Performance management and measurement in national-level non-profit sport organisations

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Research question: The purpose of this research was to examine the current field of organisational performance management and measurement within non-profit sport organisations. This area of sport management is attracting a large growth in interest from the scholarly community and as such it is timely that such a review takes place.

Research methods: To conduct this research, an electronic search was adopted through SPORTDiscus and other academic databases to identify relevant studies within the field. The studies that met the criteria were those that focused on organisational performance management or measurement issues in line with definitions of these theoretical underpinnings described within the paper.

Results and findings: Results show a number of studies focusing on various performances measurement criteria with fewer studies examining performance management from a more holistic organisational perspective. Moreover, the repetitive methodologies within the current body of literature, along with other limitations leaves clear gaps for future research to explore and thus facilitating the development of a new level of understanding and theory development within this emerging field of sport management research.

Implications: A number of management implications such as the relationship between organisational performance and governance and the importance of individual performance management systems are addressed in the concluding sections of the paper.

Keywords: performance; management; measurement; review; extant literature

Introduction

The contemporary non-profit sport organisation (NPSO) has developed into a bureaucratic entity that faces a multitude of performance challenges that continue to impact upon the governance and management of these organisations. The performance dimensions within NPSOs continue to expand with increased pressures from all types of stakeholders including athletes, coaches, sponsors and indeed government authorities. In addition, the intensity of financial issues and the modern consumption of sport such as interactive technologies are placing new performance pressures on many of these entities. In countries where strong sporting infrastructure and culture have been developed, there exists a growing demand for the availability of sporting outlets, various forms of sport competitions, a growth in the number of newly adopted or emerging sports and the

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appearance of alternative forms of practice that form the basis of a new sporting culture. An increasingly heterogeneous and uncertain internal situation is developing within the system of many NPSOs and within the sport movement in general. The non-profit status of these organisations adds to this complexity facing the modern NPSO. Their challenge is to establish a system that can meet the varying needs and expectations of their stakeholders, both commercial and public, all the while maintaining adequate service and value to their association. In fact, the unique non-profit status of these entities highlights why effective management of performance is so imperative, perhaps even more so than traditional business organisations, as non-profit organisation’s ultimate goal is generally not financial gain rather the effective performance of their mission. However, as noted by Sawhill and Williamson (2001): ‘One of the key components of the business model continues to allude non-profits: they have been unable to duplicate the crisp, straightforward way that businesses measure their performance’ (p. 371).

The management and governance practices of NPSOs have also been brought further under the spotlight in recent times due to some spectacular management failures and corruption allegations even at the highest levels of sport in organisations such as the International Olympic Committee and Fédération Internationale de Football Association not to mention various National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and other sporting entities across many nations. It can be argued that the scrutiny that these organisations now face is further justified given the significant economic and social impact that sport has on the health of many nations (Dalziel, 2011; Delaney & Fahey, 2005).

Scholars have also begun to focus on the performance of these entities with a number of studies in recent years affording attention to various performance issues within these organisations such as governance (Ferkins, Shilbury, & McDonald, 2009; Hoye & Doherty, 2011; Shilbury, Ferkins, & Smythe, 2013; Yeh & Taylor, 2008), human resource management (Arnold, Fletcher, & Molyneux, 2012; Cuskelly, 2004; Doherty & Carron, 2003; Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Taylor & McGraw, 2006) and indeed overall organisational performance itself (Bayle & Madella, 2002; Bayle & Robinson, 2007; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Winand, Rihoux, Robinson, & Zintz, 2012; Winand, Zintz, Bayle, & Robinson, 2010). Various government and state sport agencies and NGBs have also commissioned reports to investigate performance issues within NPSOs. In Australia, the McKinsey Capacity Self-Assessment Tool developed in 2001 and the Organisational Development Tool in New Zealand have been important developments in the practice of performance management within the NPSO sector. Likewise in a European context, the Sports Policy Factors Leading to International Sporting Success (SPLISS) project and industry reports from Deloitte and Touche (2003) have provided further evidence of the need for NPSOs to develop their management competencies. Industry reports such as the above, the SPLISS project in particular, have been an invaluable resource for comparing performance within varies organisations and nations and have provided theoretical models as to how NPSOs may increase their performance through effective policy-making and analysis of some key performance indicators.

