (i.e. best athletes train together with NGB coaches; living, training and school is all in one place), such as in Flanders and also in China or Russia (Digel et al, 2006) or decentralised (i.e. athletes train in their home environment), such as in the Netherlands, or both systems, such as in Norway and which is also found in Australia and France?
These examples are still unsolved at an international level, and may be nation- and sport-specific or simply inherent to the complexity of elite sports systems: no convenient truth exists in elite sports development.

From these four suggestions for explaining variations in elite sports policies of nations, some directions for future research can be drawn. This research is a progressive step forward in increasing the knowledge concerning homogeneity and heterogeneity of elite sports systems. Further research across a wider range of nations is required before any substantive conclusions can be made on a scale that might be deemed representative or generally applicable in methodological terms. CSFs used in this study can be used as basic instruments for further analysis, but it is quite conceivable that the nine-pillar framework will need adjustments to be feasible in countries with different cultures and sports systems, such as China, the United States or developing nations. Furthermore, this research needs to be proceeded at a sport-specific level. Elite sports development is largely organised on a sport-by-sport basis, and therefore variations may be hidden in other CSFs. This is also the subject of a next step in a large-scale study, coordinated by a consortium group of researchers cooperating as the ‘SPLISS’ group (Sports Policy factors Leading to International Sporting Success), to look at the key success determinants at a sport-by-sport level or in a few pillars in particular.

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Biographies

Veerle De Bosscher works at the Department of Sports Policy and Management (faculty of Physical Education) in the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), Belgium. She graduated in Physical Education and earned a masters degree (GGS) in sports management in Brussels and in training & coaching in Leuven. She recently obtained her doctorate cum laude on the topic “Sports Policy Factors Leading to International Sporting Success”. She is involved in courses on sports policies and sports management, and her research interests are in different areas of sports management, sports and elite sports policies, international comparisons, youth and sport, and quality management in sport. Dr De Bosscher is well published and is co-author of the recently released A Global Sporting Arms Race: An International Comparative Study on Sports Policy Factors Leading to International Sporting Success.

Paul De Knop has a PhD in physical education from the Faculty of Physical Education of VUB in Belgium. He graduated in leisure studies and earned a masters degree in sports sociology and sports management at the University of Leicester (UK). He became the headmaster of the VUB in 2008. As a past president of the board of BLOSO (the Flemish sports administrative body), former chairman of the council of the Flemish Community Education (RAGO), former deputy chief of cabinet of the Flemish Minister of Sport, and project manager of two sports centres, he considered the importance of social relevance of his elaborate portfolio of research topics.

Maarten van Bottenburg (1962) studied sociology at Utrecht University and the University of Amsterdam. His doctorate in the social sciences on the differential spread and popularisation of sports was published by Illinois University Press, entitled Global Games. In 2004, Maarten was appointed professor of sport processes at the Utrecht School of Governance of Utrecht University.
Acknowledgments

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The coordination of the research was funded by the Vrije Universiteit Brussel as part of PhD funding and by the other members of the consortium. Expenses for the research in the respective nations had to be covered by the researchers themselves. Financial constraints were the main barrier for more nations to be involved. We want to acknowledge the following organisations providing financial support: Olympiatoppen (Norway), CONI (Italy), UKSport (UK), NOC*NSF (the Netherlands), Sport Canada (Canada), the ministers for sport from Flanders and Wallonia, and the BOIC (Belgium).

References


Twenty20 cricket: an examination of the critical success factors in the development of the competition

Keywords
Twenty20 cricket
diffusion of innovation
new product launch
sports marketing

Abstract
This study examined the Twenty20 cricket competition launched in England and Wales in 2003. The findings identified that the competition has many of the characteristics which current diffusion models believe to be critical success factors. However, most research focused on American and Australian sports, and two key contextual factors are excluded: both timing and weather have been critical factors in the competition’s success.

Executive summary
The Twenty20 cricket competition is a shortened, faster version of traditional four-day and one-day cricket. It was launched in England and Wales in 2003 in an attempt to reverse dwindling interest in the sport. Games were to be completed in three hours and were augmented with off-field entertainment.

The study reviews literature concerning the launch of new sporting products and services, and investigates the critical success factors behind successful launches and also factors that led to failures. Most of the research conducted has been in American and Australian sport, with academic models developed in these countries, particularly America. The authors believe the models to be useful, but felt there were likely to be differences in England and Wales because of the sporting culture and calendar.

Attendance figures were gathered from a number of sources to quantify the success of the competition in
Introduction

The authors investigated the issues involved in making a new sport successful. What factors determine whether people are likely to attend a new sporting event and become interested in it? Compared to other forms of cricket, the competition appears to have been successful at bringing in spectators, but what have been the critical factors in this success?

Background to Twenty20

Cricket in England and Wales is governed by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB). The 18 domestic counties receive income from the ECB, which generates its revenue from international cricket via the sale of tickets, merchandise and television rights. ECB turnover in 2004 was £75.12 million, up from £73.5 million in 2003. Cricket is highly dependent on broadcasting revenue, which represents 80% of ECB income. The counties are subsidised by the ECB, with some earning up to 75% of their income from the source (Mintel, 2006). The size of the cricket market is considerably smaller than football, where in 2005/6 six English football teams alone had a turnover greater than £85 million, Manchester United being the biggest at £167.8 million (Deloitte, 2007).

The English county cricket season begins in mid-April and concludes in September. Before 2003 it consisted of one-day championship games (lasting up to eight hours per day) and one-day games (lasting between six and eight hours) depending on the competition played. For historical developments within the sport refer to Schofield (1982) and Paton & Cooke (2005).

A proposal to improve interest in the game through the new Twenty20 competition format was put to the first-class counties forum in 1998. The idea of a reduced version of the game was snubbed, but in 2001 problems in the domestic game were still apparent (The Economist 2003) and attendances were falling (English 2003). A £200,000 survey was
undertaken by the ECB in 2001 in an attempt to collate information as to how to satisfy customers, gain interest from a younger market and help the game as a whole. This was undertaken in three key phases. First, there was a complete examination of statistics throughout cricket, which were analysed to identify trends and patterns. This was followed by interviews with a wide cross-section of demographic groups. A mixture of current and potential spectators was involved in the process to gain a greater depth and knowledge of the target audience. The final part of the strategy involved a large random quantitative survey. A programme of 4,000 15-minute face-to-face interviews revealed that about two-thirds of the population either disliked or had no interest in cricket. Prominent among the rejectors were children, young people aged 16-34, women, ethnic minorities and members of the lower social strata (Chevallier, 2004).

The first-class counties agreed to a shorter form of the game, with the aim of attracting these rejectors. ECB marketing manager Stuart Robertson was responsible for the creation of the competition and the research programme. He believed it should be launched with the primary aim being that the competition is market-driven. It was therefore necessary to apply basic marketing techniques to cricket. The rules were not intended to be radically different, because it was hoped that it would be a stepping stone for people to watch the longer versions of cricket (Twenty20 official site).

Twenty20 was launched on 13 June 2003, and played by the 18 first-class counties in England and Wales. The counties were split into regional groups, with the winners of each group progressing to a finals day in July. In 2004, an additional quarter-final stage was added to increase the number of games.

The games were designed to last for approximately 2 hours 45 minutes, thus creating a shortened, fast-paced version of the traditional one-day game. It was deliberately staged in the middle of June, the hottest month of the year and also the period with the longest daylight hours. Most games started at 5.30pm, the aim being to become a major summer social attraction targeting a younger post-work crowd and offering a great family evening out. Additional entertainment was featured in the form of music and interactive crowd events (Sound Generator, 2003; Pryor, 2004); £250,000 was spent on marketing but no sponsor was found. However, pay-TV operator Sky screened the competition on satellite television, and terrestrial broadcaster Channel 4 covered cricket in general with a half-hour Saturday morning programme throughout June and a live game on 14 June (Wisden Cricketer Monthly, 2003).

**Literature review**

New product development is generally agreed to be risky for a variety of different reasons, and the majority of new products/services fail. Also, the degree of novelty in new products and services tends to vary. Booz et al (1982) classify new developments into four categories: product replacements, additions to existing lines, new product lines, and products that are new to the world. Twenty20 would probably be classified by the model as an 'addition to the existing lines' of four-day and one-day cricket. Others might classify it as a 'new to the world product' if it is viewed as a new sports activity (Harness & Harness 2007).

Rogers (1983) examined the speed of adoption of products and services citing the five characteristics: differential advantage, compatibility with customer values, complexity in terms of ease of understanding, divisibility in terms of ease of trying the product/service and communicability of the benefits. Though the model is a generic one, it can, to some extent, be applied to Twenty20 cricket. Differential advantage is in the form of the speed of the game, with the shorter duration being compatible with consumer values and easier to trial. The limited changes to the rules means that it is not complex. (Twenty20 official site 2003). Bridgewater (2007) claims that the complex rules of cricket make it difficult to expand its appeal, and one-day cricket it is not suited to trial because of the length of the game.
Higgins and Martin (1996) considered diffusion in a sports context and formulated a model to assess the diffusion rates of sporting innovations. They claim that there are three components that affect the rate of acceptance:

- the characteristic of the innovation as discussed above (Rogers, 1983)
- the perceived newness of the innovation, be it a change in rules, location of the event or a combination of both
- sources of influence used to communicate the idea (Mahajan et al, 1990a; Mahajan et al, 1990b).

The authors did not comment on the extent to which changes in rules or location impact on likely success. However, Papadimitriou et al (2004) evaluated perceived fit in sports brand extensions in Greece. Their research provided support for the hypotheses that perceived fit is higher for sports-related extensions and results in a more positive evaluation and higher intention to purchase.

Twenty20 has been televised live by Sky on a subscription channel. The second day of the competition was also covered live on Channel 4 on free-to-air terrestrial television. The importance of television coverage in terms of finance, commercial rationale and organisational skills is generally accepted within the literature (Deloitte, 2007; Willoughby & Mancini, 2003; Forster & Pope, 2002).

Garland et al (1999) investigated the marketing of cricket in New Zealand in the 1990s and the adoption of marketing techniques to meet customer requirements. New Zealand Cricket Inc conducted telephone interview research in 1991 to discuss the barriers to cricket. These were identified as 'a boring game that takes too long to finish, with rules that are difficult to understand and in which New Zealand did not perform well'. Further problems identified were poor facilities, unruly behaviour at grounds, and a preference for television coverage. The research also made it clear that the barriers could be 'circumvented' by marketing strategies that made use of:

- the atmosphere of one-day internationals
- the more serene atmosphere of test matches
- the success of New Zealand teams
- the excitement of watching live sport
- national pride
- the quality of teams and individual performances.

After three years, the New Zealand Cricket Council was able to see increases in attendance, television ratings, media coverage and revenue. The authors claim that research shows there is a clear distinction in the customer profile in New Zealand between test match and one-day international supporters, though they offered no empirical evidence.

The authors went on to look at the launch of Cricket Max, a version of the traditional game, mainly intended for pay-tv audiences, that was launched by Martin Crowe, a former New Zealand captain, in 1996. Crowe’s rationale (Cricinfo, 1996) was to provide a game that was short, very colourful, kept some old traditions and highlighted the best skills in the game in three hours of cricket. It was launched with live satellite coverage and sponsorship from Pepsi Max and BNZ [Bank of New Zealand]. McConnell (2004) noted that it did not compete against the country’s number one sport, Rugby Union. In comparing factors in different hemispheres, he stated that the longer twilight conditions in England offered advantages that could only be matched in the South Island of New Zealand.

Cricket Max has not been played since 2001, although there has never been an official announcement as to why not. Some of the ideas of Cricket Max were borrowed by Twenty20 (Hobson, 2005; Coward, 2007), the three-hour time slot being probably the most significant.

Haigh (2007) argues that the most successful variations of the traditional game have been those that looked more traditional and kept rule changes to a minimum. Cricket Max made changes in numbers of players and scoring; Twenty20 has not. He argues that the promotion of Twenty20 as ‘being for those who do not like cricket’ is for this reason misleading.
Paton and Cooke (2005) used attendance figures to investigate spectator numbers at domestic one-day and four-day games in England and Wales. The findings demonstrate that attendances were higher for games that didn’t clash with internationals, when games were played in the evening under floodlights, and when the games were played at festival grounds (those that are not the county headquarters, where most fixtures were played).

Funk et al (2001) devised the Sport Interest Inventory (SII) to measure the motivation for spectators to attend sporting events. It was originally applied to women’s professional soccer in the US (Funk et al, 2002). The model has also been applied in the context of Japanese and Australian sport (Neale, 2006). However, the authors have pointed out the need to survey consumers in a specific situation before using motives to develop marketing strategy.

The models of Higgins and Martin (2006) and Funk et al (2001) were both developed in the context of American sport. The SII was not used by the authors, as the research is of an exploratory nature and is not a quantitative study. An amended version could, however, be applied in the next stage of research when spectators are interviewed.

English sports have a different calendar, culture and spectator tastes from American sports, and the authors believe that the factors of timing and weather might impact upon a decision to attend an event. Further research was needed to find out if they are vital factors in the success of Twenty20. The aim of the research was to investigate these factors. The authors felt that timing was a factor in the success of the launch, as there were no other major sporting events in the summer of 2003, such as an Olympics or World Cup. A comparison can be drawn here with Rugby League. In 1996 the sport introduced an innovation with the creation of the Super League. The changed timing of the event, from a winter to a summer calendar, proved successful, as evidenced by a 19% rise in attendances when launched (Mintel, 2003).

The model for the research was developed by adapting the Higgins and Martin (1996) ‘three strategic factors affecting the diffusion rate’ model. The perceived newness component is re-titled ‘perceived newness of sport’ for reasons of clarification. A fourth component is added to include contextual factors. In the case of cricket it was thought that weather and timing would be important in determining the likely success of the innovation, though there may be additional factors that emerge from respondents’ comments. An example of the impact of contextual factors, and the benefits to marketers of exploiting them, can be seen in the positive impact of the World Cup in 2002 on attendances in the Japanese football J League (Funk et al, 2006).

Objectives

- To measure the success of the competition in terms of attendances
- To identify the critical success factors of the competition
- To examine how the critical success factors identified in Twenty20 sit alongside the three strategic factors affecting the diffusion rate model of Higgins and Martin (1996)

Methodology

A two-stage approach was adopted. Details of attendances were gathered from secondary information sources to compare attendances across competitions (Mintel, 2006; Wisden, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007). The authors also approached industry experts for their views on the competition. Because the research was of an introductory nature, an open-ended questionnaire was mailed to the marketing departments of the 18 first-class county cricket clubs in March 2005. Six questions were asked, the first two covering the areas of competition timing and the influence of weather, as discussed above. Respondents were also asked a further four questions regarding critical success factors to date, future critical
success factors, the competition’s impact on finances, and whether the format had attracted a new audience. A final question allowed respondents to make further comments. Responses were received from seven of the counties. The respondent counties were all located in the middle and south of England. There was a noticeable absence from the northern counties.

Analysis

Attendances

Tables 1 and 2 illustrate that the competition has been a success in increasing attendances compared with one-day cricket and the longer version of one-day cricket. The four-day attendances are for the total match, which works out at a daily average of about 879 (Mintel, 2006). The ECB initially hoped for average crowds of 4,500 (English, 2003) and, as the tables illustrate, these targets were exceeded. Kent and Somerset were the only counties in 2005 to have lower attendances for Twenty20 matches than for four-day games. In 2006 there was a Football World Cup. This event is arguably the biggest in the British sporting calendar, and there was a slight decline in Twenty20 attendances for that year. However, the authors have no evidence to suggest that this is a cause of the decline.

