

Scoping Review to Identify Key Concepts for Building Sports Organizational Integrity

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ABSTRACT

Integrity in sports has gained increasing attention recently. Currently, protecting and strengthening integrity involves two approaches: (1) attempting to maintain integrity by establishing rules and ensuring people comply with them (the rules approach) and (2) seeking to maintain integrity by looking to the future and aiming to avoid negative evaluation (the means approach). However, in this study, we hypothesize that adopting an approach that attempts to maintain integrity by drawing out the altruistic and socially respectful traits inherent in people is also possible, and we set out to build a system to address this as an organization through a holistic approach. In this study, we aim to identify relevant concepts that are important in building a mechanism to enhance integrity as an organization through a scoping review conducted using a standardized protocol in PRISMA-ScR. The research design was a scoping review, and the procedure followed the PRISMA-ScR to select eligible articles. The central concepts of the eligible articles were then extracted. Through the scoping review, we identified a total of 63 review articles. Out of these, we excluded 8 articles because of duplication and unknown content and selected 55 articles. The first eligibility criterion for inclusion was that the research must be related to sports integrity, which resulted in the selection of 34 articles. The second eligibility criterion was organizational research, leading to the selection of the final 10 papers. We identified 11 central keywords and 52 important concepts to enhance organizational integrity. In this paper, we establish the need for future integrity building to focus on concepts, such as morality, ethics, and other aspects of good human traits, gender, stakeholders, and accountability. These concepts should be localized according to the situation and organizational characteristics. We conclude that localized longitudinal benchmarking is important, and one should focus on the longitudinal improvement of one's own organization.

Keywords: Sports integrity, Leadership, Coaching, Governance, Holistic approach

INTRODUCTION

Integrity in sports has increasingly been recognized as an important value in recent years. Integrity in sports is often associated with issues such as doping, harassment, violence, betting, match-fixing, corruption, ethical deviance, and lack of governance. Currently, protecting and strengthening integrity involves two approaches: (1) attempting to maintain integrity by establishing rules and ensuring people comply with them (the rules approach, which commonly used methods at problem sites where behavior is restricted by

rules, codes, oversight, and behavioral principles) and (2) seeking to maintain integrity by looking to the future and aiming to avoid negative evaluation (the means approach, which is similar to the commercial integrity Gardiner (2017) presented). However, we hypothesize that adopting a third approach that attempts to maintain integrity by drawing out the altruistic and socially respectful traits inherent in people is also possible, and we set out to build a system to address this as an organization through a holistic approach. Therefore, in this study, we aim to identify the relevant concepts that are important in building a mechanism to enhance integrity as an organization through a scoping review conducted using a standardized protocol in PRISMA-ScR.

Sports integrity means the manifestation of the ethics and values that promote community confidence in sport (Australia Sports Integrity, 2022). In addition, Katsuta (2016) introduced “Integrity is the integration of outward actions and inner values”. We referred their definition, defined integrity building as following in this study. Integrity building is to create a state integration of moral internal values and outward actions.

METHODS

The research design employed for this study was a scoping review, and PRISMA-ScR was adopted as the methodological framework for the scoping review. First, Google Scholar was used as the database, and “sport-integrity” and “sports-integrity” were used as search terms. The search was performed by checking the checkboxes for articles and without specifying a time period. Next, the checkbox for review articles was checked, and the articles to be included in this scoping review process were limited to review articles. The search period for the articles was from December 2, 2022 to December 13, 2022. We selected 63 articles for inclusion in this study. The articles were checked for duplicates, and the duplicates were excluded. Next, the abstract of each paper was analyzed to evaluate eligibility on two levels. First, we evaluated whether the research was related to sports integrity. Second, we evaluated whether the research was organizational in nature. We then extracted the central keywords and related concepts that are important for building a system to enhance organizational integrity from those papers that were deemed eligible through screening. The extracted concepts were organized in a table, and new perspectives for building a system to enhance integrity were discussed.

