Women and Leadership Development in Australian Sport Organizations

Abstract

There has been growing interest in gender diversity and the leadership development of women in recent years within the broader field of management studies. Understanding leadership development processes is important for the sport industry, in which organizations are becoming increasingly professional and commercially focused. Despite the increased attention on gender diversity and leadership development within the sport industry to date, the scope and application of organizational gender and leadership development theory within an Australian sport context has been limited. As such, the purpose of this study was to explore the leadership development practices adopted by key stakeholders of the Australian sports industry, with the intention to uncover how they impact the role of women in different organizations. Specifically, the research investigated the practices of three organizations that have a major stake in Australian professional sport.

Keywords: gender, diversity, inclusion, stakeholders

Introduction

Finding an agreed-upon definition of *leadership* in the field of management is a difficult and problematic task. It is one of the hardest organizational terms to define, and yet it remains critical to the success of any business or organization. As such, leadership is one of the most widely researched and discussed topics within organizational theory (Burton & Leberman, 2017). While theorists continue to grapple with the question "Are leaders born or made?" the process of leadership development continues to demand attention. Not only does it offer employees an opportunity for career development, it can also provide organizations with a highly desirable source of competitive advantage (Day, 2001). Simultaneously, the importance of gender diversity in leadership teams is becoming increasingly recognized—both in scholarly and popular literature—as critical to the success of an organization (Burton & Leberman, 2015). Scholars such as Ely, Ibarra, and Kolb (2011) have highlighted the need for more research into effective leadership development and succession planning practices for women. There is also limited research in this area of study from a sport management perspective, particularly within an Australian context (Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014). Moreover, the scope and application of organizational theory is almost entirely focused on understanding gender and exploring gender ratios rather than examining leadership development practices for women within sport organizations (Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007). Furthermore, research has largely focused on national sport organizations with little consideration of other stakeholders in the industry (Pfister & Radtke, 2009; Sisjord, Fasting, & Sand, 2017).

As such, this represents an important opportunity to expand upon current gender discussions within the Australian sports narrative, with particular regard to the leadership development and succession planning of women. This is particularly timely given that sports organizations have been championing the role of women and increasing diversity within their

organizations and the Australian Sports Commission (2015) renewed its call for Australia's

national sport organizations to actively work towards improving the presence of women in

administrative leadership positions by enacting board level quotas. As outlined by Adriannse

(2017), however, while many sport organizations today have diversity policies, they have still

been very slow, in many instances, to appoint women to board positions, senior management

positions such as CEO, and to senior coaching positions.

This paper starts by outlining the context for the study and describing the three

organizations that agreed to participate, representing a cross section of the professional sport

industry. This is followed by a discussion of the research aims and a detailed examination of

the relevant leadership development literature, drawing especially on the knowledge base in

gender and leadership studies. The next section discusses the methodology utilized in this

study. In the remaining sections, the results are reported and discussed in relation to relevant

literature.

Context

The Australian sports industry has been continually evolving over the past four

decades. While governance remains key to the efficient and effective management of sports

organizations, the way in which sport is governed in Australia has shifted considerably since

the 1970s (Ferkins, Shilbury, & O'Boyle, 2017). Fundamentally, this shift has been driven

by technological change, which has altered the nature of sports, and the way in which sport is

broadcast and accessed (Cashman, 2010). Initial reform was triggered by increased

competition among private radio and television channels to broadcast popular sporting

matches, thereby increasing the value of specific sport properties. It represents a turning

point in the ideology of Australian sport: pre-1970s was a time in which "amateurism shaped

Australian sport" (Phillips, 2001, p. 19), and the turning point signified that the industry was

becoming increasingly more professional and commercialized. The increased professionalization of Australia's sport organizations has been most evident in three areas:

1. Governance structure – a shift from a council to a contemporary style of governance, specifically a board of directors (Ferkins, Shilbury, & McDonald, 2005).

2. Diversification of revenue streams – broadcast is no longer a supplementary source of income; it determines the financial security and overall success of a sports league. There was also significant growth in the value of merchandise and product endorsements.

3. Regulation of labour – introduction of paid players and executives; national sports organizations have become less reliant on volunteers in administrative capacities (Dabscheck, 2010).

In a professional sport environment that is becoming increasingly complex, commercial, and competitive, the need for effective and efficient leadership is crucial. Are such leadership development systems currently in place, and what role can women play in the future leadership direction of Australia's sport organizations?

Research Aims

The focus of this study therefore was to explore gendered processes among professional organizations that are part of the Australian sport industry, and to uncover their impact on the leadership development of women. As outlined above, the investigation of this phenomenon within an Australian context has thus far been limited to professional sport organizations, presenting an opportunity for further analysis. This research employed a multiple-case study approach to determine what, if any, gendered processes are in place, and to identify what leadership development practices are currently employed, in order to determine impediments to the development of women's leadership identity and to understand cultural and organizational biases (Ely et al., 2011).

In order to address the main aims of this research the study adopted a multi-case analysis. Three organizations, each with a different role, but all with a long involvement in Australian sport were selected for the study. The three organizations included: a professional sport organization that is responsible for the management of a professional national league as well as developing their sport from community level to elite level; a sport media organization that is responsible for broadcasting sport in Australia; and, a financial services organization that has been regarded as one of Australia's most significant sponsors of sport for more than three decades. Further details of these three organizations are provided in the method section.

Literature Review

Leadership Development

Leadership development has become an increasingly important element of the broader leadership and organizational field of study. However, Day, Atwater, Sturm, and McKee (2014) noted that it is first important to distinguish between developing leaders and developing leadership: "Leader development focuses on developing individual leaders whereas leadership development focuses on a process of development that inherently involves multiple individuals" (p. 64). The process of leadership development is becoming increasingly difficult to navigate, as the problems faced by contemporary leaders are often complex and ill-defined. Traditional, short-term training solutions are no longer seen as sufficient or as effective, thereby prompting a new wave of leadership development literature (Day et al., 2014).

A shortcoming of past research in the leadership paradigm was the continued desire to link personality with leadership (Day, 2011). It is an approach that neglects the "inherently longitudinal and multilevel" nature of leadership development (Day et al., 2014, p. 71). Day (2011) thus argued that leadership development must be assessed through both intrapersonal

and interpersonal perspectives. An intrapersonal or individual identity perspective embodies experience and learning, skills, personality, and self-development. Leadership also "involves a complex interaction between people and their social and organizational environments" (Day et al., 2014, p. 65). Therefore, whilst the importance of individual identity cannot be undervalued, to focus solely on this construct would reduce the overall effectiveness of any leadership development strategy. Instead, effective strategies must consider both social mechanisms and authentic leadership.