NPSOs are clearly being confronted with an operating environment that has seen substantial change relating to competitiveness and professionalisation (Slack, 1985). As a result, there is a need for these organisations to progress from simply an administrative function to being held accountable through a performance-based approach. Industry reports such as the above and scholarly research relating to organisational performance continues to expand our knowledge of what was previously known about performance issues within NPSOs. Given the growth of the field in recent years it is now timely to review the extant
literature of this body of work and to identify what might be priorities for future research. However, before a review of the literature can take place, it is necessary in the first instance to define what constitutes the terms performance management and performance measurement.

Performance management

Although Williams (2003) claims there is evidence to suggest that some local and state authorities have been involved in the analysis of data and target setting for future performance forecasting as far back as the early 1900s, the term performance management was first referred to by Aubrey Daniels in the late 1970s (Armstrong & Baron, 2005; Daniels, 2004). Since that time, performance management has evolved to become a well-established process that is embedded within the cultures of many private and public entities and has been a point of interest for scholarly research since the mid-1990s with a number of journals even devoting special issues to the subject (Ferlie & Steane, 2002). There is no single definition for the term within the literature, with different meanings and definitions commonly assigned to the concept (Armstrong & Baron, 2005; Bayle & Robinson, 2007; Daniels, 2004; Williams, 2003). For the purposes of this review, the authors view performance management as a holistic approach to performance that spans numerous performance dimensions that may be fundamental to the effective delivery of an organisation’s mission.

Within the literature, a successful performance management approach consists of a tool or system that aligns all organisational processes with the existing strategic imperatives within an organisation (Franco & Bourne, 2003; Kaplan & Norton, 1992, 1996; Neely, Adams, & Kennerley, 2002). One such tool, The Balanced Scorecard, has been adopted by a number of NPSOs particularly within Australasia where it has proved to be a popular tool amongst NGBs and some other sporting entities (O’Boyle, 2012).

Within the literature, it is suggested that any such system should be underpinned by effective leadership and competencies from senior management (Arnold et al., 2012; Fletcher & Arnold, 2011); a culture that is focused on performance improvement as opposed to punishment for poor performance (De Waal, 2003); involvement from and communication with stakeholders (Wang & Berman, 2001); and constant monitoring, feedback, dissemination and learning from results (Fryer, Antony, & Ogden, 2009). A further important aspect of an effective performance management system as referred to by Bititci, Mendibil, Nudurupati, Garengo, and Turner (2006) is that it evolves with changes in the organisation which is of particular relevance to the NPSO sector given the various performance challenges these organisations face contained within equally variable timeframes.

Although Daniels (2004) argues that the principles of performance management are required whenever organisations, irrespective of their particular type, interact with their environments to produce desired results, performance management in NPSOs appears to be a relatively new phenomenon. The majority of empirical studies concerning organisational performance in NPSOs have focused on performance measurement (Bayle & Madella, 2002; Chelladurai, Szyslo, & Haggerty, 1987; Frisby, 1986; Koski, 1995; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Papadimitriou, 1994, 1999; Papadimitriou & Taylor, 2000; Vail, 1986; Wolfe, Hoeber, & Babiak, 2002; Winand, Rihoux, Qualizza, & Zintz, 2011; Winand et al., 2010) with few studies specifically analysing the extent to which these entities engage with performance management practices in order to assist them in achieving their strategic goals and manage performance effectively. Performance management systems have been proven
to be successful in the traditional business environment (Kurtzman, 1997) and given the increased calls for NPSOs to adopt a more professional and accountable approach, it is imperative that empirical research is conducted to critically examine this issue in greater detail.

