UNDERSTANDING INNOVATION IN MEGA-SPORT EVENT ORGANIZING COMMITTEES

by

KRISTINA J. HOFF

(Under the Direction of Becca Leopkey)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation was to explore innovation in mega-sport event organizing committees. Using an embedded multiple-case study design, the 2024 Paris Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (POCOG), the 2028 Los Angeles Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (LAOCOG), and the 2026 Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup host organizing committee (United 26) were analyzed. More specifically, this project advanced three primary research questions: (1) In *what* ways are mega-sport event organizing committees being innovative? (2) *Why* are mega-sport event organizing committees innovating? and (3) *How* do mega-sport event organizing committees undergo the innovation process? Three interconnected studies, each focused on a specific research question, formed the basis of this dissertation.

The first study employed the 3D-model of innovation as a framework to identify the multidimensional types of innovative practices pursued by POCOG, LAOCOG, and United 26. Six multidimensional types of innovations were identified: fan experience technical products, commercial technical products, environmental administrative processes, environmental technical products, social administrative process, and organizational administrative processes. This study

also highlighted similarities and differences between innovations pursued by contemporary (i.e., Olympic Games) and a more traditional mega-sport events (i.e., FIFA World Cup). Focusing on POCOG and LAOCOG, the second study utilized organizational innovation as a theoretical framework. In doing so, results revealed OCOGs experience various environmental, organizational, and individual drivers toward innovation in addition to barriers (e.g., managing intangible resources and resistance to radical innovation) that hinder implementation of new practices. Using the innovation process as a framework, the third study of this dissertation explored the innovation process undergone by POCOG, LAOCOG, and United 26. Data analysis suggested the innovation process for mega-sport event organizing committees includes four main phases: initiation, adoption decision, implementation, and transfer.

Cumulatively, this dissertation extended our understanding and knowledge of sport event management, and more specifically the phenomenon that is sport event innovation. As a result, numerous theoretical and practical implications about innovation in mega-sport event organizing committees are proposed. Moreover, this dissertation also illuminated the abundance of opportunities for meaningful future research pertaining to innovation in mega-sport event organizations.

INDEX WORDS: mega-sport events; organizing committees; innovation; case study; qualitative research; organizational innovation; Olympic Games; World Cup

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To my family.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Background of Study

Since the 1960s, the concept of innovation has been discussed as adopting new ideas to foster and sustain a competitive advantage in societies with evolving societal trends, emerging technologies, and increasing marketplace competition (Damanpour & Schneider, 2006; Wolfe, 1994). Consequently, innovation is not a new phenomenon. In fact, the multiple dimensions of innovation have been examined across various academic settings, including economics, entrepreneurship, technology, management, and marketing (Baregheh et al., 2009). As a result, research has produced appealing evidence that links innovation to business growth and survival (Cefis & Marsili, 2006; Wolfe, 1994). However, despite the significance of innovation, it has only recently become of notable importance within sport management scholarship (Ratten, 2018).

Sport has been described as inherently innovative due to its capacity to adapt, evolve, and change in response to social, political, and technological trends (Ratten, 2016). More recently, some scholars (e.g., Hoeber et al., 2015; Tjønndal, 2017; Winand et al., 2016) have examined innovation in sport by exploring how new technologies are being used in innovative ways to enhance fans' experiences (Skinner et al., 2018). Others (e.g., Hoeber et al., 2015) investigate how local community sport organizations are being innovative despite their lack of resources compared to for-profit entities. However, there is a glaring lack of research that examines sport event innovation. The meager amount of research on sport event innovation that does exist

focuses on exploring what aspects of recurring sport events should be innovative to enhance consumer satisfaction (e.g., Yoshida *et al*., 2013; Yoshida & Nakazawa, 2016).

Problem Statement

Innovation is essential for organizational growth and survival due to marketplace fluctuations, evolving societal trends, and technological advancements (Damanpour & Schneider, 2006). Yet, no research to date has specifically examined why, how, and in what ways mega-sport event organizing committees are being innovative. The disparity of research on innovation in mega-sport event organizing committees is a critical omission because being innovative is a complex process that challenges all sport organizations (Slack & Parent, 2006). Moreover, innovation has become increasingly significant within international sport governing bodies, such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), to make hosting mega-sport events more effective and less costly (IOC, 2017). For instance, in March 2021, the IOC unanimously approved the Olympic Agenda 2020+5, consisting of 15 recommendations. Interestingly, the word "innovation" appears in six of the 15 recommendations. More specifically, the first recommendation of Olympic Agenda 2020+5 is to continue to "identify innovation in sport to reflect, as appropriate, in the programme and delivery of the Olympic Games" (IOC, 2021, p. 4). Along the same vein, FIFA released an action plan titled, *The Vision 2020-2023: Making Football Truly Global* that outlines 11 goals FIFA hopes to achieve by the end of 2023. Goal nine highlights FIFA's dedication to leveraging innovative technologies by establishing a new Innovation Program to test and promote emerging innovations to enhance the football experience (FIFA, 2021). These illustrative examples demonstrate the importance innovation will continue to have on mega-sport events and, therefore, warrants further investigation.

Purpose

This dissertation research aimed to enhance our understanding of innovation in mega-sport event organizing committees. For this research, a sport event is defined as "a major one-time or recurring event of limited duration, developed primarily to enhance the awareness, appeal, and profitability of a tourism destination in the short and/or long term" (Ritchie, 1984, p. 2). This definition from the event management literature is preferred as it differentiates smaller one-off, large scale, and mega-sport events (e.g., Olympic Games and World Cup) from events that are core products of sport that occur as part of a league (e.g., regular season professional games). More specifically, Hall (1992) characterized mega-events as:

> … events which are expressly targeted at the international tourism market and might be suitably described as 'mega' by virtue of their size in terms of attendance, target market, level of public financial involvement, political effects, extent of television coverage, construction of facilities, and impacts on economic and social fabric of the host community (Hall, 1992, p. 5).

In this vein, the Olympic Games and World Cup tournaments have been described as mega-events due to their size and significance that yields extraordinarily high levels of tourism, exposure, and impact for the host communities (Getz, 1997).

The purpose of this research was met by advancing three primary research questions: (1) In *what* ways are mega-sport event organizing committees being innovative? (2) *Why* are mega-sport event organizing committees innovating? and (3) *How* do mega-sport event organizing committees undertake the innovation process? To answer each primary research question, this dissertation was parsed into three separate studies. Each study focused on one of the primary research questions. By adhering to the article-based dissertation format (Dunleavy, 2003), each study has its own literature review, framework, methods, results, discussion, and conclusion sections. This format of organizing a dissertation is advantageous as it enabled the results to be

disseminated to a broader audience with each study meeting the guidelines of peer-reviewed outlets.

Significance of Study

Recently, scholars (Ratten, 2018; Skinner et al., 2018; Tjønndal, 2017) have purported that mega-sport events need to be innovative as they pave the way for the future of sport and have considerable impacts on innovation at lower organizational levels. Despite there being a connection between innovation and managing mega-sport events, there has been little to no effort to expand our understanding of the innovation phenomenon in the mega-sport event setting. Consequently, the main scholarly implications from this study derive from its findings that contribute to the broader sport event management literature by providing a better understanding of innovation in the mega-sport event environment, including enhancing our knowledge on sport event organizing committees' innovation, the pressures they face to do so, and how they manage the multi-dimensional nature of the innovation process within an organizational context.

Additionally, and arguably more importantly, this dissertation answers calls made to provide a richer and more in-depth understanding of innovation by using various innovation concepts (i.e., 3D-model of innovation, organizational innovation, and innovation process), adding a new dimension to the body of work in the sport management literature. The importance of innovation in sport management scholarship is evident from the increasing number of special issues in field-related journals. More specifically, this research further develops our understanding of innovation in sport event management by integrating the phenomenon of innovation with the unique characteristics of mega-sport events and their organizing committees as they operate within limited lifecycles. Specifically, utilizing POCOG, LAOCOG, and United 26 as embedded units of analysis for this dissertation provides a better understanding of

innovation in differing types of mega-sport events (i.e., contemporary multiple-sport mega-sport event versus a traditional single-sport mega-sport event) and geographical locations (i.e., North American versus European). Moreover, this dissertation offers practitioners insight into innovation, thus enabling them to approach the complex phenomenon from a position of greater awareness, understanding, and strength. This is advantageous for practitioners, given the significance innovation has on organizational growth and survival in our continuously evolving world.

Albeit there is still much work to be done beyond the nature of this dissertation, the analysis of these three studies takes sport event management scholarship to the next level, which is essential to expanding our understanding of the growing field through theoretical advancements and practical insights. The three studies that make up this dissertation initiates this advancement.

Review of Literature

This section provides a general review of relevant literature to establish a foundation of this dissertation. Specifically, the section begins with a broad overview of innovation and is followed by sport innovation and sport event innovation sections. Each study that makes up this dissertation is underpinned by different innovation-related frameworks. These frameworks are further discussed in each of their respective chapters.

Innovation

There is no single universal definition of innovation (Baregheh et al., 2009). Instead, the concept of innovation varies depending on the context and setting of the explored phenomenon (Baregheh et al., 2009). Consequently, innovation has come to mean different things to different people within the broader academic literature (Adams et al., 2006). Baregheh et al. (2009)

conducted a systematic review on the concept of innovation and found the word "new" to be the most significant constant across varied definitions. Their findings support Damanpour and Schneider's (2006) claim that newness is the only constant when defining innovation in different fields and from different perspectives. However, it is essential to note that innovation does not occur by generating a new idea itself but rather when a new idea is used (Damanpour & Evan, 1984). Other innovation researchers (e.g., Mohr, 1969; Rogers, 2003) have purported that innovation should not be considered as something new to the world in general, but more so something newly used by an adopter. Specifically, for this paper, innovation is defined as "any idea, practice, or material artifact perceived as new by the relevant unit of adoption" (Zaltman *et al.*, 1973, p. 10). Depending on the purpose and scope of a study, a unit of adoption can be any individual, industry, market, or organization (Garcia & Calantone, 2002). This broader definition is preferred for this research because it reflects what is considered as new or done for the first time in the context of mega-sport event organizing committees.

When discussing innovation, it is imperative to distinguish between "innovation" and "invention," which are often incorrectly used interchangeably. In 1967, Becker and Whisler differentiated invention and innovation by suggesting that an *invention* is an act of creating something new. In contrast, innovation is a process that includes the early employment of a product or process. Becker and Whisler's (1967) claims were more recently supported by Ratten and Ferreira (2017), who denoted an invention as creating a product or process for the first time. In contrast, an innovation occurs if someone improves or makes a significant contribution to the way an existing product, process, or service is used.

The scope of innovation research is extensive as it spans several branches of social sciences such as economics, management, sociology, and psychology (Baregheh *et al.*, 2009;

Damanpour, 2020). In doing so, scholars have attempted to examine *why*, how, and in what ways organizations innovate (e.g., Khan, 2018; Oke, 2007) and the rate *at which* innovations are adopted (e.g., Al-Jabri & Sohail, 2012; Mol & Birkinshaw, 2009). Researchers have also explored the challenges and barriers to being innovative, such as the impact on relationships and organizational structure (e.g., Chesbrough, 2010), and why some innovations fail (e.g., D'Este et al., 1984; Martin & Scott, 2000). Despite the growth of innovation scholarship and its application across many academic fields, only recently has innovation emerged within the sport management literature (Ratten, 2018).

Sport Innovation

As highlighted above innovation is a context-specific phenomenon. Moreover, sport has unique and complex characteristics that make it inimitable compared to other areas of inquiry (e.g., heightened emotional and psychological attachment, global appeal, and various types of sport organizational structures) (Doherty & Chelladuri, 1999; Funk & James, 2006). Consequently, Ratten (2016) has called for scholars to pay additional attention to innovation in the sport industry. Thus, it is imperative to first define sport innovation.

Defining Sport Innovation

Within sport management literature, a few definitions of sport innovation have recently emerged. For example, one of the earliest proposed definitions of sport innovation was brought forth by Tjønndal in 2017 when she referred to sport innovation as "an internal process that involves the generation and practical adoptions of new and creative ideas, which aim to produce a qualitative change in a sport context" (p. 291). Soon after, Ratten (2018) defined sport innovation as "the creation of a process, product or service that leads to increased competitiveness in a sport context" (p. 11). Most recently, Skinner et al. (2018) considered both

Tjønndal's (2017) and Ratten's (2018) definitions by describing sport innovation as "any form of change or novelty applied to a sport context" (p. 44). When considering these definitions, Tjønndal's (2017) refers to sport innovation as an "internal process," yet innovation scholars (e.g., Birkinshaw & Mol, 2006; Chesbrough, 2003) have acknowledged that external factors can also significantly influence innovation adoption and diffusion. Additionally, Ratten's (2018) definition is limited to product, process, or service innovations and does not extend to other forms of innovation (e.g., organizational or business model). For these reasons, this paper uses Skinner *et al.'s* (2020) definition when referring to innovation due to its broader consideration and meaning.

Sport Innovation Typology

In addition to defining sport innovation, Tjønndal (2017) proposed five types of innovation in the sport context: social, technological, commercial, community-based, and organizational. Each of these types of sport innovations makes up the following sub-sections of this literature review. Specifically, a definition and review of related literature for each sport innovation type is provided.

Social. According to Tjønndal (2017), social innovation can surface "when sport organizations, groups, or individuals (such as athletes and coaches) are faced with social issues that require new and creative solutions" (p. 300). In this regard, sport innovation research has focused on gender inclusion in sport and sport for development and peace (SDP). For instance, Hayhurst (2014) examined female participation in martial arts in Uganda and found that innovative campaigns and initiatives can increase female participation in male-dominated sports. Svensson and Mahoney (2020) explored the intraorganizational conditions necessary for social innovation to develop in SDP contexts. They found that SDP's organizational culture, leadership,

paid staff, organizational infrastructure, and financial resources to enable social innovation were antecedents necessary for social innovation in SDPs.

Although existing sport-related social innovation literature primarily focuses on gender equity and SDP, other scholars (e.g., McCullough et al., 2016) have highlighted the social initiatives that pertain to environmental issues in sport. Specifically, McCullough et al. (2016) employed institutional theory and diffusion of innovation to understand the *waves* in which environmental sustainability efforts have become more sophisticated and purposeful within the sport industry. In doing so, three different waves were identified: initial awareness, dissemination of education, and implementing activities.

Technological. Ratten (2011) argued that technological developments drive much of the innovation in sport. Technological innovation occurs when introducing new technologies, often emerging in other industries and translated to the sport setting, changes the effectiveness and efficiency of the current technology being employed (Damanpour, 1987; Ratten, 2020). Slack & Parent (2006) illustrated technological innovation when Hillerich and Bradby—a company best known for producing the Louisville Slugger—began using tracer lathes when manufacturing their baseball bats. The innovation lay not in the technology of the tracer lathe itself but in its use in making bats.

In this vein, the extant literature has examined how innovative technologies have transformed the sport landscape in various ways. Examples include improving athletes' equipment and performance (e.g., FastSkin Swimsuits) (Balmer et al., 2007; Sheridan, 2007), officials' decision-making capabilities (e.g., Hawk-Eye and Virtual Assistant Referee) (Petrović et al., 2015), marketing strategies (e.g., Snaptrends and virtual sponsorship signage) (Ratten, 2011), participation opportunities (e.g., online betting and eSports) (Ratten & Ferreira, 2016),

and fans' experiences, in person (e.g., use of cell phone applications) or at home (e.g., virtual reality) (Ratten, 2020; Skinner et al., 2018). For example, Petrović et al. (2015) examined how professional sport leagues began implementing novel technologies (e.g., the Hawk-Eye Operating System and GoalRef) to more effectively officiate soccer matches and enhance viewers' television broadcasting experience. Others (e.g., Ratten & Ferreria, 2016; Yim et al., 2020) noted how the use of the internet and its continuous technology-driven advancements have created brand new ways of participating in sport-related activities, including fantasy leagues, online betting, and e-sports.

Commercial. Commercial innovation often pertains to how sport products and processes are marketed (Tjønndal, 2017). Commercial innovation is vital for organizations to create a sustainable competitive advantage (Chen, 2006). Accordingly, various teams, leagues, and federations have implemented new digital technologies and social media marketing techniques to deliver innovative digital-centric sport events (Skinner et al., 2018). For instance, new location-based software programs and media intelligence systems (e.g., Geofeedia, Snaptrends, and Media Sonar) are being used by large-scale sport events such as the Super Bowl to promote their marketing and fan engagement initiatives (Goldman, 2015). Additionally, scholars (e.g., Kunkel et al., 2016; Parris et al., 2014) have found that athletes have become increasingly innovative in using social media to create sponsorship opportunities and enhance their overall image, reputation, and personal brand. For instance, Parris et al. (2014) examined how female wakeboarders could become more entrepreneurial (i.e., as innovators) in making a living due to their low, seasonal wages.

Community-based. In the sport context, "community-based innovation involves social responsibility and entrepreneurship in which individuals and sport organizations partner with

local community groups to encourage working towards a common goal" (Tjønndal, 2017, p. 301). In this vein, Ratten and Babiak (2010) elucidated a connection between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and entrepreneurship as athletes, coaches, teams, and organizations could apply business practices to solve social problems. Moreover, Reid (2017) used a case study approach of an award-winning community-based innovation by the Spartans Football Club in Edinburgh, Scotland. Specifically, Reid (2017) describes how club members' time spent working within their struggling local community benefitted its residents, particularly through a dental program called the Spartan Smilers that educated children about dental health while they participated in football. Furthermore, Zeimers et al. (2020) examined innovation in sport governing bodies in Belgium and found that innovation, financial autonomy, knowledge, and human resources are necessary for CSR implementation.

Organizational. According to Tjønndal (2017), "organizational innovation occurs when sport organizations and government institutions pursue projects of institutional change" (p. 301). Institutional change includes new ways of organizing sport (Danylchuk & Wood, 2015). Examples of institutional change in sport may include establishing new sport governing bodies (Sousa & Madeira, 2016), new clubs, organizations, and federations (Newell & Swan, 1995), new ways of financing and funding sport activities (Tjønndal, 2017), and even the introduction of new rules and regulations in sport that affect how it is played (Caza, 2000). In this vein, scholars have examined factors that lead to sport organization innovation (e.g., Hoeber & Hoeber, 2012), ways in which sport organizations have been innovative (e.g., Hoeber et al., 2015; Winand et al., 2016), and outcomes of and responses to organizational innovations (e.g., Winand & Anagnostopoulos, 2017). For example, Winand et al. (2013) found that regional sport federations in Belgium who viewed financial resources competitively, favored change, and paid

staff involved in decision-making were more likely to innovate. Moreover, when examining ways sport organizations are being innovative, Hoeber et al. (2015) identified product, process, technical, administrative, radical, and incremental innovations that were successfully implemented by various curling, soccer, swimming, and ultimate frisbee community sport organizations (CSOs). Their findings revealed 188 innovations across all clubs and indicated that innovation was more common in new and contemporary sports (e.g., ultimate) but threatened more established ones (e.g., curling). Furthermore, concerning innovation outcomes, Caza (2000) identified a successful innovation (i.e., provincial athlete ranking) and a failed one (i.e., computer scoring) within the Canadian Boxing Association. He concluded that the athlete ranking system was successfully adopted because, unlike the new computer scoring system, it was introduced gradually, giving members of the organization time to adjust and adapt.

Albeit Tjønndal's (2017) typology of innovation is helpful when providing illustrative examples of sport event innovation literature, it is essential to note that innovations are multidimensional as they often embody more than one innovation characteristic (Corthouts et al., 2021). For example, the National Hockey League using virtual overlay for advertisements on rink-side boards could be described as a commercial technical innovation. Thus, it is imperative not to view innovations as unidimensional (Rowley et al., 2011).

Sport innovations are often the solution to various organizational problems (Ringuet-Riot & James, 2013), and sport entities need to be innovative given the increasingly competitive nature of the sport business environment (Skinner et al., 2018). However, being innovative is a significant challenge many sport organizations face (Slack & Parent, 2006), including sport events and their organizing committees. Therefore, given this proposed study's purpose, the next section of this paper discusses sport event innovation in more depth.

Sport Event Innovation

There is a dearth of scholarship studying sport event innovation (Yoshida et al., 2013; Yoshida & Nakazawa, 2016). Literature that exists on sport event innovation focuses on sport events as the core product to consumers. For instance, Yoshida et al. (2013) defined sport event innovativeness as "consumers' perceptions of the newness and uniqueness of a sporting event" (p. 69). They and examined consumers' perceived innovativeness of an American college football game and found that an event's innovativeness was comprised of six primary dimensions: player performance, aesthetic environment, self-service technology, respectful access, fan loyalty programs, and fan community. These findings suggested that sport events should be innovative in these aspects to enhance consumer satisfaction.

To further test the dimensions identified in this study, Yoshida and Nakazawa (2016) examined consumers' assessments of innovative sport consumption experiences via spectator sport and participant sport settings in Asia. Specifically, the spectator sport setting examined was a professional baseball game in Japan. This event was selected because the home team had completed significant upgrades (e.g., added seating, new lighting, improvements made to the big presentation screen). Also in Japan, a running station was examined for the participant sport setting. The running station was a 5 km loop around the Imperial Palace in Tokyo, where 30 running stations provided restrooms and locker rooms and an option for runners to rent shoes, apparel, and towels. Congruent with Yoshida et al.'s (2013) findings, the six factors were present, and the aesthetic environment was the dominant factor that enhanced consumer satisfaction and brand attitude (Yoshida & Nakazawa, 2016).

It is discernable that compelling work has been done to begin examining innovation in sport event contexts. However, it is imperative to note this existing research examines sport

events as the core product offering that is part of a league through the lens of consumers. Consequently, research has yet to explore the innovation of sport events that are "elevated above ordinary life" (Getz, 1989, p. 125) due to their unique traditions, status, and relative infrequency, such as mega-sport events (e.g., Olympic Games and World Cup) (Ritchie, 1984). This omission in the sport event management literature warrants investigation given the lack of understanding of sport event innovation (Yoshida & Nakazawa, 2016) and its importance to event survival and growth (Ratten, 2016).