RESULTS

Through the scoping review, we identified 63 review articles. Out of these, we excluded 7 articles because of duplication, and an article because of unknown content from abstract and selected 55 articles (see Figure 1). The first eligibility criterion for inclusion was that the research must be related to sports integrity, which resulted in the selection of 34 articles (19 articles were excluded). The second eligibility criterion was organizational research, leading to the final selection of 10 articles (24 articles were excluded). The identified 11 central keywords in the 10 selected articles were: 1) governance, 2)

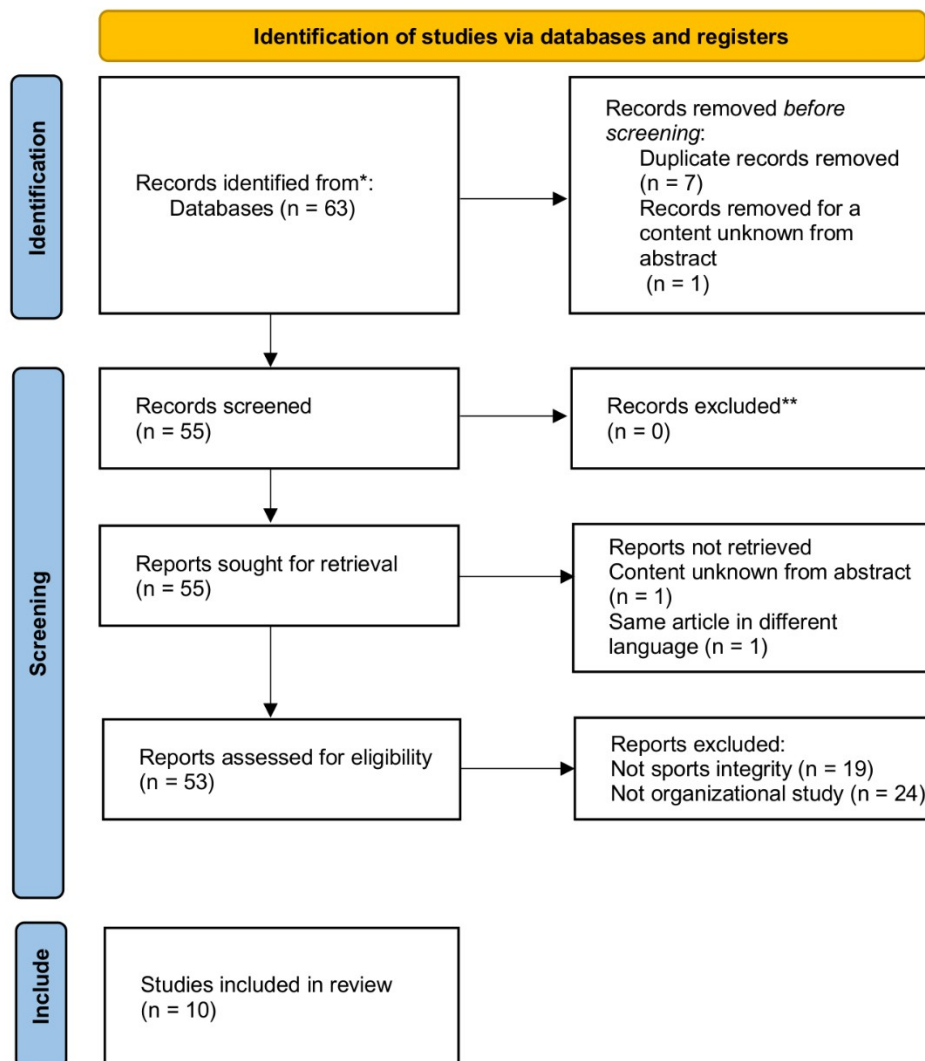


Figure 1: Identification of studies via databases and registers. (Adapted from Page MJ, et al. 2021.)

humanistic leadership, 3) pedagogy, 4) leadership, 5) organizational performance, 6) stakeholder, 7) coaching, 8) transformational leadership, 9) gender, 10) accountability, and 11) coaches' role (see Table 1). Moreover, 52 important concepts to enhance organizational integrity were presented from the 10 selected articles (see Table 1).

DISCUSSION

The results of this study may be useful in examining methods of integrity building in sports organizations. When problems concerning integrity occur, it is common for organizations to establish rules and strengthen monitoring to prevent similar situations from reoccurring. In addition, integrity

Table 1. Central keywords and important concepts to enhance integrity.