**Performance measurement**

An important aspect of any performance management system is indeed performance measurement – constant monitoring of organisational dimensions relevant to the performance management system. Measurement is the process of providing data to examine where behaviours can be altered to facilitate improved performance (Fryer et al., 2009; Lemieux-Charles et al., 2003). The need to distinguish between the two terms has been noted previously by Lebas (1995), where he claims that measurement is about past events where as management is more concerned with the present and future. Performance management and performance measurement have also been differentiated by Radnor and Barnes (2007) as:

> Performance measurement is quantifying, either quantitatively or qualitatively, the input, output or level of activity of an event or process. Performance management is action, based on performance measures and reporting, which results in improvements in behaviour, motivation and processes and promotes innovation. (p. 393)

Fryer et al. (2009) suggest that performance measurement systems are an integral component of the overall performance management approach and they should be integrated, unified, fluid and produce the desired information sought by management. In essence, the four components required within any performance measurement system are deciding what to measure (Johnson, 2005; Kennerley & Neely, 2002); how to measure it (Isgrove & Patel, 1993); interpreting the data (Brown, 2005; Vakkuri & Meklin, 2003); and communicating the results (Feit, 2003; Fryer et al., 2009; Greatbanks & Tapp, 2007).

The following section detail the method used to conduct an analysis of the extant literature within the field specifically relating to performance management and measurement within national-level sport bodies. Results of the review are then discussed followed by suggestions where future scholars may afford attention to further our understanding of these important areas within the sport management discipline.

**Method**

In order to collate extant literature involving both conceptual and empirical studies concerning performance management and measurement within these organisations, an electronic search was conducted through SPORTDiscus, Scopus and Google Scholar to ensure that all studies related to the field were identified. The search phrases used were ‘measuring organisational performance in sport’, ‘performance management in sport’ and ‘performance measurement in sport’. Variances of these terms were also used to ensure the relevant literature had been identified.

The studies that met the criteria were those that focused on organisational performance management or measurement issues in line with definitions of these theoretical underpinnings as described above in the introduction to the paper. The selection of relevant studies was limited to those published in the English language up to and inclusive of 2012.
In total, 11 studies satisfied the criteria which were applied within the electronic search (see Table 1). Studies that analysed performance within regional or local NPSOs were not selected given the variable organisational structures that these organisations can have in comparison to those NPSOs who operate at the national level. Broader issues of organisational performance that did not specifically relate to performance management or measurement as defined previously were also not included this review. Likewise, studies that focused on sport organisations that operate on a for-profit basis were not included in the review. Moreover, studies that simply focused on a singular performance dimension (governance, human resource management or similar) within organisational sport management were also omitted, as the aim of this paper was to focus on a more holistic view of extant literature within national-level organisational performance management and measurement.

Each publication’s full text was reviewed to determine the specific context of the study, its relationship to previous literature in the field, and the results and findings of the research. The results and findings were then analysed in relation to their relevance to previous studies in the field and the concepts of performance management and measurement as described previously. Ensuring rigour and trustworthiness of the search results, reference material from each study was also reviewed to ensure that the electronic search identified all relevant studies for the review. A thematic structure separating studies that focused on performance measurement as opposed to performance management was developed in accordance with the major themes present in the reviewed literature. The next section details the range of variables explored in previous studies and in doing so identifying what is currently known about performance management and measurement within NPSOs in an effort to inform future research in the field.

Results

It was found that the majority of the studies identified for review focused on performance measurement within relatively similar contexts and structures namely applying various models to carry out an assessment of performance dimensions within selected national-level NPSOs. Furthermore, the majority of studies focus on measurements within NGBs from mainland European countries (France, Belgium, Italy, Greece, Portugal and Spain); with few studies focusing on similar themes within other geographical locations (see Table 1). Few studies examined aspects of performance management within NPSOs as defined at the outset of this paper.