Overall Methodology

There are interconnected elements of a research project (i.e., epistemology, ontology, theoretical perspective, and methods) that influence how a research design comes to fruition (Crotty, 1998). These key elements are often amalgamated without distinction (Crotty, 1998). Therefore, here, my epistemological and ontological approach and theoretical perspectives will be provided.

Epistemology, Ontology, and Theoretical Perspective

Abridged, *epistemological* assumptions pertain to how knowledge is created, acquired, and communicated (Scotland, 2012). Also referred to as a paradigm (Lincoln et al., 2011) or philosophical worldview (Creswell, 2013), it ultimately outlines "how we know what we know" (Crotty, 1998, p. 8). Guba and Lincoln (1994) state that epistemology "asks the questions, what is the nature of the relationship between the would-be knower and what can be known?" (p. 108). According to Crotty (1998), objectivism, subjectivism, and constructivism are three broad epistemological views. Objectivist epistemology holds that there is an objective reality (Rawnsley, 1998). In this vein, research is about discovering this single objective truth that is separate from one's consciousness or own experiences (Crotty, 1998; Rawnsley, 1998). At the

opposite end of the continuum, the subjectivist epistemology maintains there being no single reality as it is constructed by the individual who imposes their own meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Falling between the objectivist and subjectivist epistemologies, I adopt the constructivist view that predicates the notion that truth and meaning are constructed based on one's own experiences (Crotty, 1998). Therefore, the researcher and object work in tandem to generate meaning (Crotty, 1998). As the primary investigator of this dissertation, my constructivism epistemological view is evidenced by my assumptions that the various actors within the mega-sport event organizing committees have created their own meaning of the phenomenon being examined that is innovation. By examining the various perspectives of these actors, I was able to come to a more inclusive understanding of innovation in the mega-sport event context.

Similar to epistemology, ontological approaches also inform researchers' theoretical perspective and their methodology and methods. However, while epistemology pertains to knowledge, *ontology* concentrates on reality and the nature of existence that pertains to inquiries about "what is" (Crotty, 1998, p. 10). According to Fleetwood (2005), a critical realist ontology is appropriate when studying organizations. Critical realism posits events are real but are attributable to the history and social context of the researcher (Bhaskar, 1989). As a critical realist myself, it is imperative for me to accept the challenges of this approach that not all understanding may be equally valid as individuals will have varying experience and reality that may never be understood with exact precision (Bhaskar, 1989; Groff, 2004; Frauley & Pearce, 2007). In this vein, I accept the idea that I may not have been able to arrive at a truth with absolute finality; rather, I provided insights that present the most robust and convincing interpretation of what is real. I achieved this through interacting with multiple actors who have various experiences pertaining to innovation and mega-sport event organizing committees.

A researcher's *theoretical perspective* is their "view of the human world and social life within that world" (Crotty, 1998, p. 7). Numerous types of theoretical perspectives exist, including, positivism, post-positivism, interpretivism, feminism, postmodernism, pragmatism, and critical theory, among others (cf. Creswell, 2013; Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Edwards and Skinner (2011) note that the positivist mentality has been pervasive in the sport management field; however, I identify as a post-positivist. Post-positivists reject the notion that there is one real truth (i.e., positivists) and, instead, believes inferences about socially constructed interpretations of reality are best examined using theoretical and experience-based lenses (Creswell, 2013; Miller, 2000). Accordingly, my post-positivist views align with my epistemological and ontological perspectives as they appreciate multiple constructed realities (Miller, 2000). Research within the post-positivist perspective tends to have rigorous, multiple stages of data collection and analysis (e.g., problem, research questions, method, results, discussion, conclusion) (Creswell, 2013). This illustrates the notion that it is essential for researchers to state their perspectives as these assumptions will explain and justify the methodology used in a given study (Crotty, 1998).

Research Design: A Case Study Approach

A case study is "an empirical method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (i.e., the case) in depth and within its real-world context" (Yin, 2017, p. 15). Three factors that support the use of a case study approach are: 'how' or 'why' research questions, lack of control over an event by the researcher, and the examination of a contemporary phenomenon (Yin, 2017). This research project meets all three points of criteria. Specifically, two of the three primary research questions answered how and why related inquires. Additionally, the researcher had no control over the ways mega-sport event organizing committees are innovative. Moreover, the three

embedded units of analysis selected for this research (i.e., POCOG, LAOCOG, and United 26) are contemporary phenomena as they will be taking place in the near future. Furthermore, a case study approach can help a researcher understand an organization's life and its activities (Noor, 2008). In this vein, a case study is also appropriate because its purpose is to examine innovation within an organizational context. It is for these reasons a case study approach was preferred for this research project.

Embedded Case Study Approach

More specifically, this dissertation represented an embedded case study design to enhance our understanding of innovation in mega-sport event organizing committees. An embedded case study provides more robust findings by exploring cases from multiple settings (Herriott & Firestone, 1983; Yin, 2017). The rationale that guided the selection of an embedded case study design included: (a) the ability to generate more robust findings (Herriott & Firestone, 1983); (b) the development of outcomes that contribute to our enhanced understanding of the phenomenon both individually and collectively (Putney, 2010); (c) appropriateness for use when trying to describe the features and process of a phenomenon (Yin, 2017); and (d) exploring cases from multiple lenses rather than one isolated area (Yin, 2017). Following Yin's (2017) vision, an embedded case study includes contexts, cases, and embedded units of analysis. These elements are further described in the ensuing sub-sections.

Research Contexts

In case study research, context can be geographical (i.e., location), historical, cultural, or topical (Flyvbjerg, 2011). For this dissertation, the Olympic Games and FIFA World Cup were selected as the research contexts for multiple reasons. For one, scholars have often disagreed as to what exactly constitutes a "mega" sport event; yet many agree that the Olympic Games and

FIFA World Cup are examples due to their size and significance in terms of tourism, exposure, and impact on the host communities (Getz, 1997). Additionally, and specific to this study, the IOC and FIFA have both pushed for more innovative hosting initiatives (FIFA, 2021; IOC, 2021) and often influence the emergence of innovative practices of other sport events (Tjønndal, 2017).

Cases

Within the context is a bounded case. A case can be bounded by time, space, and activity (Yin, 2017). In this vein, Organizing Committees for the Olympic Games (OCOGs) and the FIFA World Cup Organizing Committee (FIFA OC) serve as the bounded cases explored in this dissertation. OCOGs and FIFA OCs are limited by the activities of multiple stakeholders who are involved with planning and staging the mega-sport events. Mega-sport event organizing committees have unique characteristics that offer insights that are unparallel to other sport organizations. These unique characteristics of mega-sport event organizing committees include their size in number of involved stakeholders, global recognition, and limited lifecycle (Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013).

Embedded Units of Analysis

An embedded unit of analysis "defines what the case study is focusing on, such as an individual, a group, an organization, a city, and so forth" (Berg, 2001, p. 231). For this dissertation, three mega-sport event organizing committees serve as the embedded units of analysis: POCOG, LAOCOG, and United 26.

POCOG and LAOCOG. POCOG and LAOCOG are the embedded units of analysis within the bounded case of OCOGs in the Olympic Games context. Unique to traditional city selections for the Games, POCOG and LAOCOG were simultaneously awarded the rights to host their respective editions of the Summer Games on September 13, 2017, during the 131st IOC

session in Lima, Peru. These OCOGs are ideal embedded units of analysis to explore innovation for many reasons. For one, innovation is a fundamental part the OCOGs' vision statements. For instance, POCOG's candidature file states, "In 2024, and in the years before, we dream of welcoming the IOC and the entire Olympic family, and again, collaborating to stage the innovative and inspiring Games that will connect, inspire, and engage—throughout France, Europe, and the world" (p. 13). Similarly, LAOCOG's candidature files note that "[LAOCOG] will create a transformative Olympic Games utilizing our city's ideal climate, its unparalleled culture of creativity and innovation…" (2016, p. 1). Additionally, both POCOG and LAOCOG have already demonstrated innovative initiatives. For example, POCOG is the first OCOG to implement an innovation department within its organizational structure. From a commercial innovation perspective, LAOCOG uniquely developed 28 different interchanging emblems for the first time within the Olympic Movement.

United 26. In the bounded case of FIFA OCs within the FIFA World Cup context, United 26 is another embedded unit of analysis. United 26 is the joint bid of Canada, United States, and Mexico. Therefore, it is highly anticipated that United 26 will have to implement innovative initiatives to effectively stage the first ever World Cup being hosted by three nations in FIFA's history. Additionally, like POCOG and LAOCOG, United 26's bid also highlights their "deep commitment to innovation" as it is a main pillar of their legacy plans (United 26, 2018, p. 11).

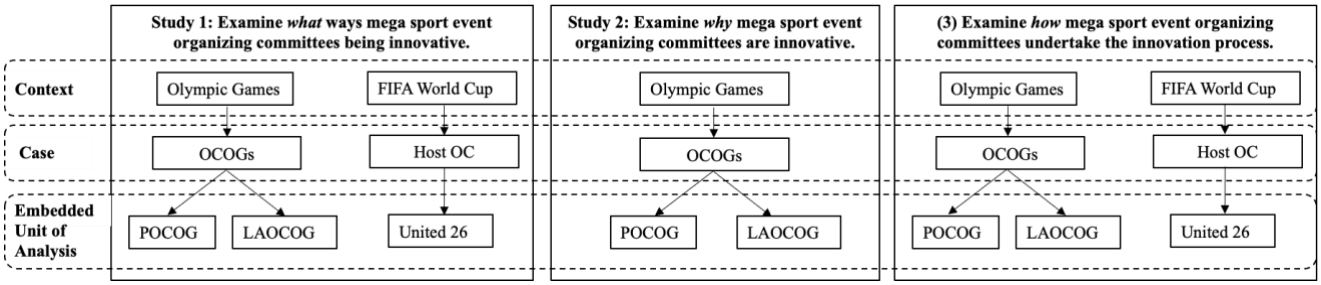
Ultimately, all three of these mega-sport event organizing committees share similar and differing characteristics that make them insightful embedded units of analysis for this dissertation. Notably, POCOG, LAOCOG, and United 26 are all in the pre-event phase (at the time of this study) which generally consists of strategic planning and major decision-making (Bohlmann & Van Heerden, 2005). However, the two contexts differ as the Olympic Games is a

contemporary multi-sport mega-sport event (i.e., multiple sports in one location) and the FIFA World Cup is a traditional single sport mega-sport event (i.e., soccer). Furthermore, they differ based on their geographical locations. For instance, LAOCOG and United 26 provide a North American perspective whereas POCOG is in Europe. These unique characteristics across the multi-setting study enhanced the trustworthiness of the research by offering more comprehensive findings (Miles et al., 2014; Yin, 2017).

An overview of this dissertation's research design is shown in Figure 1.1. Figure 1.1 illustrates how study one and three of this dissertation took the form of embedded *multiple*-case study designs as two mega-sport event contexts were studied (i.e., Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup). Study two, on the other hand, was an embedded *single*-case study research design that singularly explored the Olympic Games context.

Figure 1.1.

Embedded Case Study Design of Dissertation Research



Research Methods

A case study approach emphasizes the importance of gathering data from varied sources to confirm and justify the researcher's interpretations (cf. Yin, 2017; Miles et al., 2013). This is referred to as triangulation of methods and it can result in more robust findings and enhance trustworthiness (Yin, 2017). For this study, various data sources were collected, including archival materials and interviews with key informants.

Document Analysis

Bowen (2009) defines document analysis as "a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents – both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material" (p. 27). In this vein, documents can take various forms such as advertisements, books, letters, newspaper articles, institutional reports, and public records, to name a few (Bowen, 2009). Thus, the first step in the data collection process consisted of obtaining related documents that resulted in the collection of approximately 1,300 pages of material for analysis. Specifically, documents used to facilitate our understanding of innovation in mega-sport event organizing committees included, but were not limited to, publicly available documents pertaining to POCOG, LAOCOG, and United 26, such as official IOC and FIFA reports, bid books, candidature files, online news articles, press releases, and social media content. These types of data are unobtrusive and are considered stable sources of evidence (Yin, 2017), making them beneficial for this study. It was advantageous to accumulate this information first in order to identify potential key informants. Moreover, in case study research, such archival materials are also useful for corroborating evidence from other data sources such as interviews (Yin, 2017).

Interviews

Interviews are conversations with a purpose (Rubin & Rubin, 2011) and among the most vital sources of information within case studies as they can significantly help provide explanations (i.e., the "hows" and "whys") of key events (Yin, 2017). Interviewees of this dissertation include various key stakeholder groups who offered significant insight into innovation. More specifically, the interviewees held varied positions at different levels of responsibility (e.g., directors, chief officers, senior advisors, head managers) from diverse areas of focus (e.g., marketing, innovation, partnership and development, sustainability, venue

infrastructure) within each organizing committee. Participants were identified through official documents noted in the previous section. Once identified, the researcher used a participant recruitment script (see Appendix A) to initiate communication with participants. The script details the research project and was approved by the University of Georgia's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

The researcher sought to recruit proper interviewees for all three studies who could help achieve the specific goal of each study. In order to do so, purposive sampling occurred as the researcher selected participants with firsthand knowledge to enhance the credibility of the study's findings (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Chain referral, whereby an interviewee suggests an additional informant (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981) was also a helpful approach for the researcher securing additional key informants. However, before conducting interviews, the researcher made sure to obtain signatures of consent from all participants using a University IRB-approved consent form (see Appendix B). Duplicate copies of the signed consent forms were returned to each participant for their records.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in English using a series of open-ended questions supported by an interview guide based on the study's framework (see Appendix C). This semi-structured approach ensured essential topics and key concepts were covered and allowed for flexibility within the interview process to help the researcher stimulate and facilitate conversation rather than dictate it (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). All interviews were conducted via teleconferencing systems (i.e., Zoom and Microsoft Teams) and documented using a recording device. Interviewee descriptions can be found in each study's respective chapter. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and kept on a secure file under a private passcode. Data continued to be collected until saturation was met whereby no new information or major themes emerged

(Guest et al., 2006). To reduce redundancy, more specific details of the data collected (i.e., archival materials and interviews) for each study is described in more detail in each study's respective chapter. The accumulated archival materials and transcribed interviews then underwent data analysis.

Data Analysis

As with data collection, data analysis was modified for each study depending on its purpose. Thus, specific details about each study's data analysis process are presented in their respective chapters. This section describes the more general processes of analyzing data utilized by the researcher.

For this dissertation, data analysis of documents and transcribed interviews was aided by ATLAS.ti, a qualitative data analysis software. Following suggestions by Miles et al (2014), data analysis of all three studies were conducted in the same way beginning with first-cycle coding where the researcher would label key concepts with codes. This open coding process considered both deductive and inductive codes. To establish a starting point for deductive coding, the lead researcher created a preliminary code list based on the existing literature and theoretical frameworks used to frame each study, such as types of innovations (e.g., commercial, organizational, environmental), environmental, organizational, and individual factors that impact organizational innovation (e.g., consumers, resources, and characteristics), and key concepts of the innovation process (e.g., initiate, adopt, and implement). Inductive coding enabled new codes (fan engagement, time, external relationships) to emerge from the data collection and analysis process (Miles et al., 2014). During this coding process, the researcher also embarked on memo-taking for all three of the studies. Memo-taking ensures that the researcher's thoughts and interpretations of the data are considered in the analysis (Miles et al., 2014). In doing so, the

researcher employed a constant comparison technique throughout the dissertation (cf. Glaser & Strauss, 1967; O'Connor et al., 2008). Here, all data was systematically compared to all other data in the data set and existing literature that pertains to the phenomenon being examined (i.e., innovation) (cf. Glaser & Strauss, 1967; O'Connor et al., 2008).

After first-cycle coding, the researcher returned to the initial codes and categories and identify patterns, relationships, and explanations that thread the data together and results in higher-order themes, known as second-cycle coding (Miles et al., 2014). Finally, the researcher revisited the data, codes, and categories to find supportive illustrative examples or explanations supporting the findings of each study (Miles et al., 2014).

Research Quality

The trustworthiness of a study's results is the bedrock of high-quality qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Four general criteria can increase research trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Guba, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Credibility is achieved if the researcher paints an authentic picture of the phenomenon being examined (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and asks, "how congruent are the findings with reality?" (Stahl & King, 2020, p. 26). Credibility can be promoted through triangulation, which essentially means using multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2017). Four different types of triangulation include various data sources (i.e., data triangulation), evaluators (i.e., investigator triangulation), perspectives (i.e., theory triangulation), and methods (i.e., methodological triangulation) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Patton, 2015). For this dissertation data triangulation (e.g., official documents, online news content, interviews) supported the findings and enhanced the research quality of all three studies. Moreover, credibility was also attained in all three studies by sending transcripts back to individuals following transcription to ensure the data

accurately reflected the feelings and insight of each participant. This form of credibility is referred to as member checking (Carlson, 2010). No amendments were made to the transcripts beyond minor grammatical edits.

The second factor of trustworthiness is *transferability*, attained through discussions by the researcher of the generalization of the research (Miles *et al*., 2014). For this study, generalization occurred by means of analytical generalization where new concepts, models, or theories are constructed that have significance to other research, even if contexts or settings are different (Smith, 2018). In this vein, the generalizability of this study does not necessarily lie in the specific context or population, but in the concepts that are generalizable. Thus, the findings of this research are more generalizable to innovation and understanding mega-sport events as a whole and not the specific cases being examined.

Thirdly, *dependability* refers to the evidence that similar conclusions would be made if the study were replicated with similar participants in a similar context (Yilmaz, 2013) and essentially puts the trust in trustworthiness (Stahl & King, 2020). Methods of promoting dependability included clearly presenting the data collection and analysis process and describing the researcher's biases (Yilmaz, 2013).

Lastly, *confirmability* is the final factor of ensuring trustworthiness. Confirmability ensures that findings are based on the data obtained from the research process and not from the researcher's biases (Lincoln & Guba, 1982). Therefore, there must be evidence of a transparent path between the study's data and findings (Meyrick, 2006). Data triangulation and an audit trail supported the confirmability of each study (Denzin, 1970). An audit trail includes collecting and skillfully organizing records and how the researcher's thinking evolved throughout the research process (Carcary, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Records were organized by keeping a

documented excel spread sheet of all interviewees and accumulated data under a secure file on a password-encrypted computer. These four primary elements of trustworthiness were considered and implemented throughout the entirety of this dissertation.

Dissertation Outline

As previously mentioned, this dissertation is comprised of three separate studies to thoroughly enhance our understanding of sport event innovation in mega-sport event organizing committees. In doing so, each study focused on one of the three primary research questions with their own study-specific research questions. See Table 1.1 for more information about the specific research questions within each study. Each study was also underpinned by different innovation-related frameworks. To provide a clearer picture, the three studies that make up this dissertation are briefly outlined and illustrated by Figure 1.2 at the end of this chapter. Figure 1.2 includes the overall purpose of this dissertation and each article's primary research question, frameworks, and embedded units of analysis.

Table 1.1

Research Questions of Dissertation Studies

Study	Primary Dissertation Research Question	Study-Specific Research Questions
Study 1	In what ways are mega-sport event organizing committees being innovative?	(1) Based on their form, nature, and goal, what are the multidimensional types of innovative practices are mega-sport event organizing committees pursuing? (2) How do innovative initiatives compare between traditional single-sport and multi-sport mega-sport event settings?
Study 2	Why are mega-sport event organizing committees being innovative?	(1) What drives OCOGs to innovate? (2) What barriers do OCOGs face when innovating? (3) How do OCOGs overcome these barriers and increase their innovative capabilities?
Study 3	How do mega-sport event organizing committees undergo the innovation process?	(1) How do mega-sport event organizing committees initiate innovative practices? (2) How do mega-sport event organizing committees decide to adopt an innovation? (3) How do mega-sport event organizing committees implement innovations?

Study One

The first study, *Exploring the Multidimensional Innovative Practices of Mega-Sport Event Organizing Committees: An Embedded Multiple-Case Study Approach*, aimed to answer the first question of this dissertation: In what ways are mega-sport event organizing committees being innovative? Using the recently conceptualized 3D-model of innovation (cf. Corthouts et al, 2021) as a framework this study analyzed the multidimensional types of innovations pursed by mega-sport event organizing committees. Specifically, an embedded multiple-case study approach explored innovations of POCOG, LAOCOG, and United 26 based on their form, nature, and goal.

As a result of the analysis, findings revealed that mega-sport event organizing committees are implementing six different multidimensional types of innovations. These innovative practices include fan experience technical products, commercial technical products, environmental administrative processes, environmental technical products, social administrative process, and organizational administrative processes. Additionally, this study also compared the types of innovations being implemented in contemporary multi-sport mega-sport event events (Olympic Games) and a traditional single-sport mega-sport event (FIFA World Cup). This cross-case comparison enabled the researcher to gain deeper understanding of innovation in different mega-sport event contexts.

Study Two

The second study, *Innovation Drivers, Barriers, and Strategies of Organizing Committees for the Olympic Games: An Embedded Single-Case Study Approach*, was completed to address the second research question of this dissertation: Why are mega-sport event organizing committees being innovative? Using organizational innovation as a framework, this

empirical study specifically explored the drivers of innovation within POCOG and LAOCOG, highlighted barriers that may hamper their abilities to innovate, and discussed strategies on how to overcome these barriers and enhance the OCOG's innovation capabilities.

The findings revealed that the OCOGs experienced various environmental (e.g., sponsor expectations, IOC recommendations, consumer demands, athlete empowerment), organizational (e.g., culture, previous hosting image, leaving a legacy), and individual (e.g., pro-innovation leadership) drivers towards innovation. Yet, OCOGs also encounter certain barriers (e.g., managing intangible resources and resistance to radical innovation) that hinder the implementation of new practices. Finally, this study illuminated strategies that OCOGs should consider to combat these barriers, such as establishing relationships and implementing more formalized systems (e.g., innovation specialists and polit testing). In doing so, this study enhanced our understanding of innovation in the unique context of the Olympic Games and offered practical insights that can enhance the innovative capabilities of mega-sport event organizers.