Russell and Kuhnert's (1992) model of leadership development sought to integrate two key theories of skill development in order to promote transactional and transformational leadership qualities. Russell and Kuhnert's framework incorporates Kanfer and Ackerman's (1989) model of skill acquisition and Kegan's (1982) constructive-developmental model of adult development as critical to the success of leadership development strategies, whilst also emphasizing the importance of feedback mechanisms as a way of consolidating the two learning processes.

Kanfer and Ackerman's (1989) episodic model of skill acquisition is part of a broader body of research focused on an experience-based approach to leadership development. The model "simultaneously integrates cognitive abilities, self-regulatory processes, and information processing demands" (Russell & Kuhnert, 1992, p. 338). Kanfer and Ackerman argued that challenging experiences provides a vehicle for skill development by "motivating individuals to exert additional effort to acquire the skills demanded" (as cited in De Rue & Wellman, 2009, p. 859). Russell and Kuhnert (1992) argued that an episodic model of skill acquisition could be easily applied to individuals at the start of the leadership development process who are looking to develop foundational transactional skills. Their research provides suggestions for skill-based learning processes such as lectures, case discussion, roleplay, and simulation or trial efforts with real subordinates. As proposed by DeRue and Wellman

(2009), these challenging experiences provide two key opportunities: (a) they provide a "platform to try new behaviours or reframe old ways of thinking" (p. 860), and (b) they highlight gaps in a current skill set and hopefully promote motivation for learning and development.

Significant scholarly advancements have been made since Russell and Kuhnert's initial proposal. DeRue and Wellman's (2009) research built upon this experience-based model and sought to address five key areas: (a) unfamiliar responsibilities, (b) high levels of responsibility, (c) creating change, (d) working across boundaries, and (e) managing diversity. DeRue and Wellman also sought to address three key shortcomings of past research in the area of experience-based leadership development. Kanfer and Ackerman's (1989) research did not clearly identify the catalysts that promote motivation. Whilst Kanfer and Ackerman's (1989) model is appropriate for the development of transactional skills, it is difficult to determine boundaries for the sequence of skill acquisition (Russell & Kuhnert, 1992). Thus, if a leader were undertaking a process of transformational development, her or his skill would unlikely be formulated from a single experience. The model also relies upon the assumption that an individual is passive in relation to environmental influences; however, this is simply not the case. Rather, the learning process is dynamic and continuous, and there is a reciprocal interaction between the individual and her or his environment (Bandura, 1986).

Despite the growth in leadership development research, as outlined above, rarely has this work focused on the needs of women leaders (Harris & Leberman, 2012), it has for the most part been concentrated on men in middle and senior management situated within commercial organizations (Jennings, 2009). This has occurred despite evidence that suggests that leadership development for women can provide strong benefits both for both organizations and the individuals involved (Hopkins, O'Neill, Passarelli, & Bilimoria, 2008).

Leadership Development and Gender

The interaction between gender and leadership development remains an underexplored body of research. The focus of early theorists was on measuring developmental opportunities available to both men and women in an attempt to quantify gender bias. Following on from this approach there has been a shift in focus towards understanding subtle or "second generation" forms of bias (McCauley, Ruderman, Ohlott, & Morrow, 1994). Management rhetoric and philosophies have traditionally been dictated by male codes of behavior, ensuring that women remain unheard and unfulfilled (Maddock, 1999). These codes and biases may take the form of entrenched cultural and organizational beliefs as well as "structures, practices, and patterns of interaction that inadvertently favour men" (Ely et al., 2011, p. 4). As outlined by Ford (2006), for many organizations leadership is still shaped by "charismatic and masculine models" that still feature "macho, individualistic and assertive behaviours" and discourses that are valued more heavily in comparison to "feminine qualities such as empathy, capacity for listening, relational skills and so on" (p. 96). Furthermore, "when women use their relational skills to lead, their behavior is likely to be conflated not only with femininity but with selfless giving and motherhood" (Fletcher, 2006, p. 655).

As outlined by the work of Harris and Leberman (2012) on women and leadership development in the higher education sector, a multi-organizational response to the problems of women's progression in organizations is one that other industries should adopt and deliver. Harris and Leberman's (2012) research found a number of key characteristics that need to be considered when implementing leadership development for women, including: leadership development when conducted with sector-wide peer groups can enhance learning beyond the workplace; while leadership development programs can vary greatly in there design and implementation it is critical that senior organizational leaders have a visible presence and that they adequately resource these programs; longitudinal evaluation must be undertaken to

ensure leadership development programs can continue to be improved and adjusted overtime

to ensure women have the best opportunities to succeed as leaders in senior management

roles.

However, despite the research conducted to date, Ely et al. (2011) state that there is

still an absence of a "coherent, theoretically-based and actionable framework for designing

and delivering leadership programs for women" (p. 5). This may be due to a presumption

that organizations are now starting from a position of equity and diversity in leadership and

processes. As organizations have sought to diversify their workforce, the demand for

leadership programs has not been met by an increased scholarly assessment of gender and

leadership development. Thus, Ely et al. proposed a new leadership development model by

applying a gender perspective to two key themes of recent leadership development literature:

(a) leadership identity development, and (b) an understanding of cultural and organizational

bias.

Ely et al.'s (2011) model first seeks to identify key impediments to the development

of leadership identity. Through this process, individuals can gain greater understanding and

awareness of barriers to leadership development. These impediments include: few role

models for women, gendered career paths and gendered work, women's lack of access to

networks and sponsors, and women leaders' heightened visibility. Ultimately, Ely et al.