Multidimensional measures of performance

Early research related to the field of measuring organisational performance in NPSOs mainly focused on one (although often a variable) dimension of performance (Chelladurai & Haggerty, 1991; Chelladurai et al., 1987; Frisby, 1986; Koski, 1995; Morrow & Chelladurai, 1992). However, given the emergent diverse range of performance pressures being placed on NPSOs as described previously, more recent studies have focused on a multi-criteria approach to examine various performance dimensions within these entities. This approach is supported by the work of Herman and Renz (1999) who argued performance within a non-profit organisation is multidimensional and can never be ‘reducible to a single measure’ (p. 110). Other authors focusing on the non-profit organisation have come to similar conclusions (Forbes, 1998; Sawhill & Williamson,
Table 1. Extant literature related to performance measurement and management within NPSOs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Major results and findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frisby (1986)</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Canadian National Sport Governing Bodies</td>
<td>The ability of NGBs to secure scarce financial resources is related to its goal of excellence performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelladurai et al. (1987)</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Canadian National Sport Governing Bodies</td>
<td>The development of a National Sport Organisation effectiveness psychometric scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelladurai and Haggerty (1991)</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>Canadian National Sport Governing Bodies</td>
<td>Results focus on process effectiveness perception differences between volunteers and professional staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papadimitriou and Taylor (2000)</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>20 Greek National Sport Organisations</td>
<td>Provides five dimensions of performance: stability of the board and key strategic partnerships, athlete development, internal processes, strategic planning and the use of emerging sport science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayle and Madella (2002)</td>
<td>Quantitative and qualitative</td>
<td>40 French National Sport Organisations</td>
<td>Provides six dimensions of performance: institutional, social internal, social external, finance, publicity, organisational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madella et al. (2005)</td>
<td>Quantitative and qualitative</td>
<td>National Swimming Federations in Portugal, Greece, Spain and Italy</td>
<td>Provides five dimensions of performance: human resources, finance and institutional communication, partnership and inter-organisational relations, volume and quality of services, athletes' international performances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shilbury and Moore (2006)</td>
<td>Qualitative and quantitative</td>
<td>10 Australian Olympic Sport Organisations</td>
<td>Provides various dimensions of effectiveness including: productivity, flexibility, resources, planning, information, stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayle and Robinson (2007)</td>
<td>Quantitative and qualitative</td>
<td>11 French National Sport Organisations</td>
<td>Provides five dimensions of performance: system of governance, position in industry, quality of the operating network, facilitators, inhibitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winand et al. (2010)</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>27 Olympic sport governing bodies in Belgium</td>
<td>Provides five dimensions of performance: sport, customer, communication and image, finance, organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winand et al. (2011)</td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>18 NSOs in Belgium</td>
<td>Discusses performance from three perspectives: focusing on elite sport, developing innovative activities, the use of a broad range of volunteer expertise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winand et al. (2012)</td>
<td>Quantitative and qualitative</td>
<td>18 NSOs in Belgium</td>
<td>Develops there pathways to ‘high performance’ based on five key determinants of performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Within the NPSO extant literature, as one of the first studies to focus on performance measurement at the national level within NPSOs, Papadimitriou and Taylor (2000) apply a multiple constituency approach to measuring Greek NPSO’s performances. The quantitative performance measurement approach of this study provides an adequate overview of organisational performance within these organisations but does not describe or analyse core issues related to any performance management issues. The authors suggest that NPSOs should focus on the most important performance dimensions and ‘determine their relationship with the outputs of their organisations’ (p. 43). A multidimensional approach to assessing a NPSO’s performance has also been advocated by a number of other authors in the field (Bayle & Madella, 2002; Bayle & Robinson, 2007; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Papadimitriou, 1999; Papadimitriou & Taylor, 2000; Shilbury & Moore, 2006; Winand et al., 2010, 2011; Wolfe et al., 2002). It would appear that this is now widely accepted as an effective and appropriate method of conducting such an analysis within these organisations.