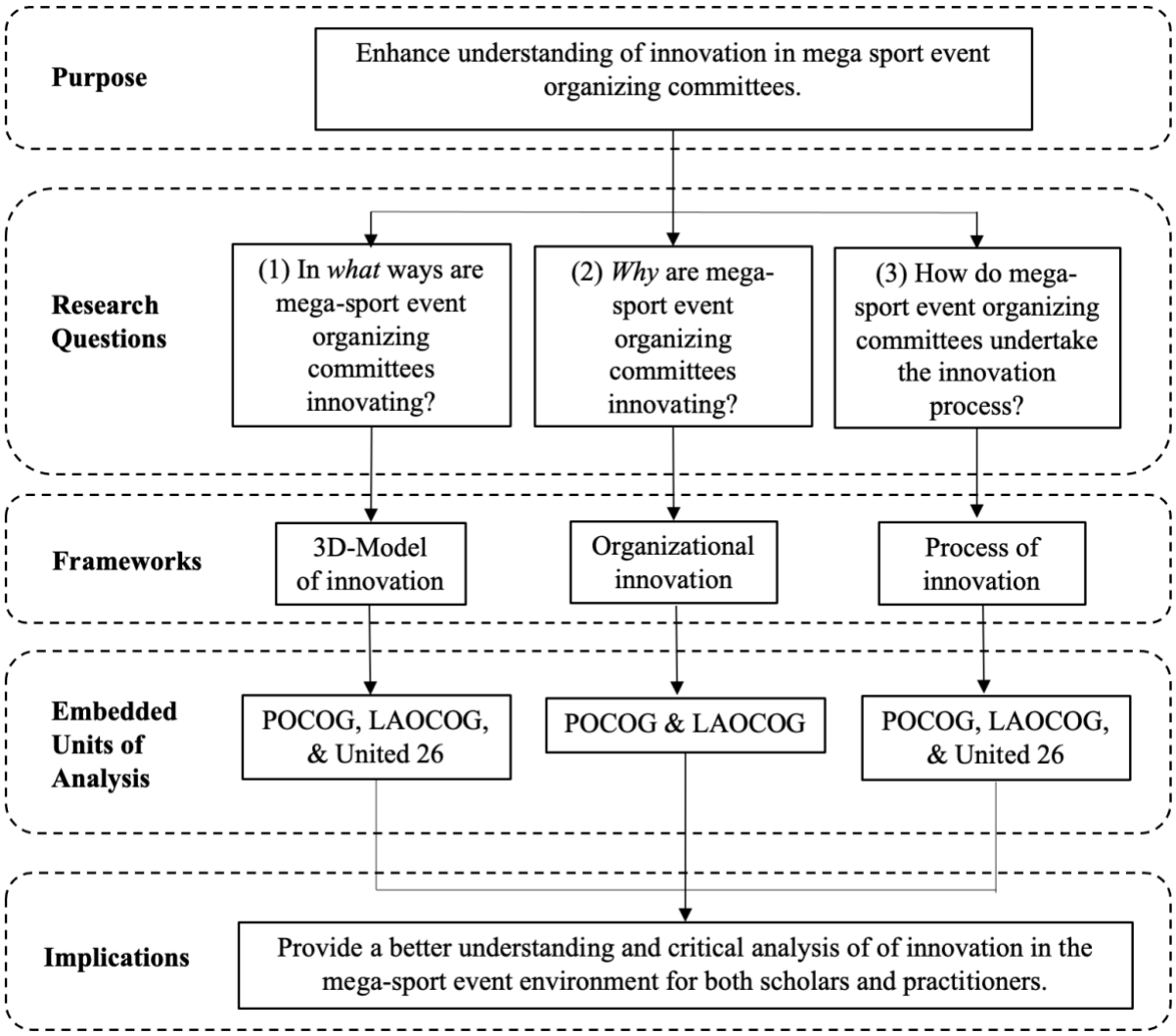
Study Three

Like study one, for the third study of this dissertation, *Initiate, Adopt, Implement, and Transfer: Exploring the Innovation process within Mega-Sport Event Organizing Committees*, an embedded multiple-case study approach using three different mega-sport event organizing committees (i.e., Paris 2024, LAOCOG 2028, and United 26) as the units of analysis formed the foundation of this research. The purpose of this study was to address the third research question of this dissertation: How do mega-sport event organizing committees undergo the innovation process?

Using the innovation process literature as a framework, this study found that the innovation process for mega-sport event organizing committees consists of four main phases: initiation, adoption decision, implementation, and transfer. In light of this study's findings, a conceptual model was provided and progressed our understanding of innovation in temporary sport organizations. This study also highlighted practical implications for sport event organizers seeking to enhance their innovation capabilities.

Figure 1.2

Outline of Dissertation Studies



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CHAPTER 2

STUDY ONE: EXPLORING THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL INNOVATIVE PRACTICES OF MEGA-SPORT EVENT ORGANIZING COMMITTEES

Introduction

Recently, parent organizations of mega-sport events are calling for host organizing committees to enhance their innovativeness to help reduce costs and enhance the efficiency of staging some of the world's largest events. For instance, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) approved Olympic Agenda 2020+5 which recommends the identification of "innovation in sport to reflect, as appropriate, in the programme and delivery of the Olympic Games" (IOC, 2021a, p. 4). Similarly, the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) released *The Vision 2020-2023: Making Football Truly Global* with an aim directed at increasing innovative technologies and programs to test new initiatives (FIFA, 2021a). Despite increasing expectations for mega-sport event organizing committees to become more sustainable, innovation is a challenge for many sport organizations (Slack & Parent, 2006).

Our lack of understanding concerning innovation is problematic for mega-sport event organizers for many reasons. For one, the global appeal and influence of mega-sport events subsequently influences the actions and behavior of other sport organizations (Tjønndal, 2017). Therefore, the innovative practices they implement may have ensuing impacts on other sport federations and governing bodies. Additionally, mega-sport events are unparallel to other sport events regarding their scope and size in number of involved stakeholders, potential of various long-term impacts, and unique transient workforce (Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013). Furthermore,

as illustrated above, mega-sport event owners are pushing for host organizers to implement more innovative practices to host these events more efficiently and effectively. Innovation is therefore particularly important for mega-sport event organizers as meeting stakeholders' expectations is a key factor for successfully staging sport events (Chutiphongdech & Kampitak, 2021). As such, understanding the types of innovations mega-sport event organizers are pursing can help sport event organizers better understand and explain the different types of innovations they are seeking to implement and areas where innovation may be lacking.

While innovation is both a process and an outcome (Corssan & Apaydin, 2010; Damanpour, 1987; Rogers, 2003), "innovation as an outcome is both necessary and sufficient for a successful exploitation of an idea, whereas that of innovation as a process is only necessary but not sufficient" (Crossan and Apaydin, 2010, p. 1169). In other words, they are not equally important as an innovation only comes to fruition if it is successfully brought to use (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010; Winand & Hoeber, 2017). Therefore, to make sense of innovation within an underexamined context, it is critical to first identify and understand innovative initiatives pursed by an entity (i.e., outcome) (Corssan & Apaydin, 2010). As such, this exploratory study aims to examine the innovative practices of mega-sport event organizing committees. More specifically, the following research questions are addressed: (1) What are the multidimensional types of innovative practices pursued by mega-sport event organizing committees? And (2) How do innovative initiatives compare between a contemporary multiple-sport mega-sport event and traditional single-sport mega-sport event settings? Answering these questions will contribute to sport event innovation scholarship and practice by expanding on an existing model used to identify and describe different types of innovations. In doing so, sport event practitioners will be

able to reflect on their innovative practices and broaden their knowledge on different ways in which they can be innovative.

The following section provides a literature review on innovation, specifically focusing on innovation outcomes in sport event organizations. Next is an overview of Corthouts et al.'s (2021) 3D-model of innovation that served as the framework for this study. A description of the research settings, data collection, and data analysis follows before presenting the findings. The discussion section and implications follow. The study concludes with a note of limitations and future research suggestions that can continue to enhance our understanding of innovation in mega-sport event organizing committees.

Literature Review

Innovation can be described as "any idea, practice, or material artifact perceived as new by the relevant unit of adoption" (Zaltman et al., 1973, p. 10). This unit of adoption can vary but may include different industries, markets, or organizations (Garcia & Calantone, 2002). In this vein, there has been a recent surge of scholastic inquiry into innovation in sport organizations (e.g., Harris & et al., 2021; Svensson & Mahoney, 2020; Winand et al., 2016; Welty Peachey, 2019; Winand & Hoeber, 2017). Prior studies focused on innovation in the field have identified several elements that influence innovativeness in sport organizations, including governing bodies, consumer expectations, and leadership styles (Caza, 2000; Hoeber & Hoeber, 2012). Factors that impact innovation in sport organizations can also include available resources such as knowledge and financial support (Delshab et al., 2020; Enhold et al., 2020; Newell & Swan, 1995; Wemmer et al., 2016). Moreover – and important to this study –some research has focused on innovation outcomes in sport organizations (e.g., Caza, 2000; Hoeber et al., 2015; Tjonndal, 2017; Winand et al., 2016).

Innovation Outcomes

Innovation outcomes are the types of innovative practices entities are pursuing (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010) and they are often identified and studied based on their specific dimension (i.e., aspects) or attributes (i.e., characteristics) (Camisón-Zornoza et al., 2004; Crossan & Apayin, 2010; Wolfe, 1994). Common innovation dimensions include form, nature, magnitude, and goal.

Form

An innovation's *form* can have either product or process attributes. Product innovations include both goods and services that meet the needs of a market or user (Suroso & Azis, 2015). Process innovation pertains to improving how work is done and often includes adopting new methods to produce a product or service (Camisón-Zornoza et al., 2004). The main difference between product and process innovations is their targeted impacts; product innovations are implemented for external stakeholders (e.g., consumers) whereas process innovations are directed at internal constituents (Rowley et al., 2011).

Nature

The *nature* of an innovation corresponds with an organization's core activities, including technical and administrative actions (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010). According to Damanpour and Evan (1984), technical innovation "occurs in the technical system of an organization and are directly related to the primary work activity of the organization" (p. 394). Such innovations influence the product or process flow of operations (Damanpour, 1991). Bantel and Jackson (1989) suggest:

> Technical innovations pertain to products and services as well as production processes and operations related to the central activities of the organizations (design and delivery of products, services, marketing, and office operations); such innovations are assumed to be originated in the technical core of the organization (p. 108).

Additionally, it is important to note that technical innovation differs from technological innovation which refers to the introduction of change to existing technology being used by the organization (Damanpour, 1987). *Administrative innovation*, however, transpires in an organization's social system and pertains specifically to structure and administrative processes that are new to the organization (Damanpour & Evan, 1984; Walker et al., 2011). In this vein, administrative innovation often encompasses change to the "organizational structure and the people who populate it" (Bantel & Jackson, 1989, p. 108).

Magnitude

Innovations may also vary depending on their magnitude. Essentially, an innovation's magnitude is the degree of difference from existing practices (McDermott & O'Connor, 2002). Specifically, clear departures from existing practices are considered to be radical innovations (Dewar & Dutton, 1986). At the other end of the innovation continuum are incremental innovations. Incremental innovations are minor changes within existing products, processes, and practices (Suroso & Azis, 2015). Incremental innovations, therefore, have a lower degree of novelty and risk compared to radical ones (Souto, 2015).

Goal

In addition to the commonly discussed dimensions of form, nature, and magnitude, the goal of an innovation embodies the problem an innovation aims to address (Lin, 2022). Tjønndal (2017) identified five attributes of goal-related innovations within sport management literature including social, technological, commercial, community-based, and organizational. According to Tjønndal (2017), social innovation can surface "when sport organizations, groups, or individuals (such as athletes and coaches) are faced with social issues that require new and creative solutions" (p. 300). Technological innovation happens when new technologies, often that

emerged in other industries, are applied to sport and impacts the effectiveness and efficiency of existing technology (Damanpour, 1987; Ratten, 2020). Commercial innovation often pertains to how sport products and processes are marketed (Tjønndal, 2017). Arguably similar to social innovation, "community-based innovation involves social responsibility and entrepreneurship in which individuals and sport organizations partner with local community groups to encourage working towards a common goal" (Tjønndal, 2017, p. 301). Organizational innovation, on the other hand, "occurs when sport organizations and government institutions pursue projects of institutional change" (p. 301).

Sport management research has examined types of innovations based on a single dimension or attribute, such as in 2015 when Hoeber and colleagues compared the number of incremental and radical innovations pursued by Canadian community sport organizations (NPSOs). Findings from their study suggested that CSOs implement more incremental than radical innovations. Winand et al (2016) identified various service-related innovations implemented by 101 sport federations in Belgium. Their findings showed that the sport federations implemented over 458 new services across a four-year span (each federation implemented 4.53 on average per year). Moreover, Winand and Hoeber (2017) differentiated technical (e.g., sport equipment, sport technologies, and new programs) and administrative (e.g., new affiliations and operating systems) innovations in the sport industry.

Although existing research on innovation outcomes in sport organizations continues to offer meaningful insight, these studies failed to consider the multidimensional nature of innovations (Corthouts et al., 2021). This is problematic as innovations should not be understood as unidimensional because they do not have just one particular form, nature, *or* goals; instead, they have all three elements of form, nature, *and* goals. (Rowley et al., 2011). To help fill this

gap in the literature, Corthouts and colleagues (2021) developed a conceptual three-dimensional (3D) model to better identify and describe innovations from a multidimensional perspective. It is this 3D-model of innovation that is employed in this study.

Framework

Corthouts et al's (2021) 3D-model of innovation includes the three dimensions discussed above: form, nature, and goal. Given that an innovation can be in the form of a product or process and its nature can be technical or administrative overall, innovation goals can vary (Corthouts et al., 2021), especially considering that multiple types of innovations have been distinguished in the sports context (e.g., social, environmental, commercial, organizational, technological, community-based) (McCullough et al., 2016; Svensson & Mahoney, 2020; Tjønndal, 2017). For their model, Corthouts et al. (2021) included social and commercial (i.e., business innovation) attributes associated with goals because they have been commonly identified in non-profit sport organizations (Svensson & Hambrick, 2019; Wemmer & Koenigstorfer, 2016; Winand & Hoeber, 2017). Social innovations included non-financial related goals whereas commercial innovations included those rooted in revenue (i.e., business innovation). However, noticeably missing from their model is the magnitude dimension. Magnitude was not considered in their framework due to the vagueness associated with determining an innovation's degree of change (Corthouts et al., 2021; Hoeber et al., 2015).

To test their newly conceptualized 3D-model of innovation, Corthouts et al (2021) collected data from three Flemish non-profit sport organizations (NPSOs) about innovations they had implemented. In doing so, respondents indicated if an innovation was either a process or a product (i.e., form), technical or administrative (i.e., nature), *and* social or commercial (i.e., goal). Findings revealed that NPSOs implemented a number of different types of innovations

including commercial administrative products (e.g., new brand logo), commercial administrative processes (e.g., new information technology consulting program for accounting optimization), commercial technical processes (e.g., appointment of new positions), commercial technical products (e.g., new sporting events), social administrative products (e.g., club support programs), social administrative processes, social technical processes (e.g., new membership follow-up system), and social technical products (e.g., new sport programs).

Corthouts et al's (2021) 3D-model proved to be a useful framework for providing a multidimensional view of innovations within NPSOs. Therefore, this multidimensional model will be an advantageous framework for identifying and describing innovations created by mega-sport event organizing committees. At the same time, our study will also address a weakness of Corthout et al's (2021) 3D-model of innovation by considering other goal dimensions beyond social and commercial, expanding our understanding of innovation in sport organization contexts. Moreover, this study moves beyond identifying innovations in a single dimension as well as ones that are specific to mega-sport events organizing committees.

Methods

To achieve this study's purpose, an embedded multiple-case study approach (cf. Yin, 2017) is used. A case study is an appropriate method of inquiry when exploring a contemporary phenomenon (i.e., innovation) and seeking to answer a "how" question (i.e., second research question) (Yin, 2017). More specifically, an embedded multiple-case study provides more robust findings by exploring cases from multiple settings (Herriott & Firestone, 1983; Yin, 2017). An embedded case study includes contexts, cases, and embedded units of analysis (Yin, 2017). These elements are further described in the ensuing sub-sections.

Contexts

A mega-sport event is "a major one-time or recurring event of limited duration, developed primarily to enhance the awareness, appeal, and profitability of a tourism destination in the short and/or long term" (Ritchie, 1984, p. 2). In this vein, the Olympic Games and FIFA World Cup tournaments have been agreeably described as mega-events due to their size and significance that yields extraordinarily high levels of tourism, exposure, and impact for the host communities (Getz, 1997). Mega-sport events are ideal contexts to explore innovation as the benefits of staging them have been increasingly challenged by various academics, policymakers, and activists given their likelihood of running over budget (Lauermann, 2016). Thus, mega-sport event stakeholders are consistently attempting to combat the downfalls associated with such events (Kassens-Noor & Fukushige, 2016; Kassens-Noor & Lauermann, 2017).

Cases

Within the context of the Olympic Games, types of innovations by Organizing Committees for the Olympic Games (OCOGs) serve as one case. The other case focuses on the types of innovations created by a FIFA World Cup organizing committee (FIFA OC) during the planning and implementation of the World Cup. OCOGs and FIFA OCs serve as ideal cases to explore the types of innovations pursued by mega-sport event organizing committees as they face enormous pressure to deliver the best events (Preuss, 2015). Consequently, these mega-sport event organizing committees often strive to implement new initiatives and cutting-edge technologies in all aspects of event delivery (Skinner et al., 2018).

Embedded Units of Analysis

Two OCOGs serve as the embedded units of analysis within the Olympic Games case: 2024 Paris Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (POCOG) and 2028 Los Angeles

Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (LAOCOG). United 26 (i.e., joint host of Canada, Unites States, and Mexico) represents a FIFA OC.

POCOG, LAOCOG, and United 26 were selected as the embedded units of analysis for this research because innovation emerged as a key element of their respective mission statements (i.e., research question one). POCOG's candidature file specifically notes that "In 2024, and in the years before, we dream of welcoming the IOC and the entire Olympic family, and again, collaborating to stage the innovative and inspiring Games that will connect, inspire, and engage—throughout France, Europe, and the world" (2016, p. 13). Similarly, LAOCOG's candidature file states that the host organizing committee "will create a transformative Olympic Games utilizing our city's ideal climate, its unparalleled culture of creativity and innovation, and its youthful energy […]" (LAOCOG, 2016, p. 1). For United 26, innovation (in addition to sustainability) forms a pillar of their legacy plans to grow football in Canada, increase access to football for girls and women in Mexico, and to prioritize underserved communities in the U.S. (United 26, 2018). The exploration of these multiple settings also supports the development of better understanding the second research question this study (i.e., How do innovative initiatives compare between a traditional single-sport and multiple-sport mega-sport event settings?).

Data Collection

To enhance data credibility, using multiple data sources is an important feature of case study research (Yin, 2017). Thus, various publicly available documents (i.e., archival materials, official documents, website information) pertaining to POCOG, LAOCOG, and United 26 as well as interviews with key stakeholders were amassed. Approximately 1,300 pages of documents were collected and included, but were not limited to, official IOC and FIFA reports, bid books, candidature files, online news report, press releases, and social media content. These

documents were utilized to first to help identify key interviewees, and to corroborate interview findings. As such, interviews with key informants with first-hand insight served as the primary data source for this research.

In total, 24 semi-structured interviews were collected from key informants representing varied stakeholder groups: POCOG (n=7), LAOCOG (n=7) United 26 (n=4), United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) (n=3), IOC (n=1), and FIFA (n=2) (See Table 2.1). The interviewees held varied ranking positions ranging from directors, chief officers, senior advisors, to managers and represented diverse areas of work (e.g., marketing, innovation, partnership and development, sustainability, venue infrastructure). Each interviewee was initially contacted via email with a detailed explanation of the study, interview guide, and consent form. Once consent was received, interviews were conducted over a password-secured online video conferencing software program (i.e., Zoom or Microsoft Teams). Interviews lasted between 17 and 87 minutes, depending on the availability and subject area knowledge (See Table 1 for specific details). Examples of interview questions include: *How would you describe the types of innovations that are being pursued by the organizing committee? What can you tell me about innovations being pursued by the organizing committee that are internal to its operations? What commercial innovations do you believe the organizing committee is pursuing?* To not compromise the interviewees' identities, they were each assigned a numeric code. Data saturation was achieved by the 20th interview when no new findings emerged from the interviews. However, as suggested by Fusch and Ness (2015), four additional interviews were collected to ensure coverage of all settings. Audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed by Rev, a third-party online software application and reviewed by the lead researcher for any errors. To enhance the trustworthiness of this study member checking provided an opportunity

for participants to review the transcription of their interview to ensure it adequately reflected their insights (Carlson, 2010). Only minor adjustments such as spelling corrections were made.

Table 2.1

Interviewee Descriptions

Stakeholder Group	Interviewees	Interviewee Code	Interview Duration (in minutes)
Organizing Committee	POCOG	1	61
		2	63
		3	59
		4	61
		5	58
		6	41
		7	49
	LAOCOG	8	32
		9	32
		10	36
		11	17
		12	84
		13	25
	United 26	14	48
		15	34
		16	49
		17	55
Member Association	USOPC	18	53
		19	51
		20	40
	Canada Soccer	21	50
Parent Organization	IOC	22	21
	FIFA	23	81
		24	87

Data Analysis

Document and interviewee data were both deductively and inductively coded using a qualitative computing software (i.e., ATLAS.ti) to identify emergent and reoccurring themes relating to the types of innovations pursued by each mega-sport event organizing committee. First-cycle coding was aided by the development provisional code list using the research questions, framework, and existing literature related to this study (e.g., product, process, technical, administrative, (Miles et al., 2014). Inductive coding, the development of codes as they emerge from the data, was also undertaken. Examples of inductive codes included: experience, environmental, delay, legacy, and tradition. During this coding process, the lead researcher included memo-taking to ensure their thoughts and interpretations of the data were considered in the analysis (Miles et al., 2014). In doing so, a constant comparison technique enabled the data to be compared to the remainder of the data set and existing literature (i.e., innovation) (cf. Glaser & Strauss, 1967; O'Connor et al., 2008).