Counts were scheduled five Twenty20 home games for the first two years of the competition. In 2005 this changed to four per season. Since 2004 there has been a quarter-final round. Q (Table 2) indicates that the figure includes a home quarter-final game. The top four placed counties in the group stages host quarter finals. Additional errors are accounted for by abandoned games in 2004 and 2006.
Twenty20 cricket: development of the competition

**TABLE 1** Average attendances by competition 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPETITION</th>
<th>AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE (THOUSANDS)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FOUR-DAY CHAMPIONSHIP(^1)</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONE-DAY TOTESPORT LEAGUE(^2)</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWENTY20(^2)</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: \(^1\)Mintel, 2006 \(^2\)Wisden, 2006

**TABLE 2** County attendances – by selected competitions (all figures in thousands)

NB: Q indicates that the figures include a home quarter-final game.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AVERAGE 4-DAY MATCH ATTENDANCE 2005 (1)</th>
<th>AVERAGE TWENTY:20 HOME ATTENDANCES 2003 (2)</th>
<th>AVERAGE TWENTY:20 HOME ATTENDANCES 2004 (3)</th>
<th>AVERAGE TWENTY:20 HOME ATTENDANCES 2005 (4)</th>
<th>AVERAGE TWENTY:20 HOME ATTENDANCES 2006 (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average number of games in brackets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DERBYSHIRE</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.3(2)</td>
<td>2.7(2)</td>
<td>3.2(4)</td>
<td>2.9(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DURHAM</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.5(2)</td>
<td>5.7(3)</td>
<td>4.4(3)</td>
<td>4.5(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESSEX</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>6.9(2)</td>
<td>6.8(2)</td>
<td>6.1(4)</td>
<td>6.0(5)Q</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLAMORGAN</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9(3)</td>
<td>4.4(3) Q</td>
<td>4.5(3)</td>
<td>3.4(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLOS</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.9(3)</td>
<td>6.8(2)</td>
<td>3.1(4)</td>
<td>5.2(5)Q</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAMPSHIRE</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>6.0(3)</td>
<td>8.7(3) Q</td>
<td>8.4(2)</td>
<td>8.0(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KENT</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>6.2(2)</td>
<td>3.8(3)</td>
<td>4.5(4)</td>
<td>3.8(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LANCASHIRE</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>9.0(3)</td>
<td>5.3(2)</td>
<td>9.8(5)Q</td>
<td>10.5(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEICESTERSHIRE</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>4.7(3)</td>
<td>5.0(3) Q</td>
<td>4.4(4)Q</td>
<td>3.6(5)Q</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIDDLESEX</td>
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<td>15.3(2)</td>
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<td>11.6(4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NORTHANTS</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>5.1(2)</td>
<td>3.4(3)</td>
<td>4.7(4)Q</td>
<td>3.8(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTTS</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>5.1(2)</td>
<td>5.6(3)</td>
<td>7.5(4)</td>
<td>8.1(5)Q</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOMERSET</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.6(2)</td>
<td>4.0(3)</td>
<td>3.4(4)</td>
<td>6.0(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SURREY</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.7(3)</td>
<td>6.1(3) Q</td>
<td>14.2(5)Q</td>
<td>14.4(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSSEX</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.5(3)</td>
<td>4.6(2)</td>
<td>5.2(4)</td>
<td>5.2(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WARWICKSHIRE</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>8.6(2)</td>
<td>6.5(3)</td>
<td>9.0(4)</td>
<td>8.6(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORCESTERSHIRE</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.6(3)</td>
<td>4.9(2)</td>
<td>5.1(4)</td>
<td>4.4 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YORKSHIRE</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>8.2(3)</td>
<td>7.0(2)</td>
<td>7.2(4)</td>
<td>5.7(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table compiled from:
2. Wisden, 2004 pp.833-42  
5. Wisden, 2007 pp.922-44
Questionnaire responses

Timing
All the respondents believed that the timing of the event was critical to the competition’s current success. Indeed timing was identified as crucial in different ways. The date range was selected because it would theoretically coincide with optimal weather conditions. The time of day was also a factor. A key objective was to make the event accessible to target markets, and the 5.30pm start enabled school children and the majority of workers to attend without encroaching on work time. Two respondents pointed out that the combination of these factors allowed families to attend. It was also felt that without other major sporting events occurring simultaneously, Twenty20 received more media coverage.

Weather
Respondents believed that the weather had an impact on initial success, although one pointed out that weather is crucial to all cricket competitions. However, the weather had not been as good in 2004 as in 2003. One respondent claimed that despite this, attendances increased in 2004 mainly through excitement. Another felt that good weather attracted a new audience in addition to established cricket fans.

Critical success factors
Respondents listed a number of factors here. Five mentioned the good entertainment provided by the competition. One respondent described the competition as having a reputation for fast and lively cricket. Satellite television and media coverage were mentioned four times, and the length of the game three times. Also mentioned were:

• attraction to women and children
• extra activities leading to crowd involvement.

Future critical success factors
Media interest was mentioned by five respondents in terms of maintaining satellite coverage and keeping the media interested. Five respondents also pointed out the problem of over-exposure of the format and the need to avoid saturation by having too many games. Two respondents mentioned the need to maintain the current format and keep it to a sensible calendar window slot.

Other factors highlighted were the competition from international Twenty20 cricket, which started in 2005 (Coward, 2007), weather, the need for counties to invest in marketing activities to sustain success, and the moving of games away from headquarters to other areas of the county.

Finances
All seven respondents agreed that the Twenty20 competition has made all the counties’ finances healthier, and some have come to rely on it to boost their income. For some counties, Twenty20 fixtures are the only games to sell out, and they bring in a big percentage of revenue. One respondent also pointed out that revenue was boosted not only by ticket sales and satellite coverage, but by secondary spending in catering outlets, beer sales, soft drinks etc. Another mentioned corporate hospitality as a good source of revenue.

New audience
All respondents felt the competition has attracted a new audience: women and children (cited twice) families, non-county members, corporates, young people, people turned off by one-day cricket, 18-35 year olds, and sports fans in general.

Further comments
One respondent attributed some of the success to crowd interaction, stating that it added to the atmosphere and general overall enjoyment. Another
pointed out that Twenty20 led to more people attending other formats of the game, particularly floodlit matches.

Conclusions

The competition has proved to be a success in its first four years. The reasons for this can be seen in aspects of the three strategic factors affecting the diffusion rate model. In particular the characteristics of a shortened, three-hour version of the game were compatible with consumer needs, and sources of influence were gained through the media.

The timing and weather are not included as factors in the model. However, the findings from the primary and secondary data suggest strongly that these contextual issues need to be added to the model. There appear to be two aspects of timing that contributed to the success of the competition. First, that the competition is played at a time that is convenient for people to attend, and second, that it avoids competition with other sports, particularly football.

Further issues were mentioned and require more research, most notably the level of interaction of the sport. Some of the interaction is caused by events that are part of the match entertainment but not directly part of the game (Economist, 2003; Pryor 2004), but do these events contribute to the motive for attending?

Further research and limitations

The survey included only the county marketing teams. Research needs to be conducted among those who have attended games to investigate the issues discussed in the models, and in particular their motivation for going to matches. The SII model could be applied, but it needs to be adapted to take account of the contextual issues of timing in terms of convenience of attending, competing sports and the weather. The issue of crowd involvement in entertainment activities that are not part of the main game also requires investigation.

Further research is also needed to monitor the success of the competition following the introduction of international games in 2005. A World Cup was held in South Africa in 2007, but this did not coincide with English and Welsh domestic competition. Research is also required into the area of saturation. At what point is the game likely to reach saturation level, and what is the optimum number of games per season?

Biographies

Adrian Pritchard is a lecturer in marketing at Coventry University, though he is currently based in Guangzhou, South China. His interests lie in product extensions and franchising in sport.

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Twenty20 cricket: development of the competition


Communicating with consumers through video games: an analysis of brand development within the video gaming segment of the sports industry

Keywords
PGA Tour
Tiger Woods
product placement
video games
brand image

Abstract
The PGA Tour/Tiger Woods golf series was examined for brand and product placement and found to have 2,100 identifiable brand images, with all but one occurring in the final three years. Brands appearing most frequently included Oakley, Nike, adidas, TW Nike and Tag Heuer. By product category, Nike was leader in equipment (36%) and Oakley in apparel (31%). The results indicate that video games are increasingly seen as viable marketing avenues.

Executive summary
The increasing popularity of the sports video game genre has provided advertisers with new avenues for marketing and product placement. Video games, once seen as kids’ games and strictly recreational tools, have transformed into vivid, life-like representations of a wide variety of situations. Sports video games in particular have been embraced in the marketplace, with the genre holding 40% of the console gaming marketplace. Chief among the demographic groups that purchase sports video games is Generation Y, a highly desirable target market for advertisers that comprise consumers aged 18-34. As video games have advanced technologically, advertisers appear to have taken notice, with industry-wide expenditure on...
Brand development and video games

in-game product placement rising sharply – from $50 million in 2004 to a projected $120 million in 2006.

The purpose of this study was to examine whether companies are using the sports video game genre for the purposes of branding and product placement, and if so, to what extent this utilisation is taking place. The study examined the highly popular PGA Tour/Tiger Woods golf game for the Playstation and Playstation 2 consoles from 1997-2006, utilising the content analysis method to measure the amount of product and brand placement present in the various menu options for each year of the series. The study used the brand image, name or logo as the unit of measurement.

The results of the study reveal that advertisers are indeed using sports video games for the purposes of branding and product placement, and that this utilisation is a relatively new phenomenon. For the first seven years of the series, there was only one incidence of branding. However, in the final three years of the series, from 2004-2006, there were 2,099 unique occurrences of branding and product placement. Furthermore, the number of incidences of branding in each game more than doubled from 2004 to 2006, while the number of brands represented in the game nearly doubled over that same time span. Certain brands had a much larger presence than others, with adidas, the Nike family and Oakley accounting for more than two-thirds of the total branding impressions recorded. In all, 24 distinct brands were identified over the life of the series, including such niche companies as Cobra, Precept and Under Armour.

These results indicate that sports video games are increasingly seen as viable marketing avenues by companies and by advertisers. The growing number of visible company brands, coupled with the increasing number of available products, indicates a desire by these companies to have their brands seen and utilised by users of this game series.

Introduction

Video games (i.e. Pong, Space Invaders, Pac-Man) were introduced almost three decades ago as a new form of home entertainment. While early home video games were rather basic in design and execution, the genre has since evolved in terms of technology, interactivity and popularity. Today, there are 132 million teen and adult gamers in the United States alone, where nearly half of all households have a games console (Brown, 2006). Sales of entertainment software reached $8.2 billion in 2004, and are expected to reach $15 billion in 2009. The potential reach for advertisers and corporate entities is enormous, as video games have provided another medium through which marketers utilise brand development and brand awareness.

The modern success of the sports video game genre began with EA Sports’ Madden NFL Football. The series has sold more than 19 million units since its debut in 1989. Because of the enormous success of this video game, a separate sports category was created, which now includes games from several different sports entities, such as golf (PGA Tour/Tiger Woods), baseball (MVP Baseball, Triple Play), football (NCAA College Football), basketball (NBA Live, College Hoops) and boxing (Fight Night). In 2005, 17.3% of video games sold were of the sports genre (Essential Facts, 2006) and six of the top 10 units sold in 2005 were sports games.

Despite competition from several other companies, EA Sports – a subsidiary of Electronic Arts (EA) – is the leader in the sports gaming industry, with a 25% market share. EA Sports accounts for a third of EA’s $3.1 billion annual revenue. Video sports games not only provide EA and other gaming companies with billions of dollars in revenues, but they also provide a unique ‘outside the box’ method of marketing and advertising for the corporate world. According to the Sports Business Journal, in-game video game advertising spending was at $50 million in 2004. In 2005, advertising expenditures jumped to
$80 million (Video Game, 2006), with a projected total of $730 million by 2010 (Brown, 2006).

The traditional marketing and advertising spending patterns that have supported corporate brands are not as effective in the current market environment, because many of these time-honoured initiatives are creating less of a return on investment than they did before. In today’s marketplace, it is the marketer’s job to relate the brand to its target consumer in a very personal and relevant way. Experts indicate that major advertising agencies are expanding client services to include all forms of sports marketing and sponsorship opportunities, including video games (Bonham, 1998, as cited in Bush et al, 2004). Sports video games have become an effective way in which advertisers can reach an ever-growing target audience.

While it is true that video games reach a wide demographic range (Brown, 2006), one of the most important market segments to advertisers is individuals born between 1977 and 1994, otherwise known as Generation Y (Bush et al, 2004). Within this overall market is the teen market segment, one of the most coveted of all segments due to the consumers’ spending power, ability to be trendsetters, receptivity to new products and tremendous potential for becoming lifetime consumers (Brand, 2000; Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001). Video games are the “most frequently used interactive media” among this valued market segment (Beentjes et al, 2001, p.95). The teen market is notoriously difficult for marketers to capture, so as the infrastructure for in-game ads improves, it seems clear that advertisers will recognise the potential and embrace it (Tochen, 2006). Advertising in video games provides marketers with a rare opportunity to play a significant role within this popular and ever-growing entertainment vehicle (Brown 2006). By actively getting involved in video games, advertisers are developing a brand image in a medium that is attractive to this market segment.

Review of literature

Advertising
Successful advertising can enhance a brand’s reputation in a specific product category, which can lead to a greater increase in sales and more positive feelings for the overall brand (Chaudhuri, 2002; Zajonc, 1980). Advertising theory concludes that in the absence of functional brand differentiation, brand advertisement has to give every consumer some reason, benefit or added value to be able to select one brand over another (Ehrenberg et al, 2002). Successful advertising and marketing should affect a consumer’s experience, meaning that advertisers should not just tell the consumer about the brand, but should also allow the consumer to experience the brand (Calder & Malthouse, 2005). Customer perception of a brand’s value occurs when the customer is familiar with the brand and holds favourable, strong and unique brand associations in their memory (Keller, 1993). Video gaming is a genre that is well suited to marketing and advertising.

Advertising, through the gaming experience, allows for repeated exposure of the brand, which in turn leads to a more conscious understanding of a brand’s image (Ehrenberg et al, 2002).

Brand and product development
To properly develop a product’s brand, advertisers and marketers must be able to differentiate their product from those of their competitors. Both Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) argue that the creation of brand value (i.e. added value associated with a brand name) is largely driven by consumers’ mental associations relative to a specific brand. As noted by Mehta et al (2001, p.9), “A consideration set refers to the set of brands (a subset of all the brands in the product category) over which a consumer makes an explicit utility comparison or cost-benefit trade-off before she makes her brand choice decision.” Video games present a new method of advertising to those target consumers that corporations may not fully be reaching.
Brand development and video games

The concept of brand community may be applicable to the investigation of brand placement in video games. Cova and Pace (2006, p.1087) noted that the study of brand community involves the examination of "consumers driven by a similar passion or ethos to form a group, thereby producing a sub-culture". Brand communities form around a particular product and have been interpreted in several ways in previous research, including relatively simple brand-to-consumer connections, as well as more complex webs of community which involve the brand, the customer, the product and the marketer (McAlexander et al, 2002). Brand communities may exist on a dual-level basis in relation to product placement in video games, on one level involving communities focused on the brands included in the game and on another level involving communities focused on the games themselves.

It is essential that advertisers maximise their overall investment by actively leveraging their role in video games with a meaningful marketing strategy (Farrelly et al, 2005). Product placement via video games offers advertisers an opportunity to reach a larger and more captive audience than they would with traditional advertising methods (Nelson, 2002). While some marketing methods involving sports could be considered obtrusive, this is not the case with in-game marketing. In fact, research shows that gamers enjoy the method of marketing via product placement because they believe it enhances the realism of the experience, aids character development, creates a sense of historical subtext and provides a sense of familiarity (Nelson, 2002; Tsuruoka, 2006). Advertisers see the effectiveness of including their products in computer and video games as a popular method to increase brand awareness (Nelson, 2002). Advertisers have found that the marketing method of product placement is a successful way to develop their brand to a specific market segment. The brand can play an endorser role, in that it will provide credibility and instil confidence in the consumers, especially if new technology like video games is involved (Aaker, 2004).

Product placement within video games provides advertisers with the ability to consistently demonstrate their product in its natural state, such as a round of golf, and to do so over a period of time not afforded by the temporal constraints of a television broadcast.