(2011) argued:

> Leadership development programs that provide women with a framework for
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> understanding how second generation gender bias can derail their leadership
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> transitions and a holding environment in which to discover, recover, and sustain a
>
> sense of agency and purpose in their ongoing exercise of leadership occupy an
>
> important place in the portfolio of developmental experiences that will help women
>
> advance into more senior leadership roles. Participants in such programs invariably

develop a strong network of peer support that often extends beyond the life of the

program. (p. 35)

Gagnon and Collinson (2014) built upon the ideas presented by Ely et al. (2011) and

argued that historically, leadership development and gender studies have focused too heavily

on the individual's "cognitive processes or interpersonal interaction" (p. 649). This

shortcoming was widely demonstrated in the prescription of certain qualities necessary for

the development and success of a leader (Day, Harrison, & Halpin, 2009). In doing so, the

literature fails to truly account for the complexities of leadership development, in particular,

the role of employer, organizational discourse, and power in shaping leader identities

(Gagnon & Collinson, 2014; Shaw & Frisby, 2006). Therefore, Burton (2015) argued that

any discussion of a woman leader's identity and lived experience "must include positioning

gender as a fundamental aspect of organizational and social processes" (p. 156). This is

crucial for organizations that prescribe to a hegemonic masculine norm and can lead to a

better understanding of gender as an axis of power, defining organizational structures,

processes, and interactions (Burton, 2015; Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Frisby, 2006).

The core focus of early studies on gender and organizational theory was on the

relationship between gender and employment. Kanter's (1977) initial analysis considered

gender composition and the presence of a skewed gender ratio across most industries. The

research focused significantly on the presence of minorities in the workforce, with Kanter

(1977) arguing "the greater the skewness of a group, the greater the visibility of the minority

and the greater the emphasis on gender differences". A key finding of Kanter's research was

the idea that an organization's gender ratio or composition is a structural determinant of

(gendered) organizational behaviour. Kanter's research also suggested that organizations

with skewed gender ratios were more likely to benefit from greater visibility and improved

emphasis on gender differences. Whilst gender organizational theory has more recently been

rebadged as "gender diversity," the principles applied today still reflect those proposed by Kanter in 1977.

Leadership, Gender, and Sport

There is a growing body of research examining the interaction between leadership and gender within a sport context. Historically, this research has focused on analyzing how gender is interpreted and understood within a sporting context, and how this context influences practices of inclusion and exclusion of women in sport governance (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007). A key finding of the research was that a skewed gender ratio among sports boards was often considered normal, whilst a balanced ratio was considered unique. It is a sentiment that reflects McKay's (1997) critical early study on male managers within Australia and New Zealand national sport organizations. Notably, the managers interviewed ascribed the absence of women in positions of power to "'tradition,' 'society' or 'natural' sex difference" (McKay, 1997, p. 51). The issue with this attitude is that it does not problematize gender skewness and through an implicit acceptance, it allows for the "reproduction of gender limitations" (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007). In a later study, Claringbould and Knoppers (2008) found that the use of traditions and symbols, as well as characterizations of gender-appropriate tasks and positions, often caused alienation for female participants, as these traditions held different meanings for men and women—often favouring men. However, positively, it was also found that "by virtue of their membership and by introducing issues related to women," organizations were able to work towards reducing and undoing gender divisions (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008, p. 87).

The commentary surrounding the credibility of gender ratios has also been applied to the sport industry. Whilst considerable research has been conducted into international sport organizations, Adriaanse and Schofield (2014) sought to address a gap in the literature regarding Australia sport organizations. The authors sought to assess the interactions of

leadership, gender, and sport within an Australian context through an analysis of the impact

of gender quotas on gender equality among boards of national sporting organizations in

Australia (Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014). It was found that there was a deeply entrenched

resistance to the introduction of quotas, board members citing common concerns such as

"adverse effects of such a strategy; opponents warned of increased regulation and decreased

efficiency, tokenism and a decline in the quality of governance," and believing that the "best

people" would be passed over in favour of female candidates (Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014,

p. 494). Whilst continuing a push for the introduction of gender quotas, Adriaanse and

Schofield also argued that the success of a quota regime would be interdependent on the

implementation of other gender dimensions or strategies.

In her study of Australia sport and leisure organizations, Sibson (2010) sought to

examine the impact of other gender dimensions on the leadership development of women.

The author noted that whilst sport organizations have attempted to demonstrate gender

equality through a greater female presence, they continue to perpetuate gender inequality.

This led Sibson to investigate the impact of positional power on women's access to power,

and its ability to influence agenda-setting power and bring about change. Ultimately, it was

found that whilst the number of women in leadership positions is important, it is critical to

assess the staffing configurations within sport organizations and whether women hold

positions of influence (Sibson, 2010). In organizations where men continue to hold senior

management and leadership positions, the re-gendering of sport organizations is not simply a

women's issue. Sibson argued that it is the responsibility of those who possess the power to

set an organization's agenda and directive to both challenge and reorganize sport

management practices.

In summary, current scholarly knowledge has focused on the intersection of

leadership and gender among international sporting organizations, with limited application to

Australian sports. Moreover, the application of organizational theory within Australia, whilst scarce, is almost entirely focused on national sports organizations. This highlights a significant opportunity to further our understanding of gendered processes within an Australian sporting context, through an assessment of the gender constructs of different stakeholders within the professional sport industry. This study focused on comparing the gendered behaviors of a professional sport organization (PSO), a sport media organization (SMO), and a financial services organization (FSO), which was traditionally regarded as a "blue-chip" sponsor, and exploring how gendered behaviors among Australian sport stakeholders have impacted the leadership development of women.

Methodology

As outlined earlier, a case study approach was adopted for this study. This method was selected as it helps researchers to understand the how and why of a modern phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin, 2009). As outlined by Stake (1995), case studies can draw upon holistic, naturalistic, and qualitative methods in order to examine practices and social interactions. Moreover, and as argued by Yin (2009), the "distinctive need for case studies arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena" (p. 4). The case study method allows the researcher to capture the most meaningful and often complex characteristics of the phenomenon being explored.

There are numerous advantages for sport management research in adopting a case study methodology. This has been demonstrated in studies conducted over the past few decades, in which researchers have sought to demonstrate a deep level of understanding of sport-related phenomena (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Edwards and Skinner (2009) argued that case study "sport management researcher is able to obtain an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of cases in order to generate new insights" (p. 202).