**Determinants of performance (performance measurement)**

Based on a multi-criteria approach to measuring organisational performance, various performance indicators and determinants of performance have been described by the authors in the field. It is interesting to note that crossover of determinants of performance within the various studies is quite limited, further justifying the need for a review of extant literature to create clarity surrounding the topics of performance management and measurement within NPSOs.

Perhaps the most common determinant of performance that is seen in a number of the studies reviewed within this research is the role that human resource management has to play in determining the overall success or failure in relation to substantive organisational performance (Byers, 2013; Cuskelly & O’Brien, 2013; Schlesinger, Egli, & Nagel, 2013; Wicker & Hallmann, 2013). Human resource management in the studies reviewed encompass themes such as board processes (Bayle & Robinson, 2007; Papadimitriou & Taylor, 2000), volunteer recruitment and retention (Winand et al., 2011) and indeed the performance of paid executives and other employees of the NPSOs (Madella, Bayle, & Tome, 2005; Shilbury & Moore, 2006).

It is clear that all organisations, including NPSOs, consist of individuals brought together in order to assist in the achievement of certain strategic objectives. The combined performances of individuals working together can have a significant impact on the capability of any organisation in achieving those objectives (Van Emmerik, 2008). Likewise, it is generally accepted that volunteers specifically, play a major role in assisting NPSOs achieve those same strategic objectives (Byers, 2013; Cuskelly & O’Brien, 2013; O’Boyle, 2013). The uniqueness of combining paid and unpaid staff within NPSOs certainly appears to be an area of concern for these organisations and a requisite determinant to be addressed in any organisational performance assessment initiatives.

In addition to human resource management, authors also list a number of other imperative areas of performance that NPSOs must address. Papadimitriou and Taylor (2000) argue that there are five major determinants of performance within an NPSO: board and external liaisons stability; interest in athletes; internal procedures; long-term planning; and contribution of sport science. In contrast, Bayle and Madella’s (2002) study argues there are six major determinants of performance within their French NPSO sample:
institutional; social internal; social external; economic and financial; and promotional and organisational. Bayle and Madella (2002) use qualitative research methods to establish performance indicators for NPSOs that can aid in the construction of various performance profiles of organisations. The study provides a number of descriptions for the performance of organisations but the terminology used and the lack of identification of where these performance failings lay (performance management) result in a study that provides little insight into the actual management of organisational performance within NPSOs. Perhaps the major benefit of the methodology employed in their research is that the study allows for the comparison of performance between organisations, albeit only within French NGBs. The major limitations of their study are that their approach to performance measurement is largely descriptive, limited to a specific time point and do not provide any evidence to identify a lack of organisational performance.

Building on Bayle and Madella’s (2002) study, Madella et al. (2005) adopt a similar model to analyse the performance of swimming NGBs in the countries of Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece. The authors define performance in terms of resource dependency theory and state it is ‘the ability to acquire and process human, financial and physical resources to achieve the goals of the organisation’ (p. 207). Resource dependency theory is most commonly associated with theories of governance and most commonly relates to the ability of the board to attract the necessary resources into the organisation (O’Boyle & Bradbury, 2013). However, within Madella et al.’s (2005) study, the authors do not cite governance as being a major determinant of performance for an NGB. Instead the study defines performance within an NGB as compromising of five different dimensions: human resources, finance and institutional communication, partnership and inter-organisational relations, volume and quality services and athletes’ international performances. In order to strengthen the findings of an analysis of key determinants identified in their study, the authors also employ case study methodology to qualitatively analyse and compare determinants of performance within their research sample which is a further addition to previous methodologies employed within the field.