Video games
Video games allow for brands to create a significant number of unique impressions on a specific target market that they might otherwise not be able to reach. A unique brand that can position itself in the marketplace as superior will lead to an increase in its reputation, which will in turn lead to a greater market value (Chaudhuri, 2002). Video games provide this unique opportunity for corporate brands. The technological advancements in gaming have made it easier and more efficient for marketers to place highly targeted brands in games which will have a positive effect on the consumer’s involvement with the respective brand (Nelson, 2002).

There have been several studies done within the genre of video games, most of which focus on sociological aspects of the individual participating (Beasley & Standley, 2002; Vandewater et al, 2004). However, only a few studies have focused on business aspects of the video game industry. Most notable was the study by Nelson (2002), which focused on the effectiveness of placing brands in racing games by measuring the sponsorship recall of the participants. The study found that players were able to recall 25-30% of brands in the short term and approximately 10-15% of the brands at a delay. Brands that were associated with a major part of game play or brands that were already relevant to the consumer experienced a higher recall rate.

Purpose of the study
The purpose of this study was to determine the recent trends in brand development in sports video gaming. This work breaks new ground because it concentrates on brand development and trends over the past decade in sports video games. In an effort to determine the existence and extent of this brand
development, this paper analyses the annual golf video games offered through EA Sports and Tiger Woods PGA Tour. This sport and these releases were selected because of their unique position in the video game marketplace. The burgeoning popularity of the sport of golf, particularly among young people, can be traced back to the appearance of Tiger Woods on the PGA Tour in the late 1990s and his subsequent successes. Not only have Woods’ on-course successes increased interest in the game among the youth demographic, but the presence of a consistently successful multiracial golfer made golf an attractive sport to a wide variety of social, racial and economic groups (Lieber, 2001).

The PGA Tour/Tiger Woods series is also relatively unique in the video gaming segment of the sports industry, standing as the only mainstream sports title where the user can create an individual character in his/her own image, progress that character through a series of individual-play tournaments and dress that character in whatever way s/he sees fit. In addition, the PGA Tour/Tiger Woods series is one of the longest-running sports gaming franchises, with the original PC version of the game appearing in the early 1990s. The study involved an analysis of the first decade of golf video-game releases (1997-2006). By examining the brand usage and placement, a better understanding of how corporations use video games to develop a specific brand line to a captive audience is achieved.

Based on the results of previous research into branding, brand development and video games, the following research questions were developed for this study:

1. Do corporate advertisers use sports video games as an avenue for branding?

2. To what degree are corporate advertisers integrating their products into sports video games?

Methodology

The methodology for this study was a content analysis of brand images appearing in the annual golf video games offered through EA Sports and Tiger Woods PGA Tour. Content analyses have been conducted on books, newspapers, television broadcasts, websites and many other communication formats (Riffe et al, 2005). This unobtrusive and non-reactive research methodology is simply the systematic and replicable examination of communication symbols. The brand images appearing within the menu frame of the video games (N=10) provided the overall data for this study. All of the game menu options, products and brands – with the exception of the manufacturer’s (EA) brand – were coded. Only those brand images that met the study’s codebook and coding protocol (i.e. recognisable, visible, understandable) were coded.

Measures

The study involved a descriptive analysis of brand images (e.g. logos) included in the video games (N=10) over the prescribed time (1997-2006). For the coded material examined, the unit of analysis was the brand logo or image. In an attempt to discover the existence and extent of brand development in sports video games, seven coding measures were developed and coded. The coders first identified themselves (1 or 2). Next, the year in which the golf video game was released was recorded. Following this, the game menu location (i.e. equipment, apparel) was noted. The coders then recorded the brand name of the product, and the featured product was noted by the coders. For example, the coders identified if the brand appeared on a ball, putter, pair of pants, shirt, glove, etc and then determined whether the feature product was locked or unlocked. (This was determined by the user’s ability to purchase or use the item in question in the default game – if an item was unable to be purchased from the game menu frame, it was considered a locked product.) The last variable coded was the dollar amount. This only applied to those elements of the game where items were being purchased (i.e. the game’s Pro Shop).
Brand development and video games

Coders
Riffe et al (2005) note that content analyses can use one coder, two coders or several coders. In order to efficiently and effectively code the content of this study, two trained sports management doctoral students were utilised as coders. Both of the coders had an effective level of training and worked independently. These two coders were utilised due to their involvement in and familiarity with the codebook, coding sheets and coding protocol. First they independently examined the same two video games, which were chosen by random selection and which represented 20% of the total sample. This initial coding was done in order to test intercoder reliability (explained below). After the completion of the intercoder reliability section, the remaining eight video games (from a total of 10) were randomly divided into two groups, with each coder given four video games. In total, each of the coders coded six video games (two intercoder reliability games plus four individual games).

Reliability
Reliability in content analyses is directly connected with intercoder reliability. This is the determination of the degree to which coders consistently measured the coding variables. The testing of intercoder reliability involves measuring consistency, which involves both a simple agreement percentage and a statistic that takes into consideration the element of chance agreement. To effectively test reliability in content analysis, researchers must have an overlap of data (normally a minimum of 10%) where the project coders have coded the same information (Riffe et al, 2005). Therefore, two video games (20% of the 10 video games in this study) were randomly selected, in order to provide a reasonable size for a data overlap. The same two video games were independently coded by the study’s two coders. An examination of the issues in this sample that fit the requirements of the codebook protocol produced a total of 404 brand images. The 404 brand images were 19.2% of the total brand images (2,100) coded for this study.

The first stage of reliability requires the calculation of simple percentage agreement, which can be determined by tabulating the number of times the coders have coded the data the same way. For this study, the agreement between the coders in the overlap area resulted in percentages that ranged from 95.8% to 99.3% (Table 1). According to Riffe et al (2005), any agreement percentage above 80% is considered acceptable. However, because this agreement could be the result of accurate coding or nothing more than agreement by chance, there is a need for a second stage in the testing of intercoder reliability. This stage takes out agreement by chance alone. It involves turning the percentage of agreement into a coefficient of reliability (Potter & Levine-Donenstei, 1999). For this study, these scores ranged from .953 to .992. Any reliability assessment above .70 is considered acceptable for the corrections for chance agreement (Riffe et al, 2005). This study’s high numbers relating to percentage of agreement and correction for chance agreement confirm that the two coders were thoroughly familiar with the coding protocol and codebook by the time this study was conducted. Overall, they were highly consistent in their application of the protocol definitions and procedures.

Data analysis
The purpose of this study was to determine the recent trends in brand development in sports video gaming. The data gathered were used to determine the existence and extent to which brands were integrated into the golf video games offered through EA Sports and Tiger Woods PGA Tour. Using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 13.0 (SPSS), descriptive statistics and frequency tables were used to tabulate, describe and summarise the parameters of the data that were collected.
Brand development and video games

Results

This study involved the coding of all 10 golf video games released by EA Sports and Tiger Woods PGA Tour from 1997 through 2006. The coding protocol and timeframe of the study yielded for analysis a total of 2,100 brand images that fitted the study’s protocol. Nearly every brand image recorded in the coding process occurred in the last three years of games that were examined, with the most recent year, 2006, containing 916 brand images. Table 2 reflects the year-by-year breakdown of recorded images.

The 2,100 images coded in this study represented 24 unique brands over the life of the series, with the top five occurring brands appearing in Table 3. None of the remaining brands coded comprised more than 3.9% of the total data set. In order, however, these remaining brands included: Taylor Made, Callaway, Under Armour, Ping, Cleveland Golf, Dunlop, Maxfli, Cobra, Precept, Grafalloy, Mizuno, True Temper, MacGregor, Odyssey Golf, Bridgestone, Golden Bear, Rossa, Tour Stage and Never Compromise.

TABLE 1  Reliability percentages and corrections for chance agreement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF AGREEMENT</th>
<th>SCOTT’S PI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CODER</td>
<td>99.3</td>
<td>.985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIDEO GAME</td>
<td>99.3</td>
<td>.985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAME MENU</td>
<td>99.3</td>
<td>.989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAND NAME</td>
<td>99.3</td>
<td>.992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRODUCT</td>
<td>95.8</td>
<td>.953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOCKED/UNLOCKED</td>
<td>99.3</td>
<td>.985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOLLAR AMOUNT</td>
<td>98.8</td>
<td>.986</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 2  Total brand images by game year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GAME YEAR</th>
<th>NUMBER OF IMAGES</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>779</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>916</td>
<td>43.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An examination of the brands within each specific year revealed that several brands were consistently represented in the 2004, 2005 and 2006 editions of the video games. Table 4 illustrates the top brand occurrences for those three years. There were 15 different product groupings coded over the life of the series. The product grouping with the most occurrences was 'Shirts' with 535 (25.5% of the total), followed by 'Headwear' with 472 (22.5%), 'Pants' with 199 (9.5%), 'Watches/Jewellery' with 152 (7.2%) and 'Shoes' with 125 (6.0%). The remaining product groupings coded in this study (ranging from 5.4% to 1.4%) were Shafts, Eyewear, Balls, Irons, Wedges, Gloves, Putters, Drivers, Fairway Woods and Gloves.

Also analysed were the distributions of brands in terms of the various product groupings. The Nike brand had the widest distribution, appearing in 14 of the 15 identified product groupings. The 'Watches/Jewellery' product grouping was the only one in which the Nike brand was not represented. The other brands that had wide distributions were Callaway and Dunlop (each represented in nine of the 15 product groupings), Precept and Taylor Made (eight product groupings each), Bridgestone, Cleveland Golf, Cobra, Mizuno, Oakley and Ping (seven product groupings each), Golden Bear and MacGregor (six product groupings each) and adidas, Tour Stage and TW Nike (five product groupings each).

For the life of the series, Nike was the most commonly occurring brand in five of the product groupings: Balls, Putters, Fairway Woods, Socks and Gloves. Oakley was the most commonly occurring brand in five categories as well: Shoes, Pants, Headwear, Eyewear and Watches/Jewellery. Taylor Made was the most commonly occurring brand in three of the product categories: Irons, Drivers and Shafts. Cleveland Golf was the most commonly occurring brand in Wedges, and adidas was the most commonly occurring brand in Shirts.

While there were no brands included from 1997 to 2001, several brands were added to the game during the final three years that were reviewed. Although there were no brand images coded in the 2003 game, the two brand instances coded in the 2002 game both belonged to Nike. In 2004, the number of brands increased to 13. In addition to Nike, the product line-up for 2004 included adidas, Callaway, Cleveland Golf, Maxfli, Odyssey Golf, Ping, Precept, Rossa, Tag Heuer, Taylor Made, Tour Stage and TW Nike. In 2005, the number of brands included increased to 17. The game added Cobra, Dunlop, Grafalloy, Never Compromise, Oakley and True Temper, while Precept and Tour Stage did not repeat their appearances in the game. In 2006, the number of included brands increased to 22, with Bridgestone, Golden Bear, MacGregor, Mizuno and Under Armour appearing for the first time, Precept appearing again after a one-year hiatus, and Cleveland Golf and Never Compromise not appearing.

An examination of brand occurrences based on type of product category was also conducted, with the 15 product categories broken up into two segments: Equipment, which encompassed all items dealing directly with the playing of golf (Balls, Drivers, Fairway Woods, Gloves, Irons, Putters, Shafts, Wedges), and 'Apparel', which denoted all other categories (Eyewear, Headwear, Pants, Shirts, Shoes, Socks, Watches/Jewellery). For the life of the series, the brand with the most instances of equipment was Nike, with 107 (22.1%) of the 485 equipment items. The leader in number of apparel items was Oakley, with 499 (30.9%) of the 1,615 apparel items in the game, and all of those occurring in just the last editions released over the last two years of the study’s timeframe (2005 and 2006). An examination of the individual final three years (2004, 2005 and 2006) of the study reveals some interesting results in terms of brand occurrence based on type of product category, highlighted in Table 5.

'Locked' and 'unlocked' products were also a measured element of the game. An 'unlocked' product was available for purchase from the outset of the game, while a 'locked' product was not available to the user until some sort of in-game requirement had been met. Of the 2,100 products, 835 (39.8%) were
### TABLE 3  Top five occurring brands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRAND NAME</th>
<th>NUMBER OF IMAGES</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OAKLEY</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIKE</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADIDAS</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TW NIKE</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAG HEUER</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 4  Top five brand occurrences 2004-06

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NIKE</td>
<td>121 (30%)</td>
<td>OAKLEY</td>
<td>251 (32.2%)</td>
<td>OAKLEY</td>
<td>248 (27.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADIDAS</td>
<td>111 (27.5%)</td>
<td>NIKE</td>
<td>140 (18.0%)</td>
<td>NIKE</td>
<td>151 (16.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TW NIKE</td>
<td>37 (9.2%)</td>
<td>ADIDAS</td>
<td>128 (16.4%)</td>
<td>ADIDAS</td>
<td>129 (14.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAG HEUER</td>
<td>32 (7.9%)</td>
<td>TAG HEUER</td>
<td>52 (6.7%)</td>
<td>UNDER ARMOUR</td>
<td>50 (5.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLEVELAND GOLF</td>
<td>22 (5.5%)</td>
<td>TW NIKE</td>
<td>48 (6.2%)</td>
<td>TW NIKE</td>
<td>49 (5.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>779</td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>916</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 5  Brand leaders by category 2004-06

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2004 EQUIPMENT</th>
<th>BRAND LEADER</th>
<th>NUMBER OF ITEMS</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF YEAR</th>
<th>TOTAL CATEGORY ITEMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004 APPAREL</td>
<td>ADIDAS</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>37.0%</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 EQUIPMENT</td>
<td>NIKE</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 EQUIPMENT</td>
<td>NIKE</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005 APPAREL</td>
<td>OAKLEY</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 APPAREL</td>
<td>OAKLEY</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
<td>685</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 6  Brands with at least 40% of items unlocked

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRAND</th>
<th>NUMBER OF UNLOCKED ITEMS</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF BRAND’S ITEMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADIDAS</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIKE</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>51.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAG HEUER</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>47.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAKLEY</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
‘unlocked’ and therefore available from the outset of the game, while 1,265 (60.2%) were ‘locked’. The brands with over 40% of their products unlocked are listed in Table 6.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate recent trends in brand development in sports video gaming. The results indicate a demonstrable increase in brand occurrence over the life of the PGA Tour/Tiger Woods video game series, both in terms of number of brands included and overall number of available products. This increase of brand occurrence indicates that this video game series has rapidly become an important marketing conduit for companies engaged in the manufacture of golf products, apparel and other items.

According to the data collected, the development of the PGA Tour/Tiger Woods video game series into a viable marketing element was sudden. The lack of branding in the games from 1997 to 2003 could have been due to a number of factors, including technical limitations, graphics capacity and a lack of advertiser familiarity and/or comfort with the video game genre. As discussed earlier, it has become essential that advertisers can maximise their overall investment by actively leveraging their role in video games with a meaningful marketing strategy (Farrelly et al, 2005).

One of the most revealing results is that the number of brands nearly doubled from the first version of the game that had a large quantity of branded products (2004) to the last version coded (2006). In 2004, the number of brands stood at 13. Despite three brands dropping during the next two years, the overall number of brands increased to 22. In addition to an increase in brands featured, the overall number of products more than doubled over the same time span, from 403 in 2004 to 916 in 2006. This finding is not surprising given the overall increase in spending on in-game advertisements during this period (Video Game, 2006) and the increasing realisation among companies that video games are a useful method by which their target markets can be reached.

The prominence and volume of products bearing the Oakley brand are two intriguing findings of this study. A possible reason for this finding is that Oakley, which is not as well known as Nike or adidas in terms of its golf apparel line, wanted to utilise the popularity and visibility of the Tiger Woods video game series to introduce its vast product line to golfing fans in the game’s demographic. It should be noted that if the Nike and TW Nike brands were combined into one, the overall Nike brand would lead in overall branded products featured.