Case study methodology is not without its weaknesses. As Yin (2009) pointed out, quality case study research is difficult to do and provides a challenging avenue for the social researcher: "Perhaps the greatest concern has been over the lack of rigor" (p. 14). Lack of empirical rigor has been a notable criticism primarily because of the tendency towards verification in case studies, where researchers merely seek confirmation of their preconceived notions, which ultimately impacts the objectivity of the research (Berg & Lune, 2012). Another concern about case studies is the lack of scientific generalizability. This refers to the relevance of the case beyond its own boundaries—that is, to the wider population. Linked to this, another criticism is that there are limited opportunities for case studies to confirm or produce scientific theory (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

The present study adopted a multiple-case design focusing on three selected organizations: the FSO, the SMO, and the PSO. Yin (2009) considered single- and multiple-case designs to be variants within the same methodological framework, with no broad distinction made between the two approaches. However, the multi-case approach has distinct advantages over the single-case approach. Through the comparison of individual cases, the researchers have the opportunity to develop and refine new formulations (Edwards & Skinner, 2009). As such, the findings from multiple cases are "often considered more compelling and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust" (Yin, 2009, p. 53). In other words, the multiple-case design provided the researchers with an opportunity to conduct cross-case analysis (Stake, 2006). This approach helped to validate similarities among the three cases when similar findings emerged, and also assisted in showing differences among the organizations.

Three "critical cases" were selected for our multi-case analysis (Flyvbjerg, 2004). Each organization represented a different stakeholder within the Australian professional sport industry: a sponsor of professional sport, a sport broadcaster, and a national sport governing

body. As per the ethics approval process at the University of Technology Sydney, a pseudonym was assigned to each case in order to protect the commercial interests of the organizations. The discussion below outlines the position of each organization—FSO, SMO, and PSO—within their industry sector, and more broadly within an Australian sports context.

Financial Services Organization

The FSO was one of Australia's largest financial institutions. The organization was established in the early 1800s; however, it was not until 1982 that it undertook a process of rapid expansion through the acquisition of various smaller lenders in order to widen its footprint in both Australia and New Zealand. In 2008, the organization launched a much larger multi-brand group strategy with its most significant merger to date. The organization is publicly listed on various stock exchanges including the Australian Stock Exchange (ASX). As a reflection of its listing on the ASX, the organization employs a shareholder-based system of corporate governance, and this drives the strategic direction and policy implementation within the firm. For the full year ending 30 September 2016, the organization had employed more than 35,000 full-time staff (ASX, 2016). While the FSO is not a sport organization, it is one of Australia's largest sponsors; it has provided support to professional sport leagues, professional sport teams, and major sport events. Furthermore, it was the first bank to publicly commit to achieving a target of 50% of its leadership positions being held by women by 2017; the current percentage of women is 48%. As the organization is a non-public sector employer with 100 or more employees in Australia, it is required to undertake compulsory gender reporting as part of the Workplace Gender Equality Act (WGEA) of 2012.

Sport Media Organization

The SMO was a leading sport broadcaster in Australia with a focus on live national and international sports events. The broadcaster was established in the 1990s and currently

offers multiple television channels dedicated to sport programming. Its channels broadcast over 10,000 hours of live sports programming per year, including live sports such as AFL, cricket, motorsport, netball, and tennis. The organization competes primarily with free-to-air, subscription television, and digital channels.

Prior to November 2012, the organization was a joint venture between two prominent media organizations. However, the ownership structure has now shifted, and the SMO is now fully owned by one of the joint venture organizations. Similar to the FSO, the parent company of the SMO is listed on the ASX. As such, the SMO also employs a shareholder-based system of governance. The organization's revenues are captured within the financials of its parent company and as a result are not easily identifiable. However, the most significant operating expenses were identified as being the acquisition and production of content (programming), and the operation of technical facilities of the broadcast operations (ASX, 2016). Women hold the majority of leadership positions within what has been described by Byrant (1984) as the "pink collar ghetto" parts of organizations, such as marketing, public relations, and human resource management. Historically, there has been limited representation of women in operational leadership positions within the SMO. Similar to the FSO, as a non-public sector employer with 100 or more employees in Australia, the SMO is also required to undertake compulsory gender reporting as part of the of 2012 WGEA.

Professional Sport Organization

The PSO represents one of the largest participation sports in Australia, particularly among women. The sport has its origins as far back as the late 1890s, but it was not until 1997 that the first national competition was formed, attracting much-needed sponsorship and media interest. In 2008, the competition was disbanded and a new competition established, which incorporated the national competitions of both Australia and New Zealand. It

represented a shift from amateur to semi-professional competition, attracting increased popularity, sponsorship, and player salaries. The professionalization of the sport can be significantly attributed to landmark broadcast deals that ensured the sport could be viewed on both free-to-air and subscription television.

The PSO is considerably smaller than other sport governing bodies in Australia (such as the Australian Football League and the National Rugby League), both in terms of the number of employees and revenue. It is also significantly smaller than the FSO and SMO examined in this study. For the full year ending 31 December 2016, the organization had total revenues of $15,853,286 and employed 58 staff (full-time and part-time); the sport had close to 500,000 participants (Professional Sport Organization, 2016). The PSO is a not-for-profit organization and has a delegate system of governance, with directors of the board elected by and accountable to the sport's governing council. The council consists of two delegates representing each state or territory. Women hold the majority of leadership positions within the PSO. This is reflective of the sport's history as a predominantly female sport. Unlike the FSO and SMO, the PSO does not meet the criteria for compulsory gender reporting under the 2012 WGEA due to the size of the organization.

The selection of these case studies was based on the authors' established connections with each organization, which enabled timely access to participants. Furthermore, each organization was chosen for their key role as stakeholder within the professional sport industry, allowing for direct and pertinent comparisons to be made with regard to leadership development practices and processes. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with 14 senior managers, across the three organizations with the majority undertaken face-to-face and remaining interviews completed over the phone. The average interview length of the interviews was one hour. Participants were asked eight questions, encompassing the following key themes: formal and informal approaches to leadership development, structures

and strategies, succession planning considerations, and the impact of an organization's

gender ratio on its successes.   Purposeful sampling resulted in the 14 interviews being

conducted with senior executives and managers at the three organizations. At the SMO,

interviews were conducted with senior managers in human resource management, broadcast

planning, and operations. For the sport sponsor, interviews were conducted with senior

managers in human resource management and operations. At the sport governing body,

interviews were conducted with the CEO, deputy CEO, human resource management, and

sport operations. Each interview was digitally recorded and then transcribed. In addition to

the interview data, internal organizational documents, media sources, and externally available

documents (e.g., annual reports) were also collected and examined.