Title	Central keywords	Important concepts to enhance organizational integrity
* ¹ A review of good governance principles and indicators in sport	Governance	Vision, mission and strategy* ⁴ Structures, regulations and democratic process* ⁴ Highest level of competence* ⁴ Athletes' involvement, participation and care* ⁴ Harmonious relations with governments while preserving autonomy* ⁴ Clarity of propose/objectives* ⁵ Delegation and committees* ⁵ Judicial/disciplinary procedures* ⁵ Organizational transparency* ⁶ Reporting transparency* ⁶
Sports betting-motivated corruption in Australia: An under-studied phenomenon	Governance	Respect for oneself and for others* ⁷ Moral responsibility* ⁷ Moral accountability* ⁷ Fair play* ⁷ Respect for the game* ⁷ Sportspersonship* ^{2,7} Positive personal values* ⁷ Compassion for others* ⁷ Honesty in following the rules* ⁷ Ethics Positive culture towards preserving integrity Codes of conduct* ⁸ Good governance* ⁸ Promoting values* ⁸
Reforming global sport: Hybridity and the challenges of pursuing transparency	Governance	Encouraging acts of whistleblowing Democratize their decision-making processes* ⁹ Multistakeholder involvement/engagement* ⁹ System of checks and balances* ⁹
The role of humanistic leadership on good governance in sport organization: A literature review	Governance Humanistic leadership	Humanistic leadership Transparency Democracy Check and balance Solidarity Communication
No struggle, no progress: The historical significance of the governance structure reform of the international Association of athletics Athlete and coach-led education that teaches about abuse: an overview of education theory and design considerations	Governance Pedagogy	External involvement External supervision/constraint of independence Gender balance Narrative pedagogy Pedagogy culturalized and specialized to each country, sport, and competition level Respectfully challenge to acceptance of normalised types of abuse

Continued

Table 1. Continued.

Title	Central keywords	Important concepts to enhance organizational integrity
A review of good governance principles and indicators in sport	Leadership Organizational performance Stakeholder	Moral* ¹⁰ Ethic* ¹⁰ Ethics in leadership/ Coaches ' ethical leadership* ¹¹ Transparent and balanced environment* ¹² Better person* ¹³
Transformational leadership in sport coaching: Review and future directions	Coaching Transformational leadership	Transformational leadership
Challenges and opportunities in international sport organizations: Investigation of barriers hindering the Asian Football Confederation from better governance	Governance Gender Stakeholder Accountability	Better governance* ¹⁴ Gender balance Stakeholder engagement Stakeholders' representation Accountability Localized longitudinal benchmarking* ³
Match-fixing threats: Effective responses of coaches	Coaches' role	Financial health-check Protect inside information Instil in players a 'best efforts' mentality

*1 This article is an evaluation of 9 international good governance indicators and covers a wide range of concepts. Concepts that overlap with other papers were excluded.

*2 Sportsmanship was used in the article.

*3 This concept was generated by referencing the context of some sentences by the author.

*4-14 Articles introducing the important concepts were presented with the marks and numbers in reference list.

protection and enhancement are often implemented as a means to avoid negative evaluation due to the occurrence of problems in the future. Some of the papers that met the eligibility criteria in this study also argued for the important of monitoring and control. Lastra (2016) argued that the importance of building integrity by utilizing human altruism and respect for others, rather than the rules approach or the means approach, should be addressed. Abbott and Sheehan (2013) and Forrest (2012) asserted that awareness, education, and training are the basic elements of effective corruption prevention, while Lastra (2016) argued that we should rely on other methods developed through codes of conduct and good governance rather than education, and, as in this study, that it is necessary to work at the level of sports organizations. It was inferred that Lastra (2016) departed from the approach of rules, regulations, and monitoring and rather intended to focus on the good aspects of the person. This study focuses on key concepts that could be considered effective in the construction of an approach that utilizes good human characteristics. Thus, this study contains a set of concepts useful for the construction of soft law (Henne, 2015), jurisprudentially speaking.

Among them, gender, stakeholders, and accountability would be considered new frontiers that have rarely been examined in integrity research in the sport context to date.

Table 2. Year of publication and target for improvement of the subject study.