Nike was the most diversified brand in terms of product grouping appearances, with its logo appearing in 14 of the 15 groupings. Given Nike’s recent entrance into the golf equipment industry, and given its existing contract with the golfer (Tiger Woods) whose name is featured on the title of the series, this is not a surprising occurrence. Furthermore, Nike had the greatest number of ‘unlocked’ products available to users at the start of the game. One could interpret this as indicating Nike’s desire to have its products readily available to users from the outset. If Nike has chosen to follow the basic premise of brand exposure mentioned above (Chaudhuri, 2002; Zajonc, 1980), then it makes sense that it would want its products to be given a greater level of exposure.

It is also important to note that while the overall percentage of Nike products to the whole went down over the final three years of the game, the actual number of Nike products from year to year increased. This is not surprising, given the increase in overall brands offered in the game over this time period. The entry of companies with broad product lines, such as Oakley, combined with the addition of ‘niche’ companies such as Bridgestone, Cobra, Grafalloy and Mizuno, helped to spur the increase in the overall number of products offered. Furthermore, as noted in the conceptual framework of this study, the ability for
Brand development and video games

a company to have its product(s) portrayed as quality items can lead to increased market value and market share (Chaudhuri, 2002).

The PGA Tour/Tiger Woods series is ideally suited for this task, because all products are portrayed in a positive light. The only noticeable differentiation offered between the products is in appearance, character skill modification and price, and none of these factors is portrayed in a negative manner to the user. Indeed, it appears from empirical observation that practically every company has a ‘specialised’ product in at least one equipment category, thereby allowing that company to have a core product or products portrayed in the best possible light. Given this, it is not surprising that both the number of products and the number of brands increased with each passing year from 2004.

The results of this study reveal that the PGA Tour/Tiger Woods video game series is increasingly seen as a viable and important marketing avenue by companies whose product line includes golf and golfing accessories. Given the rapidly increasing level of marketing capital spent on in-game advertisements over the last three years (Video Game, 2006), it is obvious that companies with an interest in golf decided to increase their marketing activity in the realm of video games. As Chaudhuri (2002) explained, the success of in-game advertising can deliver an overall enhancement of a brand’s reputation in a specific product category, which can lead to a greater increase in sales for the overall brand.

A greater level of exposure to the target consumer, in this case the video gamer and the golf enthusiast, can lead to a more positive feeling towards that brand (Chaudhuri, 2002; Zajonc, 1980). To focus marketing resources on the video game market is to focus one’s brand image on Generation Y consumers, whose prospects for becoming long-term consumers are very high (Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001).

Conclusions

The results of this study reveal that corporate advertisers do indeed use sports video games as an avenue for branding, and that the degree of product and brand integration in games has increased rapidly over the past three years. Furthermore, the benefits of brand integration in video games appear to have only recently been understood by advertisers. Brand integration in the PGA Tour/Tiger Woods series of games was virtually non-existent from the launch of the series through the first seven years. That number increased in the last three years examined, with the number of products more than doubling by 2006 and the number of brands represented nearly doubling over the same period. This indicates that corporate entities with an interest in marketing golfing products are utilising video games as a new marketing tool, and that they appear to be interested in expanding the degree of integration that their products enjoy.

The increasing levels of brand integration in sports video games have been demonstrated to be quantifiable by the methods utilised in this study. However, an important conceptual element of brand integration is a corresponding increase in brand awareness by the individuals who utilise the medium into which the brands have integrated. As mentioned earlier, the members of Generation Y, towards whom sports video games are marketed, have the potential to become long-term consumers (Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001). An experimental research design could quite easily ascertain the level of increase in brand awareness among such individuals, by comparing the brand integration data derived from a particular game (or games) with the degree to which game users are familiar with the brands and their products before and after use. Such an investigation would have two main conceptual implications. First, it would measure the effectiveness of product placement in video games, a topic important to both practitioners looking to measure their marketing efforts and to scholars seeking to examine the theoretical
implications of an interactive secondary delivery system (i.e. video games). Second, it could indicate whether the brands' inclusion into video games fostered an extension of brand community (Cova & Pace, 2006; McAlexander et al, 2002) for those brands, whether they fostered an extension of brand community for the game itself, or neither. This exploration could contribute to, and potentially expand, the theoretical body of research relating to brand community, by considering the role of interactive media in the brand community process.

This potential extension of brand community theory possesses implications for marketers and other managers, as well. The presence of a particular brand or product within a video game could entice people to purchase the game who would not otherwise be inclined. Alternatively, or additionally, the inclusion of brands and products within video games could bolster brand community for the game itself, with users' loyalty to the game(s) increasing due to a higher perceived level of real-life detail or authenticity. By exploring the effects of product placement in video games, marketers and managers could potentially increase their consumer base, increase their current consumers' loyalty, or both.

The limitations of the study are that its findings can only be applied to one particular video game series, namely the PGA Tour/Tiger Woods series, over one particular timeframe (1997-2006). However, these limitations are minimalised given the fact that the increase in brand representation and product placement observed in the PGA Tour/Tiger Woods series very closely matches the proportional increase in overall money spent on in-game advertising over the same period (Video Game, 2006). Future studies could examine the extent of branding in other series of sports video games, such as the aforementioned Madden NFL series or the FIFA soccer series.

Research should be conducted throughout qualitative techniques to examine branding decisions. For instance, researchers should interview brand managers and marketing directors of companies that have placed products in sports video games. Furthermore, it might be beneficial for future researchers to compare and contrast the amount of in-game advertising in sports video game titles with in-game advertising from non-sports video game titles, to see if the market for brand development and placement is advancing evenly across the video game spectrum. It would also be beneficial to examine the target markets for a set of companies using in-game branding in sports video games, to see how the demographics of these markets skew towards a particular gender, age or income class.

For many years, video gaming was seen as simply a leisure activity for the young, with relatively primitive graphical interfaces and an unpredictable user base. But as the video gaming world has matured, so too have its technical aspects, which in turn help to introduce that world to a multitude of new users. As research has shown, video gaming now reaches a significant portion of sports consumers, and those consumers are very desirable to companies due to both their age and their consumption habits (Fromme, 2003).

It is of importance to both the business of sports branding and the academic study of sports marketing that this emerging marketplace be identified, observed and analysed, because it represents the opening of a new frontier in the connection between commercial sports enterprise and sports consumers. Specifically, sports consumer products aimed at the key gaming demographics should pay particular attention to this emerging practice of brand development. As a result of this study, brand managers and marketing directors of consumer products should develop marketing strategies that include the sports video gaming experience.
Biographies

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References

Brand development and video games


An analysis of spectator motives and media consumption behaviour in an individual combat sport: cross-national differences between American and South Korean Mixed Martial Arts fans

Keywords
Mixed Martial Arts
spectator motives
event marketing

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Abstract
This study compared the motives and media consumption behaviours of American and South Korean spectators of Mixed Martial Arts. Significant cross-national differences were noted in sport interest, vicarious achievement, aesthetics, national pride and violence. Backward regression analyses indicated that sport interest, fighter interest and drama predicted media consumption at the American event, while sport interest, drama and adoration were significant predictors at the Korean event.

Executive summary
The sport of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) has shown signs of significant growth in the United States and Korea over the past few years. In the US, Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) television events now draw better cable ratings among key demographic groups than National Basketball Association (NBA), National Hockey League (NHL) and Major League Baseball (MLB) games; MMA also recently established the pay-per-view industry’s new single-season record by generating more than $200 million in 2006 in the US (Hamilton, 2006; Scelfo, 2006; Trembow, 2007; Wertheim, 2007). In South Korea, one of the broadcasting corporations bought the television rights from K-1, an MMA provider, for a total of $30 million
for three years (Kim, 2007). Considering that the broadcasting rights fees for MLB and the Korean Baseball Organisation (KBO) are $48 million for four years and $9.5 million per year respectively in Korea, the magnitude of this purchase for K-1 is quite impressive (Moon, 2007). Given the stated goals of global expansion by MMA providers (Official UFC 75 “Champion vs Champion” press release, 2007), for sports marketers of both American promoters and Asian promoters it is crucial to understand the cross-national differences in terms of fan motivation to attend and watch MMA events so that they can create effective marketing plans for a successful drive into a new market.

The primary goal of this study was to explore the cross-national differences among MMA fans by comparing the motives and the media consumption behaviours of 437 spectators who attended local MMA events that were held either in a mid-sized Midwestern US city (n = 208) or a major metropolitan city in South Korea (n = 229). Spectators at these events completed a questionnaire containing items assessing spectator motives and media consumption based upon previously published studies (Funk et al, 2002; Kim et al, 2007; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995). ANOVA results indicated significant differences between American and Korean participants in the motives of sport interest (p < .01), vicarious achievement (p < .01), aesthetics (p < .01), national pride (p < .01) and violence (p < .05). In addition, two backward linear regression analyses indicated that sport interest (β = .584), fighter interest (β = .176) and drama (β = .187) were significant predictors of media consumption for spectators at the American event, while sport interest (β = .747), drama (β = .157) and adoration (β = .133) were significant predictors of media consumption for spectators at the Korean event. The findings suggest cross-national differences exist, necessitating a better understanding of the relevant market when promoting MMA events. Furthermore, significant predictors of media consumption in each setting were identified. This is an important consideration given the sport’s reliance on the media (e.g. pay-per-view events) to generate exposure and revenue. From a practical standpoint, our findings suggest that marketers must seek to understand different cultures when attempting to globalise the sport. Slight differences in the way the sport is marketed may have a large impact on the acceptance and growth in different countries.

Introduction

MMA is a combat sport in which different martial arts styles or techniques, including striking and grappling, are permitted. MMA was introduced to the public for the first time when the first UFC was held in Denver, Colorado, in November 1993. After struggling to survive between 1997 and 2001, the sport re-emerged in the US in 2001 with the sale of the UFC franchise to Zuffa, LLC, and the adoption of new rules that included five weight classes, rounds, time limits, a list of over 31 fouls, and eight possible ways for the fight to end.

The UFC’s efforts to provide big championships and rival matches on pay-per-view channels, along with the success of The Ultimate Fighter reality series on Spike TV, have resulted in consistent growth in television ratings. In fact, UFC television events now draw better cable ratings among key demographic groups than NBA, NHL and MLB games, and recently established the pay-per-view industry’s single-season record by generating more than $200 million in 2006 in the US (Hamilton, 2006; Scelfo, 2006; Trembow, 2007; Wertheim, 2007).

The huge growth in MMA popularity has been seen not only in the US, but also in other countries, especially Asian countries such as Japan and South Korea. Japanese promoters (e.g. Pride FC, established in 1997, and K-1, introduced in 1993) took advantage of UFC’s early struggles in the US by recruiting UFC fighters to provide good matches for their events. As a result, MMA has been successfully and consistently growing in Japan and other Asian countries for more than 10 years. For example, Pride
FC drew 90,107 fans to Tokyo National Stadium in Japan in August 2002. Recently, in South Korea, one of the broadcasting corporations bought the television broadcasting rights from K-1 for a total of $30 million over three years (Kim, 2007). Considering that the broadcasting rights fees for MLB and the KBO are $48 million for four years and $9.5 million per year respectively in Korea, the magnitude of this rights purchase for K-1 is quite impressive (Moon, 2007).

As the sport has become popular throughout the world, various promoters have begun to explore ways to expand their market globally. For instance, K-1, realising the rapid growth of the MMA market in the US, televised its fighting series on cable channels in the US. In fact, K-1 has also planned to hold several of its live events in 2007 in the US, Holland, Germany and South Korea in order to penetrate the world market (K-1, 2007).

UFC, not content with its current position as a leading promoter in the US, also set its goals on conquering European and Asian markets. UFC president Dana White was quoted in a June 2007 press release as saying: "We’ve done so well over here in the last six years in the US, we have this product... it translates all the cultural barriers, language barriers and we know this can work worldwide. We opened an office in London and we will have done three events in the UK this year, and they will all have been successful. Our plan is to move out into Europe and next year go into Italy, Spain, Germany, France, etc.” (Official “Champion vs. Champion” press release, 2007). In addition, UFC’s purchase of Pride FC, previously its most intimidating rival from Japan, demonstrated UFC’s strong desire to make inroads into the Asian market as well as giving it a means to strengthen its lead position in the US. However, it will not be effective for Asian promoters or American promoters to market their events to customers in the North American or Asian market in the same manner they have used for their own markets, because North American customers and Asian customers may appreciate different aspects of the sport (Genauer, 2006). Therefore, it is crucial for sports marketers of both American promoters and Asian promoters to understand the cross-national differences in terms of fan motivation to attend and watch MMA events in order to create the most effective marketing plans.

**Sports motives**

For sports marketers, it is important to understand and satisfy sports fans and spectators who attend and watch sporting events. Therefore, identifying different reasons to attend or watch sporting events has been the most critical assignment for marketers and researchers, because each fan or spectator may appreciate different aspects of an event. If sports marketers are able to provide what fans want from the events, fans will revisit or continue to watch. Researchers have identified key motivation factors and have developed scales to measure the motives of sports consumers (Funk et al, 2002; Kahle et al, 1996; Milne & McDonald, 1999; Sloan, 1989; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995).

In this line of research, Bilyeu and Wann (2002), James and Ridinger (2002) and Funk et al (2002) each suggested that different motives may be appreciated for different sports and for different consumer segments. Even though previous researchers have provided a general idea about the motives of sports consumers, the effort to identify and measure these motivations in specific sports is still lacking (James & Ross, 2004). Motives among sports consumers can be different depending on the type of sport – whether artistic sports (e.g. gymnastics and synchronised swimming) or combative sports (e.g. wrestling, football and boxing); therefore, individual motives should be rationalised for each sport (Funk et al, 2002; Mahony et al, 2002). Based on this suggestion, Lee et al (2006) proposed 10 potential motivations of MMA fans. Among the 10 proposed motives, eight (sport interest, eustress, escape, economic factor, aesthetics, vicarious achievement, national pride and socialising) were identified based on existing sports fan motivation instruments (Funk et al, 2002, Milne & McDonald, 1999; Sloan, 1989; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995), and two
additional motives (adoration and violence) were proposed, based on suggestions in prior research that heroism (Stevens et al, 2003) and violence (Coakley, 2006) may be factors which increase interest in sport.

Researchers have also explored demographic differences within a target market. By far the most popular demographic analysis has been the comparison by gender in motives to attend sporting events (Kahle et al, 1996; Kim et al, 2007; Swanson et al, 2003; Zhang et al, 1996). However, the impact of cultural differences on fan motives to attend has rarely been studied.

Kwon and Trail (2001) compared fan motivations to attend intercollegiate sports events between American students and international students. Even though the study examined the cultural differences in fan motives, it did not examine the impact of cultural differences on fan motivations for a specific sport in different countries, because it was limited to intercollegiate sport events in the US. Therefore, the need still exists to compare cultural differences in fan motives for similar sporting events contested within each country’s respective environment (e.g. a comparison of American fans at an American event with Korean fans at a Korean event in the same sporting context).

Purpose of study

The surprising and dramatic increase in the interest in the sport of MMA throughout the world over the past 10 years has raised several questions for sports managers and researchers. Furthermore, the sport has begun to expand globally, and many MMA organisations are seeking to market to spectators in other countries. However, little is known about how spectators of different nationalities differ in motivation for sports consumption. The primary purpose of this study is therefore to examine differences in motivation using a cross-national comparison of spectators from two of the largest and fastest growing markets for MMA – the US and South Korea. In addition, much of the sport’s global expansion has taken place through media such as television and internet. Therefore, the relationship between spectator motives and media consumption is examined for each group in order to understand differences in what drives media consumption of MMA in each country.

Methodology

Participants and procedures

Given that the purpose of this study was to explore potential cross-national differences, the participants of the survey were limited to existing or current fans of MMA who attended an MMA event. To obtain a sample of MMA fans from each country, data were collected from a local event held in June 2006 in a mid-sized Midwestern city in the US and an event held in February 2007 in a metropolitan city in Korea. With each event organiser’s permission, questionnaires were distributed to spectators sitting in randomly selected seats prior to the beginning of the opening ceremony. In order to participate in this survey, respondents were limited to adults who were at least 18 years old.