Data Analysis

Data codification was the first stage of the data analysis, which involved identifying

conceptual categories within the raw data (Gratton & Jones, 2010). The key element of this

stage of the process is the identification of specific themes. It is a crucial step in reducing the

amount of raw data and identifying the most relevant information. As Miles and Huberman

(1994) explained, it is a "process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and

transforming the data" (p. 10). The initial data codification enabled the researcher to

establish themes that were exhaustive but not mutually exclusive. It was found that many

statements had some relevance to multiple categories. It enabled all relevant data to fit into a

category, whilst accounting for similarities and slight nuances in themes. The following steps

outline the two stages of coding that took place within this study.

It was important for the first author to begin the data-coding process by reviewing all

interview transcripts. The first author was able to engage in an open-coding process, which

involved the identification of key statements related to the research question (Gratton &

Jones, 2010). The next step involved identifying common statements among participants in

order to establish provisional categories. This process was conducted manually using Microsoft Excel, allowing the researcher to effectively group and organize the statements into first-order codes.

A key benefit of conducting manual analysis was that it enabled the researcher to become very familiar with and develop a thorough understanding of the qualitative data. Whilst the researcher and research supervisor had initially discussed the use of a coding software program such as Microsoft OneNote or NVivo, this was later deemed unnecessary. It was determined that manual analysis could sufficiently provide a comprehensive and in-depth presentation of the findings from the research. Using Microsoft Excel, the researcher was able to manage the coding structure and easily revisit and reevaluate the provisional categories (Veal, 2011).

The second stage of the coding process involved grouping the first-order codes into larger theoretical categories. It was important to continually refer back to the data set in order to ensure that the second-order themes accounted for the data from the initial codes as well as provided an accurate and relevant representation (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This continual process of review and refinement involved a shift from an open-coding process to an axial-coding process (Pratt et al., 2006). The purpose of axial coding is to consolidate the codes and group them together at a theoretical level in order to extricate relationships between categories and their subcategories (Walker & Myrick, 2006). Once the data codification was complete, the data were then displayed graphically so that conclusions could be drawn and verified (Veal, 2011). This allowed the researcher to engage in selective coding, whereby benchmark cases and examples were identified within the data set, and used within the discussion of findings (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Throughout this process the coding conducted by the first author was verified by the second author with each coding stage analyzed for consistency and gaps in analysis.

Findings

Five key themes emerged from the data analysis. The first theme titled, *Gender Policy Engagement*. The second theme is called *Gender Quota Tensions*, while the third theme explores *Gender-Specific Leadership Development*. The fourth is called *Gender Reporting* while the final theme is titled, *Formal and Informal Approaches to Development*. The five themes are discussed in detail below.

Gender Policy Engagement

The study found that whilst most participants believed their organization had some form of gender policy in place, their understanding of this policy was often vague, with many respondents unable to articulate specific details contained in the relevant policy. Those participants who were most familiar with their organization's gender policy (including issues relating to equity, fairness, and discrimination) were usually senior managers located in the human resources division. Not surprisingly, the FSO had the most extensive gender policy of the three organizations that were part of this study. A senior manager from the FSO noted that organizational leaders were accountable for the enforcement of gender policies and the achievement of gender diversity initiatives: "We view gender diversity as both an economic and business opportunity, which is why we've introduced our 'On Target' initiative" (Respondent 2). At the core of the On Target initiative was the belief that the empowerment of women would lead to better performance. However, the same manager also acknowledged the tension between gender diversity, equality for all employees, and promotion by merit. Despite this tension, the senior manager went on to describe the key components of the On Target strategy:

> On Target is driven by six key principles: vision and accountability, treating both men and women fairly, looking after each other, helping women to "make their mark," empowering women, leading by example. What is meant by this is that we engage in

research partnerships which are looking at gender issues in the workplace, and we are

focusing on outcomes—so, transparency, measuring, and reporting on gender.

(Respondent 2)

Rather than develop a unique and company-centric gender policy, both the SMO and

PSO were reliant on government guidelines for setting the direction of their gender policy.

For the PSO, this represented another policy approach that is likely to change as the human

resources function becomes more established. This was noted by a senior manager: "As the

HR function of [retracted] develops, I have a personal expectation that our organizational

policies and procedures will develop with it" (Respondent 13). However, another manager

within the same organization acknowledged that until such time, "change comes from the

top" there will be a continued reliance upon compulsory governance procedures such as the

Commonwealth Government WGEA legislation to guide organizational reporting

(Respondent 10).

Gender Quota Tensions

It was found that only the FSO utilized quotas or metrics to address issues of gender

diversity in the workplace. However, there were varying attitudes surrounding quotas and

their effectiveness was widely debated. Whilst many respondents recognized the importance

of greater diversity in the workplace, they were often unwilling to accept that a quota system

was the best way of achieving this objective. It was also found that whilst discussions of

quotas and metrics had been ongoing within the financial sector for some time, they received

little attention within the sport industry. A senior manager explained the use of quotas by the

FSO in depth:

The organization is striving towards a target of 50% female representation within

leadership roles by 2017. The original target was 40%, but this was achieved 2 years

early. Currently, 50.6% of the leadership team within my division are women, but

this is impacted by factors such as maternity leave; so, currently we're sitting below

the 50% benchmark. (Respondent 1)

A senior executive at the FSO explained the reasoning behind the use of quotas,

highlighting that their organization was close to reaching its unofficial mandate of at least

50% women on the shortlist for each position they advertised (Respondent 2). The

importance of quotas was illustrated by another manager: "The use of quotas has forced the

organization to rethink its talent pool and to critically evaluate where our labour and talent

comes from. I no longer accept the excuse from interviewers that 'they [women] didn't

apply'" (Respondent 1). However, both these respondents had reservations about the long-

term use of quotas and metrics. Respondent 1 raised concerns about the possibility of reverse

discrimination:

> Although I recognize the importance of quotas in focusing business and culture
>
> towards the issue of diversity, I am conscious of the possibility of reverse
>
> discrimination. It is for this reason that I prefer to focus on selecting the best person
>
> for the role.