Winand et al. (2010) also apply a similar model as Bayle and Madella (2002) and Madella et al. (2005) to present five major determinants of performance: sport, customer, communication and image, finance and organisation. These determinants are analysed through adopting a quantitative approach to performance measurement, and similar to previous studies, focus on measurement as opposed to management within the research sample. The authors acknowledge this limitation and suggest that future research focus on ‘qualitative judgements […] in order to assess organisational performance’ (p.305). In conducting an analysis of strategic and operational goals, Winand et al. (2010) suggest that, in general, the performance dimensions in their study are relatively independent of each other, in direct contrast to Bayle and Madella’s (2002) study. An important aspect of Winand et al. (2010) study is the comparison between their identified determinants of performance and the strategic goals and priorities of their research sample. This is an important development in the extant literature as it is widely accepted that the performance of any organisation must be driven by and compliment the specific objectives as identified within that organisation’s strategic plan. In fact, this is the basis for the development of a number of performance management tools and practices within the traditional business environment (Kaplan & Norton, 1992; Lyons, 2006; Neely et al., 2002; Town, 2000; Van Dooren & Van De Walle, 2008).

The latest development within this area of scholarly work is provided by Winand et al. (2012) who provide three pathways to ‘high performance’ (based on five key
determinants) within NPSOs based on a mixed-method design combining quantitative performance measurements with qualitative measures through the use of semi-structured interviews. The results of the study suggest that ‘researchers should analyse combinations of factors leading to performance and not just the net effects of variables’ (p. 19), taking into account the impact that each variable may have on other identified determinants of performance. The authors argue that their presence (or absence) might lead to different results according to the factors with which they are combined. This would appear particularly relevant in the NPSO context, due to the complexity of these organisations – combining volunteers and paid staff, multiple strategic goals and mixed financing – which demands complex explanations.

**Satisfaction of stakeholders**

The satisfaction of stakeholders has been the most consistent determinant of performance proposed within the extant literature. Bayle and Madella (2002), Bayle and Robinson (2007), Madella et al. (2005), Papadimitriou and Taylor (2000), Shilbury and Moore (2006) and Winand et al. (2010) all suggest that organisational performance can be determined by the level of satisfaction experienced by organisational stakeholders. Papadimitriou and Taylor (2000) suggest this is an integral part of the objective component of the performance measurement system. It may also unveil the imbalance between expectations of stakeholders and the actual results achieved by the organisation, allowing for better understanding of the organisation’s dysfunctions (Spriggs, 1994). In applying the competing values approach (CVA) to measuring organisational effectiveness within Australian Olympic sport bodies, Shilbury and Moore (2006) also suggest that ‘determining whose view of effectiveness is important’, and ‘is central to the use of constituents or stakeholders to measure effectiveness’ (p. 9).

The stakeholders of a NPSO have variable interests and expectations depending upon the position of the organisation and their relationship with it. It may be necessary for an organisation to place particular importance on satisfying the needs of one or a limited amount of stakeholders based on the level of financing or support they are receiving from those stakeholders (Papadimitriou & Taylor, 2000). Furthermore, as the organisation grows and the network of stakeholders is increased, meeting the expectations of all the various stakeholders presents a very complex issue for the management team. In addition, referring to the complexities of measuring stakeholder satisfaction as a performance measure, Slack (1997) adds that ‘different constituents (stakeholders) use different criteria in their assessment of an organisation […] some of these criteria may be conflicting, and that some may change over time’ (p. 34). Slack also adds that a major problem is ‘determining which constituents are important to an organisation, and then measuring the criteria they value and use in determining the effectiveness of their organisation’ (p. 34).

**Performance management**

Only one study within the review partly focused on performance management issues within NPSOs as opposed to a sole emphasis on performance measurement. Bayle and Robinson’s (2007) study provides a ‘holistic’ (p. 250) view of organisational performance (management and measurement) within sport as opposed to a singular focus on measurement of organisational performance through the identification of various determinants of performance. Their study employs a survey and qualitative semi-structured interviews using case
study research to understand strategy and management practices in relation to organisational performance within French NGBs. The authors divide the survey into four main components: strategy – the environmental context of the organisations and long-term planning; governance – the professional ethos of the organisation and the roles and calibre of the board; stakeholder relationships – strategic partnerships with public and private entities; control and evaluation – processes or individuals responsible for managing and evaluating performance. The latter component, ‘control and evaluation’ focuses on the explicit issue of performance management within their sample. They found that the absence of control mechanisms in their research sample led to ‘unclear objectives and lack of clarity in the use of resources’ (p. 265) and that this issue ‘directly inhibits the effective performance’ (p. 265) of NPSOs.