Among 570 (America=270; Korea=300) distributed questionnaires, 496 were returned (87% response rate) and 437 (America=208; Korea=229) were usable for the study. For the American event, the crowd was mostly male: the ratio of males ($n=160$; 76.9%) to females ($n=48$; 23.1%) was approximately three to one. The youngest age group (18-24) was most represented, with 66 participants (31.7%), followed by the 25-29 year age group with 59 participants (28.4%). The level of education among study participants was mixed: 30.8% had a high school diploma, 35.1% had some college and 31.8% had either an undergraduate or graduate degree. The majority of the crowd was white (87.9%). At the Korean event, the crowd was similarly mostly male: the ratio of males ($n=186$; 81.2%) to females ($n=43$; 18.8%) was approximately four to one. The 25-29 year age group was most represented, with 96 participants (41.9%), followed by the 18-24 year age group with 51 participants (22.3%). The level of
education among study participants varied: 21.8% had a high school diploma and 76.4% had either an undergraduate or graduate degree.

Instrument
To explore the cross-national differences between American and Korean MMA fans for this study, 50 items were developed. The questionnaire included items designed to capture demographic information, MMA experiences, MMA preferences, motivation to watch MMA events and media consumption behaviour. To ensure consistency, the original version of the survey questionnaire, written in English, was translated into Korean by two Korean doctoral students in sports management who had wide knowledge of sports motive literature. The Korean version of the questionnaire was translated back into English by another Korean graduate student to confirm that the initial translation had been performed correctly.

Fan motives
The motives scale developed by Kim et al (2007) for the sport of MMA was adopted for this study. Three items for each motive were assessed with seven-point Likert scales anchored by Strongly Disagree (1) and Strongly Agree (7). Cronbach Alphas (α) for the English version of the scale (for Kim et al) ranged from α = 0.749 (drama) to α = 0.926 (sport interest), and the RMSEA result (0.063) indicated a good fit of the model to the data. Two additional items – fighter interest and organisational interest – were added to the original list of 10. A discussion of the 12 possible motivation factors and a rationale for each follows.

(a) Drama (Funk et al, 2002; Sloan, 1989; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995). MMA fans are excited by a thrilling event, which happens in a relatively short time period compared to other sports, or by a very close match where the fans cannot predict a result.
(b) Escape (Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995). Sports fans watch or attend sporting events to temporarily forget their problems or to revitalise their life by escaping from their routine.
(c) Aesthetic qualities (Funk et al, 2002; Milne & McDonald, 1999; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995). Some hard-core MMA fans who know fighting techniques well enjoy dedicated matches between well trained fighters with excellence and mastery more than just bloody fighting between unskilled fighters.
(d) Vicarious achievement (Funk et al, 2002; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995). While the average MMA fan probably does not participate in fighting often, the sport still attracts them. Watching MMA fighters can provide fans with a feeling that they cannot achieve in their actual life.
(e) Socialising (Funk et al, 2002; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995). Sporting events are widely used for making friends or spending time with friends. MMA clubs have been established for MMA fans who want to socialise with others who have similar interests and watch the matches at the events. In local amateur MMA events, it is not hard to find 10 or more fans coming to the event in a group to cheer for fighters from their own club.
(f) National pride (Funk et al, 2002). National pride appears to have played a huge role in the success of MMA in the Asian market, while it is not relatively emphasised in the US, where individual fighters are the focus rather than cultural background.
(g) Economic factor (Guttmann, 1986; Wann, 1995). Due to the nature of a combat sport like boxing, MMA events have provided fans with the opportunities to wager on anticipated outcomes of MMA matches.
(h) Adoration (Lee et al, 2006). This motive addresses the idea that spectators may be attracted by athletes who are heroic and appear unbeatable.
(i) Violence (Coakley, 2006; Goldstein & Arms, 1971). Since MMA is considered to be more realistic than other combat sports, the associated violence with one-on-one combat may be particularly attractive to fans.
Spectator motives

(j) **Sport interest** (Funk et al, 2002). As an emerging sport, MMA appears to have been successful in inspiring sports fans’ interest, and MMA fans are attracted to attend events and watch the match because they like the sport itself.

(k) **Fighter interest** was adapted from Funk et al’s (2002) ‘interest in player’ scale to address the fact that MMA fighters often fight for different organisations, and fans may be attracted to watch specific events to see their favourite fighters.

(l) **Organisational interest** was also adapted from Funk et al’s (2002) ‘interest in team’ scale. In contrast to many traditional mainstream sports where there are few leagues and many teams, the MMA industry consists of more than 100 organisations promoting individual events. Therefore, event marketers often focus on building their organisational brands and fans often identify with different organisations. This motive accounts for the possibility that spectators could be fans of the organisation promoting the event.

**Media consumption behaviour**

Three media consumption items (adapted from Fink et al, 2002) were incorporated into this study. The items for media consumption were measured with seven-point Likert scales anchored by Strongly Disagree (1) and Strongly Agree (7) and included: “I read about MMA news over the internet”, “I watch MMA events on television” and “I watch MMA reality shows on television”.

**Demographics**

Demographic information, including gender, age, marital/household status and educational level, were collected from participants in the present study.

**MMA experience and preferences**

In terms of the MMA experience, two items including “How did you find out about MMA for the first time?” and “How many MMA events have you attended?” were asked. For the preferences of MMA fans, the following two items were included: “Which of the following is your favourite MMA event?” and “Which of the following is your favourite weight class?”

**Data analysis**

Two sets of a confirmatory factor analyses and Cronbach internal consistency analyses were conducted to evaluate construct validity and inter-item reliability for the respective data from each event, since the two questionnaires were written in different languages and collected in differing cultural contexts. Descriptive statistics were calculated to assess overall demographics, MMA experiences, MMA preferences, MMA fan loyalty and motives to attend and watch MMA events. A correlation analysis of the sport motivation factors was conducted to examine associations among the factors. One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to examine cross-national differences between American and Korean spectators in MMA fan motivation. Subsequent to the ANOVA, backward regression analyses were performed separately for American and Korean groups to examine the relationship between MMA fan motivations and fan media consumption behaviour. Backward regression analyses sequentially deleted weaker, non-contributing variables and identified contributing variables of value to each regression equation.

**Results**

**Scale validity/reliability**

The confirmatory factor analysis results for each fan motive indicated acceptable measures of absolute fit (American: RMSEA=.063; Korean: RMSEA=.068) and comparative fit (American: CFI=.97; NFI=.93; NNFI=.96; RFI=.91; Korean: CFI=.96; NFI=.93; NNFI=.96; RFI=.92) according to Steiger (1990) and Kelloway (1998). Factor loadings, standard errors and average variance explained values for the 12 MMA motives in each setting are reported in Table 1. The range of Cronbach coefficients of the variables for the American event was from $\alpha=0.749$ (drama) to $\alpha=0.926$ (sport interest) and the range for the Korean...
Spectator motives

Preferences
Descriptive statistics were calculated for American and Korean spectators’ MMA experiences, MMA preferences and motives to attend and watch MMA events. In terms of American MMA fans, word of mouth was important, since 33.5% of attendees had been exposed to the sport of MMA for the first time by their friends or colleagues; 34 participants (17.8%) indicated that Spike’s television series The Ultimate Fighter had provided their introduction to the sport, followed by watching matches through pay-per-view ($n=32, 16.8%$). However, 131 Korean spectators (60.7%) reported that they watched their first MMA event on television, and 39 participants (17%) were introduced to the sport by their friends. Regarding the favourite MMA promoters from both groups, American participants (81%) overwhelmingly indicated UFC as their favourite MMA event, while Korean participants indicated K-1 (62.4%) as their favourite MMA promoter, followed by Pride FC (31%).

Motives
For the Korean sample, drama (M=5.30) was the most important factor followed by vicarious achievement (M=5.24), fighter interest (M=4.97) and sport interest (M=4.56). For the American sample, sport interest (M=5.53) was the most important factor followed by drama (M=5.52), aesthetics (M=5.11) and fighter interest (M=4.71).

To explore the cross-national differences in MMA fan motivation between the respondents in the US and Korea, a one-way ANOVA was calculated, and significant cross-national differences were found in sport interest [$F(1, 435)=37.05, p < .01$], vicarious achievement [$F(1, 435)=36.40, p < .01$], aesthetic quality [$F(1, 435)=27.00, p < .01$], national pride, [$F(1, 435)=9.99, p < .01$] and violence [$F(1, 435)=31.87, p < .05$].

Among the five motivations showing significant differences between two groups, the Korean spectators rated vicarious achievement and national pride higher than American spectators. American spectators rated sport interest, aesthetic quality and violence higher than the spectators in Korea. Table 2 shows a complete list of the means and standard deviations for motivations by cultural background.

Subsequent equations regressing spectator motives on media consumption were calculated for each country to provide more specific information to sports marketers regarding the relevant motives for each cultural background (Table 3). The overall model for the American event was significant [$F(11, 196)=18.323, p < .001$, Adjusted $R^2=.479$]. Through backward regression to remove non-contributing variables, fighter interest, sport interest and drama remained as significant predictors of media consumption. The model reflecting the remaining variables was significant [$F(3, 204)=67.254, p < .001$, Adjusted $R^2=.490$]. The Standardised Coefficient ($\beta$) indicated that sport interest ($\beta=.530$) explained the most variance, followed by fighter interest ($\beta=.176$) and drama ($\beta=.140$).

The overall model for the Korean sample was also significant [$F(12, 216)=29.424, p < .01$, Adjusted $R^2=.556$]. Through backward regression to remove non-contributing variables, sport interest, drama and adoration remained as significant predictors of media consumption. The model reflecting the remaining variables was significant [$F(3, 225)=97.221, p < .001$, Adjusted $R^2=.559$]. The Standardised Coefficient ($\beta$) indicated that sport interest ($\beta=.747$) explained the most variance, followed by drama ($\beta=.157$) and adoration ($\beta=.133$). The result of the Korean model indicated that 56% of the variance in media consumption was explained by sport interest, drama and adoration motives.
### TABLE 1  Factor loadings ($\beta$), standard errors (SE) and average variance explained values (AVE) for the 12-motive scale of MMA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOTIVES AND ITEMS</th>
<th>KOREA (SAMPLE=229)</th>
<th>AMERICA (SAMPLE=208)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\beta$</td>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRAMA/EUSTRESS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ENJOY THE DRAMA OF CLOSE FIGHTS</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I PREFER WATCHING A CLOSE FIGHT RATHER THAN A ONE-SIDED FIGHT</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ENJOY FIGHTS WHERE THE OUTCOME IS UNCERTAIN</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICARIOUS ACHIEVEMENT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHEN MY FAVOURITE FIGHTER WINS, I FEEL A PERSONAL SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHEN MY FAVOURITE FIGHTER WINS, I FEEL MY STATUS AS A FAN INCREASES</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I FEEL PROUD WHEN MY FAVOURITE FIGHTER DOES WELL</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESCAPE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ATTEND FIGHTS TO AVOID THE HUSTLE AND BUSTLE OF DAILY ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>1.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WATCHING FIGHTS OFFERS AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET AWAY FROM MY EVERYDAY ROUTINE</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIGHTS ARE OPPORTUNITIES TO FORGET ABOUT MY PROBLEMS</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECONOMIC FACTOR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BETTING OR MAKING BETS IS THE MOST ENJOYABLE ASPECT OF BEING A FAN</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I LIKE TO BET ON FIGHTS WITH MY FRIENDS OR COLLEAGUES</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I LIKE MMA BECAUSE I CAN BET ON THE FIGHTS</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AESTHETIC QUALITY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I APPRECIATE THE BEAUTY AND GRACE OF MMA FIGHTS</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I LIKE MMA BECAUSE MMA IS A FORM OF ART</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WATCHING A WELL-EXECUTED ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE IS SOMETHING I ENJOY</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADORATION/HERO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHEN A FIGHTER APPEARS TO BE UNBEATABLE, HE BECOMES A HERO</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMA FIGHTERS ARE MY ROLE MODELS BECAUSE OF THEIR HIGHLY ADVANCED SKILL</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I WATCH MMA FIGHTS TO WITNESS GREATNESS</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIOLENCE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I MMA BECAUSE IT HAS MORE VIOLENCE THAN OTHER SPORTS</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I LIKE THE MATCHES MORE WHEN THEY GET BLOODY</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ENJOY THE VIOLENCE OF MMA</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATIONAL PRIDE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ATTEND MMA MATCHES TO SUPPORT MY COUNTRY'S FIGHTER</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PATRIOTISM IS A BIG REASON WHY I ATTEND FIGHTS</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHEN MY COUNTRY'S FIGHTERS WIN, I FEEL PROUD TO BE A CITIZEN</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIALISING</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATCHES ARE GREAT OPPORTUNITIES TO SOCIALISE WITH OTHER PEOPLE</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERACTING WITH OTHER FANS IS A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF BEING AT MMA EVENTS</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I AM THE KIND OF PERSON WHO LIKES TO BE WITH OTHER PEOPLE</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPORT INTEREST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I AM A HUGE FAN OF MMA IN GENERAL</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIRST AND FOREMOST, I CONSIDER MYSELF A FAN OF MMA</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I CARE ABOUT THE SPORT OF MMA</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIGHTER INTEREST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I TEND TO FOLLOW INDIVIDUAL FIGHTERS MORE THAN MMA ORGANISATIONS</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I AM MORE OF A FAN OF INDIVIDUAL FIGHTERS THAN A FAN OF ONE CERTAIN ORGANISATION</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I TEND TO WATCH MMA TO SEE MY FAVOURITE FIGHTERS</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>1.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Spectator motives**

**TABLE 2** Means, standard deviations and Cronbach Alphas of motivational factors by country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>KOREA (SAMPLE =229)</th>
<th>AMERICA (SAMPLE=208)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADORATION</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AESTHETIC*</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRAMA</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECONOMIC FACTOR</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESCAPE</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATIONAL PRIDE*</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIALISING</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICARIOUS ACHIEVEMENT*</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIOLENCE*</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>1.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPORT INTEREST*</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIGHTER INTEREST</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANISATIONAL INTEREST</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>1.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant cross-national differences at the $p < .05$ level.

**TABLE 3** Impact of motivations on media consumption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE B</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>ADJ $R^2$</th>
<th>$F$</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KOREA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.565</td>
<td>.559</td>
<td>97.221***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPORT INTEREST</td>
<td>.696</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>.747***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRAMA</td>
<td>.198</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>.157***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADORATION</td>
<td>-.143</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>-.133*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.497</td>
<td>.490</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPORT INTEREST</td>
<td>.593</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>.530***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>67.254***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIGHTER INTEREST</td>
<td>.200</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>.176**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRAMA</td>
<td>.181</td>
<td>.074</td>
<td>.140**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$. 

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Discussion

As the popularity of MMA has rapidly increased throughout the world over the past few years, leading MMA promoters such as UFC, Pride FC and K-1 have attempted to expand their business in the US or East Asian countries. However, there are concerns about whether promoters have appropriate marketing strategies to penetrate new markets successfully, because North American customers and Asian customers appreciate different aspects of the sport (Genauer, 2006). The findings of this study suggest cross-national differences exist, necessitating a better understanding of each market when promoting MMA events.

Several differences in motivations emerged from the analysis, suggesting differences in why Americans and Koreans are attracted to attending MMA events. Primarily, Americans rated sport interest as the most important factor. This finding exemplifies the shift in the way MMA has been promoted in the US. It was first promoted as a spectacle, and initial spectators were attracted by the novelty of the sport. It now appears that American spectators attending MMA events have begun to embrace MMA as a legitimate sport, and many see themselves as fans of the sport. Similarly, Americans rated aesthetics as much more important than Koreans, suggesting that American consumers are attracted to the technical aspects of the sport and appreciate the artistry of well-executed performances. Given that Americans have much less experience watching or participating in martial arts, a well-executed take-down or submission manoeuvre may seem very impressive.