Ensuing the identification of the initial codes, the second-cycle coding process was performed to further explore the relational aspects between the first-cycle coded data. In doing so, emergent categories were grouped according to the types of innovations identified (i.e., fan engagement technical products, commercial technical products, environmental administrative processes, environmental technical products, social administrative processes, and organizational administrative processes) and amongst units of analysis (i.e., delaying innovative practices, incremental innovations, leaving a legacy, and the influence of a traditional sport). In the final stage of data analysis, the lead researcher undertook selective coding by revisited the data to provide supportive illustrative examples or explanations that support the findings of this study (Miles et al., 2014).

Findings

Findings revealed that POCOG, LAOC, and United 26 do indeed aim to implement innovative practices. There were also notable similarities and differences between units of analysis (i.e., the OCOGs and FIFA OC). These findings along with supportive illustrative examples are reported in the following sub-sections.

Multidimensional Innovative Practices of Mega-Sport Event Organizing Committees

In answering the first research question, six different types of innovative practices pursued by the mega-sport event organizing committees were identified. These include fan experience technical products, commercial technical products, environmental administrative processes, environmental technical products, social administrative process, and organizational administrative processes. Table 2.2 provides an overview of each innovation typology, including its description and illustrative examples from the data. They are also described in more detail in the following sections.

Fan Experience Technical Products

All three mega-sport event organizing committees are pursuing innovative practices with the main goal of enhancing fans' experience. Specifically, these innovations are new services meant to increase consumer participation and viewership. For instance, POCOG created a novel initiative to "provide members of the public with a more enriched Olympic experience" (Interviewee 5) through a new program called Le Club Paris 2024 (i.e., Club Paris) described here:

> Each month until the Olympic and Paralympic Games Paris 2021 is offering its members the chance to take part in fun challenges, enabling them to earn points that will give them the chance to enter prize draws and enjoy exclusive rewards, such as participating in unique experiences with Olympic and Paralympic athletes (IOC, 2021b, p. 2).

One illustrative example of a Club Paris initiative was a challenge from POCOG to club members to participate in at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day. Participants recorded their minutes and provided documentation through an application. Two winners were randomly selected to take part in an adventure sports experience with Olympic and Paralympic athletes (IOC, 2021b). Additionally, Club Paris participants who accumulated at least 700 points by March 2021, were able to participate in a marathon on the same course used during the Games (Houston, 2021). POCOG reserved 100 spots for women in particular to help support and facilitate female participation.

Together, both POCOG and LAOCOG have also implemented a new global hospitality program called On Location "that changed the entire model of the Games' hospitality globally" (Interviewee 13). According to IOC documents, the OCOGs "will deliver world-class hospitality experiences for fans and Olympic stakeholders alike, with packages including tickets, travel, accommodation and unique in-venue and host city hospitality" (2021c, p. 2). Moreover, the document reveals this initiative will also "enhance eservices for athletes' families and friends wanting to see their loved ones compete at the Games" (IOC, 2021c, p. 2) by providing additional support for travel, accommodations, and reserved tickets.

In addition to enhancing fan experiences through participatory initiatives, POCOG, LAOCOG, and United 26 will also innovate how spectators view the events. These will be noticeable at the opening ceremonies. For example, the 2024 Paris Olympics opening ceremony "will not be held in a stadium for the first time in the entire history of the Summer Olympic Games" (Interviewee 4). Instead, according to POCOG reports, "the parade of athletes will be held on the Seine, with boats for each national delegation, equipped with cameras to allow television and online viewers to see the athletes up close" (2022, p. 5).

While PCOOG is moving the opening ceremony outdoors, LAOCOG will use more than one stadium. According to their bid book, the 2028 Olympic hosts plan to use both the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum and the newly build SoFi Stadium and home to the National Football League's Los Angeles Chargers (LAOCOG, 2016). An article in the LA Times highlights that "hosting Olympic ceremonies across two stadiums has never been done before" (Wharton, 2017, p. 2). Similarly, while United 2026 has "not yet solidified opening ceremony plans, [they] believe it would be advantageous to host it in more than one stadium as a joint bid" (Interviewee 14).

Commercial Technical Products

In this study, commercial technical products pertain to novel marketing initiatives produced and offered by the organizing committees. In this vein, findings revealed that both POCOG and LAOCOG implemented commercial technical product innovations. POCOG organizers were troubled by separate logos and branding historically used by the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. In response, organizers created the first inclusive emblem in Olympic history. This decision is illustrated by Interviewee 1, who stated the following:

> Historically, the Olympics and Paralympics are branded completely different but [POCOG] thought this was a disservice to the Paralympics. So, what was a very controversial decision, we used the same exact emblem to symbolize our commitment to both Games. We are not talking about the same shape but different colors, they are identical. This is the first time in history that this has happened.

Similarly, LAOCOG was also commercially innovative and designed an animated emblem. They noted that this logo "illustrates the strength of LA's diversity and defies a singular identity" (2022).

Additionally, LAOCOG offers innovative marketing-related services known as the athlete marketing program (AMP) to ensure that every athlete can support themselves and

engage with commercial opportunities. Interviewee 12 revealed that “less than 15 percent of Olympic athletes are represented by an agent and majority of Olympic athletes do not get any financial endorsements.” Therefore, as noted by a Forbes online article, key personnel from LAOCOG established a relationship with an already existing online application platform meant to maximize athlete branding called Opendorse (Bruton, 2021). In doing so, “athletes can be directly connected to sponsors to drive more revenue for athletes and add more value to sponsors” (Interviewee 19). While AMP is currently only available for USOC athletes, an LAOCOG informant “hopes that all Olympic athletes can be given access to AMP and benefit from it” (Interviewee 7).

Environmental Administrative Processes

Environmental administrative process innovations often reflect new policies implemented by the mega-sport event organizing committees to stage environmentally friendly sport events more effectively. Here, findings revealed that POCOG is aiming to stage the first climate-positive Games. According to an online news article, POCOG made this pledge and implemented a new climate strategy initiative with three primary objectives: “reducing greenhouse emissions, supporting projects that contribute positively to the climate, and mobilizing stakeholders to maximize a long-term positive impact” (Shefferd, 2021, p. 1). One way this will be accomplished is by “not having any air conditioning in the Olympic Villages” Interviewee 2. More specifically, POCOG is “working on developing a specific film that will be put over the windows that can help lower the temperature of rooms during a heatwave” (Interviewee 2).

Moreover, POCOG and LAOCOG are the first OCOGs to jointly participate in the inaugural Together4Climate event. At this event, Anne Hidalgo and Eric Garcetti, Mayors of

Paris and Los Angeles, respectively, signed the C40 Fossil-Fuel-Free Streets Declaration to encourage environmentally sustainable editions of the Olympic Games (IOC, 2017). In addition, POCOG has also implemented innovative environmental-related products.

Environmental Technical Products

While environmental administrative processes pertain to new environmental policies, environmental technical products are novel environmental-related services offered to key constituents (e.g., athletes, spectators, event organizers). At the time of this study, findings revealed that POCOG implemented two environmental technical products: the Climate Coach and the carbon footprint calculator.

In 2021, the IOC released a statement noting that POCOG had launched the Climate Coach, an online application available to those in Paris to help event employees and other stakeholders reduce their carbon footprint in their professional and personal lives (IOC, 2021). Additionally, in a press release from POCOG, the organizing committee is also "currently working on creating a custom 'carbon footprint calculator' for sporting events that will be made available to the broader industry" (POCOG, 2021, p. 2). These innovative products offered by POCOG support Interviewee 1's claims that "Paris will lead the way to more sustainable Games by offering new environmental innovations that can actually be used by people."

Social Administrative Processes

Social administrative process innovations are new internal procedures and policies that aim to promote social initiatives more effectively. Interviewees from across the three settings indicated they will be implementing new processes to support social change "such as homelessness, affordable housing, LGBTQ+, people with disabilities, autism, migrant rights, workers' rights, and human sex trafficking" (Interviewee 14). However, analysis of the

accumulated data for this study only found evidence of one innovative social administrative process. POCOGs website demonstrates the OCOG's commitment to providing a more socially responsible edition of the Games:

> Paris 2024 and its partners have decided to make the Olympic and Paralympic Games a responsible event in economic, social and environmental terms. That's why Paris 2024 joined forces with trade unions and employer organizations by signing a social charter together on 19 June 2019. A first for a major sporting event, this initiative guarantees a responsible and sustainable approach" (POCOG, 2019).

More specifically, the Paris 2024 Social Charter, aims to meet three primary objectives: give all companies access to contracts, contribute to the occupational integration of vulnerable groups, and protect decent working conditions (POCOG, 2019). According to POCOG, by implementing the Paris 2024 Social Charter, 25% of the Games' contracts will be given to small and medium-sized businesses, 10% of hours worked will be set aside for people who are in long-term unemployment or have disabilities, and all working conditions will be monitored (POCOG, 2019).

Organizational Administrative Processes

Innovative practices related to organizational administrative processes include changes to an organization's structure. In this vein, POCOG and United 26 offer illustrative examples. For instance, POCOG is the first OCOG to establish a specific innovation department within its organizational structure, called the Innovation Working Group. This is further described by Interviewee 3:

> Olympic Organizing Committees have different functional areas or business units, but innovation has never been one of them. Oftentimes, Organizing Committees may have a small innovation team that is put in the communications department to market innovative things being done, but POCOG is the first to ever have a specific part of their organizational structure to have a department dedicated solely to innovation.

Moreover, POCOG's Innovation Working Group "consists of three main leaders with much innovation-related experience and 30 other people who were hired to identify different ways POCOG can be innovative, called explorers" (Interviewee 3). Explorers try to "define, educate, and accompany different departments of PCOG in search of innovation" (Interviewee 1) to make the 2024 edition of the Summer Olympic Games as innovative as possible.

When asking Interviewees how they believed the 2026 World Cup host organizing committee was being innovative, all answers pointed to the unique format of the event. For instance, Interviewee 17 stated that "having three countries jointly host the World Cup is innovative as it is truly something that has never been done before." Interviewee 17's sentiments are further echoed by Interviewee 15, who also noted that "without question, not only having 17 different cities, but three different countries to work together to simultaneously host a World Cup is incredibly innovative for FIFA who historically has only one host country, and very rarely two."

Table 2.2

Multidimensional Innovative Practices of Mega-Sport Event Organizing Committees

Innovation	Description	Illustrative Example(s)	Organizing Committee
Fan Experience Technical Products	New services meant to increase consumer participation and viewership	Club Paris	POCOG
		On Location Hospitality Program	POCOG and LAOCOG
		Outdoor opening ceremony	POCOG
		Multiple venue opening ceremony	LAOCOG and United 26
Commercial Technical Products	New marketing-related initiatives	Joint Olympic and Paralympic emblem	POCOG
		Electronically animated emblem	LAOCOG
		Athlete Marketing Program	LAOCOG
Environmental Administrative Processes	New policies implemented to stage environmentally friendly sport events more effectively	Climate strategy initiative	POCOG
		Together4Climate	POCOG and LAOCOG
Environmental Technical Products	New environmental-related services	Climate Coach	POCOG
		Carbon Footprint Calculator	POCOG
Social Administrative Processes	New internal procedures and policies implemented to promote social initiatives more effectively	Paris 2024 Social Charter	POCOG
Organizational Administrative Processes	New changes to an organization's structure	Innovation Working Group 3 Country joint host	POCOG United 26

Innovation Comparisons

When discussing the types of innovations being pursued by these mega-sport event organizing committees, findings also shed light on similarities and differences between the innovation practices utilized by the OCOGs and the FIFA OC. Most notably, data analysis revealed that POCOG, LAOCOG, and United 26 are delaying many innovation-related practices. Additionally, innovations tend to be more incremental in nature and focus on leaving a sustainable legacy. However, despite their similarities, organizing committees of contemporary mega-sport events (i.e., POCOG and LAOCOG) provided more illustrative examples of innovative practices than the mega-sport event organizing committee hosting a more traditional sport event (i.e., United 26). The following sections further describe these findings.

Delaying Innovative Practices

Although data analysis revealed that mega-sport event organizing committees innovate, informants noted that they are "not really innovating too much yet" (Interviewee 23). This slow implementation of innovation is linked to how quickly technologies are advancing in modern society. Interviewees discussed how they are delaying their technological-related innovative practices because of the "difficulties with predicting what technologies will be available when it comes time to actually host the event" (Interviewee 13). This is further described by Interviewee 8:

> Seven years from now we do not know where the world will be. So, the problem is we do not know what technology will be in place and what things [LAOCOG] will be able to take advantage of. As a result, being innovative for us is making sure that we don't make decisions too early, and we take advantage of the freedom we have to go slow and be very thoughtful with how we want to be innovative.

However, OCOGs "must get to the implementation and execution of innovations at some point because the clock expires, and all these great innovation ideas are just that without being put in

place" (Interviewee 11). For LAOCOG, the point at which this occurs is said to be when the Games are officially handed over from one mega-sport event organizing committee to the next. Interviewee 12 explained that "when Paris comes and passes the Games over to us is really the trigger point for and the turning point of when we move as an organization from strategizing innovations to actually really beginning to implement them." Similarly, a United 26 stakeholder echoed this sentiment stating they will really begin "to delve into more innovative technologies after the World Cup in Qatar is finished" (Interviewee 21). Interestingly, a POCOG informant noted that technological innovations will be considered even later and "not until about 100 to 50 days prior to the start of the Games."

Incremental Innovations

Although magnitude (i.e., degree of change) was not part of the multidimensional framework utilized in this research, data analysis suggested that innovations in this context were "more minor than drastic" (Interviewee 3). The mega-sport event organizing committees in this study were more likely to implement incremental innovations over radical ones since effectively staging the event supersedes innovation. This was described by Interviewee 15, who stated that for United 26 "innovating feels a lot less important to dotting the I's and crossing the T's." Similar sentiments were shared by a POCOG informant, who specifically stated that "our innovations are more incremental than radical because we are trying to make sure we still host a successful event and not try to create the light bulb" (Interviewee 3).

Additionally, "the willingness to innovate and the willingness to avoid risk collide" (Interviewee 1). Consequently, mega-sport event organizing committees prefer to implement minor innovations because they do not want any negative outcomes associated with their event. Interviewee 1 said "everyone wants to be innovative, but when you start realizing that 5 billion

pairs of eyes will be looking at you, you have to ask yourselves if some innovations are really worth the risk." Therefore, mega-sport event organizing committees "ultimately consider minor innovations that include less risk so if it doesn't work it doesn't stop the event or create major issues" (Interviewee 4) when implementing innovative practices. However, mega-sport event organizing committees strive to ensure the innovations they do implement leave a lasting, positive impact.

Leaving a Legacy

Innovations are pursued by mega-sport event organizing committees with the intention of "leaving a positive, lasting impact" (Interviewee 10). For POCOG, the innovative practices they implement are "indented to leave a lasting legacy where when [they] implement something new, it is then regularly implemented for future editions of the Games for many years to come" (Interviewee 5). The desire to implement sustainable innovations was also evident in the World Cup context. Interviewee 12 said that event organizers of United 26 often ask themselves "what innovations do we want to leave when the World Cup is over and how do we create change in the way that the event will be hosted for the better moving forward?" For LAOCOG, their "innovations are motivated by the legacies they can offer the entire Olympic Movement and the identity of LA" (Interviewee 8).

In sum, POCOG, LAOCOG, and United 26 typically delay many of their innovations, prefer to implement minor innovations to avoid risk, and hope to leave a lasting legacy with the innovations they do implement. The most noticeable difference between the organization's is the disparity between the number of innovations implemented by the two events.

The Influence of a Traditional Sport

Despite their similarities, data analysis also revealed that POCOG and LAOCOG have implemented more innovative practices than United 26, as illustrated in Table 2.2. United 26 key informants were not shy in noting how little they felt they had to be innovative due to the global appeal of soccer, as noted by Interviewee 24:

> FIFA World Cup hosts do not have a lot of pressure to be innovative because we have little competition and we do not feel like we have to save the world. So, really, we are not competing against anyone, and we have the most popular game in the world, we have the largest single sport event on Earth. As a result of having the most attractive property in the world we are in a very easy place where everyone wants our product regardless of how innovative our event is because the public simply loves football.

Moreover, when comparing innovation between United 26 and the OCOGs, United 26 "does not have surfing, skateboarding, or any kind of contemporary sport so innovating is not really necessary as football is still ingrained in history and tradition." As a traditional sport, there is also much resistance to innovation from consumers which makes it difficult for United 26 to be innovative "because every time there is a new innovation in football the fans always say 'no, no, no' because it is such a traditional business" (Interviewee 23).

Discussion

Six different types of innovations emerged in this exploration of multidimensional innovative practices pursued by mega-sport event organizing committees.

Enhancing free viewership and participation of fans (i.e., fan engagement) was the most common type of innovation mentioned by all three of the mega-sport event organizing committees. In sport, fan engagement is a form of customer engagement that pertains to fans' non-transactional behaviors (Annamalai et al., 2021; Yoshida et al., 2014). Non-transactional behavior research in sport has blossomed in more recent years due to technological advances

(Huiszoon et al., 2018; Yoshida, 2017). More knowledge pertaining to non-transactional behavior by consumers in sport is necessary as non-transactional engagement initiatives have become increasingly important as consumers can interact with other consumers, athletes, and organizations more than ever before through new forms of media (e.g., social media, phone applications) (Doyle et al., 2020; Verhoef et al., 2010). The use of new media to implement innovative practices was also evident in our findings as illustrated by Club Paris, Climate Coach, and the Carbon Footprint Calculator initiatives. Thus, the findings of our study support researchers' (e.g., Annamalai et al., 2021; Yoshida, 2017) calls for more work on non-transactional behaviors given their increasing prevalence in our modern society.

The use of multiple forms (i.e., technical and administrative) of environmental and social innovations was also noteworthy. It could be argued that both technical and administrative environmental and social innovative practices are being pursued, at least partially, as a result of new policies implemented by both the IOC and FIFA. Formalized policies put forth from the IOC and FIFA (e.g., Agenda 2020+5 and *The Vision 2020-2023: Making Football Truly Global),* emphasize the importance of hosting their respective events in a more environmentally and socially responsible manner. A large body of innovation-related literature purports that formalization can hinder innovation in organizational settings (Dedahanov et al., 2017; Eva et al., 2017; Oltra, 2018). However, this study argues that – as opposed to seeing policies as roadblocks to innovation – sport event organizers should look to these policies for ideas on where they could be implementing new practices.

Furthermore, data analysis revealed that mega-sport event organizing committees are implementing more product and technical innovations than process and administrative ones. These findings are inconsistent with those purported by Hoeber et al (2015), who found that

Canadian CSOs are more focused on process-related and administrative innovations. Hoeber and colleagues (2015) link their findings to the pressures CSOs often face to enhance their operations and professionalization. While CSOs may focus more on internal innovations (i.e., process and administrative), mega-sport event organizing committees' innovative practices have more external outcomes. The desire for POCOG, LAOCOG, and United 26 to implement more outcome-related innovations may be a result of their drive to leave a lasting legacy. Legacy can be defined as "all planned and unplanned, positive and negative, tangible and intangible structures created for and by a sport event that remain longer than the event itself" (Preuss, 2007, p. 211). But it has also been considered a "wicked problem" (Byers et al., 2018, p. 171) as it is a challenging and fluid concept, making the successful delivery of innovative long-term outcomes (i.e., legacies) challenge for sport event organizers. Therefore, further insight regarding innovation as event legacy is warranted.

Finally, in a time where our world is continuously evolving, mega-sport event organizers are currently implementing less innovative practices as they attempt to wait for technologies to evolve. While this delay in implementing innovative initiatives may been seen as a strategic move, this can significantly hinder the mega-sport event organizing committees' innovative capabilities as it is widely understood in innovation literature that successfully innovating is a multi-step process that occurs over a period of time, often requiring new practices to be trialed and modified before being officially implemented (Damanpour & Schneider, 2006). Therefore, it could be argued that the OCOGs technological innovation decision making four years out is much more ideal that FIFA's OCs to delay technological innovations until four months from the start of their event as OCOGs are giving themselves more time to test and modify technological innovations. This heightened delay of innovation in the context of the World Cup may be

contributed to the traditional nature of soccer. Soccer matches are identified as traditional sport events (Green & Chalip, 1998). According to existing literature, traditional sport events are less likely to innovate and are more risk adverse (Hoeber et al., 2015; Winand et al., 2013).

Implications

This study is the first to empirically investigated the multidimensional innovative practices pursued by mega-sport event organizing committees. By focusing on mega-sport event organizing committees, this study also addresses the call for research to enhance our understanding of innovations being implemented in other sport organization contexts (Hoeber et al., 2015). Additionally, sport literature has often only considered one dimension (i.e., form, nature, goals) (e.g., Hoeber et al., 2015) or one attribute (i.e., product, process, technical, administrative, social, or commercial) (e.g., Tjønndal, 2017) of innovation at a time. This study employed Corthouts et al's (2021) 3D-model of innovation to study mega-sport event organizing committee contexts. Since Corthouts et al (2021) applied this framework to Flemish volunteer sports clubs it was limited to only social and commercial innovations. This study expands our existing knowledge on innovations being implemented by sport organizations and tests this 3D-model of innovation in a new context.

Further enhancing the 3D-model of innovation enables practitioners to better understand the innovations they are seeking to implement. As such, findings of this study can serve as a guide to future mega-sport event organizing committees by highlighting the ways in which previous editions of the event have innovated and where they might be lacking. When looking to implement innovative practices, sport event organizers should look to formalized policies from their event owners for inspiration. Additionally, they should consider being more proactive with technological innovations. Although event organizers tend to wait for technology to mature, this

conundrum will continue to create challenges since technology will never stop evolving. Finally, mega-sport event organizers should continue to consider implementing incremental innovations as they are more feasible when operating in a limited time frame.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the multidimensional types of innovative practices being pursued by mega-sport event organizing committees. Emergent trends in the analyzed data resulted in six types of innovations: fan experience technical products, commercial technical products, environmental administrative processes, environmental technical products, social administrative process, and organizational administrative processes. Moreover, it was also evident that the OCOGs (i.e., POCOG and LAOCOG) are similar to FIFA OCs (i.e., United 26) when innovating (e.g., delay technological innovations, implement more incremental innovations than radical ones, and consider legacy when innovating). However, OCOGs and the FIFA OC differ regarding innovation as the FIFA OC was less motivated to innovate due to the tradition and history of soccer.