By contrast, Respondent 2 argued that there were currently not enough women within the

financial sector more broadly to sustain a target of 50% women in leadership positions across

all major financial organizations. She described the conundrum as follows:

> We need to create workable roles that promote the career choices of women. We also
>
> require a critical mass in order to tilt the current working climate more favourably
>
> towards women. However, ultimately, I believe the solution is simple: Nothing
>
> attracts women more to a role than other women, and this is essential for gender
>
> equality in the financial services industry to be sustainable. (Respondent 2)

Despite the push for gender diversity and quotas in the corporate sector, this rhetoric

was not shared by either the SMO or PSO. A senior member of the human resources division

of the SMO stated, "Gender equality and the use of quotas has never been a priority for us because there have been no red flags which would have forced the organization to change its approach" (Respondent 6). Whilst continuing to argue in favor of "diversity of experience rather than a diversity of gender," the same respondent acknowledged that despite close to equal representation of women in entry-level roles and in specialist middle management roles, women were not well represented at the senior leadership level: only four positions were held by women in a senior leadership group of 14 (approximately 29%).

Similar to the SMO, a more informal approach to gender diversity and quotas was preferred by the PSO. Respondent 10 noted, "Although we have no [gender] metrics in place, we actively pursue women for leadership roles." Unlike the FSO or SMO, however, the PSO represented in this study was in a unique position in terms of female representation. Close to 75% of the organization's staff were women, and as Respondent 13 suggested, "Although there are emerging opportunity to recruit more men, there is no desire to reach an equal gender ratio of 50%, as it doesn't accurately represent the demographic of our sport."

Gender-Specific Leadership Development

For the purpose of clarity, gender-specific leadership development processes were interpreted broadly for this research. They included any workplace processes that had the underlying purpose of promoting the leadership development of women within the organization. It was established that a variety of different approaches might be utilized to advance the leadership development of women. The FSO was the only organization that had gender-specific development processes in place, which were both extensive and relatively accessible to women across all tiers of the business. The gender-specific development practices within the FSO were found to vary across the hierarchy of the business. Respondent 1, for instance, identified that gender-specific development approaches were usually first introduced by middle management. The "Women in [name of organization

removed]" initiative was more extensive than the skill-specific workshops offered to junior employees, demonstrating the organization's commitment to gender-based development. Respondent 1 explained the three key components of the initiative: "Our Women in [name of organization removed] program was centered around three pretty traditional approaches to personal development: there's mentoring opportunities, which are focused on influencing and negotiating; networking; and experiences with cultural differences."

In 2015, the FSO also launched a gender-specific, women-focused development program called Equilibrium. Respondent 4 outlined the premise of the program: "[It was a] 12-month, structured program whereby the participant and organization collaborate on the creation of an individual development plan that is unique to the skills and ambitions of the participant." Key components of the program included technical and financial training, leadership development programs, and project-based work assignments. It was part of the FSO's commitment to gender diversity and its recommitment to filling 50% of leadership positions by women by 2017. Respondent 2 outlined the purpose of the program:

> The focus of the program is on fostering an innovative and creative culture that leads to outcomes. We are also looking at cause-and-effect stuff, processes, and tools for significant degrees of collaboration. It's also about inclusive language and removing unconscious bias.

In complete contrast, neither the SMO nor the PSO had any kind of gender-specific development processes in place. Whilst the PSO offered no detailed insight into the reasoning behind this, Respondent 6, a senior manager at the SMO, suggested that in the past the organization had been "cautious not to focus on women" because they did not want "to alienate the rest of the workforce." Respondent 8, however, suggested that the organization was looking to shift this attitude while continuing to incite change and better engage employees: "Funnily enough, that's the next step in this change process. However, first we

had to put in place the framework for a broad leadership development approach before we could even consider gender and the leadership development of women."

Gender Reporting

The utilization of gender-reporting methods was dependent on the size of the organization. The FSO and SMO had gender-reporting mechanisms in place, while the PSO did not. Gender reporting is a compulsory legal requirement as part of the 2012 WGEA for non-public sector organizations with 100 or more employees in Australia for a period of 6 months or more. There was no evidence of discussion within the PSO to voluntarily participate in such processes.

The existence of gender-reporting processes within the FSO was critical in differentiating the organization from others in the sector, allowing the organization to promote itself as an employer of choice. The effectiveness of such an approach was rewarded in 2014, when the organization was identified as a Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) Employer of Choice for Gender Equality. Respondent 2 also discussed the importance of gender reporting mechanisms: "It forces large organizations to embrace diversity through policy. In order to secure the best talent, organizations such as ours are asking, 'Why would a woman want to work for us?'"

The same respondent has also sought to be a leader in discussions regarding gender diversity within the organization, seeking to change the nature of the debate:

> Rather than seeing gender reporting as something "we have to do," we should be
> seeing it as something extremely beneficial to the organization. We also need to be
> asking, why is it [gender diversity] smart? Why is it important? Why is it not a
> metric?" (Respondent 2)

Respondent 2 further stated that "we must maintain the rage" in order to achieve true gender equality in the financial services industry. The respondent suggested that too much time had

already been spent "admiring the problem" because the complexity of the issue has rendered many employers and employees "frozen" and unable to act (Respondent 2).

As for the FSO, gender reporting was also a legal requirement of the SMO. However, there seemed to be some disconnect between participating in this reporting and truly appreciating the benefits of the process. Respondent 6, for instance, discussed the organization's compliance with WGEA reporting obligations, but argued that more broadly the organization was "very behind the eight-ball on corporate policies." The same respondent also suggested that there was "a lack of understanding of the true value of gender equality reporting." This observation was reiterated by Respondent 8: "We are waiting until the culture is more sophisticated. It's about adopting a softly, softly approach." Unfortunately, this admission highlights that despite adherence to legal reporting requirements, the organization did not yet fully appreciate the benefits of the required process.

Formal and Informal Approaches to Development

It was established that the use of formal approaches to education and training was dependent on the skill that was being developed. Whilst formal education was often preferred for leadership development training, more informal approaches such as on-the-job training were utilized for skill-specific education such as the use of new technology or software. The FSO represented the benchmark with a more developed understanding of the importance and benefits of leadership development training. It was also found that the FSO provided greater access to educational and training resources for all employees when compared with the PSO and the SMO.