In relation to the organisation’s performance at strategic level, Bayle and Robinson (2007) suggest there are three principles that performance depends upon: the system of governance; the quality of the organisation’s network (affiliations, supporting bodies); and the positioning of the organisation within its particular sport. The study refers to these principles as ‘The Strategic Performance Mix’. At the operational level, Bayle and Robinson’s (2007) study suggests there are three further performance issues that facilitate overall organisational performance: forms and levels of professionalisation; the presence of a participatory organisational culture; and adopting a partnership approach.

Although performance management is addressed at one point in their research through the acknowledgement that control mechanisms are absent within their research sample, a detailed analysis of specific tools or processes that can be used by NPSOs to manage on-going performance is not provided within their research study. This presents a clear gap in the extant literature related to performance management within NPSOs and must be prioritised as an area for future research. The next section explores this and other issues further while suggesting areas for future research within the field.

**Directions for future research**

The field of research related to performance measurement continues to grow albeit generally limited to a small number of authors focusing on specific European countries. Despite the clear importance for the understanding of organisational performance management practices and theory within national-level NPSOs, the extant literature in this field is extremely limited and further research is urgently required to investigate these issues in greater depths. Due to the lack of empirical studies in the field, it is unknown how NPSOs can manage imperative performance dimensions within their organisations to ensure the sustainability of a consistently high-performing organisation. The use of traditional performance management practices and systems and their potential benefits to NPSOs is currently absent from the literature related to organisational performance within the NPSO sector.

It is evident from the extant literature examined above that a clear distinction must be drawn between performance management and performance measurement within these organisations. The analysis of specific performance dimensions through mostly numerical measures undoubtedly serves benefit for these organisations but in order to address fundamental issues of performance, organisations must also employ qualitative judgements to uncover where exactly specific performance failings can be rectified. The need for such an approach can be portrayed through the issue of governance for instance within NPSOs, as poor governance clearly has a significant impact on organisational performance (Bayle &
Robinson, 2007; Ferkins & Shilbury, 2010; Hoye & Doherty, 2011; O’Boyle & Bradbury, 2013), but such a revelation cannot be unveiled through the use of only quantitative analysis. Likewise, the calibre of individual employed within the organisation may have a significant impact on overall organisational performance, but current studies in the field do not address such qualitative measures. Therefore, it is important that future studies concerning organisational performance management and measurement within NPSOs employ a mixed-method approach to provide a more holistic view of the various performance dimensions impacting upon these entities.

As noted above, a number of performance dimensions that are identified for analysis in the extant literature overlap within various studies. It may therefore be possible to create a best practice approach to measuring organisational performance through the selection of the salient common variables that can be applied to almost all national level NPSOs. This would allow for the comparison of performance between different entities similar to the SPLISS project which share similar characteristics. It is up to scholars to test this hypothesis through engaging in empirical research to examine the selected variables within various organisations. This would be a significant advancement in both the theory and the practice of organisational performance management and measurement in national-level NPSOs and an important area that future studies should focus on.