Limitations and Future Research

With all research, it is important to consider its limitations. For one, two OCOGs were considered while only one FIFA OC was investigated. This imbalance between the two contexts may also contribute to why more innovations were identified by POCOG and LAOCOG than United 26. More specifically, many innovation examples provided in this study were from the POCOG case. This, at least in part, is due to POCOG being closer to staging their event in 2024 when compared to LAOCOG (2028) and United 26 (2026) respectively. Additionally, some innovations, in particular fan engagement ones, were categorized as such depending on the context in which the innovation was being discussed by the interviewees. Another limitation of

this study is the embedded units of analysis being limited to the North American (i.e., LAOCOG and United 26) and European (i.e., POCOG) contexts. Therefore, innovative practices by other large scale sport events should be further considered, especially those in other geographical locations with different state and organizational structures. As such, exploring innovative practices by sport event organizers in different sport events contexts is suggested. Moreover, considering that mega-sport event organizing committees are implementing innovative practices with legacy in mind, it is suggested that there is a connection between two complex phenomenon that tend to plague mega-sport event organizers (i.e., innovation and legacy). Thus, it is suggested that the connection between innovation and legacy be further explored to develop a better understanding of how the two influence each other and impact the long-term outcomes of staging mega-sport events.

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CHAPTER 3

STUDY TWO: INNOVATION DRIVERS, BARRIERS, AND STRATEGIES OF ORGANIZING COMMITTEES FOR THE OLYMPIC GAMES

Introduction

Innovation allows organizations to adapt to evolving demands or discover new opportunities, and thus is often viewed as the crux of organizational effectiveness and survival (Damanpour & Schneider, 2006). Although there is no universal definition of *innovation* (Baregheh et al., 2009), organizational studies commonly define it as "any idea, practice, or material artifact perceived as new by the relevant unit of adoption" (Zaltman et al., 1973, p. 10). A *unit of adoption* can be any individual, industry, market, or organization (Garcia & Calantone, 2002), and '*new*,' in this context, describes anything perceived as new by the organization (Rogers, 2003). There has been a recent surge in scholarly inquiry aimed at enhancing our understanding of innovation within various sport organization contexts (e.g., community sport organizations, professional teams, and sport governing bodies) (Mataruna-Dos-Santos, 2020; Svensson & Mahoney, 2020). Most notably, scholars have investigated ways sport organizations are innovating (e.g., Ehnold et al., 2021; Hoeber et al., 2015) and factors that may influence whether sport organizations behave innovatively (e.g., Winand et al., 2016; Winand & Hoeber, 2017). Sport organizations may be motivated to innovate due to pressures stemming from external stakeholders (Svensson & Hambrick, 2019; Wemmer & Koenigstorfer, 2016) or because a new practice aligns with their operational expectations (Trendafilova et al., 2013).

However, various barriers (e.g., resource accessibility, organizational structure, managerial attitudes) often hamper innovation (Heuske & Guenther, 2015).

Although motives for organizational innovation have been discussed in the sport management literature (e.g., Cadwallader et al., 2010; Gullu et al., 2018), there continues to be a lack of empirical research that explores innovation in specific contexts, such as Organizing Committees for the Olympic Games (OCOGs). OCOGs are formalized working groups with diverse stakeholders, including sport organizations, local governments, sponsors, members of the media, and volunteers (Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013). Our meager understanding of innovation by OCOGs is an omission within sport-event management scholarship and practice and warrants exploration for many reasons. For one, due to the global recognition and influence of mega-sport events, any innovation they pursue often influences other sport organizations to follow suit (Tjønndal, 2017a). Moreover, OCOGs' scope and size, potential for long-term impacts, and limited lifecycle make them topics of particular interest (Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013). Additionally, international sport governing bodies, such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC), have had to adopt new practices to make mega-sport events more effective and less costly to host (IOC, 2021). As such, understanding the driving factors for innovation can help organizing committees maximize their innovation efforts and meet stakeholder expectations.

This study answers the call to enhance our knowledge of innovation in different sport settings (Tjønndal, 2017a; Yoshida & Nakazawa, 2016) by using concepts related to organizational innovation (Ratten, 2018). We address the following research questions: (1) What drives OCOGs to innovate? (2) What barriers do OCOGs face when innovating? (3) How do OCOGs overcome these barriers and increase their innovation capabilities? In answering these research questions, this study contributes to the scholarship in the broader sport event

management field and provides practical information to sport organizations. Specifically, this study offers sport event organizers insight into innovation, enabling them to approach this complex phenomenon from a position of greater awareness, understanding, and strength. This is particularly advantageous given necessity for innovation if an organization is to survive and grow in a continuously evolving environment (Ratten, 2018).

Conceptual Framework

Damanpour's (2020) conceptualization of organizational innovation served as the guiding framework for this study. Organizational innovation is the adoption of a behavior or idea that is new to an organization (Zaltman et al., 1973). Practitioners and scholars have become increasingly interested in understanding what propels organizations to be innovative (Damanpour, 2020). Many factors can encourage organizational innovation, such as consumer demands, keeping up with competitors, and leadership expectations (Van de Ven, 1993). On the other hand, various problems (e.g., resource scarcity or poor communication and knowledge management) can prevent organizational innovation (Rogers, 2003). Innovation barriers are factors that "impede, delay, or completely block innovation" (Hueske & Guenther, 2015, p. 114). Identifying these barriers is essential for enabling organizations to develop strategies to overcome them (D'Este et al., 2012).

Drivers of and barriers to innovation are often categorized as either internal (i.e., individual or practices within the organization) or external (e.g., environmental elements) (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010; Thun & Müller, 2010). However, scholars have called for more multi-level approaches in innovation research (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010). Thus, we use Damanpour's (2020) three main categories of organizational innovation: environmental, organizational, and individual.

Environmental Drivers and Barriers

An organization's environment consists of stakeholders outside of its boundaries whose actions can impact its behavior (Aldrich & Pfeffer, 1976; Child, 1997). More specifically, an environment can be broken into two parts: the operational environment and the general environment (Damanpour, 2020). The *operational environment*—also known as an organization's micro-environment—includes sectors that closely surround and interact with an organization. For example, customers, suppliers, and competitors are "key stakeholders who are affected by an innovation or who can affect it" (Hueske & Guenther, 2015, p. 116). The operational environment is embedded in the general environment.

The *general environment* consists of an array of macro-level social, legal, technological, economic, and political factors that can have a significant impact an organization's incentives and capabilities for innovation (Damanpour, 2020). For instance, the commercialization of technological developments often influences organizations to adopt and implement new technologies to be more efficient (Zhang et al., 2019). Given the impact an environment has on an organization embedded within it, internal stakeholders often establish strategic relationships with external entities to obtain various resources (e.g., knowledge, financial, human) to enhance their innovation capacity (Chesbrough, 2003).

Organizational Drivers and Barriers

An organization is "a stable system of individuals who work together to achieve common goals through a hierarchy of ranks and a division of labor" (Rogers, 2003, p. 404). Several factors can influence the innovation process. An organization's structure (i.e., size and complexity) can influence the innovation process (Damanpour & Schneider, 2006), but findings are mixed regarding how structure affects innovation (Camisón-Zornoza et al., 2004;

Damanpour, 1992). For instance, some research suggests that larger, more complex organizations cultivate innovation through already existing systems, such as research and development departments and marketing expertise (Damanpour, 1992). Conversely, other studies have found that simple organizational structures with smaller staff sizes can promote innovation through effective communication and greater flexibility (e.g., Hoeber & Hoeber, 2012).

Resource availability is another factor affecting innovation, but, as with structure, there is conflicting evidence on the role of resources. Lack of resources might hamper an organization's innovation capabilities (Hueske & Guenther, 2015) or be a significant motivator (Winand et al., 2013).

Perhaps the most critical factor is organizational culture. Organizational culture can be defined as a "complex set of values, beliefs, assumptions, and symbols that define the way in which a firm conducts its business" (Barney, 1986, p. 657). It is a primary determinant of innovation and is often manifested by pro-innovation leaders (Lemon & Sahota, 2004). Furthermore, an innovation that does not align with an organization's overall culture and operational strategy can reduce their effectiveness (Arevalo & Aravind, 2011; Li et al., 2018; Naqshbandi & Kamel, 2017).

Individual Drivers and Barriers

Innovation is often dependent on the abilities and attitudes of individuals in the organization (Anderson et al., 2004). Specifically, those in leadership positions directly influence strategy, expectations, allocation of resources, and implementation of policies (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010; Damanpour, 2020; Wolfe, 1994). Thus, a significant amount of research has explored various managerial characteristics pertaining to innovation, including demographics, personalities, and behaviors (Damanpour, 2020). Skilled leaders who have a positive attitude

toward and understanding of innovation promote organization-wide adoption of innovation (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010).

Conversely, managers and employees who are resistant to change can hinder innovation (Beheshtifar et al., 2012). Leaders can make risk-averse employees more comfortable by giving them the freedom to approach challenges differently (Katz, 1964) and praising their performance when they successfully implement innovative initiatives (Aman et al., 2018). Moreover, sharing knowledge among internal departments stimulates innovation by encouraging employees to circulate creative thinking (Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998).

Literature Review

Innovation in Sport Organizations

Sport organizations have emerged as an interesting context for scholars to explore the phenomenon of innovation. There is an increasing body of literature on organizational innovation in nonprofit sport organizations (NPSOs) (e.g., local sport clubs, sport councils, and sport federations) due to the greater challenges NPSOs face competing for memberships and resources (e.g., financial, human, infrastructure) (Corthouts et al., 2021; Newell & Swan, 1995; Hoeber et al., 2015; Winand et al., 2013, 2016) as compared to their for-profit counterparts (Delshab et al., 2020). Again, however, findings are mixed. Some scholars have argued that resource scarcity makes non-profit organizations risk-averse and reluctant to innovate (Hull & Lio, 2006), whereas others have found that having limited resources can foster innovation within NPSOs (Hoeber et al., 2015; Winand et al., 2013). One of the earliest works on innovation in a sport organization context (Newell & Swan, 1995) suggested that NPSOs in the United Kingdom *need* to innovate in order to obtain the financial (sponsorships and grants) and human (staff and volunteers) resources required for their sport to survive.

Leaders of sport clubs, national federations, and international governing bodies can drive innovation (Tjønndal, 2017b). Hoeber and Hoeber (2012) indicated that leadership commitment and a pro-innovation board of directors were the primary managerial determinants of innovation in a Canadian community sport organization that adopted a new technology. Recently, Harris and colleagues (2021) also found that national governing bodies of sport that had leaders who created a pro-innovation culture had greater medal counts, financial resources, and memberships. In addition to leadership, organizational culture and infrastructure, financial resources, and paid staff are necessary preconditions for social innovation in sport (Svensson & Mahoney, 2020). Corthouts and colleagues (2020), however, found paid staff to have no significant impact on implementing innovation in voluntary sport clubs.

Researchers have also explored the role of external pressures in NPSO innovation. NPSOs often feel the need to innovate given stakeholders' expectations for more professionalized service and better products (Hoeber et al., 2015; Vos et al., 2012; Winand et al., 2016). Pressures for NPSOs to innovate have come from the media, sponsors, competitors, and governing bodies, among others (Newell & Swan, 1995; Spencer et al., 2021). Despite these pressures, not all sport organizations favor innovation (Hull & Lio, 2006; Smith & Shilbury, 2004; Winand et al., 2013), especially those with long histories and rich traditions (Smith & 2004). The importance of tradition in many sport contexts can create a desire to maintain the status quo and lower environmental pressures to change (Winand et al., 2013). Other barriers, such as stakeholder conflict, can prevent sport organizations from successfully adopting innovations (Caza, 2000).

Thus, the sport management literature has found that numerous factors (e.g., managerial characteristics, resource capacity, consumer demands, stakeholder expectations) affect

innovation (Corthouts et al., 2020; Hoeber & Hoeber, 2012; Winand et al., 2013). While these studies offer insights into innovation in non-profit sport organizations, the inconsistent findings imply that innovation is a context-specific phenomenon (Baregheh et al., 2009). While various types of sport organizations (e.g., community, voluntary, national) have been studied, more research into sport events' innovation is needed (Yoshida & Nakazawa, 2016). This is particularly true for those events that are "elevated above ordinary life" (Getz, 1989, p. 125) due to their unique traditions, status, and relative infrequency, such as mega-sport events (e.g., Olympic Games) (Ritchie, 1984). Our research fills this gap by focusing on the innovation drivers, barriers, and strategies of OCOGs.

Methods

This paper uses an exploratory embedded single-case study design to enhance our understanding of the innovation drivers, barriers, and strategies experienced by OCOGs. Exploratory case study approaches are viable when addressing gaps in knowledge and seeking to answer a "how" question about a social phenomenon (i.e., innovation) in a contemporary setting (Yin, 2018). Previous studies employ exploratory case study approaches to facilitate meaningful empirical research on innovation in sport organizations (e.g., Best et al., 2021; Harris et al., 2021). Specifically, an embedded single-case study design includes a context, single case, and embedded units of analysis (Yin, 2017). In the context of the Olympic Games, the case of this study pertains to OCOGs with POCOG and LAOCOG serving as the embedded units of analysis. As the focal points of a case study design, the ensuing section further describes and justifies the selected embedded units of analysis.

Embedded Units of Analysis

During the 131st IOC session in Lima, Peru, on September 13, 2017, the IOC awarded the cities of Paris and Los Angeles the rights to host the 2024 and 2028 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games, respectively. The 2024 Paris Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (POCOG) and the 2028 Los Angeles Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (LAOCOG) are ideal embedded units of analysis for several reasons. First, innovation is integral to their vision statements. POCOG's candidature file states, "In 2024, and in the years before, we dream of welcoming the IOC and the entire Olympic family, and again, collaborating to stage the innovative and inspiring Games that will connect, inspire, and engage—throughout France, Europe, and the world" (p. 13). Similarly, LAOCOG's candidature file states:

> [LAOCOG] will create a transformative Olympic Games utilizing our city's ideal climate, its unparalleled culture of creativity and innovation, and its youthful energy to reimagine a Games that delivers the ultimate personalized experience for the athletes, maximizes our existing world-class sporting culture and infrastructure to ensure a sustainable long-term Olympic legacy for our city, and refreshes the Olympic brand around the world for a new generation. (2016, p. 1)

Second, POCOG and LAOCOG have both already demonstrated innovative initiatives years before staging their events. For instance, POCOG has highlighted their intention to make the Games more environmentally friendly by using green roofs to cool the Olympic and Paralympic Villages and by providing residents and visitors with over 250,000 bicycles to help reduce car traffic and promote active mobility (POCOG, 2016). To support these initiatives, POCOG is the first OCOG to establish an innovation department within their organizational structure (European Olympic Committees, 2021). LAOCOG has been innovative in engaging people in L.A. and around the world (IOC, 2020). Historically, the Games have been represented by one emblem, but LAOCOG released 26 different emblems created by a range of people, including Olympic athletes (e.g., Alex Morgan), celebrities (e.g., Reese Witherspoon), local

creatives (e.g., tattoo artist Dr. Woo and graffiti artist Chaz Bojórques), chefs (e.g., Jorge Alvarez), and social justice leaders (e.g., Rachel Sumekh).

Furthermore, POCOG and LAOCOG have both similar and different organizational characteristics. At the time of this study, both OCOGs were in the pre-event phase, which consists of strategic planning and decision-making (Bohlmann & Van Heerden, 2005). However, POCOG and LAOCOG are in different geographical regions, offering the possibility of findings that are unique to each context and that could therefore expand the generalizability of the results.

Data Collection

A case study approach emphasizes the importance of triangulation or gathering data from varied sources to confirm and justify the researchers' interpretations (cf. Yin, 2018; Miles et al., 2014). Data sources included publicly available documents of significance (i.e., archival material, official documents, website information) pertaining to POCOG and LAOCOG and innovation, such as IOC reports, OCOG bid books, candidature files, press releases, and online news articles. In total, 466 pages of documentation were reviewed. Such archival documents are beneficial because they are considered stable, unobtrusive, specific, and broad sources of evidence (Yin, 2018). Specifically, these materials helped generate interview questions and identify key stakeholders to contact for interviews. The documents, therefore, served as secondary sources of data by giving way to interviewees' perspectives (Bowen, 2009).

Using purposive sampling (cf. Rubin & Rubin, 2011), semi-structured interviews were conducted with informants from key stakeholder groups: OCOGs (i.e., POCOG and LAOCOG); National Olympic Committees (NOCs), including the Unites States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC); and the parent organization of the Olympics, the IOC. In total, 16 individuals with first-hand insight into OCOG innovation were interviewed. The interviewees

held various positions at different levels (e.g., directors, chief officers, senior advisors, head managers) and represented diverse areas of work from within the organizations such as marketing, innovation, partnership and development, sustainability, and venue infrastructure. However, to protect their identity, each interviewee was given a numeric code. Interviews lasted between 17 and 80 minutes, depending upon the interviewee's availability and knowledge regarding the research topic. Additional interviewee information can be found in Table 3.1

Table 3.1

Interviewee Descriptions

Stakeholder Group	Interviewees	Interviewee Code	Interview Duration (in minutes)
Organizing Committee	POCOG	1	61
		2	63
		3	59
		4	61
		5	58
		6	41
	LAOCOG	7	49
		8	32
		9	32
		10	36
		11	17
		12	84
		13	25
Member Association	USOPC	14	53
		15	51
Parent Organization	IOC	16	21

Interviewees were initially identified from a review of documents and then contacted by email. Often an interviewee would recommend other protentional informants who could be of interest to this study (i.e., chain referral sampling) (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). Examples of

interview questions include: *Can you explain why you think the POCOG is being innovative? Can you tell me about any barriers that may hinder LAOCOG's ability to be innovative? Can you explain any strategies POCOG uses to overcome these barriers to be innovative?*

Data saturation occurred by approximately interview 12 as no new information was attained, further coding was not feasible, and enough information was provided to replicate the study (Fusch & Ness, 2015). All interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed by Rev, an online software application. To ensure accuracy, the lead researcher thoroughly reviewed the transcripts and sent them to each interviewee for confirmation (i.e., member checking) (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). No amendments were made.

Data Analysis

Data analysis of interview transcripts and documents was conducted using Atlas.ti to facilitate the coding process. As data were collected, first-cycle coding consisted of deductive and inductive coding (Miles et al., 2014). To establish a starting point for deductive coding, the lead researcher created a preliminary code list based on the existing literature used to frame this study, including the environmental (competitors, consumers, regulators), organizational (culture, structure, resources), and individual (attributes, characteristics, beliefs) factors that often impact organizational innovation (Rogers, 2003). Inductive coding enabled new codes (time, communication, external relationships) to emerge from the data collection and analysis process (Miles et al., 2014).

Next, second-cycle coding involved identifying patterns, themes, and relationships among the first-cycle coded data. Emergent themes and specific sub-themes came to fruition that helped to thread the data together. For instance, in terms of drivers, several factors that encourage innovation proposed by Rogers (2003) appeared (e.g., consumer demands,

organizational culture, and pro-innovation leadership). Similarly, common themes from existing innovation barriers (e.g., internal knowledge constraints) and strategy (e.g., external partnerships) literature also emerged. Additional sub-themes were created inductively representing the unique innovation-related pressures (e.g., IOC recommendation), barriers (e.g., temporary organization lifecycle), and strategies (e.g., previous Olympic hosts) specific to this context.

Finally, selective coding enabled the researchers to return to the data set and provide illustrative examples of the major themes and sub-themes from the data. In doing so, a model was developed that embodies the findings of the study by illustrating what drives OCOGs to be innovative, the barriers that may prevent them from doing so, and strategies that can employed to enhance OCOGs' innovation capabilities (see Figure 3.1 at the end of the findings section).

Findings

This study focused on three central elements of innovation by OCOGs: drivers, barriers, and strategies. Major themes that emerged related to drivers of innovation included external environment, organizational identity, and internal individuals. Topics specific to barriers included managing intangible resources and resistance to radical innovation. Strategies used by OCOGs to overcome innovation-related barriers aligned with two themes: establishing external relationships and implementing formalized systems. These major themes, their associated sub-themes, and sample quotes from the data will be presented in this section and have been summarized in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Coded Data Themes and Sub-themes

Main Element	Major Themes	Sub-themes	Example Data Quotes
Drivers	External environment	Sponsor expectations	"The commercial partners put pressure on the OCOGs to make sure they are innovative" (Interviewee 1).
		IOC recommendations	"Innovative solutions must be continuously explored to reduce costs and optimize revenues" (IOC, 2021, p. 7).
		Consumer demands	"We are also trying to drive for change because people are evolving. Consumers are changing their demands" (Interviewee 8).
		Athlete empowerment	"We want to be innovative and think differently that is relevant for the athletes" (Interviewee 4).
	Organizational identity	Organizational culture	"Innovation is one of the key elements of our vision. It is really a core value and something we use for our own personal objectives" (Interviewee 4).
		Previous hosting image	"There is so much pressure on what '84 delivered to the movement from a commercial innovation perspective, that we cannot host the Games in L.A. with all it has to offer and not strive to be innovative in our approach" (Interviewee 15).
		Leaving a legacy	"We are motivated to innovate by legacy" (Interviewee 9)
	Internal individuals	Pro-innovation leadership	"Our leaders bring a background of interruption and innovation and bring that expertise to the L.A. 2028 Games" (Interviewee 11).
Barriers	Managing intangible resources	Temporary organizational lifecycle	"Sometimes being innovative has to be pushed aside so the OCOGs can deliver what they were asked for within the time constraints they have (Interviewee 1).

		Internal knowledge constraints	"People who can think purely about innovation and have the ability to actually strategize and execute is definitely a resource that we are probably lacking" (Interviewee 8).
	Resistance to radical innovation	Stakeholder complexity	"Innovation is stifled when we are expected to please everybody" (Interviewee 9).
		Maintain tradition	"[The IOC] are more traditional, and they do not always see an issue with how things have been done in the past" (Interviewee 8).
Strategies	Establish relationships	Previous Olympic hosts	"There is an observer program in place each Games that allows organizing committees to show the previous one so that they can learn and build on that for each edition" (Interviewee 12).
		External partnerships	"We relied on establishing relationships to help make us smarter and deliver innovations along the way" (Interviewee 15).
	Formalized systems	Innovation departments	"We have a tech and innovation group" (Interviewee 9).
		Pilot testing	"It takes time getting new things right, so we test and pilot them often" (Interviewee 10).