Koreans, on the other hand, have much more experience of watching or participating in martial arts, because traditionally martial arts have been considered an important tool for cultivation of the mind and for character-building in many Asian countries, while other sports have played those roles in western countries (Ko, 2002). Therefore, Koreans naturally exposed to Korean Taekwondo, Japanese Judo and Chinese Kungfu from an early age may have seen MMA moves many times before, making them less impressive. Based on these findings, promoters in the US should focus on fostering identification with the sport and should continue their efforts to legitimise the sport by educating spectators about the skills and strategies involved. Conversely, education may have little effect on Korean spectators, who more easily accept MMA as a legitimate sport and are already familiar with the various martial arts techniques via their cultural background.

Another area that American spectators rated more highly than Korean spectators was violence. American spectators rated violence as the fifth-highest reason to attend events, indicating they are attracted, to an extent, to the aggressive, dangerous nature of the sport. Korean spectators had dramatically different ideas: they rated violence as 11th out of 12 motives. This finding may also be explained by differences in participation in martial arts. Korean spectators with high levels of the knowledge of the finer aspects of martial arts – such as discipline, focus and athleticism – may not associate the actions during matches with violence, while American spectators may perceive relatively higher levels of violence from MMA actions. When the sport first started in the US, promoters needed something to get customers’ attention and focused on the violent aspects of the sport. Although this approach created several problems for early promoters of the sport, it did attract attention (Walter, 2003; Wertheim, 2007). However, as MMA has evolved with rules and regulations designed to correct some of the negative images around the sport, and its fans have been educated regarding MMA skills and strategies, MMA fans have begun to appreciate aspects beyond its violent nature. Therefore, despite being a combat sport, results from this study suggest that violence may not be the best marketing strategy for either Koreans or Americans.

Korean spectators placed a greater emphasis on vicarious achievement than American spectators. Koreans have been watching and practising martial arts for thousands of years, making it reasonable to believe they would have a better ability to see
themselves in their favourite fighters. Unlike other Asians, every Korean male has to serve in the military for two years. During their period of service, they are trained to achieve a certain competency level in Taekwondo or other martial arts as a part of their training. Most Americans, on the other hand, are only now being introduced to the sport and may not have as much knowledge of traditional martial arts as a basis for their appreciation of the sport. Without the history and knowledge of martial arts, American spectators may put much more emphasis on other factors. This is an interesting finding for marketers, as many American sports teams use vicarious achievement as a marketing tool by emphasising team success and the ability for fans to ‘be a part of the team’s success’. Results from this study suggest that such strategies may not be as effective for marketing MMA to American consumers, but may have a strong effect on Korean consumers.

Korean spectators also rated national pride as a much more important factor than their American counterparts. In part, this reflects the way the sport has been presented by the major MMA organisations. Asian organisations such as Pride and K-1 have placed a greater emphasis on national rivalries when promoting fights. For example, Pride often matches Japanese fighters with American fighters and promotes the national pride angle as the key selling point for the fight. UFC, the dominant American organisation, has rarely used this angle to promote fights, choosing to focus primarily on the skills and achievements of the individual fighters.

The primary similarities between the groups were in terms of drama and fighter interest. Both were highly rated for each group, suggesting that regardless of where the sport is marketed, promoters should continue to emphasise the drama associated with close fights and the qualities of the individual fighters. Since drama is important, promoters should avoid mismatches and seek to promote fights where the outcome is uncertain. Further, drama was much higher rated than adoration, suggesting that MMA fans would much rather see close fights than see fights featuring a dominant, seemingly unbeatable, fighter.

UFC has been successful with this approach, as exemplified by the number of upsets and title changes in 2006 and 2007.

This discussion also extends to fighter interest. American and Korean customers are both motivated to watch MMA to see their favourite fighters. However, the aforementioned discussion suggests that MMA fans would rather their favourite fighter fought the best opponents than built lofty records against lesser opponents. Therefore, MMA promoters should seek to find additional ways to build interest in fighters, such as educating spectators about fighters’ backgrounds, history, fighting styles and strengths. Developing interest in fighters by building their records against lesser opponents may create interest in fighters, but the drama associated with the sport would suffer. Boxing has often been criticised for this, and based on the results of this study, MMA should avoid the practice.

This study also sought to understand which motives drove media consumption. This is an important consideration as relatively few people can attend MMA events, thus creating a need to generate exposure and revenue through media consumption. In both the American and Korean samples, sport interest was the main predictor of media consumption, as spectators with a high interest in the sport are probably more likely to seek further information about the sport through various media outlets. To a much lesser extent, drama predicted media consumption for both groups. The only differences between the two groups were that fighter interest predicted media consumption in the American sample, indicating that American consumers like to watch close fights featuring their favourite fighters. This is exemplified by the UFC’s television series UFC Unleashed, which is a compilation of the best, most dramatic fights featuring the most popular fighters. Adoration was negatively correlated with media consumption in the Korean sample. This may indicate that Koreans do not want to see unbeatable fighters holding champion titles for a long period.

While MMA serves as an excellent setting to determine the efficacy of various contrasting martial
arts techniques, the event results seem to indicate that there is no one martial arts style that is effective across all fighting situations. As a result of the lack of dominance afforded to one particular technique, MMA fans have learned to anticipate the possibility of huge upsets during events. The results of the present study indicate that the outcome uncertainty associated with MMA may influence Korean MMA fans with regard to media consumption.

In conclusion, results from this study indicate that differences exist between American and Korean spectators in their motivations to watch the emerging sport of MMA. From a practical standpoint, the findings suggest that marketers must seek to understand different cultures when attempting to globalise the sport. Slight differences in the way the sport is marketed in different countries may have a large impact on the acceptance and growth in those areas. Theoretically, this study advances research into sports fan motivation by providing additional evidence into the efficacy of sport-specific motives research, as suggested by James and Ross (2004). The majority of sports consumer motivation research has focused on team sport rather than individual sport. In addition, studies examining consumer motivations within individual combat sports are extremely rare. More importantly, this research extends the work of Kwon and Trail (2001) by validating the notion that motivations for sports consumption may vary among different cultures. Since the study evaluated the motives of consumers in two different countries, it allows for an accurate comparison of consumer motivation differences between nationalities in the same sports context.

Limitations and future research
The primary limitation to this study is that only spectators for American and Korean events were surveyed for the sample. Although this method accomplishes the study’s primary goal of understanding whether or not cross-national differences influence MMA consumption, there is more detailed information to be learned about spectators in other countries. Research could be undertaken in other areas where MMA has experienced growth, such as Japan and the United Kingdom, to better understand the MMA phenomenon. While these countries have seen significant exposure to the sport, research could also be expanded to examine areas that have not been exposed to the sport to the same extent, such as France and Italy, to better understand how to expand the sport into new areas.

The study was also limited in that each fight card in the study contained exclusively domestic fighters. This lack of international match-ups may have limited the analysis of national pride as a motive. Contrary to the belief that national pride would play a huge role in Asian MMA markets, it was rated only the sixth highest among 10 factors. In practice, promoters outside the US, such as Pride and K-1, in the belief that national pride will attract more Asian MMA fans to the sport, have utilised competitions between fighters who have different backgrounds to create interest. Future research into national pride as a motive should take place at events matching fighters of different nationalities to determine the relative importance of this motive.

Finally, it is important to consider whether the cross-national differences uncovered in this study are practically relevant as well as being statistically significant. According to Table 2, motives with statistically significant mean differences according to setting differed by approximately one point on a seven-point Likert scale. Given the rather large sample size of 437 (America=208; Korea=229) usable surveys and the resulting statistical power that accompanies a sample size of this magnitude, one could argue that these results are both statistically significant and practically meaningful. However, given the limited research concerning motives of MMA spectators and fans of individual combat sports in general, future research is needed to provide more definitive information as to what constitutes a practically relevant difference in this setting.

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Biographies

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Spectator motives


The challenges of producing popular sports contests: a comparative study of biathlon and cross-country skiing

Keywords
International Biathlon Union (IBU)
International Ski Federation (FIS)
stakeholder
events marketing

Executive summary
The aim of this article is to analyse how different configurations of stakeholders create opportunities for the production of popular TV sports contests. The key to financial success is attention in the media, and particularly on TV. In recent years, the competition between sports has grown fiercer and it has become important to identify stakeholder settings that are favourable to producing popular TV sports contests. This paper contributes to existing knowledge by comparing the developments of biathlon and cross-country skiing as TV products.

Abstract
This article analyses how different configurations of stakeholders create opportunities for the production of popular TV sports contests. Based on qualitative methodologies, biathlon and cross-country skiing are used as contrasting cases. The paper concludes that the relative success of the International Biathlon Union is due to a favourable network position in relation to stakeholders. By comparison, the International Ski Federation suffers from a weak position within a dense stakeholder network.

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Peer reviewed
Biathlon vs. cross-country skiing

The international governing bodies for cross-country skiing and biathlon have both tried to increase their sport’s popularity among TV viewers. However, the internal processes within the two sports have been different.

Being in possession of the TV rights, the International Biathlon Union (IBU) has had a central role, with freedom to construct a portfolio of contests that the media and TV viewers have found attractive. The athletes and the media have been involved in this innovation process. This has given them and the stakeholders a sense of ownership of new competitions that has been a part of the innovation process.

Cross-country skiing has more established traditions than biathlon as a competitive and a commercial sport. Powerful event organisers with a long history already existed when an official World Cup was launched in 1982. Over the years, the event organisers have developed mature relationships with commercial actors such as the media and sponsors, and they have therefore been unwilling to hand over power to the International Ski Federation (FIS). In contrast to the biathlon, the TV rights for the World Cup competitions are sold by the event organisers, not by the international sport governing body (FIS). This seems to have reduced the ability of the FIS to promote cross-country skiing as effectively as the biathlon is promoted. In addition, interviews with representatives from the FIS and athletes document that the athletes have stood up as powerful stakeholders and resisted innovations in the competition programme. On occasion, athletes have even used boycott threats to have their own way. The paper also reveals that different attitudes between nations within the FIS have had a similar effect.

This paper uses a stakeholder network approach to shed light on the differences between the IBU and the FIS. It concludes that the IBU is in a situation of low density/high centrality, a favourable network position in relation to its stakeholders; the FIS has a position of high density/low centrality and suffers from a weak position within a dense stakeholder network.

Introduction

Sports contests have a number of characteristics that distinguish them from other goods and services. One of these is the uncertainty of outcome phenomenon (Neale, 1964). Although many spectators are fans of teams and individual athletes and want their favourites to win, they also find close contests more exciting than those that are dominated by one contender. According to Noll (1974), the more uncertainty in the results of the games, the higher the public demand for the sport. This requirement of uncertainty of outcome calls for cooperation between the actors involved in the production of sports contests. Another characteristic of sports contests is the joint nature of the production (Gerrard, 2000). In principle, it takes at least two athletes or teams to produce a contest; in reality, there are usually many more. The relationship between the contenders is best described as ‘cooperative competition’. These two characteristics, the uncertainty of outcome and joint production, make sports contests different from other commodities.

As well as the athletes, the production involves a range of stakeholders such as local event organisers, national and international sports governing bodies, the media and sponsors. These actors will have different motives for being involved; they may also have conflicting interests with regard to organisation of the competitions and which instruments to use to make them exciting. Such disagreements can make it difficult to organise a contest in a way that maximises the TV audience.

The aim of this paper is to shed light on how different stakeholder compositions create different conditions for successful TV products. Biathlon and cross-country skiing are used as comparative sports. Since the late 1980s, both these sports have aimed at attracting more TV viewers and spectators. There are many indications that biathlon has been the more successful of the two. The reasons for this are analysed using stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984). Special attention is paid to conflicting interests between the international sports governing bodies and
Biathlon vs. cross-country skiing

various stakeholders – such as the athletes, local event organisers and national sports governing bodies, and the consequences that these conflicting interests have had for the promotion of the sport.

The first section briefly outlines the theory of uncertainty of outcomes before describing the main theoretical framework of the paper – a combination of stakeholder theory and network theory (Rowley, 1997). After describing the methodology, the paper goes on to outline the recent history of the two sports, including changes made to competition programmes and their relative success in terms of TV audiences and revenues. Then follows analysis of how the FIS and the IBU have each sought to develop their sports as media products, and how their respective organisational positions have influenced their ability to do this. The final part of the paper uses stakeholder network theory in order to discuss how the IBU’s relative success in relation to the FIS may be explained by characteristics of the two stakeholder networks, and the organisations’ different positions within these.

Developing successful TV products – a stakeholder network perspective

The theoretical section of the paper consists of two parts. First, a multidimensional perspective on the uncertainty of outcomes is introduced. This makes it clear that the production of popular sports contests is complicated and requires a high level of interaction between stakeholders. Second, a perspective on stakeholder dynamics and power is introduced, with the network as a central element.

The uncertainty of outcome phenomenon has received substantial attention in the literature from sports economists (Borland, 2003; Downward & Dawson, 2000; El-Hodiri & Quirk, 1971; Kringstad & Gerrard, 2003; Neale, 1964; Szymanski, 2003; Szymanski & Kuypers, 1999). Although empirical results have been ambiguous about the precise importance of uncertainty of outcome to the popularity of a TV sport, there is no doubt that this does matter.

The uncertainty of outcome element can have several dimensions. In team sports, it can apply to individual matches. It may also apply on a seasonal level and be related to winning a tournament or league, avoiding relegation or qualifying for play-offs or other international tournaments. Individual sports also have procedures which give the uncertainty of outcome several dimensions – for example, the World Cup series and similar competitions that take the results over a whole season. Some sports also organise supplementary competitions within the main contest – for example cycling races, where separate sprint and climbing contests are quite common.

The uncertainty of outcome has been given several dimensions with the aim of attracting larger audiences and hence generating higher revenues. It is well documented that popular sports contests can generate enormous revenues, particularly from the sale of TV rights and through sponsorship (Gratton & Solberg, 2007; Fort, 2003). However, achieving such objectives is conditional upon how the competitions are produced by the TV media and how they are organised.

First, there is the visualisation of the contest element. A close race in itself is of no value for spectators and TV viewers unless they are able to observe it. It is not enough to read about it in the next day’s newspapers; achieving a certain quality of production is vital. Second, it is important that the best athletes are willing to participate in all contests. The more athletes and clubs that are involved in contests of importance, the easier it is for the event organisers to sell the products. As an example, a World Cup series will lose its prestige if top athletes give priority to the Olympics and World Championships and only participate in a few World Cup races.

To fulfill the conditions of achieving high-quality production and of recruiting the best athletes, the owners of the product are dependent on coordinating and balancing the relations between hosts of stakeholders. Stakeholder theory is much used within research on sports events (Friedman & Parent, 2004; Parent, 2005; Parent & Benoit, 2007). In a widely
used definition, Freeman (1984, p.46) defines a stakeholder as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievements of the organisation’s objectives”. This is a broad definition, which has been contested by authors who seek more narrow, precise definitions of stakeholders, for example by requiring that a stakeholder group or individual must have direct relevance to the organisation’s core economic interests (Clarkson, 1995). This paper is based on a broad definition of stakeholders, which seems suited to a situation where different stakeholders have very different types and degrees of claims on the organisation of cross-country skiing and biathlon (Mitchell et al, 1997).

In an argument for integrating stakeholder theory with network theory, Rowley argues that stakeholder theory has been too concerned with defining who is a stakeholder and with classifying individual stakeholder relationships (Rowley, 1997). As a consequence, the dynamic inter-relationships between different stakeholders are not captured. In Rowley’s argument, the stakeholder tradition is thus incapable of grasping the real dynamic of how organisations respond to a multitude of stakeholder influences. Rowley (1997) seeks to address this gap by defining stakeholder power in terms of network structure and position and by analysing how aspects of an organisation’s stakeholder network, namely network density and the focal organisation’s centrality, influence its degree of resistance to stakeholder pressure. This paper is based on this combined perspective. The international sports governing bodies of the IBU and the FIS represent the ‘focal organisation’, while the local event organisers, athletes, the media, sponsors and national sports governing bodies are the ‘stakeholders’.