Title	Year	Target for improvement
A review of good governance principles and indicators in sport	2016	ISO, IF
Sports betting-motivated corruption in Australia: An under-studied phenomenon	2016	IF, NF, Club (Team), Individual
Reforming global sport: Hybridity and the challenges of pursuing transparency	2015	IF
The role of humanistic leadership on good governance in sport organization: A literature review	2021	Club (Team)
No struggle, no progress: The historical significance of the governance structure reform of the international Association of athletics	2018	IF
Athlete and coach-led education that teaches about abuse: an overview of education theory and design considerations	2022	Club (Team), Coach, Athlete
Stakeholders leadership approaches in soccer context	2022	Club (Team), Coach
Transformational leadership in sport coaching: Review and future directions	2022	Club (Team), Coach
Challenges and opportunities in international sport organizations: Investigation of barriers hindering the Asian Football Confederation from better governance	2020	IF
Match-fixing threats: Effective responses of coaches	2021	Club (Team), Coach

Gender balance could be one of the central issues in future sports integrity research. Previous studies that address gender include Kreiger (2019), Akramov (2020), and MrKonjic (2016). In all of these studies, it is clear that gender balance is intended to democratize and improve the transparency of the decision-making process. All three studies were conducted on international sports organizations, which is an issue that is being actively addressed by international organizations. However, some studies on gender do target clubs and teams.

Stakeholders are another concept that could be a central issue in the future. Henne (2015) identified multistakeholder involvement and multistakeholder engagement as important factors for democratizing the decision-making process in governance. Akramov (2020), in his discussion of stakeholder representation, states that many modern sports organizations fail to involve athletes, coaches, referees, media partners, and sponsors in the decision-making process and that the lack of stakeholder involvement in the decision-making process is a major factor hindering the democratization of the decision-making process in governance. Garcia and Welford (2015) argue that fan involvement can lead to increased transparency and accountability in sports organizations. In addition, Akramov (2020) identified stakeholder

engagement as a central issue for increasing governance proficiency. Multi-stakeholder involvement is an essential element of the holistic approach and will be an important factor in the future development of sports. It will also be an essential element when considering how to build the integrity of sports organizations and sports teams.

Accountability is a concept that has been seen in many studies with governance as a keyword. Through the review of this study, we believe that sports organizations are required to be transparent because of their influence and that accountability is a key concept to enhance transparency. Accountability should not be viewed as an after-the-fact response to a problem. It is important to have a constant awareness of accountability to create a positive state of accountability and transparency.

Turning to the study of teams, in which leaders and players are the main stakeholders, more humanistic concepts, such as being a better person, moral/ethical responsibility, ethics, positive personal values, and solidarity, were prominent among the key concepts mentioned (Hartarto et al., 2021; McMahan et al., 2022; Neto et al., 2022; Natsuhara, 2022; Young, 2021). In addition, many studies that focused on teams discussed integrity in relation to leadership, and several leadership theories were addressed (Hartarto et al., 2021; McMahan et al., 2022; Neto et al; Natsuhara, 2022). Their leadership theories included: 1) humanistic leadership, 2) ethical leadership, and 3) transformational leadership.

Finally, although mainly inspired by McMahan et al. (2022) and Akramov (2020), this study takes into account the individual characteristics of the organization, its situation, its cultural and regional background, and its age and emphasizes the importance of longitudinal benchmarking to see whether the organization has improved compared to a certain point in time, rather than comparing it with other organizations. In other words, this study concludes that it is important to aim to realize resilient integrity building through localized longitudinal benchmarking. In addition, to realize effective integrity building, Henne (2015) introduces the “hard low” mechanism and the “soft low” mechanism of Trebeck and Trebeck (2005), which are “a combination of a binding mechanism (hard low) and a non-binding mechanism (soft low).” The idea that “binding mechanisms (hard low) and non-binding mechanisms (soft low) merge to force social change,” introduced by Trebeck and Trebeck (2005), may be necessary. Continued efforts in this direction will likely foster the positive culture of integrity maintenance cited by Lastra (2016).

CONCLUSION

In considering the future of integrity building, we have identified some concepts that need to be focused on. Among others, morality and ethics, which are related to positive human traits, are concepts that should be focused on. Gender balance and stakeholder involvement/engagement are also relatively new concepts in sports integrity research, but they are essential for improving transparency and high-quality decision-making. When evaluating the integrity of a sports organization, it is important to keep these concepts in mind and localize them according to the situation and characteristics of the organization.

Localized longitudinal benchmarking should be used to evaluate whether the organization has improved compared to a certain point in time, rather than comparing it with other organizations. We conclude that it is important to use localized longitudinal benchmarking, which can be localized to the situation and characteristics of the organization while keeping these concepts in mind.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This study was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP 21K17607. We would like to thank enago (www.enago.jp) for the English language review.

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