Drivers of Innovation

As illustrated in Figure 3.1, three major innovation drivers were identified in this research context: external environment (i.e., sponsor expectations, IOC recommendations, consumer demands, athlete empowerment); organizational identity (i.e., organizational culture, previous hosting image, leaving a legacy); and internal individuals (i.e., pro-innovation leadership).

External Environment

Achieving stakeholders' expectations within the operational environment of the OCOGs was found to be a significant innovation driver for both POCOG and LAOCOG. More specifically, findings revealed four key sub-areas where this was considered critical: sponsor expectations, IOC recommendations, consumer demands, and athlete empowerment.

Sponsor Expectations. Most notably, the existing relationships between The Olympic Partners (TOP) and host OCOGs resulted in interviewees feeling that "the commercial partners put pressure on the OCOGs to make sure they are innovative" (Interviewee 1). This commercial pressure was due to TOP sponsors seeking a return of investment by "using the biggest event in the world as a platform to showcase their innovative capabilities and be seen as innovative and cutting edge" (Interviewee 12). This is best described by Interviewee 7:

> At the price point that the LA28 sponsorship package is being sold for, which is $400 million over an eight-year term, I think that level of investment is one that many companies cannot afford, so you are only getting certain kinds of companies who are expected to experience a lot in return in terms of innovation and benefit for the brand of the company.

In addition to experiencing pressure to be innovative from sponsors, the OCOGs also felt pressure from the IOC.

IOC Recommendations. Specifically, in 2021 the IOC Executive Board established a strategic roadmap: *Olympic Agenda 2020+5: 15 Recommendations*. In the report, the IOC states

that “innovative solutions must be continuously explored to reduce costs and optimize revenues, while delivering key legacies prior to and after the Olympic Games” (2021, p. 7). As a result, interviewees expressed that there was “pressure to host the Games differently” (Interviewee 4). For instance, an online news report revealed that POCOG is striving to become the first climate-positive OCOG by 2024 (Tikoo, 2021, p. 1).

Consumer Demands. Several interviewees commented that the OCOGs feel pressure “to make the Games spectacular and innovative for people who watch” them (Interviewee 5). Interviewee 8 stated, “it is important to innovate for consumers because their demands are evolving, and if OCOGs do not keep up with that innovation and have something ready for our fans, then we missed them.” Consumers’ role in driving innovation was further described by Interviewee 15:

> The next generation motivates us. Gen Z and Millennials will be the largest group in terms of consumership by the time the Games has come around, and they are the key holders of voice and culture. We know we need to break through to the younger audience in new and innovative ways to show them that we are actually connected to pop culture and we understand our community.

Athlete Empowerment. Moreover, the OCOGs see all Olympic and Paralympic athletes as key stakeholders within the Olympic Movement. Therefore, empowering athletes and providing them with a better Olympic experience was an important driver for LAOCOG and POCOG to be innovative. As Interviewee 4 stated, the OCOGs “want to be innovative and think differently than what has been done before for the athletes.” For instance, stakeholders of LAOCOG recognized that “there is a problem with the way athletes make money and are employed” (Interviewee 8). This problem ultimately motivated the OCOG to innovative specifically “around athlete empowerment to support Olympic and Paralympic athletes” (Interviewee 8). This was achieved by LAOCOG implementing the Athlete Marketing Program

(AMP) initiative. AMP is “first time in Olympic history that athletes can be directly connected to sponsors to drive more revenue for athletes and add more value to sponsors” (Interviewee 14).

Organizational Identity

Organizational identity also emerged as a factor that drove the OCOGs to innovate. This topic is further broken into three sub-themes: organizational culture, previous hosting experience, and leaving a legacy.

Organizational Culture. Evidence suggested that the values and beliefs of the OCOGs resulted in an organizational culture that encouraged team members to be innovative. For instance, “creating a creative and innovative Olympic Games experience that benefits everyone is at the core of Paris 2024’s mission” (IOC, 2019, p. 1). This was supported by Interviewee 4, who said that “innovation is one of the key elements of [POCOG’s] vision. It is really a core value and something we use for our own personal objectives.” Similarly, LAOCOG “was not built on just producing the Olympic Games. And with that as our culture, it allows us to think about things a bit differently and be more innovative” (Interviewee 11).

Previous Hosting Image. Both L.A. and Paris previously hosted editions of the Olympic Games that were innovative for their time. Paris 1924 created the first Olympic Village in history, and L.A. 1984 established a sponsorship program. Given their previous Olympic innovative initiatives, it was evident that both cities’ “history of innovation around the Olympic Games” (Cruz, 2019, p. 1) created an image that they wanted to maintain. Specifically, “Paris 2024 wants to feel that we are continuing to raise the bar, and that’s where innovation comes in” (Interviewee 3). Similarly, a LAOCOG member said, “there is so much pressure on what ’84 delivered to the Movement from a commercial innovation perspective, that we cannot host the

Games in L.A. with all it has to offer and not strive to be innovative in our approach" (Interviewee 12).

Leaving a Legacy. Evidence also suggested the OCOGs were "motivated to innovate by creating legacies" from staging the event (Interviewee 13). More specifically, interviewees suggested they were driven to implement "innovative initiatives that last longer than the Games they host" (Interviewee 9). POCOG wanted their "innovative initiatives to be a legacy so people can look back and say it started here with us" (Interviewee 3). Similarly, LAOCOG strived to be innovative "to move the Olympic Movement and Paralympic movement forward" (Interviewee 13). In doing so, they hoped that "innovations on [their] agendas will be remembered and carried on" (Interviewee 15) and "become a normal standard for hosting the Games" (Interviewee 7).

Internal Individuals

Findings also revealed that individuals inside the OCOGs drove innovation.

Pro-Innovation Leadership. Pro-innovation leadership emerged as a sub-theme, as leaders within both POCOG and LAOCOG were considered to be highly supportive of innovative initiatives. Interviewee 5 noted that employees feel the need to be innovative because "as soon as you hear our President, Tony, speak, he is always talking about innovation." Likewise, for LAOCOG being innovative "comes down to leadership. Our leaders bring a background of interruption and innovation and bring that expertise to the L.A. 2028 Games" (Interviewee 14).

Innovation Barriers

As shown in Figure 3.1, impeding the direct arrow from the drivers to innovation of OCOGs are barriers. Two major barriers to innovation emerged from the data: management of intangible resources and resistance to radical innovation.

Managing Intangible Resources

The management of intangible resources was found to be a significant barrier to innovation in both POCOG and LAOCOG. Specifically, innovation was hindered by having to operate within a temporary organizational lifecycle and to contend with internal knowledge constraints.

Temporary Organizational Lifecycle. When trying to innovate, time was described as a "conundrum" (Interviewee 15) because "OCOGs are temporary and will not be here forever so they cannot just be innovating everywhere" (Interviewee 3). Consequently, "sometimes being innovative has to be pushed aside so the OCOGs can deliver what they were asked for within the time constraints they have" (Interviewee 1). The impacts of time constraints were also described by Interviewee 4:

> There are challenges. The biggest one being time. If we [POCOG] want to be innovative, we have to think about it very quickly, because our life cycle is only six and a half years to seven years, but most of the time you have to make a decision, maybe two to three years in advance to be able to implement the innovation.

Although LAOCOG may have an extended planning time period, "the long runway is sometimes a hinderance to innovation" (Interviewee 14). Specifically:

> More time means more ideation. And then prioritization of those become really hard because you want to do everything. Sometimes you lack focus when you have more time. So that's one that I've seen a lot like, because, you know, we're just all like, oh, we should do this. And we should do this. And we should do this. And someone's like, guys, like, we have to put on a Game, so maybe we shouldn't do all of those. (Interviewee 8)

Planning for an event many years in advance can also create challenges because "over 10 years things will change; certainly, technology will evolve" ("LA's 2028 Olympics," 2018, n.p.).

Internal Knowledge Constraints. A lack of existing innovation-related knowledge was another barrier that emerged. Within OCOGs "there are a lot of great, brilliant people. However, there is not a lot of deep technical talent, like engineers and people building technology is not

very strong, but that's not the reasons the organization exists" (Interviewee 14). This was supported by Interviewee 8:

> As an organization we do not have the bandwidth to support the amount of innovation we actually want to do. So people who can think purely about innovation and have the ability to actually strategize and execute is definitely a resource that we are probably lacking.

Resistance to Radical Innovation

While being innovative is a primary objective of POCOG and LAOCOG, data suggested there was some resistance to radical innovation in the organizations as a result of the complex stakeholder network involved when staging an edition of the Games and the IOC's desire to maintain tradition within the Olympic Movement.

Stakeholder Complexity. Staging the Games "requires [OCOGs] to have many different perspectives on how to execute innovative initiatives" (Interviewee 7). Although "OCOGs want to be informed by stakeholder input, innovation is stifled when they are expected to please everybody" (Interviewee 13). The impact of the complex stakeholder network in this context is described by Interviewee 13:

> Sometimes the reason innovation does not happen, or people decide it does not happen is because it is too complicated. You could say that with any bureaucratic big Fortune 500 company, but it is even more complicated with so many more layers. Here, OCOGs have the IOC, International Sport Federations, Olympics and Paralympics, large commercial programs, and all the governments that run these different entities. So, the layers of, and the degree of, change sometimes is probably challenged in one way or another because of how many people have to be involved.

Consequently, when trying to be innovative, "there is a bit of politics of who controls what so there is a little bit of tension and power dynamics when making changes" (Interviewee 14).

Maintain Tradition. While the "IOC is definitely more open to innovation" (Interviewee 15), it is also "risk-averse" (Interviewee 9). This is "partly because they are more traditional, and they do not always see an issue with how things have been done in the past" (Interviewee 8). For

instance, “the IOC says, ‘Here is your playbook.’ If [OCOGs] do not like it, it’s important to have people who will challenge it and not mind if the IOC say not to challenge it but continue to push anyways” (Interviewee 8). Consequently, “being really innovative is a culture shock for an organization like the IOC” (Interviewee 13), and the OCOGs are often the ones “pushing the IOC to be more innovative in a healthy but uncomfortable way” (Interviewee 14). Therefore, the IOC’s resistance “is a factor that can make it hard for OCOGs to be innovative” (Interviewee 7).

Strategies for Enhancing Innovation Capabilities

Despite the presence of barriers, two major strategies have been implemented by OCOGs to enhance their innovation capabilities: relationships and formalized systems (see Figure 3.1).

Establish Relationships

Establishing relationships was found to be one of the main strategies implemented by POCOG and LAOCOG to enhance their innovative capabilities. More specifically, the OCOGs established relationships with previous Olympic hosts and other external partners.

Previous Olympic Hosts. Having a relationship with previous OCOGs was identified as an important way to obtain new innovation-related knowledge and enhance their innovation capabilities. Specifically, “there is an observer program in place each Games that allows organizing committees to show the previous one so that they can learn and build on that for each edition” (Interviewee 15). In this regard, both POCOG and LAOCOG are able to obtain diverse insight on new technologies and ideas that are being implemented for the Games in different geographical landscapes. For instance, Interviewee 2 noted that “there was a lot of knowledge exchange” between POCOG and the 2020 Tokyo Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, where stakeholders could observe Tokyo’s innovative initiatives (e.g., use of drones, robotic mascots, and autonomous transportation) in their implementation phase. Similarly,

LAOCOG is "learning from colleagues in Tokyo and Paris… so that anything they develop there, [LAOCOG] can transfer to L.A. quickly" ("LA's 2028 Olympics," 2018, n.p.). In doing so, the OCOGs are able to learn from previous mistakes regarding innovation. However, as Interviewee 4 pointed out, "the way one host OCOG may do innovation is very different from what another host may be able to do because innovation has to be contextualized because of what resources and expectation each OCOG has."

External Partnerships. Findings also revealed that the OCOGs "do not want to be exclusive innovators" (Interviewee 15). Instead, POCOG and LAOCOG "relied on establishing relationships to help make [them] smarter and deliver innovations along the way" (Interviewee 12). For example, the head of POCOG's innovation department stated:

> During the preparation and the delivery of the biggest sporting event, the Olympic Games, there are many stakeholders involved from public institutions to global and local partners, startups, tech companies, and many different types of organizations. During this phase, Paris 2024 is monitoring, researching, and having many conversations with the ecosystem to see what solutions are out there than can be applied at the Olympic Games. (Shehabi, 2020, p. 1)

Similarly, LAOCOG "has created a sandbox of collaboration and co-creation with private companies" (Cruz, 2019, p. 1). Doing so gives the OCOGs "more time to focus on actually delivering the Games" (Interviewee 8).

Formalized Systems

The OCOGs had formalized systems within their organizations to help them be more successfully innovative.

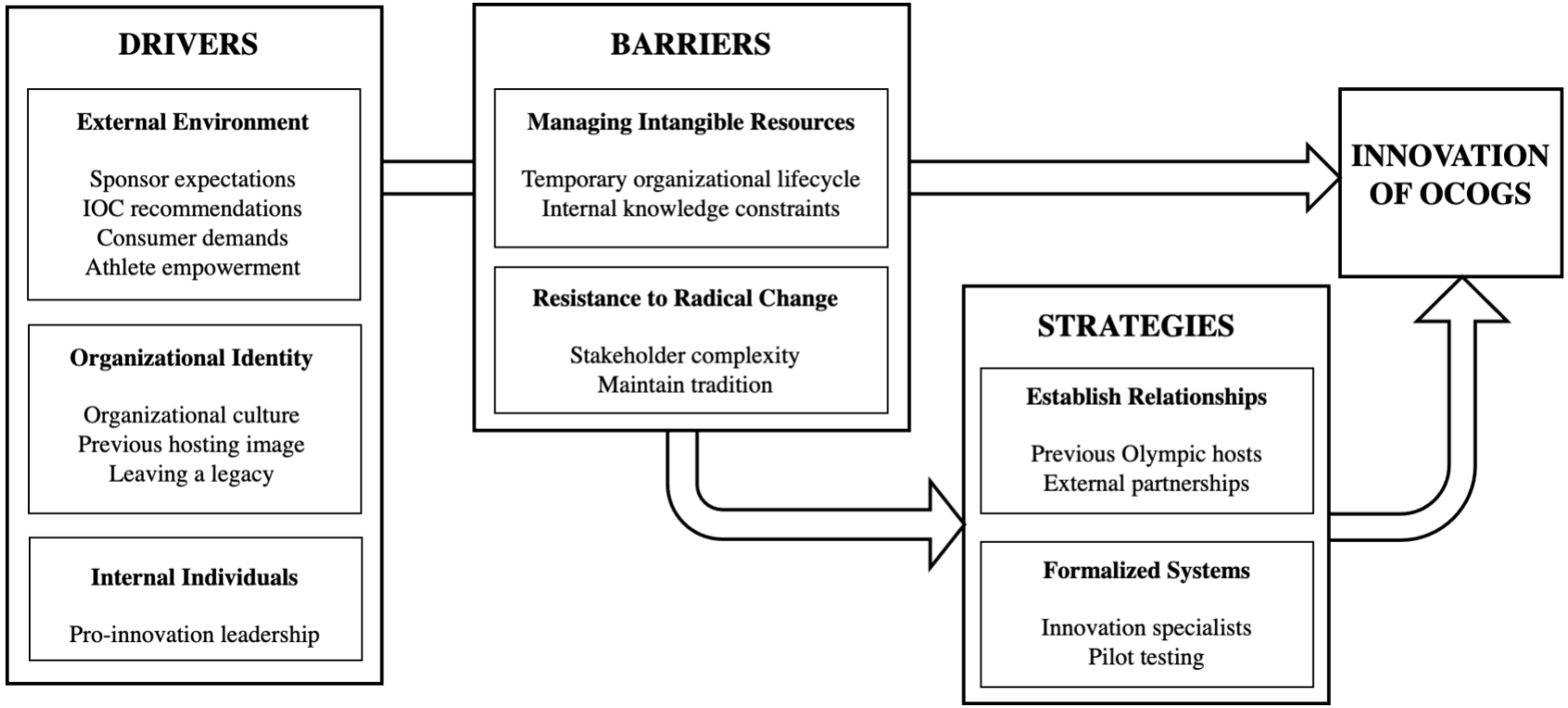
Innovation Specialists. The OCOGs in this study created innovation-specific departments within their organizational structures. POCOG was the first to create an Innovation Department. This department is "a team of three innovation leaders who try to implement innovative solutions to identified problems and has 30 'explorers' who go through an intensive

three-month course on innovation" (Interviewee 1). While POCOG has their own innovation-specific department, LAOCOG has innovation specialists who "sit in the marketing research and insights team ... to observe consumer behavior within the Olympics and L.A." (Interviewee 8).

Pilot Testing. Findings also suggest the importance of pilot testing innovations. Specifically, OCOGs "usually pilot test anything that is new or different" (Interviewee 8) to ensure successful implementation. In doing so, "there is comfort that it has already been tested" (Interviewee 9). Given the OCOGs' time constraints, "the quicker you test your innovations the sooner you know if you are on the right track or not … and these pilot tests serve as metrics to ensure the innovation can actually happen" (Interviewee 1).

Figure 3.1

Innovation Drivers, Barriers, and Strategies



Discussion and Implications

The purpose of this research was to explore the pressures that drive OCOGs to innovate, the barriers that may prevent them from doing so, and strategies they implement to overcome these issues and enhance their innovative capabilities. We applied organizational innovation as a framework to the unique context of OCOGs. This approach extended existing research that has thus far employed organizational innovation as a framework in other sport organization contexts (e.g., Hoeber & Hoeber, 2012; Næss & Tjønndal, 2021; Newell & Swan, 1995). In doing so, we found that OCOGs experience various drivers to be innovative. However, despite these pressures, some stakeholders from its operational environment are risk-averse. Furthermore, OCOGs lack innovation-related knowledge and time to successfully implement innovative initiatives. Thus, OCOGs implement strategies such as establishing external relationships and formalized structures to overcome these barriers as illustrated in Figure 3.1. These findings answer calls from the literature to apply innovation concepts (i.e., organizational innovation) to sport studies (Ratten, 2018), expand our understanding of innovation in diverse sport contexts (Tjønndal, 2017a), and enhance our theoretical and practical understanding of spot event innovation (Yoshida & Nakazawa, 2016).

Findings also identified competing institutional logics at play in relation to innovation by OCOGs. Institutional logics are "the set of material practices and symbolic constructions" that shape the behavior of social actors (Friedland & Alfred, 1991, p. 248). In other words, logics represent the reality and rules of individual and organizational actions and social behavior (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Thornton & Ocasio, 1999). Competing institutional logics occur when organizations face contradictory pressures from various stakeholders (Pache & Santos, 2013). In our study, we found that OCOGs felt various pressures to innovate from external,

internal, and individual constituents. Yet, at the same time, some actors in the OCOGs' operational environment were risk-averse and hesitant to implement radical innovations. There is an extensive body of innovation-related literature illustrating that risk aversion is a main factor that reduces the adoption of innovations (Arundel et al., 2019; Rogers, 2003). These findings prove to be problematic for OCOGs seeking to meet stakeholder expectations and advances awareness of competing logics as it pertains to innovation in sport organizations and can be used to further understand institutional adaptation to organizational innovation, as suggested by Nite & Washington (2017). Moreover, such institutional contradictions can make space for institutional entrepreneurs (Sharma et al., 2010)

The need to overcome tradition and the associated risk aversion pertaining to innovation in mega-sport event organizing committees illustrates the usefulness of institutional entrepreneurship. Institutions are often defined as "rules, norms, and beliefs that describe reality for the organization, explaining what is and is not, what can be acted upon and what cannot" (Hoffman, 1999, p. 351). In this vein, it can be considered that mega-sport event organizing committees (i.e., OCOGs and FIFA OCs) are organized within a strict institutional framework set by their parent organizing (i.e., IOC and FIFA). Within such institutions are institutional entrepreneurs (i.e., individuals and/or organizations) that brings about change by mobilizing resources to challenge existing institutional structures (see DiMaggio 1998 and Maguire et al., 2004). Thus, institutional entrepreneurs are essential for entities that are looking to break free from long-standing traditions and enhance their innovative capabilities (Jensen & Fersch, 2019). Given the importance institutional entrepreneurship has on innovation, future research should consider exploring innovation-related institutional entrepreneurs (i.e., change agents and champions) in mega-sport event organizing committees and how such entrepreneurs can work to

alter existing institutional practices. Doing so could help explain how institutions can be created, maintained, or altered.

Data analysis also revealed that time is a unique challenge to innovation in the OCOG context. Time pressure, defined as "limitation of the time allocated for employees to finish their work" (Hsu & Fan, 2010, p. 378), is a factor that has been studied on organizational creativity – a linchpin necessary for innovation in sport (Smith & Green, 2020). However, findings regarding the impact time pressure has on creativity and innovation are inconsistent as studies have found that high time pressure can have positive (Ohly & Fritz, 2010; Wu et al., 2014), negative (Maqbool et al., 2019; Unsworth, 2004), both positive and negative (Amabile et al., 2002; Byron, 2010; Hsu & Fan, 2010), or nonsignificant (Amabile et al., 1996.) implications. The disparity among these findings may be contributed to much of this work being limited to post-project perspectives, as noted by Winsor (2012). Findings from this study also suggests that time is as great of a barrier to innovation as other resource limitations (e.g., infrastructure, money, human) are to other sport organizations (Corthouts et al., 2021; Newell & Swan, 1995; Hoeber et al., 2015; Winand et al., 2013, 2016). Thus, time is a uniquely significant factor that needs to be considered when discussing innovation in the context of OCOGs. This suggests that further research on time pressure and the innovation process (Damanpour & Schneider, 2006; Hoeber & Hoeber, 2012) within organizational contexts that operate in limited timeframes is needed.