Formal training was often linked to an employee's development plan and performance review at the FSO. When describing alternative approaches to development, Participant 1 suggested: "This learning process could take the form of participation in structured learning or possibly participating in a formal mentoring program." The FSO in the past five years had

become recognized as a Registered Training Organization (RTO) and this move was a clear demonstration of their commitment to employee education and training. Internally developed courses were frequently utilized by lower and mid-level employees and provided them with a nationally recognized qualification. In contrast, the FSO still maintained a preference for external facilitators when engaging in the development of senior managers and executives.

In comparison, the SMO had no formal processes in place with regard to education and training for its employees. Participant 5 noted: "It is reflective of a task rather than people orientated approach to development." However, the participant also acknowledged that through the annual performance review process an employee is able to request future education and training opportunities. A position reaffirmed by Participant 6: "no reasonable request for training would be refused … If it is related to your role, the business is likely to support you."

Similarly, the PSO stated that they had been "behind the eight ball" with reference to the development of leadership training programs for employees. It was found that one respondent involved in this study, had held a managerial position for three years but was yet to benefit from a formalized leadership development program (Participant 9). In an attempt to address the participant's current skill gaps, the participant had chosen to participate in two, short-term structured learning programs: "I've done a course on branding and brand positioning, and another on collective bargaining". A lack of financial resources was suggested as a significant limitation for the PSO in creating education and training opportunities for its workforce. As illustrated by Participant 12: "resource impacts opportunities and because of this training and development becomes a secondary focus for the organization. It is not intended to be that way but we are extremely busy and under resourced, which makes it difficult to give this cause as much attention as it deserves. We are extremely resource dependent."

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that both the SMO and the PSO had unbalanced gender ratios within their leadership teams. Whilst the leadership team of the SMO was skewed towards men, the opposite circumstance was evident within the PSO. The findings are reflective of Claringbould and Knoppers (2007) research, which highlighted that a skewed gender ratio among a sport board (or leadership team) was often considered normal, whilst a balanced ratio was considered unique. Findings indicated that neither organization had ever experienced a balanced gender ratio, thus allowing for the reproduction of gender imbalance. Within the SMO, this helps explain the lack of discussions regarding gender diversity and the leadership development of women; the PSO, by contrast, had limited discussions on the implementation of gender-specific development programs because the vast majority of its workforce was female. Both organizations have failed to problematize gender imbalance, resulting in the implicit acceptance of gender norms. However, it should be noted that Claringbould and Knoppers (2007) suggested, "by virtue of their membership and by introducing issues related to women" (p. 87), organizations are able to work towards reducing and undoing gender divisions.

Findings indicated that there were striking similarities between attitudes towards gender quotas and metrics in the literature with those of participants in the current study. Ultimately, the findings of this study were consistent with those of Adriaanse and Schofield (2014), who found that there was a deeply entrenched resistance to the introduction of quotas. Participants in this study focused on the adverse effects, tokenism, and decline in quality of governance as reasons for opposing the introduction of gender targets. However, whilst the literature focused on gender quotas and metrics from a purely sport industry perspective, it appears that these attitudes are more widespread, as participants in the FSO articulated similar comments.

The way in which gender diversity and the leadership development of women was discussed varied across the three organizations. The findings emphasized the importance of having employees invested in the issue as a determinant of the success of gender equality strategies. For the FSO, consultation with employees regarding gender equality was achieved through a broad range of strategies such as consultative committees, focus groups, internal surveys, exit interviews, and performance discussions. The continuous and varying approaches to conversations regarding gender diversity suggests that the issue remained front-of-mind for employees. In comparison, the SMO addressed gender equality during exit interviews, performance reviews, and informal discussions.

The absence of regular and robust discussions regarding gender and leadership within the SMO was attributed to the organization's focus on establishing a broad leadership program, which at the time had not yet accounted for diversity. By not accounting for diversity, the organization maintained and accepted gender bias—often through entrenched cultural and organizational beliefs—as well as "structures, practices, and patterns of interaction that inadvertently favour[ed] men" (Ely et al., 2011, p. 4). Any discussion of gender diversity was often informal or at the conclusion of the course of employment. The impact of addressing issues of gender diversity at the end of employment is that less weight is given to the issue. Employees have a reduced investment in the issue because any change will no longer have a direct impact on them.

The research also demonstrates the interconnectedness between gender organizational theory and the reality of operating in corporate Australia. It was found that the results of the study were consistent with findings of prominent gender theorists on issues such as skewed gender ratios as the norm, the importance of critical mass, and the resistance to gender metrics (Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014; Connell, 2002). The findings highlighted that there are insufficient discussions about gender equality and the leadership development of women,

particularly within the sport industry. The lack of discussion has been caused by organizational cultures that have not problematized gender imbalance but rather allowed for the implicit acceptance of prevailing gender norms (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007).

Findings indicated that the organizational gender ratio was a structural determinant of gendered organizational behaviour within all three organizations. This satisfies Kanter's (1977) research, which emphasized that the greater the skew of a group, the greater the emphasis on gender differences. The findings also emphasized a strong correlation between the gender composition of the leadership team of all three organizations and the reinforcement of gender norms determined by the level of gender equality discussions and the progression of women within the organization. The FSO at the time of interview had a reasonably balanced leadership team and a critical mass. Respondent 2 emphasized, for instance, the importance of a shift in the critical mass in order to transform the current working climate so that is more favourable towards women. The organization has reached a critical point whereby 61% of all non-managerial staff are women. This shift in the organization's critical mass represents the first steps toward undoing gendered organizational processes (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007; Kanter, 1977).

In contrast, the critical mass of the SMO remained favourable towards men, as did the skewed gender ratio within the top three layers of management (Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014; Kanter, 1977). This could explain the lack of discussion regarding gender diversity and the leadership development of women. As explored by Kanter (1977), a skewed gender ratio is a structural determinant of (gendered) organizational behaviour. It reinforces the status quo by limiting a shift towards a more balanced gender composition across the top three layers of management. This concept is reinforced by Connell's (2002) four-dimensional gender model, whereby the fourth dimension includes gender, culture, and

symbolism, including "the language and symbols of gender difference, and the prevailing beliefs and attitudes about gender" (p. 839).