Although there is a body of research within the sport management domain relating to the recruitment, management and retention of volunteers (Cuskelly, Hoye, & Auld, 2006; Cuskelly, Taylor, Hoye, & Darcy, 2006; Schlesinger et al., 2013; Wicker & Hallmann, 2013), literature relating to the assessment or evaluation of volunteer performance is rare, and it would appear that documented instances of these processes taking place in practice are equally scarce. As the individual contributes to improving the performance of the organisation, it is possible that an ‘individual’ performance management measure, as part of a wider organisational approach may help employees understand their role in achieving strategic objectives. McCarthy and Garavan (2001) suggest employees must receive constant support and feedback on their own performance and have opportunities to gain more expertise in their roles through defined learning and development programmes. It can be assumed that the assessment of volunteer performances’ rarely occurs due to the difficulties in assessing an individual’s performance when they do not receive any direct financial gain through their work for the organisation. Doherty (1998) suggests that as NPSOs rely so heavily on volunteers that it can also be assumed they do not wish to discourage volunteers from involvement in any way through the negative connotations associated with formal traditional performance appraisal processes. In addition, in order to facilitate the learning of new skills and contribute to the development of the sport, industry reports also suggests that feedback and better communication were sought by volunteers to improve their volunteer experience (SPARC, 2006). Therefore, based on volunteer motivations and expectations, it appears that NPSOs are making the mistake of assuming volunteers do not wish to receive feedback or assessment of their work for the organisation. Future studies should explore what type of performance appraisal system can be adapted as part of a larger performance management practice to be employed by the NPSO sector relevant to volunteers.

An area of research that is not addressed in any study of organisational performance in NPSOs is the use of traditional business performance management tools such as The Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1992, 1996), The Performance Prism (Neely et al., 2002; O’Boyle & Hassan, 2013), or any derivative of such tools. These practices have been widely adopted within the traditional business environment (Kurtzman, 1997)
and as the professionalisation and commercial aspects of NPSOs begin to grow in importance, it is imperative that future research focus on the applicability of such tools within this sector. The Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1992, 1996) in particular has been shown to be versatile enough to be adopted within various organisational types and industries and therefore it can be assumed that this performance management tool could also serve some purpose within the NPSO sector. If such practices are not currently being employed by NPSOs, causation must be established to examine if a lack of knowledge or expertise on the part of management is an issue in this regard (Arnold et al., 2012; Chelladurai, 2005; Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Mahony & Howard, 2001; Miller, 1997).

Finally, the few studies that have been conducted in this field have almost exclusively focused on mainland European countries (with exception of some Australian and Canadian studies). It is essential that further quantitative and qualitative research in particular (case study, action research or similar) is conducted in various other geographical locations to examine themes and issues concerning performance dimensions within similar organisations from other locations. The ability for generalisation of findings within the extant literature is clearly a major limitation of current research within the field and as a result future scholars must expand this research to include other organisations of variable size, structure, function, and ultimately as stated, location. It may not always be possible to compare and contrast organisational performance within these entities; however, where this is possible, valuable insights may be gained as to how NPSOs can learn from others who have succeeded in implementing effective organisational performance management practices to assist in the achievement of strategic imperatives. In addition, expanding research within the field will provide a greater understanding of organisational performance management issues within NPSOs which is now so urgently required within both research and practice. Further theoretical frameworks relating to performance management and measurement within the NPSO sector should be explored to enhance our understanding of the enablers and inhibitors involved in performance measurement and management practices in the NPSO sector. As scholarly works continue to emerge it is anticipated that new theory related to performance measurement and management in the NPSO sector will provide industry with the capability to manage imperative performance dimensions in an effective and an efficient manner.

In conclusion, future research into the organisational performance measurement and management practices of national-level NPSOs can inform new theory development in the academic discipline, better policy formation within industry and provide greater understanding of this important emerging discipline within sport management in general. There are still large gaps in our understanding of this area most notably the applicability and relevance of traditional business performance management practices within NPSOs. As highlighted above, it is anticipated that this and other identified pertinent issues will be addressed in future research within the field that will in turn contribute to the development of new theory. The current paper establishes a context for what has previously been examined within the area of performance measurement in NPSOs. However, performance management within these entities still remains a largely unexplored area and the directions for future research identified above will help scholars and practitioners to gain new levels of understanding in relation to this imperative aspect of sport management.
References