Furthermore, findings revealed that OCOGs establish strategic relationships to overcome innovation-related barriers (e.g., knowledge and time). This finding confirms that sport organizations, including mega-events, establish relationships for co-creating innovative solutions (Erhardt et al., 2019; Svensson & Hambrick, 2019). Additionally, this finding suggests that OCOGs essentially participate in open innovation (cf. Chesbrough, 2003). Open innovation

holds that innovating should not be purely an internal process and those seeking to innovate should establish external linkages to harness additional resources (Chesbrough, 2003). Hence, OCOGs strategically establishing relationships with various entities (e.g., local startups, fortune 500s, and previous hosts) for innovation-related purposes illustrates open innovation. Yet, little is known about open innovation in sport organizations, including the mega-sport event context. This is a significant omission considering mega-sport event organizers regularly rely on external constituents due to the size and scope of the Games (Parent, 2008) and this study illuminates open innovation as a key strategy for OCOGs to innovate. Therefore, future research on innovation in OCOGs using an open innovation lens could advance our understanding of how strategic external linkages can enhance OCOGs' innovative capabilities to meet stakeholder expectations more effectively.

Our study also has practical implications as the drivers, barriers, and strategies found in our study can impact the actions and strategies of mega-sport event organizers. For example, host OCOGs should continue to leverage existing partnerships and establish external relationships to obtain innovation-related knowledge. Specifically, OCOGs could partner with local universities and researchers to develop, test, and introduce innovations on a broad range of topics such as logistics, athlete safety, risk management, among others. Doing so would offer OCOGs enhanced innovative capacity while allowing the universities space to complete their research and potentially contribute to broader advances in their fields. Additionally, by establishing relationships beyond organizational boundaries and reaching the broader ecosystem, temporary organizations such as Olympic-related projects can overcome internal knowledge constraints (Davies et al., 2014; Worsnop et al., 2016). Moreover, as competing stakeholder logics can be problematic, OCOGs should identify innovation-specific salient stakeholders early in their

planning stage. Mitchell and colleagues (1997) describe stakeholder salience as "the degree to which managers give priority to competing stakeholder claims" (p. 854). In this vein, stakeholder salience could be a useful framework to explore which stakeholders mega-sport event organizing committee managers should pay attention to regarding innovation. In doing so, event organizers should prioritize the salient stakeholders' expectations and implement strategies on how they can be met. OCOGs seeking to be innovative should also focus their efforts more on incremental innovations that are less likely to generate pushback from key stakeholders and that can be implemented in a timely manner, such as continuing to make upgrades to enhancing fans' experience through modern media (e.g., social media, cellphone applications). In doing so, OCOGs can enhance their innovation capabilities and more successfully meet stakeholder expectations.

Conclusion

Organizational innovation was used as a lens to explore the drivers of and barriers to innovation OCOGs face as well as the strategies they use to implement innovations. OCOGs experience heightened pressure to innovate from their external operational environment (i.e., sponsor expectations, IOC recommendations, consumer demands, athlete empowerment), their own organizational identity (i.e., culture, previous hosting image, desire to leave a lasting legacy), and internal individuals (i.e., pro-innovation leadership).

Despite these pressures, OCOGs must overcome various barriers, such as managing intangible resources like time and knowledge. Stakeholder complexity and desires to maintain tradition also proved to be barriers to radical innovation. Strategies OCOGs used to enhance their innovation capabilities included establishing relationships with previous Olympic hosts, forming external partnerships, and implementing formalized systems (i.e., an innovation department and

pilot testing). These findings contribute to the sport innovation literature and offer practical strategies to help guide OCOGs enhance their innovation capabilities.

Limitations and Avenues for Future Research

Although many diverse perspectives were accumulated and data saturation was met by interview 12, it is important to note that interviewees in this study do not fully represent their respective stakeholder groups. The empirical findings are also limited to cases in the North American (LAOCOG) and European (POCOG) contexts. Consequently, innovation drivers, barriers, and strategies may differ for OCOGs in other geographical locations, as innovation is a context-specific phenomenon and stakeholders may influence OCOGs differently. Examining other mega-and large-scale sporting events that also change hosting locations and are temporary in nature (e.g., FIFA World Cup, Superbowl, Rugby World Cup) would serve as interesting and valuable avenues of future research into sport innovation. Additionally, this study confirms that sport organizations, including mega-events, establish relationships for co-creating innovative solutions (Svensson & Hambrick, 2019). It has been regularly documented that external relationships can enhance organizations' innovation capacities by means of open innovation (cf. Chesbrough, 2003). Open innovation holds that innovating should not be purely an internal process and those seeking to innovate should establish external linkages to harness additional resources (Chesbrough, 2003). In this vein, our study found that the OCOGs undertook open innovation by co-creating value for themselves and their partners as it pertains to innovation. However, little is known about innovation in mega-sport event organizing committees from an open innovation lens. Identifying who exactly OCOGs establish external relationships with and how these relationships are managed was beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, future research should further explore the phenomenon of open innovation within mega-sport event

organizing committees to offer a more holistic understanding of open innovation and knowledge transfer in the context of mega-sport event organizing committees.

It is also important to note that the findings of this study do not aim to generalize beyond the context of OCOGs. However, elements of the study may be analytically generalizable to other sport organizations. Future research should not only explore the drivers, barriers, and strategies in other sport organizational contexts, but also examine the role of external relationships and innovation capacity within mega-sport event organizing committees.

Finally, this study explored two cases settings with organizing committees that are both in the pre-event stage. It would be advantageous for researchers to conduct a post-event analysis, as barriers and new strategies may emerge the closer POCOG and LAOCOG are to delivering the Games. In this vein, scholars should also consider exploring the innovation process throughout the entire lifecycle of OCOGs. There are discrepancies in how innovation scholars depict the innovation process (e.g., Mintzberg et al, 1976; Rogers, 2003; Seligman, 2006; Simon, 1998). Our findings reveal that mega-sport event organizing committees can offer a unique perspective on the innovation process because while OCOGs are not meant to last, their insights are expected to be passed on. Doing so will continue to enhance our understanding of the phenomenon that is innovation in sport.

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CHAPTER 4

STUDY THREE: INITIATE, ADOPT, IMPLEMENT, AND TRANSFER: EXPLORING THE INNOVATION PROCESSES WITHIN MEGA-SPORT EVENT ORGANIZING COMMITTEES

Introduction

It is important to understand innovation in sport given the industry's competitive and evolving nature (Ratten, 2016; Skinner et al., 2018). To date, scholars have explored commercial (Dos Santos, 2020; Mastromartino & Naraine, 2021), social (Svensson & Hambrick 2019; McCullough et al., 2016), and technological (Breuer et al., 2021; Dos Santos et al., 2019) innovations in sport. Other research focuses on sport organizations' process of innovation rather than the innovation itself (Damanpour, 2020; Svensson & Mahoney, 2020). Some scholars (e.g., Enhold et al., 2021; Hoeber et al., 2015; Winand et al., 2016) examine the ways in which innovation occurs, while others (e.g., Corthouts et al., 2020; Winand & Hoeber, 2017; Newell & Swan, 1995) have explored factors (e.g., stakeholder expectations, resource availability, and employee attributes) that impact innovation in varied sport settings. Despite this significant body of work, it is important to note that innovation is context-sensitive (Baregheh et al., 2009).

To that end, mega-sport event organizing committees exhibit unique characteristics that make them incomparable to other sport organizations. These characteristics include their global recognition, number of involved stakeholders, and relative hosting infrequency (Ritchie, 1984). Moreover, mega-sport events (e.g., Olympic Games and World Cup) have become increasingly expensive to stage, and mitigating negative outcomes is a challenging burden many hosts face

(Chappelet, 2014). Consequently, event owners such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the *Fédération Internationale de Football Association* (FIFA) have highlighted the importance of embracing innovation to make the staging of the Olympic Games and World Cup more effective and less costly (IOC, 2021a). For instance, in March 2021, the IOC unanimously approved the Olympic Agenda 2020+5, which highlighted innovation in six of the 15 recommendations. Specifically, the first recommendation aims to "identify innovation in sport to reflect, as appropriate, in the programme and delivery of the Olympic Games" (IOC, 2021a, p. 4). In the same vein, in 2021 FIFA released an action plan titled *The Vision 2020-2023: Making Football Truly Global* that outlines 11 goals the organization hopes to achieve by the end of 2023. Goal nine highlights FIFA's dedication to enhance the football experience by establishing an Innovation Program to test emerging innovations (FIFA, 2021). These illustrative examples make clear that innovation is at the forefront of planning and staging future editions of these events.

Despite the increasing pressures on mega-sport event organizing committees to be innovative, there is no clear understanding of the innovation process in this context. The purpose of this study was, therefore, to explore how mega-sport event organizing committees pursue innovation. Three research questions addressed this purpose: (1) How do mega-sport event organizing committees initiate innovative practices? (2) How do mega-sport event organizing committees decide to adopt an innovation? (3) How do mega-sport event organizing committees implement innovations? In answering these questions, this study responds to calls for more research on the innovation process in sport organizations (Hoeber et al., 2012). Findings also build on current innovation process models by presenting a new view that is unique to temporal or short-term sport event organizing committees. By making the complex innovation process

more transparent, this research can help sport event organizers make their innovation-related practices more effective.

Literature Review

Innovation

This paper uses Zaltman and colleagues' definition of *innovation* as "any idea, practice, or material artifact perceived as new by the relevant unit of adoption" (1973, p. 10). Depending on the purpose and scope of a study, a *unit of adoption* can be any individual, industry, market, or organization (Garcia & Calantone, 2002). Scholars have attempted to examine *why*, how, and in what ways organizations innovate (e.g., Oke, 2007) and the rate *at which* innovations are adopted (e.g., Al-Jabri & Sohail, 2012). They have also explored the challenges and barriers to being innovative (e.g., Chesbrough, 2010), and why some innovations fail (e.g., D'Este et al., 2016). Despite the growth of innovation scholarship and its application across many academic fields (e.g., economics, management, engineering, sociology, and psychology), innovation is a relatively recent phenomenon in the sport management literature (Ratten, 2018).

Sport Innovation

In sport, researchers have focused on examining types of innovations (Hoeber et al., 2015; Svensson & Hambrick, 2019). For instance, Hoeber and colleagues (2015) identified product, process, technical, administrative, radical, and incremental innovations in community sport organizations, finding that innovation was more common in new and contemporary sports (e.g., ultimate) but threatened more established ones (e.g., curling). Wemmer and colleagues (2016) identified innovations in various sport service (i.e., sport activities and competitive sport events) and non-sport service (training programs, online services, promotion, and equipment) programs in Belgium. Caza (2000) found that the method of implementation was important to

the success of innovations at the Canadian Boxing Association: successful innovations (i.e., provincial athlete ranking) were introduced gradually, giving members of the organization time to adjust and adapt; immediate adoption of a new practice (i.e., computer scoring) was more likely to lead to failure.

One of the earliest studies on factors affecting the innovation process among sport organizations was completed by Newell and Swan in 1995. Their findings illustrated the effects of organizational characteristics such as size, membership, financial resources, staff, and traditions. Hoeber and Hoeber (2012) looked at the roles of management (i.e., leadership commitment and pro-innovation characteristics), structure (i.e., organizational capacity and organizational design), and environment (i.e., involved and interested external parties). External partnerships have also been identified as a means to further enhance a sport organization's innovative capabilities. For instance, Franke and Shah (2003) found that community participants in various sports often collaborated on prototypes for new products. In a similar vein, sport entities devoted to development and peace establish relationships with external partners to co-create new ideas to help address social issues (Svensson & Hambrick, 2019).

Despite extant studies, there remains a paucity of research on the innovation process (Svensson & Hambrick, 2019). This is a significant omission within sport management literature: innovations can help solve known issues in sport (Ringuet-Riot et al., 2013), but innovation is nearly impossible to achieve without a well-defined understanding of the innovation process (Desouza et al., 2009).

Conceptual Framework

The Innovation Process

While innovation has been discussed as a single event (Wolfe, 1994), it is more

commonly considered to be a multi-step process (Damanpour & Schneider, 2006). Within the broader management literature, the word *process* refers to the order of events in an organization's existence that occur over time (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010; Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). Although scholars agree the process of innovation is comprised of sequential phases (Damanpour & Schneider, 2006; Rogers, 2003), there is much discrepancy across innovation models (Dobni, 2006; Meissner & Kotsemir, 2016). These models have evolved over time and often represent different generations of research on the topic (Meissner & Kotsemir, 2016; Taferner, 2017).

Evolution of the Innovation Process

Innovation process models span over six generations. An early approach known as the technology push model is linear and broadly postulates the abilities of new technologies on innovation to enhance productivity (Usher, 1955). It assumes outputs (i.e., products) are more important than the process itself. The market pull model, which emerged in the late 1960s, views innovation as a result of entities trying to satisfy consumer demands and expectations (Myers & Marquis, 1969). The third-generation model merged the technology push and market pull approaches. Mowery and Rosenberg (1979) argued the various stages of the innovation process may interact with each other. In response, Rothwell and Zegveld (1985) expanded this model to allow for a more interactive process as organizations began to work with external research and development (R&D) institutions. As the first to visualize the innovation process and incorporate interactions between science, technology, and markets, this model indicates that the innovation process may be more iterative or cyclical than linear. The fourth-generation model highlights the role of cooperation in innovation success, featuring feedback loops from actors to help provide solutions for emergent issues (Kline & Rosenberg, 1986). The networking, or fifth-generation,

model incorporates strategic relationships, recognizing the need not just for multiple actors but for joint ventures designed to enhance the speed and efficiency of innovative initiatives (Rothwell, 1994). Most recently, Chesbrough (2003) created the open innovation paradigm, which postulates that entities should leverage both internal and external resources (e.g., knowledge, technology, financial, human) to accelerate internal innovation and to expand external use of innovations.

The models' sources of innovation have evolved over time. For instance, earlier generations focused on internal sources for innovation-related inspiration; later models acknowledged the importance of external influences. The fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-generation models are useful for this particular study given the importance of external stakeholders when staging a mega-sport event (Parent, 2008).

Phases of the Innovation Process

The ability to distinguish and identify the different phases of the innovation process is critical (Desouza et al., 2009). Many parts of the process have been identified, including evaluation, initiation, implementation, routinization, awareness, selection, adoption, attitude formation, decision, and termination (Angle & Van de Van, 2000; Hage & Aiken, 1970; Klein & Sorra, 1996; Zaltman et al., 1973). These can be summarized more generally as initiation, adoption decision, and implementation (Damanpour & Schneider, 2006; Rogers, 2003). This study uses these three phases in order to be consistent with existing literature on the innovation process in sport organizations (e.g., Flanders et al., 2020; Hoeber & Hoeber, 2012).

Initiation (the first step of the innovation process) includes recognizing a perceived need for innovation, searching for solutions, becoming aware of existing innovations, identifying suitable innovations, and proposing some for adoption (Damanpour & Schneider, 2006; Rogers,

2003). In this case, innovations can be initiated from within an organization or from external sources (Chesbrough, 2003; Rogers, 2003). *Adoption decision* occurs when top organizational echelons (e.g., managers, committees, and boards) evaluate proposed innovations and consider their technical, financial, and strategic components (Meyer & Goes, 1988). When an innovation is accepted as an ideal solution, members of an organization obtain and allocate resources to facilitate this change (Damanpour & Schneider, 2006; Rogers, 2003). The last phase of the innovation process, *implementation,* includes testing and modifying an innovation and prepping an organization for its use (Meyer & Goes, 1988; Rogers, 2003). During this last phase, the innovation is used successfully (Rogers, 2003).

Despite the importance of these phases to the innovation process, research studies commonly examine only one phase due to the complex, multi-dimensional nature of the whole process (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014; Rogers, 2003). As such, incorporating all three stages of the innovation process offers a more holistic perspective. Doing so enhances our understanding of the effect of each phase on the others and ultimately on the success of the innovation. The context of mega-event organizing committees also provides a unique angle on this area of inquiry: temporal organizations, or organizations that exist for a limited duration, have been largely neglected (Marx, 2021).

Methods

Prior to this study, there has been little investigation into the broader innovation process of sport organizations. We designed a qualitative, embedded, multiple-case study to delve further into this topic.

Embedded Multiple-Case Study

Case studies are a particularly effective method of inquiry when seeking to answer "how" questions (i.e., how an organization undergoes the innovation process) about a social phenomenon that we cannot control (i.e., innovation) in a contemporary setting (Yin, 2017). An embedded case study includes three main elements: context, case, and units of analysis (Yin, 2017). In case study research, context can be geographical, historical, cultural, or topical (Flyvbjerg, 2011). Within a given context, a case can be bounded by time, space, and activity (Yin, 2017). The unit of analysis "defines what the case study is focusing on, such as an individual, a group, an organization, a city, and so forth" (Berg, 2001, p. 231).

The embedded multiple-case study design was selected due to (a) its ability to generate more robust findings (Herriott & Firestone, 1983), (b) its development of outcomes that contribute to our enhanced understanding of the phenomenon both individually and collectively (Putney, 2010), (c) its appropriateness when trying to describe the features and process of a phenomenon (Yin, 2017); and (d) the possibility of exploring cases from multiple viewpoints (Yin, 2017).

Research Contexts

This study explored the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup to enhance our understanding of the innovation process experienced by mega-sport event organizing committees. Scholars have often disagreed as to what exactly constitutes a "mega" sport event; yet many agree that the Olympic Games and FIFA World Cup are examples due to their size and significance in terms of tourism, exposure, and impact on the host communities (Getz, 1997). Another reason these two events were selected as research contexts for this study is the IOC and

FIFA have both pushed for more innovative hosting initiatives (FIFA, 2021; IOC, 2021a) and often influence the emergence of innovative practices in other sport events (Tjønndal, 2017).

Bounded Cases

Organizing Committees for the Olympic Games (OCOGs) and the FIFA World Cup Organizing Committee (FIFA OC) serve as the bounded cases explored in this study. OCOGs and FIFA OCs are limited by the activities of multiple stakeholders who are involved with planning and staging the mega-sport events. Mega-sport event organizing committees have unique characteristics, such as their size (in number of involved stakeholders), their global recognition, and their limited lifecycle (Parent & Smith-Swan, 2013).

Embedded Units of Analysis

Three mega-sport event organizing committees serve as the embedded units of analysis: 2024 Paris Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (POCOG), 2028 Los Angeles Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (LAOCOG), and the FIFA 2026 World Cup Organizing Committee (United 26). POCOG and LAOCOG are the embedded units of analysis within the bounded case of OCOGs. As opposed to traditional city selections for the Games, POCOG and LAOCOG were simultaneously awarded the rights to host their respective editions of the Summer Games on September 13, 2017, during the 131st IOC session in Lima, Peru. In the bounded case of FIFA OCs, United 26 is the joint bid of Canada, United States, and Mexico. United 26 is the first time in FIFA history that the World Cup will be hosted by three nations.

Together, POCOG, LAOCOG, and United 26 serve as ideal settings for this research study given their similar and differing characteristics. Most importantly, innovation is a fundamental part all three organizing committees' vision statements. For instance, POCOG's candidature file states, "In 2024, and in the years before, we dream of welcoming the IOC and

the entire Olympic family, and again, collaborating to stage the innovative and inspiring Games that will connect, inspire, and engage—throughout France, Europe, and the world" (p. 13). Similarly, LAOCOG's candidature files note that "[LAOCOG] will create a transformative Olympic Games utilizing our city's ideal climate, its unparalleled culture of creativity and innovation…" (2016, p. 1). United 26's bid also highlights their "deep commitment to innovation" as a main pillar of their legacy plans (United 26, 2018, p. 11). Additionally, during data collection for this study, all three organizing committees were in the pre-event phase, which generally consists of strategic planning and major decision-making (Bohlmann & Van Heerden, 2005). However, the contexts differ: one is a multi-sport mega-sport event (i.e., multiple sports in one location) and the other is a single sport mega-sport event (i.e., soccer). Furthermore, they differ based on their geographical locations. These distinct characteristics across the multi-setting study enhance the trustworthiness of the research by offering more comprehensive findings (Miles et al., 2014; Yin, 2017).

Data Sources and Collection

The use of multiple data sources leads to enhanced data credibility in case study research (Yin, 2017). As such, archival material, books, documents, and interviews were amassed during data collection. These materials helped identify key stakeholders to contact for interviews and generated interview questions. However, the documents became as a secondary source of data as they gave way to the voices and perspectives of the interviewees (Bowen, 2009). The various sources helped achieve data triangulation (Miles et al., 2014) and ensure a more balanced and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Patton, 1990).

Documents

The first step in the data collection process consisted of obtaining related archival materials and documents and resulted in the collection of approximately 1,290 pages of material for analysis. These data sources included but were not limited to publicly available documents pertaining to POCOG, LAOCOG, and United 26, such as official IOC and FIFA reports, bid books, candidature files, online news articles, press releases, and social media content. These types of data are unobtrusive and are considered stable sources of evidence (Yin, 2017), making them beneficial for this study. Moreover, it was advantageous to accumulate this information in order to identify potential key informants.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants (e.g., presidents, heads of innovation, venue managers). In total, 24 interviews were undertaken with representatives of important stakeholder groups, including POCOG (n = 7), LAOCOG (n = 7) United 26 (n = 4), United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) (n = 3), IOC (n = 1), and FIFA (n = 2). See Table 4.1 for additional information about the interviewees. The nature of semi-structured interviews facilitates a fluid conversation between the lead researcher and interviewees, offering respondents the chance to explore issues important to the innovation process in this case (Longhurst, 2003).

Table 4.1

Interviewee Descriptions

Stakeholder Group	Interviewees	Interviewee Code	Interview Duration (in minutes)
Organizing Committee	POCOG	1	61
		2	63
		3	59
		4	61
		5	58
		6	41
		7	49
	LAOCOG	8	32
		9	32
		10	36
		11	17
		12	84
		13	25
	United 26	14	48
		15	34
		16	49
		17	55
Member Association	USOPC	18	53
		19	51
		20	40
	Canada Soccer	21	50
Parent Organization	IOC	22	21
	FIFA	23	81
		24	87

Potential interviewees were first identified in the initial review of archival materials. Subsequently, these individuals were contacted via email with details about the project, including the interview guide and consent form. Once consent was obtained, interviews were scheduled and conducted over a password-secured online video conferencing software program (i.e., Zoom

or Microsoft Teams). Interviews lasted between 17 and 87 minutes, depending on the participant's availability and knowledge about the subject. Examples of interview question include: *Where do you believe the mega-sport event organizing committee obtains insight regarding innovations? In the mega-sport event organizing committee, can you tell me how decisions to adopt or not to adopt innovations are made? Can you explain to me what happens after an innovation is adopted? Can you explain to me what happens after the innovation has been implemented?* Each interviewee was assigned a numeric code in order to not compromise their identity. All interviews concluded with the lead researcher asking about other potential contributors to the research project (i.e., chain referral sampling) (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981).