Density is a characteristic of the whole network and measures the relative number of ties in the network that link the actors together. This is calculated as a ratio of the number of relationships that exist in the network (stakeholder environment) to the total number of possible ties if each network member were tied to every other member. A complete network is one in which all possible ties exist. In this context, we can imagine that individual event organisers establish relations with one another that do not go through the international sports governing body. Likewise, athletes can communicate internally, for example, by establishing their own unions, which are independent of the international sports governing bodies. If we regard all individual actors as separate stakeholders, and these are tied together, then the network density will be close to 1.

Centrality refers to an actor’s position in a network relative to the others. In contrast to power gained through individual attributes, centrality refers to power obtained through the network structure. Similar to formal power, which can be defined by a hierarchical position, network centrality implies a position of status. Social network literature distinguishes between three types of centrality, each corresponding to a different aspect of an actor’s positional status: degree centrality, closeness centrality, and betweenness centrality. These are measures of an actor’s number of direct ties to the other actors, independent access to other, and control over other actors, respectively (Brass & Burkhard, 1993).

Degree centrality is defined as the number of ties an actor has with other actors in the network. The idea behind degree centrality is that players ‘well connected’ in their local environment – in terms of having many relations – will have access to many alternative sources of information, resources and so forth.

Closeness centrality defines an actor’s ability to access independently all other members of the network. Frooman (1999) associates closeness centrality with efficient communication, stating that closeness means fewer message transmissions, shorter times and lower costs. One can measure an actor’s closeness centrality by summing the lengths of the shortest paths between him or her and all other actors (Wassermann & Faust, 1994).
Betweenness centrality is similar to closeness centrality, since both measures consider access to other actors, but it is based on the viewpoint of an intermediary actor who is positioned between other actors, rather than the standpoint of the transmitting and recipient actors. Actors with high betweenness centrality are brokers or gatekeepers in the sense that they facilitate exchanges between less central actors (Scott, 1991). It is the extent to which an actor has control over other actors, independent access to others, and control over other actors respectively. The most central actor(s) have the shortest aggregate distances to all other actors and can reach other actors, through a minimum number of intermediary positions. The central actor is therefore dependent on fewer intermediary positions than the peripheral actor (Brass, 1984). All stakeholders must go through the most central actor to communicate or exchange resources with other parts of the network. An actor possessing low closeness centrality is highly dependent on other actors to access other regions of the network. An actor that is close to all others can disseminate information quickly throughout the network (Rowley, 1997). As the focal organisation's
centrality increases, its ability to resist stakeholder pressure also increases, and a highly central focal firm might be able to resist all stakeholder pressures.

The models in Figures 1 and 2 are adaptations from Rowley (1997) and illustrate two sports governing bodies whose ability to influence will be different. The governing body in Figure 1 is in a powerful position due to high degree centrality and also high betweenness centrality. All contacts with local event organisers, the media and sponsors have to go through these, and it is only one step away from the stakeholders.

This is fundamentally different from the situation in Figure 2 where the event organiser is more powerful, and at the cost of the sports governing body. Here the event organiser is the most central actor, only one step away from the other actors. Furthermore, the event organiser can also benefit from high betweenness centrality, because the other actors have to communicate through him or her.

Table 1 illustrates how the centrality of the focal organisation and the density of the stakeholder network influence the distribution of power between them. In a situation of high density/high centrality, stakeholders are able to constrain the focal organisation, while a highly central focal organisation is able to resist stakeholder pressures. Stakeholders can coordinate their efforts to monitor and sanction the focal organisation, and the focal organisation can influence the formation of expectations. The focal organisation faces an uncertain environment, since its stakeholders are capable of forming a strong, unified force against it.

A centrally located focal organisation facing a densely connected set of stakeholders will want to decrease the degree to which its stakeholders could exercise their ability to change the organisation’s behaviour. Stakeholder pressures, especially unforeseen demands, could disrupt the organisation’s performance. As a result, the focal organisation will become a compromiser, attempting to balance, pacify and bargain with its influential stakeholders (Oliver, 1991). The goal of a compromiser is to negotiate a mutually satisfactory position, which at least minimally appeases stakeholder expectations, and to achieve a predictable environment in which stakeholders are unlikely to oppose its actions collectively.

Under high density/low centrality the focal organisation is in a vulnerable position. The network structure allows for efficient communication between stakeholders, and the focal organisation is unable to influence the information exchange process from its peripheral position. A focal organisation holding a peripheral position in a high-density network will become a subordinate to its well organised stakeholders and not be in a position to resist stakeholder pressures (Rowley, 1997; Oliver, 1991).

Under low density/high centrality conditions, the focal organisation is able to resist stakeholder pressures. Stakeholders that are not united in their pressure on the organisation will become passive and unable to exert unified pressure on the focal organisation. The relative power balance shifts in favour of the focal organisation, which can adopt a commanding role, attempting to control stakeholders’ behaviours and expectations.

In a low density/low centrality situation, the focal organisation is unable to manipulate established norms. It does not occupy an influential position in the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Density of the Stakeholder Network</th>
<th>Centrality of the Focal Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>LOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMPROMISER</td>
<td>COMMANDER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUBORDINATE</td>
<td>SOLITARIAN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 1 A structural classification of stakeholder influences: organisational responses to stakeholder pressures (Rowley, 1997)
network, and will adopt the role of a solitary, attempting to avoid stakeholder pressures.

Stakeholder network theory permits an interactive analysis of characteristics of networks and of positions within such networks. We have already indicated that the FIS and the IBU participate in different types of networks and hold different positions within them. As the empirical data shows, this difference in organisational structures has consequences for the possibilities for change in TV sports products.

Methodology

The paper combines qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data is based on two case studies of the respective developments of cross-country skiing and biathlon as media sports. For each case, central stakeholders have been identified and interviewed. At the level of the international sports governing bodies, interviews with representatives of the IBU and the FIS have been conducted, among them Anders Besseberg, president of the IBU; Sverre Seeberg, member of the Council of the FIS and chairman of the Norwegian Ski Federation; Odd Martinsen, chairman of the Cross-Country Committee of the FIS from 1986 to 2002; and Vegard Ulvang, chairman of the same committee since 2006 and a member since 1997.

At the national level, the Norwegian Biathlon Association (NSSF) was researched most extensively as part of a larger in-depth study into the development of this association. Key personnel were interviewed (the president, the general secretary and the head of development). A number of athletes (n = 15) in the national team were also interviewed, and fieldwork was conducted in which the national team was followed during the World Championship in 2005. The interviews with the Norwegian Ski Association (NSA) were conducted especially for this paper, and included the current chairman and a former athlete who was a central person at the national team during the 1990s.

Among other relevant stakeholders, one interview was carried out with a TV journalist who had been central to the Norwegian TV productions of both biathlon and cross-country skiing since the 1980s.

Finally, various sources of second-hand data were also collected, covering consumer surveys, TV ratings, TV rights fees, sponsorship deals and prize money paid to competitors. This was supplemented with data from newspaper articles and other sources. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods enables us to analyse the topic more thoroughly than would have been possible by means of a single method (Silverman, 2001).

The development of biathlon and cross-country skiing as TV sports

Cross-country skiing became an Olympic sport in 1924, and was dominated by the Nordic countries for several years, and later by the Soviet Union. The World Cup was unofficially introduced in 1973/74 and became official in 1982. The modern winter biathlon has a shorter history and was introduced in 1955 in Macolin, Switzerland. As with cross-country skiing, the Nordic countries and the Soviet Union dominated the sport during the early years. It became an Olympic sport in 1960, and an official World Cup was inaugurated in 1978.

Both sports have enhanced their geographical territory, and this is reflected in the distribution of medals in international championships. Three nations won medals in the 1991 Biathlon World Championship and nine in the 2005 championship. In cross-country skiing, the number of countries winning medals increased from five to nine in the same period. Biathlon has become a very popular TV sport, and in 2002 it was the most watched winter sport in Europe.

In the following we present the developments in competition programmes, spectator popularity and

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i http://www.biathlonworld.com/eng/history/page_000085.htm

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Financial revenues within the two sports. Data from Germany and Norway, which represent two core markets for these sports, are used to illustrate development trends.

Competition programme
Both sports have undergone major changes since the 1990s. In cross-country skiing, this process started in the 1990s and continued into this century. Cross-country skiing had one (classical) style until the 1980s, when free style was introduced. Historically, all individual contests were based on sequential start procedures, with competitors starting every 30 seconds. Since early in the 1990s, new contests such as sprint, mass start, pursuit start and duathlon have been introduced. As a consequence of these developments the numbers of competitions have increased significantly, from two in the 1924 Winter Olympics in Chamonix to 12 in the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin.

Biathlon has undergone a similar development, from a single contest in the inaugural 1960 Olympics to 10 in the 2006 Turin Olympics. Pursuit start and mass start were introduced in World Championships in the 1990s. Shooting procedures have also been modified in order to improve the view of the standings during the race.

Development as TV sport
The promotion efforts seem to have paid off in terms of TV exposure and revenue generation, as illustrated. Figure 3 shows a growth in the TV ratings for World Cup competitions in Germany for both sports in the period 2001 to 2005, with the exception of a minor decrease for the biathlon in the last year. Biathlon was the second most popular sport over the whole period, and enjoyed a 9% increase in TV viewers. Cross-country skiing had the strongest growth, and climbed from (joint) fifth to third during the same period. The biathlon World Cup competitions achieved an average market share of 22.6% (2004/05) and 22.1% (2003/04), while the equivalent percentages for cross-country skiing were 18.4% (2004/05) and 18.6% (2003/04). For biathlon, the positive

![Figure 3: Average TV audience World Cup competitions, Germany (millions)](image-url)
development continued during the first part of the 2005/06 season after the small decline in 2004/05.

Figure 4 illustrates the ability to reach TV audiences during the Winter Olympics in 2002 and 2006. It is based on ratings figures and the duration of the programmes for the specific sports, and it confirms biathlon’s leading position in the German market. Cross-country skiing was rated second in 2002 and third in 2006. Biathlon enjoyed a positive growth of 15% in viewers from 2002 to 2006, while all the other sports experienced a decrease. Figures 5 and 6 are based on consumer surveys measuring the interest for various winter TV sports in Germany. The results document biathlon’s leading position; cross-country skiing is fifth. Figure 5a refers to the respondent’s personal ‘top two’ winter sports, and shows that one in two mentioned biathlon while one in four mentioned cross-country skiing. Figure 6 confirms biathlon’s superiority and shows that while one in three was very interested (level 6) in biathlon, only one in nine was very interested in cross-country skiing.

Surveys from Norway documented a similar pattern, as illustrated in Figures 7 and 8. The 2003/04 biathlon World Cups attracted the highest TV audiences ever, and the sport enjoyed an increase of 7% over the entire period (17% up to 2003/04). For cross-country skiing, the ratings were lower for every year following the 1999/2000 season except for the 2004/05 season, when they were unchanged from the previous season.

Biathlon was ranked as the sixth most popular TV

The IFM-index combines the rating figures and the duration for the specific sports programmes. Retrieved 5 May 2006 from: http://www.apf.at/apf/hp.nsf/47587915C0A67B8AC1256DD0004FAC69/$File/BWC%20VKP0607%20E.pdf
Biathlon vs. cross-country skiing

FIGURE 5 Popularity of winter sports, Germany

![Bar chart showing popularity of winter sports in Germany](chart.png)

- **Biathlon**: 51% in 2005, 53% in 2004
- **Ski-jumping**: 45% in 2005, 49% in 2004
- **Nordic combined**: 32% in 2005, 30% in 2004
- **Ski-alpine**: 31% in 2005, 31% in 2004
- **Cross-country skiing**: 25% in 2005, 26% in 2004

Source: Sponsors wissen für sportbusiness, Ausgabe September 2005, 10 Jahrgang

FIGURE 6 Interest in biathlon and cross-country World Cup 2005 (Germany)

![Bar chart showing interest in biathlon and cross-country World Cup 2005](chart2.png)

- **Very interested in biathlon**: 34% in 2005, 11% in 2004
- **Very interested in cross-country**: 19% in 2005, 15% in 2004
- **Very interested in biathlon**: 12% in 2005, 16% in 2004
- **Very interested in cross-country**: 14% in 2005, 18% in 2004
- **Very uninterested in biathlon**: 10% in 2005, 10% in 2004
- **Very uninterested in cross-country**: 18% in 2005, 21% in 2004

Source: Sponsors wissen für sportbusiness, Ausgabe September 2005, 10 Jahrgang. Retrieved 30 June 2006 from:
http://www.apf.at/apf/hp.nsf/_/2FA94DB1CE8996A9C1256C590031DE50?opendocument
http://www.apf.at/apf/hp.nsf/_/0B6E23BB826197CE3C1256D9C00418F1C?opendocument
Biathlon vs. cross-country skiing

**FIGURE 7** TV viewers World Cups in biathlon and cross-country skiing, Norway

![Graph showing TV viewership for biathlon and cross-country skiing over years 1999/2000 to 2004/05.](image)

**FIGURE 8** Popularity of Norwegian TV sports

![Graph showing interest in sports from 1999 to 2005.](image)

Source: Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK), 2006

Source: MMI Sponsoring, 2005
Biathlon vs. cross-country skiing

FIGURE 9 TV revenues IBU (€million, 2005)

Source: IBU, 2005

Biathlon has experienced an enormous growth in TV rights since the early 1990s, as shown in Figure 9. Some contracts have had a duration of several years, but the annual real value may have declined due to inflation.

The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) has always acquired the biathlon rights, but has met fierce competition from rival bidders in recent years. This competition was the main reason for the increase in the rights fee from 2006. ARD and ZDF, the two German national broadcasting services, are the guarantor of the new deal and will shoulder the bulk of the cost, paying at least 50% of the rights fee (TV Sports Markets 9(10), p.5).

It is difficult to present similar data for cross-country skiing TV rights, since these have been offered in packages which also cover ski-jumping. In comparison to biathlon, the World Cup skiing rights are sold individually by each local event organiser. The FIS only sells the World Championship rights. Nevertheless, one finds several indications of the biathlon being the more successful of the two in terms of revenue generation. For the TV deal from 2007 to 2011, the German skiing association will receive an annual payment of about €14 million for the first three seasons, and €15 million for the final season. This represents a slight reduction from the previous deal, where it received €15 million annually (TV Sports Markets, 2007, 11(10), pp.5-7). European fees were set to fall for the World Championships in the last round of negotiations with the EBU. The EBU had agreed in principle to pay less for the 2011 and 2013 championships than the €97 million it paid for the 2007 and 2009 event, but some EBU members
became concerned about competition from private broadcasters, raising the fee to €121 million. However, the competition never materialised (op. cit.).

Both cross-country skiing and biathlon have gone through extensive changes in their competition programmes since the 1990s. Many of these changes have gone towards enhancing the uncertainty of outcome effect, by introducing shorter races and races where the first person to cross the finish line wins the competition. Despite this similarity in development, TV ratings figures and the financial revenues deriving from TV rights in the two sports indicate that biathlon has become the more successful TV product since the turn of the century. It is argued that this can be explained by the respective power of the product owners, i.e. the international sports governing bodies, the IBU and the FIS. More specifically, their different positions in stakeholder networks have given them different degrees of opportunity to shape the visual TV product and to integrate elite athletes into the joint effort of production.

The shaping of a successful TV product – analysis of underlying elements
Three elements are essential to the TV product. One is the production of the TV transmission: to what degree it allows for TV audiences to experience the uncertainty of outcome, by the timing of clips and results. The second element is the competition itself, with the uncertainties of outcome that it implies. According to the perspective of this article, the context of the competition – i.e. a World Cup series – is also important in creating this uncertainty of outcome. Hence, the third element concerns the athletes’ willingness in contributing to making the World Cup a viable product. In this section we will show how the FIS and the IBU have worked to create good TV productions and interesting competitions, and how they have tried to integrate athletes into developments.