Unlike the two organizations already discussed, the gender composition within the PSO was uniquely favourable towards women. Therefore, traditional perspectives and attitudes regarding gender diversity and the promotion of women were rarely discussed. Whilst the organization recognized that gender diversity—more specifically, the presence of women within senior management positions—has been a significant issue within the sport industry, it had not been directly affected by lack of diversity, and therefore did not consider it a major issue. However, the implication of this stance is that as employees seek opportunities outside the organization, they may not possess the skills that would enable them to deal with gender diversity challenges within other organizations. Whilst this prevailing belief may hold true within the organization, employees often have to work with external stakeholders who may be part of an older paradigm, including the SMO in this study. Regardless of organizational circumstances, leadership development programs provide a fundamental framework that allows women to understand the impact of bias on their leadership aspirations and progression, as well as to develop strategies to overcome these barriers (Ely et al., 2011).

With regard to the formal and informal education and training structures, the SMO and the PSO, were focused mainly on experience-based approaches to leadership development. In contrast, a more holistic approach was implemented by the FSO. Such a holistic approach that considers both intrapersonal and interpersonal perspectives of leadership development is favoured by Day and colleagues (2011), who have argued that focusing predominately on experience-based learning is insufficient as leadership also "involves a complex interaction between people and their social and organizational environments" (p. 65). It was therefore found that both the SMO and PSO employed an ad

hoc approach to leadership development, whereas the FSO approach was systematic and strategically planned.

The primary rationale provided for the informal and skill-based approach to leadership development deployed by the SMO and the PSO was resource constraints and secondly the ease in which a skill-based approach was able to be delivered to employees at various levels within the organizations. The ease with which skill-based development strategies can be applied in organizations is consistent with findings presented by Russell and Kuhnert (1992). Their research found that an episodic model of skill acquisition could be easily applied to individuals at the start of the leadership development process, especially when they are looking to develop foundational skills. By focusing solely on experience-based development through skill acquisition, both the SMO and the PSO however risked their employees progressing through the organizational hierarchy without the benefit of higher-order cognitive skill development.

The importance of higher-order skill development is emphasized by Kegan's (1982) cognitive-developmental theory, which incorporates the key aspects of experience, object and subject. This theory highlights its own episodic expectation, suggesting that as an individual obtains greater responsibility, they would possess greater problem-solving abilities and behaviours, providing greater choice in their response. Therefore, as both the SMO and PSO were solely reliant upon skill-based development, their leaders were not to be getting the best opportunity to develop the necessary skills for more complex decision-making (Day et al., 2014).

In contrast, the FSO had a clearly defined structure for leadership development. As a result, the organization had successfully implemented a framework that incorporated both formal and informal approaches to development. The FSO was regarded as exemplar within its industry, having won many awards over the past decade. In terms of formal approaches to

education, the FSO had both a dedicated training function and leadership development programs. The FSO had a specially designed leadership program, that allowed it to develop values, skills and behaviours that it desired within its leadership group. By offering different leadership programs at each stage of the development process, the organization was reinforcing a core principle of Kegan's (1982) constructive-developmental theory. The idea being that leadership responses are likely to differ at each stage of the developmental process, "each stage suggests a different but consistent way of making decisions and influencing others" (Kuhnert & Russell, 1990, p. 600).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the purpose of this study was the exploration of gendered processes among organizations involved in Australian professional sport, to uncover the impact it has had on the leadership development of women. To the authors' knowledge this is the first study to examine such phenomenon within the Australian professional sport context, and therefore presents an opportunity for additional research in the future, in order to develop deeper theoretical and practical perspectives. A multiple-case study approach was adopted for the study to assist our understanding of what (if any) gendered processes were in place, and to identify the leadership practices that were employed.

As outlined by Ely et al. (2011) our understanding of the link between gender and leadership development remains a largely underexplored area of research. Furthermore, Ely et al. (2011) have stated that leadership programs for women in organizations have been incoherent, not necessarily theoretically sound, or without a clear actionable framework. With this in mind four key themes were identified in this study: *gender policy; gender quotas; gender-specific leadership development;* and*, gender reporting*. While the study participants

believed their organizations had some form of gender policy their understanding of it was often vague or limited. Furthermore, in relation to quotas, while one organization utilized metrics to address gender diversity in their workplace across the sample attitudes varied widely on the effectiveness of quotas. As outlined above and with the exception of the FSO, gender-specific development processes were limited across the sample. Finally, two organizations in the study had gender-reporting mechanisms in place as required legally for non-public sector organizations in Australia with more than 100 employees.

A number of possibilities emerge from this study for future research. Further work on understanding how women in sport organizations can best benefit from leadership development programs requires investigation. In undertaking this research studies needs to investigate the best mix of informal "on the job" leadership development with formal development programs such as short or long courses through varying institutions or external organizations. As the important work of McCall (2010) has argued, leadership development should be experience-based with 80 percent of it taking place on the job with the remaining 20 percent off site in structured learning activities. How best experience-based leadership development programs can work for women in sport organizations is unknown and therefore providing opportunities for sport management researchers to build on the work that has taken place in the wider gender and management studies sphere.

Finally, and when focusing especially on the PSO, it is important to note that unlike the FSO and the SMO (both large corporations with vast resources to invest in leadership development) the PSO decided to invest its limited resources into the development of their sport. While formal leadership development structures were not a priority at the PSO, they were able to develop a stable and successful culture over time that enabled leadership succession to emerge from within the organization. As outlined by Ford (2004) and Fletcher (2006) the PSO, being a predominantly female based organization, they were able to maintain

a leadership environment that was relational and collective, and unlike the SMO, it was not a macho or individualistic leadership environment. While such dualisms (for example, collective versus individualistic or leader versus follower) are overly simplistic when considering the complexities of organizational life, as outlined by Bowring (2004) and Collinson and Collinson (2009, p. 377) this type of binary opposition is generally "reinforced by a gender dualism in which men are privileged while women are marginalised". It is largely because of this that the PSO has been and still is such an interesting organization for sport management researchers to study.

In conclusion this study makes a number of important contributions to both sport management theory and practice. The findings from the study demonstrate the strong connections between gender composition of leadership teams and the reinforcement of gender norms and the level of progression of women within the three organizations investigated as part of this study. The findings from the study extend our knowledge of the current strategies and leadership development practices for organizations with a stake in professional sport. Importantly this included a major sport media firm and a major sponsor, in addition to the national governing body, two organisations that typically have not been investigated in a leadership context in the sport management literature. From a practical point of view the research has implications for current sport management practitioners highlighting the need for sport organizations to be more involved in knowledge sharing across industry boundaries in order to learn how non-sport organizations best develop their people and future leadership teams.

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