The production of TV transmissions
Cross-country skiing has a long history and this includes event organisers that over the years have become powerful stakeholders. Among them, first and foremost, are the organisers of the ski festivals of Holmenkollen (Oslo, Norway), Lahti (Finland) and Falun (Sweden). For several decades these were the major events in addition to the Olympic Games and the World Championships. These, and some newcomers, have not been willing to hand over their power to the FIS. The chairman of the NSA and member of the council of the FIS stated:

“Remember there are many traditional event organisers in cross-country skiing. In cross-country and skiing in general, the FIS has the rights for the World Championships, while it is the national associations that can sell the rights for the World Cup.”

In most cases there is also a close association between local event organisers and the national federations. This means that separate national federations have their own power base in relation to the international sports governing body, the FIS.

In biathlon, with its considerably shorter history, things are different. Early in the 1990s the IBU assumed control over TV right deals for World Cup competitions as well as the World Championship rights, so the IBU did not have to negotiate with powerful stakeholders such as event organisers. The difference between the IBU and the FIS in this respect is spelled out in the interview with Ulvang, a former elite athlete and current leader of the cross-country committee and a longstanding member of the FIS athletes’ committee:

“Some events are solved differently in biathlon and cross-country skiing. Among other differences, there is the difference with regards to the World Cup, where the IBU is the initial TV right holder. This has been possible because biathlon has a shorter history as a commercial sport than cross-country skiing. Biathlon did not have traditional event organisers that had organised international events since the early or mid 20th century. Therefore, it was easier for the IBU to get control.”
The IBU has used this control strategically to choose its broadcasting partners. One principle has been to ensure that the same broadcasters are given the rights to all the World Cup events during the season. A second principle is to prioritise public broadcasters. By selling production rights to the EBU, the IBU ensures that the World Cup is delivered by public broadcasters in the different European countries. According to the president of the IBU, this is an important principle in order to make the sport accessible to the widest possible audience. Finally, the IBU has also required that the same producers are involved in all productions during a season, to ensure quality. According to the Norwegian TV commentator in our study, this has been important in creating high-quality productions over time.

By comparison, the FIS was not in a position to control which broadcasters had the rights to cross-country transmissions. Each national federation negotiated its own agreement, and in some cases the financial aspects of the agreement were prioritised over quality. Moreover, the World Cup was distributed between different channels during a season, and there was no continuity on the production side. Hence, the quality of transmissions has varied significantly.

The control of the IBU over TV rights has put this international sports governing body in a position where it can ensure certain principles in the production of the biathlon as a TV product. As we shall see, the control position of the IBU has also had consequences for the development of the competition programme when compared to the position of the FIS.

Development of the competition programmes within cross-country skiing and biathlon

When a new competition programme was developed in biathlon, the IBU and the president, Besseberg, took a leading role. However, this was done as a process of involvement, which Besseberg describes thus:

"Regarding mass start in biathlon, several alternatives were considered, and the TV broadcasters were included, as they were when the pursuit start was designed. Indeed, they were not the only ones, as the pattern of this process is typical for most of what is happening in biathlon. The key word is involvement, and hence joint responsibility. I spoke to many of the involved parties during this process, among others to athletes, TV commentators, sponsors and journalists. We listened to their suggestions and used them before constructing the final design."

What is important to note is that the IBU was in a position to take the lead in the process and to coordinate the viewpoints of a range of stakeholders.

In the FIS, disagreements between national federations, in particular in the Scandinavian countries and Finland and in Central Europe, were a problem to the process of changing the competition programme. They involved the views on 'mass start versus sequential start' and also on the length of sprint distances. Central Europeans have preferred short sprint distances, while the Nordic countries preferred long distances in order to make sprint competitions attractive for all-round athletes. These differences were confirmed by the FIS representatives Ulvang and Martinsen:

"Discussions have revealed a major difference between the Nordic countries and Central Europe. In the Nordic countries we have been accustomed to long [races of] 50 kilometres [and to] measuring 'intermediate times', while Central Europeans have their background in cycling and athletics. Young people of today do many things while watching TV. A mass start is easier to watch in a superficial way, while individual start requires more concentration." (Vegard Ulvang)

When sprint was introduced, the Nordic countries, and particularly Norway, argued that the distance should be as long as possible.

"The reason for this was to prevent the sport becoming divided and specialised. However, the Central Europeans saw their chance with the
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Introduction of sprint and wanted the distance to be as short as possible. They saw their chance for cross-country skiing to have a breakthrough as they thought that the Scandinavians were slower and easier to beat than in traditional cross-country skiing. A compromise was reached, with a sprint distance between 1,200 and 1,500 metres."

(Odd Martinsen, current leader of the FIS competitive committee)

These two citations clearly indicate that the FIS has had to negotiate between strong stakeholders within its own organisation. The different national federations have had the power to fight for their own interests, and the FIS has not had the measures of control to take a clear leading role in developments.

An additional issue for the FIS was that many athletes and their coaches were very negative about changing the competitions, for example by introducing mass start and pursuit start. Pursuit start was tested in 1987 and 1988, but many athletes disliked it. Snowy weather conditions on the second day could represent a disadvantage for the winner of the first day's race and also prove to be a disadvantage for racers who not were as good competing head to head as they were when starting sequentially. In 1989 the athletes managed to stop a World Cup race due to the FIS plans to introduce a 'wave-start' system, with five skiers starting together. A similar incident occurred the following season, when the athletes forced the FIS to cancel plans to introduce pursuit start in the 1991 World Championship.

Seeberg, chairman of the Norwegian Ski Association and member of the Council of the FIS, stated:

"While representatives of the FIS have worked on adjusting the sport for spectators and TV viewers, the competitors have resisted it. Therefore the process has taken more time."

Ulvang, triple Olympic Champion in Albertville 1992, was one of the most active in the dispute with the leaders of the FIS. He is currently chairman of the FIS cross-country committee:

"The competitors have more or less always opposed altering the existing [system], which also was the case during my career. We, the competitors, were not involved at all. The biggest problem occurred with the suggestion to introduce the wave start in December 1989.... A meeting between the competitors gave full support to a boycott of the new arrangement. The support was massive... The boycott was a reaction to competition procedures which we disliked, but first and foremost we reacted to the way they were introduced. The FIS cross-country committee made their decisions without consulting the athletes."

Such problems have not occurred in the biathlon. One reason for this is that the athletes were involved in the preparations of innovations such as pursuit start and mass start before they were introduced in championships. Hence the biathletes adopted positive attitudes towards the new competitions. In addition, coaches, journalists and other key figures were involved in these processes. Furthermore, new starting procedures were tested at unofficial events before being adopted in World Championships, World Cups and the Olympic Games.

The biathletes revealed more positive attitudes than the cross-country skiers. Ole Einar Bjørndalen (five times Olympic Champion and winner of the World Cup) stated:

"The biathlon has gone through a rapid development during the last 10-15 years. As for the competition programme, I believe we have found a lasting design. There should not be any changes made for the sake of change."

Halvard Hanevold (twice Olympic champion):

"Some important developments have taken place involving the biathlon, but without the sport being adversely affected."
In summary, the IBU has shown a greater ability than the FIS to promote change in the competitive programme. This has been made possible through a combination of being in control of central resources (the TV rights) and use of their intermediary position between stakeholders. The FIS, on the other hand, has not been in control of TV rights, and its development of the competition programme has been characterised more by dispute. Negotiation between the various stakeholders has been less possible, which is most clearly expressed through relations with the athletes. This state of affairs has also had consequences for the support by athletes of the biathlon and the cross-country World Cups.

The prestige of the World Cup

The main objective of the World Cup was to enhance the uncertainty of outcome through a seasonal dimension. To achieve this, however, the best athletes would need to participate as often as possible in World Cup competitions. History indicates that biathletes have taken the World Cup more seriously than cross-country skiers. This was illustrated during the 2005/06 season, when both sports hosted 24 World Cup events. In the biathlon, the top 10 male athletes participated in 21 events on average, while the top 10 male cross-country skiers participated in only 11. According to Seeberg, weak participation in the World Cup is a problem for the FIS:

"We [the FIS] have toiled with the problem of competitors not participating in enough races. The World Cup product is being devalued if the best competitors do not participate. In the long run, there is a risk that the World Cup competition would be discontinued."

Ulvang makes a similar point:

"If we are unable to create an attractive World Cup, cross-country skiing will continue being a great sport – but not an interesting TV sport."

Consequently, the World Cup's prestige has been reduced. In turn, this has reduced its ability to enhance the uncertainty of outcome dimension. The disagreements have also made it difficult to promote cross-country effectively. Although many athletes have shared the goal of promoting the sport, the international 'cross-country family' has not stood united behind innovations. The conflict of views has reduced the ability to reorganise contests to align them more closely with audience preferences, despite this being necessary for increasing popularity.

Discussion

The empirical data presented in this paper indicate that the biathlon has been more successful than cross-country skiing in terms of growth in popularity and revenue generation over the past two decades. One major reason for this has been the different positions of the two sport governing bodies, the IBU and the FIS. The position of the IBU corresponds with the situation described in Figure 1, where the focal organisation is powerful and the stakeholders are less influential. Biathlon has been in a position of 'low density/high centrality'. The IBU has been an influential focal organisation, and neither the athletes nor the event organisers have stood up as powerful stakeholders against the IBU. This has allowed the IBU to tailor competitions to make them attractive for the media, particularly TV. The best athletes have participated in (almost) all World Cup races. This has made the competition prestigious and, in turn, given the uncertainty of outcome an extra dimension – in addition to the specific race. The biathletes have accepted the changes in the contests. One reason for this is that they have been involved in the planning and preparations of new competitions. The interviews indicate that the IBU listened to their views before introducing modifications to competitions. This seems to have reduced the motive to use their own 'union', the Athletes Commission, as a powerful stakeholder against the IBU. The FIS has toiled with influential athletes who have...
been unwilling to alter competitions. The model in Figure 2 best describes the situation of cross-country skiing. The FIS has found itself in a position of a low degree of centrality, while the close ties between the athletes have created a high degree of density. The athletes have stood up as a powerful stakeholder, and have on several occasions resisted changing the events. This was illustrated by their success in preventing the introduction of new competitions through the threat to boycott World Cup competitions. The interviews also provide other examples where athlete power was used. To summarise, the FIS has been given a role as subordinate – or at best a compromiser – and hence found it difficult to take a stand against influential athletes and local event organisers (Oliver, 1991).

Another reason for the different attitudes between biathletes and cross-country skiers could be that the shooting element can have great influence on the order in a biathlon race. This reduces the relative importance of other factors, such as start procedures. This may also explain why biathletes have been more positive towards innovations such as the mass start than cross-country skiers. However, the fact that cross-country skiing does not have this dimension makes it important to extend the uncertainty of outcome by other features. Hence, internal disagreements may have ‘punished’ the sport harder than they would have punished biathlon.

Another major difference has been seen in the positions of local event organisers. Cross-country skiing has long traditions. Consequently, powerful event organisers with a long history already existed when the official World Cup was introduced. Over the years, these stakeholders had established long-term relationships with commercial actors, such as TV broadcasters and sponsors. Therefore, they were unwilling to provide the FIS with the same power as the IBU. As an example, the event organisers have sold the TV rights for World Cup competitions in cross-country skiing. In reality, there will be many event organisers, not only one, as Figure 2 indicates, and they will not have the same motives as the sports governing body to standardise the contests in order to promote the World Cup.

Biathlon had a short history when the official World Cup was introduced. Therefore, the IBU gained more power than event organisers (compared to cross-country skiing). This enabled them to standardise competitions in order to promote the World Cup. Furthermore, the IBU has always sold the TV rights for World Cup competitions and the World Championship. An attractive World Cup can also reduce the prize money and hence save costs for event organisers, since athletes aiming to win the World Cup would have to participate in as many events as possible. Representatives of the FIS have on several occasions argued in favour of centralising the sale of the World Cup rights, as they believe that this would help market the sport, through increased exposure and by boosting revenue (TV Sports Markets 9(21), p.1).

In summary, cross-country skiing seems to be ridden with conflicts between individual and collective rationalities. It is likely that a reorganisation of the contests would have increased the sport’s popularity among TV viewers. In turn, this would also have increased the revenues to be shared between the actors involved in the organisation of the competitions. However, the problem has been that some of these actors are better off with the current system if alternative systems introduced increase the power of the FIS and put them at personal financial disadvantage.

Conclusion

This paper has revealed that organising sports contests in a way that maximises their popularity can prove difficult if the production involves stakeholders with different interests. It has illustrated the advantages of standing united as a homogeneous organisation when adaptations of the products are required, but it also makes clear that certain factors can make it difficult to launch necessary innovations.

Sports fans in general prefer close contests, with a high degree of uncertainty of outcome. However, a
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Close competition is of no value unless spectators and TV viewers are able to get a good view of it.

Biathletes have stood united behind the innovations aiming to increase the popularity of their sport. The IBU has been a central and powerful actor, and has avoided conflicts with powerful stakeholders such as athletes and local event organisers. In cross-country skiing things have been different: severe internal disagreements between the competitors and the FIS have delayed innovation. Biathlon has also been more successful than cross-country skiing in using the World Cup to give the uncertainty of outcome a seasonal dimension.

The contribution of stakeholder network theory in analysis of the organisational conditions for enhancing media products is that it combines information about individual positions in the network with characteristics of the network itself. For example, the FIS' difficulties in positively engaging athletes in changes to competition programmes must be understood both through the FIS' low degree of centrality and through the density of the athlete network. Likewise, the IBU's successful role must be understood as a result of its centrality within a dense network where close interaction in promoting change is made possible.

The importance of establishing favourable organisational situations is manifest through the changing situation in European TV markets. In addition to declining rights fees, TV audiences across Europe are much lower than they were several years ago. According to one senior skiing rights executive, if these problems are likely to continue, skiing could go the way of tennis and athletics in disappearing from Europe's television screens, unless changes are made to how the sport's major events are organised (TV Sports Markets 11(10) pp.5-7).

There is a need for more research that might clarify the organisational conditions required for promoting the necessary changes. Research should aim to provide more in-depth analysis of how sports can promote themselves effectively. This, among other things, also requires more consumer surveys on the factors which influence people's interest in viewing sport on TV.

Biographies

**Harry Arne Solberg** is a professor at Trondheim Business School at Sør-Trøndelag University College. His research interests are the economic impacts of sport and sporting activities, with specialisation in sports broadcasting and sporting events. Within this field he has published around 20 articles in refereed journals and several book chapters. In addition, he has published, with professor Chris Gratton, The Economics of Sports Broadcasting. He is a member of the editorial boards of the International Journal of Sport Finance and European Sport Management Quarterly.

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References


Biathlon vs. cross-country skiing


The *Journal* welcomes the submission of academic and practitioner research papers, articles, case studies, interviews and book reviews. Submissions should aim to educate and inform and should ideally focus on a specific area that is pertinent to the subject matter of the *Journal*, as detailed below. In all instances, the editorial team seeks to publish submissions that clearly add value to theory and/or practice in sports marketing and sponsorship.

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The mission of the *Journal* is to bring together academics and practitioners in one forum, with the intent of furthering knowledge and understanding of sports marketing and sponsorship. The *Journal* interprets sports marketing and sponsorship broadly, to include:

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- individual performers and endorsers
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- clarity and content of the abstract
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- value added by the submission to academic and practitioner understanding of sports marketing.

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Research articles should normally be no less than 4,000 and no more than 8,000 words. Case studies of no less than 2,500 and no more than 5,000 words should be objective rather than promotional and should follow the following format: Background / Objectives / Implementation / Results / Conclusion. Interviews are welcomed, but should be discussed with the Editor. Book reviews should normally be less than 1,500 words.

Each article submitted for consideration should include an executive summary of up to 500 words, which gives a flavour of the article and includes the rationale for the study, methods used, key findings, conclusions and value added. A shorter abstract, of no more than 100 words, must also be included.
Footnotes and endnotes may be used but only where appropriate and as sparingly as possible.

Tables, charts, diagrams and figures should be in black and white and placed on separate pages at the end of the manuscript. Where data or image files have been imported into Word for tables, diagrams etc, please supply the original files. Authors must indicate in the main body of the text approximately where each table, chart, diagram or figure should appear.

Jargon should be kept to a minimum, with technical language and acronyms always clearly defined.

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