Data saturation—when no new knowledge or codes emerged from its collection—was attained by the 20th interview; however, the remaining four interviews were conducted to ensure coverage of the settings (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed by a third-party online software application (i.e., Rev). To enhance the trustworthiness of this study, each transcript was member checked by informants for any errors with only minor grammatical adjustments made (Rubin & Rubin, 2011).

Data Analysis

Following guidelines suggested by Miles and colleagues (2014), data were coded both deductively (i.e., based on existing literature) and inductively (i.e., directly from the data), aided by qualitative computing software, ATLAS.ti. More specifically, initial first-cycle coding involved the use of a code start list based on the research questions, existing literature, and the conceptual framework (initiate, adopt, test). Data were assigned either one of the starting codes or a new code (e.g., problem, re-evaluate, knowledge) (Miles et al., 2014). Next, second-cycle coding involved reexamination for patterns and relationships that threaded the data together (e.g.,

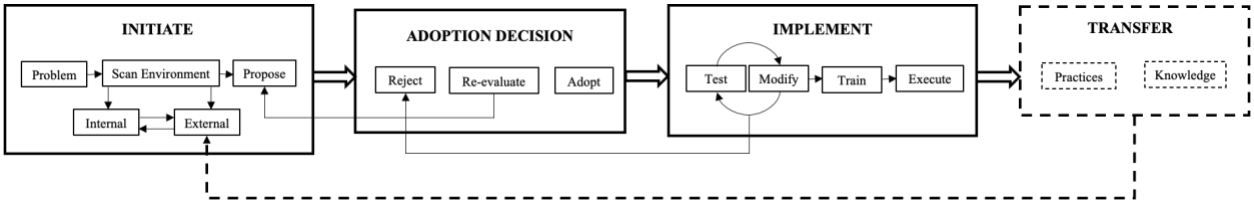
scanning the environment, transfer practices and knowledge) (Miles et al., 2014). Finally, selective coding occurred as the lead researcher returned to the data, codes, and categories to provide illustrative examples of the identified relationships or explanations.

Findings

Data analysis revealed four phases of innovation within mega-sport event organizing committees: initiation, adoption decision, implementation, and transfer. See Figure 4.1 for a model of the innovation process of mega-sport event organizing committees.

Figure 4.1

Innovation Process



The initiation phase involves identifying a current problem, scanning the environment, and proposing a solution. As depicted by the arrow from the initiation phase to the adoption decision phase, once an innovation is proposed, decisions are made to either reject, re-evaluate, or adopt the innovation. The feedback arrow between re-evaluate and propose shows that some innovations need to be further developed before being adopted. Implementation of an adopted innovation is then attempted. During the implementation phase, the innovation is tested and modified before staff is trained, and the new element is put into practice. However, some innovations may later be rejected for a number of reasons, for example, lack of time. In this context, mega-sport event organizing committees transfer their innovative practices and the knowledge (i.e., tacit) they obtained from their experiences to future hosts. The transfer of knowledge and practices can occur during the event and continue even after the OCOG ceases to

exist. The dashed line in Figure 4.1 represents the notion that an organizing committee can continue to influence the innovation process even after their disbandment.

Initiation

In this study, innovation in mega-sport event organizing committees begins with event organizers looking for a solution to a problem. Thus, innovating "is not just doing something to do it to be cool but doing something new to actually provide a needed solution" (Interviewee 12). A problem can be brought forth by any key stakeholder group (e.g., organizing committee, member associations, parent organization). For instance, "a problem can either come from FIFA when we really want to solve a problem for the next World Cup or for football in general. Or the problem comes from one of our member associations" (Interviewee 23). However, given that years pass between hosting mega-sport events, event organizers are faced with the challenge of identifying problems that need innovative solutions "because problems appear and disappear as society is always changing, so some problems we thought were once important are suddenly no longer a problem" (Interviewee 23). Additionally, although the bid books of the mega-sport event organizing committees examined in this study highlighted the importance of innovation, problems continue to arise once the Games were awarded because "the bid book is usually outdated so [event organizers] really do not always deliver what was in the bid that was designed six years ago because things have changed since then" (Interviewee 9). Similarly for United 26, "a lot of things have evolved since the bid book because it's such a long, eight-year process, and it is not like we can look into a crystal ball and see where things are going" (Interviewee 21). Once a current problem has been identified, event organizers scan the environment for inspiration and possible solutions.

When scanning their environment, mega-sport event organizing committees look both inside and outside of their organization. Internal, innovation-specific working groups exist in each of the units under investigation. For instance, in January 2020, POCOG developed an innovation department to "help kickstart ideation and brainstorming sessions by following market trends and seeing what hot topics appear on social media or in literature" (Interviewee 3). Similarly, LAOCOG has an innovation department housed in their "research and insights team that looks at data to determine what innovations can be used" (Interviewee 12). United 26 relies more heavily on the FIFA Innovation Programme, a solution-driven platform vehicle for innovative products (FIFA, 2022a). Mega-sport event organizing committees also lean on "co-creating with existing partners to help make [them] smarter and better deliver innovations along the way" (Interviewee 9). For instance, The Olympic Partners (TOP) Programme consists of prominent companies (e.g., Coca-Cola, Samsung, Toyota, Visa) that have exclusive marketing rights within the Olympic Movement and help foster innovation with OCOGs (IOC, 2021b). This co-creation is best described by Interviewee 1:

> The Olympic Movement is associated with some of the biggest brands in the world, some of the most innovative companies in the world, and they are all very innovative. So, a lot of the time when we will seek for an innovation, we first look to our TOP sponsors to see if they are capable of helping us instead of just slapping their logo here and there.

In addition to pairing with existing partners, mega-sport event organizing committees strive to "co-create with new partners that can help [them] on [their] innovation journey" (Interviewee 13). These external sources of innovation "can range from local tech start-ups to Fortune 500 companies" (Interviewee 12). Event organizers also look to universities "such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the U.S., Victoria University in Australia, and Technical University in Munich to see if they can solve problems from a scientific point of view" (Interviewee 23). Observations of other events are also key sources of inspiration. For example,

POCOG and LAOCOG looked to colleagues in Tokyo to see whether any innovations from that edition of the Games could be used in Paris or Los Angeles (Interviewee 2). Event organizers "review and document what they felt was innovative or a problem they noticed" (Interviewee 1). While previous editions of the Games serve as beneficial examples for OCOGs, "the most recently held edition of the Games is most important as distant ones become less relevant from an innovation standpoint" (Interviewee 1). For United 2026, inspiration for innovation can come from other North American sport events, such as "the Super Bowl, to see what they are going to be rolling out the next couple of years" (Interviewee 21).

Important to this context is that internal and external sources of innovation are not mutually exclusive. For instance, POCOG's innovation group has internal individuals called "explorers" who are responsible for scanning their external environment "with the aim of matchmaking between needs that have surfaced and who can help solve them" (Shehabi, 2020, p. 1). To be effective, explorers "went through an intensive three-month course on innovation" (Interviewee 3). Mega-sport event organizing committees also send out requests for proposals (RFPs) where "a brief is sent to companies with a problem that they are trying to solve" (Interviewee 18). In other instances, external entities reach out to the mega-sport event organizing committees. For example, Interviewee 12 stated that they "often receive hundreds of emails and numerous calls from companies on a weekly basis saying they can offer something new and [they will] only take that call if it's a possible solution to a problem that needs solved."

Whether an innovation is inspired by the internal or external environment, it often needs to be proposed to the organization in the form of a "a presentation and meetings between top managers and those who think they have a solution" (Interviewee 1). Sometimes there are numerous companies that propose an innovation. In this case, event organizers "must ensure that

all companies who are proposing an innovation have the exact same information so there is no bias in this process" (Interviewee 7). Once an innovation is proposed, a decision must be made regarding its adoption.

Adoption Decision

The adoption decision phase requires deliberation. However, the ultimate decision about whether to adopt an innovation does not get made by a large committee "because nothing would ever get done" (Interviewee 18). Moreover, the decision is dependent on the type of innovation being proposed. For instance, "innovations pertaining to technology will likely be decided upon by our tech team, whereas any sustainability or environmental-related innovations will be likely determined by the sustainability team" (Interviewee 8). Thus, deciding to adopt an innovation is best described as being completed "one case at a time" (Interviewee 5). Sometimes, organizing committees "need approval from multiple stakeholders, depending on the nature of the innovation" (Interviewee 5). For OCOGs in particular, an innovation that may "completely change the organizational structure or have significant change requires input from the IOC, whereas smaller innovations with maybe less impact can be decided by the organizing committee" (Interviewee 12). United 2026, however, "cannot do anything without FIFA's blessing" (Interviewee 16). FIFA is heavily involved in the decision to adopt an innovation because "it is their brand, and it is their property being planned or organized. So, quite frankly, majority of the time, FIFA is going to want to be involved in the approval phase" (Interviewee 17). FIFA also introduced FIFA Forward 1.0 in to enhance their oversight and control in FIFA tournaments to ensure they are effectively managed and executed (FIFA, 2022b).

Findings also reveal that mega-sport event organizing committees generally decide what to do with a proposed innovation in one of three ways: reject, re-evaluate, or adopt. An

innovation is often rejected if it is "not economically, environmentally, or socially friendly" (Interviewee 24). Innovations may also "sometimes get rejected because of fear of failure, in the sense that we do not want to put our time, energy, and money into something that then simply does not work" (Interviewee 3). Even more critical to limited-lifespan organizations like mega-sport event organizing committees is the impact of time. In this case, some innovations are rejected because "[they] are impossible from a time perspective, regardless of if it is the best idea" (Interviewee 4).

Some innovations need to be re-evaluated in order to obtain more information about the proposition. After feedback is reviewed and additional research done, the innovation can be re-proposed. The arrow in Figure 4.1 from re-evaluation to propose represents this feedback loop. This process of re-evaluating a proposed innovation is best described by Interviewee 24:

> Sometimes we see something that is a good idea, and it is something that is usable and something we may need. However, we may not have enough information, so we tell them to go test it somewhere and bring us back the data to see if it is a viable strategy.

The decision to implement proposed innovations is made in a variety of ways. POCOG uses a point system wherein members of POCOG "give proposed innovations a score based on different things, so we are depending on the score to justify [their] reasoning for innovation adoption" (Interviewee 7). LAOCOG uses a more informal technique of "having smaller groups that come to a consensus if an innovation should be adopted or not" (Interviewee 18). In this case, the decision-makers vary depending on the type of innovation being deliberated. For example, an innovation pertaining to the LAOCOG brand will be decided on by the marketing team (Interviewee 18). Once adopted, mega-sport event organizing committees begin to test and modify the innovation.

Implementation

For mega-sport event organizing committees, implementation begins with testing and modification. As Interviewee 1 stated, “once an innovation gets the green light, [mega-sport event organizers] are dedicated to working on making it actually happen by piloting and testing it as much as possible.” For OCOGs, it is imperative to first “test innovations on a smaller scale event, then gradually see how it works on a larger or more significant scale, such as trying it at a local soccer club and then maybe at the French Open” (Interviewee 3). The Youth Olympic Games have also been described as “a breeding ground for digital experimentation” (IOC, 2022, p. 4). For instance, Lillehammer 2016 introduced the use of virtual reality as an educational interactive application within the Olympic Movement (IOC, 2022). Similarly, an innovation is “usually tested on the Under 17s and then Under 20s before it gets used at the World Cup” (Interviewee 17). For example, when FIFA hoped to use microchipped soccer balls that can help officials gauge offsides at the 2006 World Cup in Germany, the balls were first tried at the Under 17 world soccer championships in Peru (McGrath, 2010).

When testing innovations, “the most important thing is the quicker you test, the sooner you know if you are on the right track or not” (Interviewee 3). Therefore, mega-sport event organizing committees attempt “to get an innovation in users’ hands as quickly as possible to get feedback” (Interviewee 12). It follows that “getting aggregated feedback from as many stakeholder groups as possible” (Interviewee 19) is imperative as it “helps inform the decision that gets made” (Interviewee 18). Feedback is critical and “comes from as many different perspectives as possible, like the consumers, players, and coaches, because if you only have one perspective you could miss maybe another aspect of the innovation.” However, it “normally takes at least one to two years to test an innovation and get feedback from it and see how it can

be made better" (Interviewee 23). Thus, time creates a greater challenge for temporary organizations:

> Our testing of innovations has a lifespan where is it is the greatest opportunity on one side, but on the other side it is our greatest challenge in that we only have a certain amount of time. This means we have to get to execution because as some point the clock expires, so all of these great ideas are just that. (Interviewee 11)

Consequently, mega-sport event organizing committees "sometimes identify an innovation that is a great opportunity but just simply do not have enough time to do it" (Interviewee 5), resulting in rejection. This is represented in Figure 4.1 by an arrow between testing and modifying to rejection, illustrating that an innovation may have to later be rejected despite it originally having been adopted. LAOCOG is a special case as it was awarded the 2028 Summer Games 11 years in advance as opposed to the more typical seven-year window. This additional time to plan for the Games is "a major asset when innovating because time is so valuable to be able to properly pilot innovations; it is the one thing that literally cannot be bought" (Interviewee 3).

Findings also suggested that innovation can be executed at any point in a mega-sport event's lifespan (i.e., pre-, during, post-event). For example, commercial innovation can be executed earlier in the pre-event stage so mega-sport event organizers can "get people's attention and show them who we are and what they can expect from us" (Interviewee 12). In contrast, technological innovations are often delayed to "take advantage of newer technological developments" (Interviewee 8). Therefore, the innovation process presented in this study can essentially transpire at any time throughout a mega-sport event's lifespan. Regardless of when an innovative initiative is executed, "it is very important to train and educate people about an innovation" that is going to be executed (Interviewee 4). When training staff to execute innovations, "there is usually a big simulation prior to the event, about 100 days prior, to help

prepare" (Interviewee 4). After preparations are made, the innovation is successfully put into practice.

Transfer

The transfer of innovation-related practices and knowledge can be shared before, during, and after the mega-sport event. In this case, lead managers from different departments of the next host organizing committee "will observe the edition of the event that is close to taking place or already occurring" (Interviewee 8). However, in contrast to other sport events with longer or reoccurring formats (e.g., regular season sport events), mega-sport event organizing committees "go out of business the second the events are over" (Interviewee 18). The swift disbandment of mega-sport event organizing committees is described as "the circus being kicked out of town overnight" (Interviewee 10). Yet, like many other organizations, mega-sport event organizing committees strive to ensure that they "turn [their] innovative initiatives into something permanent for the future" (Interviewee 24). To "transmit everything [they] learned and worked on to the next hosts" (Interviewee 6) who are seeking innovative solutions, mega-sport event organizing committees not only share the innovative initiatives they implemented (i.e., practices) but also insight into how they accomplished them (i.e., knowledge). This exchange process is described as "a fluid transition of information that is shared between different past and future organizing committees" (Interviewee 3). It is achieved by event organizers putting "structures in place that will allow people to share and benefit from what has been done, the lessons learned, mistakes made, and what was successful" (Interviewee 8). Thus, despite the disbandment of host committees, individuals that were part of the innovation process remain involved by offering feedback to the next hosts. This feedback is represented in Figure 4.1 by the arrow that goes

from the transfer phase back to the initiation phase. The transfer phase and its feedback arrow are also dotted to represent the fact that the organizing committees are dissolved at this time.

It is important to note that transferring innovative practices and knowledge is not always successful. Subsequent hosts may have significantly different resources. Context-specific challenges related to the transferring phase was described by Interviewee 5:

> It is hard to compare hosting locations because at the end of the day you may have to do an innovation differently depending on what specific needs the host location must address. For example, Paris has one of the largest subway and public transportations networks in the world, unlike L.A., where transportation is a major problem, so we will not be implementing too much innovation regarding transportation and therefore we are not always sure how useful our innovations will be to L.A.

This is further supported by Interviewee 20, who stated that "while [United 2026] hope to learn from Qatar, money is not a problem for them like it is for us, so we have to be more selective when deciding what innovations we want to push for compared to them." One way to overcome this issue is to encourage organizing committees to examine previous hosts with similar circumstances. For example, POCOG found that "when gaining insight from Tokyo, it was evident that innovation for them was very technological, but that was not what [POCOG] were focusing on" (Interviewee 6). Therefore, POCOG "turned to the London Organizing Committee for more advice, as their initiatives were closer to Paris because they refurbished a lot of London, and [POCOG] is looking for more urban innovations as well" (Interviewee 7). Selectivity is important when seeking to mimic what previous hosts have done, especially with regard to innovation-related knowledge. Therefore, when scanning the external environment for innovation inspiration, mega-sport event organizing committees should seek insight from previous hosts whose situation is most similar to theirs.

Discussion

This exploration of mega-sport event organizing committees' innovation process found similarities and differences between OCOGs and FIFA OCs throughout their initiation, adoption-decision, implementation, and transfer phases.

During the initiation phase, all of the mega-sport event organizing committees relied on strategic external relationships to enhance their innovation capabilities, illustrating that these organizations undergo open innovation (cf. Chesbrough, 2003). Open innovation postulates that relying solely on internal resources restricts organizations' innovation capabilities; thus, organizations should establish strategic relationships with external stakeholders to harness innovation-related knowledge and technology (Chesbrough, 2003). The innovation process of mega-sport event organizing committees embodies key elements of more recent, 5th and 6th generation innovation process models. This finding builds on existing evidence that external stakeholders play a key role in sport organizations' innovation, as suggested by Svensson and Hambrick (2019).

Despite their similarities, OCOGs and FIFA OCs differ when it comes to decision-making about innovation adoption. For instance, OCOG members decide whether to accept or reject incremental innovations or minor changes, whereas radical innovations that lead to fundamental departures from existing practices require IOC approval. Conversely, FIFA is involved in all innovation decision-making, regardless of impact or degree of change. FIFA's more dominant role in decision-making may be attributed to the governing body having recently restructured its hosting process to take more control in an effort to host the World Cup more efficiently (FIFA, 2022b). However, in doing so, awaiting FIFA's adoption-decision can slow down the innovation process. Priemus and colleagues (2008) suggested that organizations need

to take a more democratic approach (i.e., collaborative decision-making) when working on mega-projects. Democratic decision-making is said to enhance employee responsiveness and foster innovativeness (Prakash & Gupta, 2008). Thus, these results should be taken into account when considering adoption decision-making in sport organizations.

Although OCOGs and FIFA OCs differ in their innovation adoption decision-making, their implementation phases are similar. Notably, in both cases, innovations are trialed and modified. Trialing innovations is a time-consuming process (Rogers, 2003). Yet, the longer it takes to modify an innovation to meet an organization's needs, the more likely new technologies and social developments will occur in the interim, making the innovation no longer necessary (Bruijn & Leijten, 2008). This creates a conundrum for mega-sport event organizing committees, as they have a limited timeframe to conduct trials and ensure innovations will remain relevant. While previous research has focused on external relationships (Svensson & Hambrick, 2019), managerial attitudes (Delshab et al., 2022), and organizational culture, leadership, and infrastructure (Svensson & Mahoney, 2020) as factors that impact innovation in other sport organizations, our findings suggest that time should also be considered.

This study illuminates the importance of sharing innovation-related knowledge with future hosts, resulting in the fourth phase of the innovation process. Scholars (e.g., Nieves et al., 2014) have noted that knowledge transfer is an essential part of the innovation process, especially in hospitality and tourism sectors. Yet, our findings do not align with Weidenfeld and colleagues (2010), who argued that spatially "distant similar attractions are more likely to share knowledge than neighboring similar attractions" due to competing for consumers (p. 622). Instead, mega-sport event organizing committees strongly benefit from nearby local sport events and organizations for innovation-related knowledge. This is because mega-sport events in other

geographical locations may have very different resource capabilities, government and local support, and hosting expectations. Event organizers need to be aware that the most recent host of a mega-sport event may not provide applicable innovation-related insights; rather, events with more similar attributes may be more useful sources of innovation-related knowledge. By suggesting that implementation is not necessarily the end-point for understanding innovation in organizational contexts, as suggested by many of the existing innovation process models (Damanpour & Schneider, 2006; Rogers, 2003), this study highlights an additional element critical to the innovation of mega-sport event organizing committees.

Furthermore, the innovation-related knowledge transfer between current and future hosts can be described as tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is learned through collaborative experiences, such as observations or discussions (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Findings did not reveal there to be any explicit knowledge whereby information was obtained from existing documents or databases. Explicit knowledge is arguably easier to transfer from one entity to another (Becerra et al., 2008). Thus, future mega-sport event organizing committees need more systematic knowledge management.

Implications

This study found that three different mega-sport event organizing committees (i.e., POCOG, LAOCOG, United 26) strive to transfer their innovation-related practices and knowledge to future hosts after the conclusion of their event. As a result, this study makes several contributions to the innovation and sport management literature. First, we illustrated how mega-sport event organizing committees use open innovation, leveraging both their internal and external environments. We also showed that decision-making differs between OCOGs and FIFA OCs, but time is a unique factor that significantly impacts the innovation process of both mega-

sport event organizing committees. Finally, and arguably most importantly, this research expands the understanding and conceptualization of the innovation process by including “transfer” as a final important component of the innovation process and, specifically, noting the limitations of transferring innovation-related knowledge from one mega-sport event organizing committee to another. The innovation process literature has also yet to consider the actions of stakeholders after an organization is disbanded. Our study reveals that the innovation process can be ongoing for certain stakeholders, even within temporary organizational contexts.

Most innovation-related sport management studies have focused on the types of innovations pursued by sport organizations (Hoeber et al., 2015). This study expands our understanding by further elaborating on the innovation process (Svensson & Hambrick, 2019). In doing so we also enhance our understanding of knowledge transfer in sport management literature. The active process of transferring knowledge between sport entities has been purported to be more complex among sport event stakeholders due to their transient work force (Schenk et al., 2015). Our study found that a feedback loop facilitates innovative knowledge transfer between previous and future sport event hosts.

Sport event organizers wanting to innovate can benefit from using our model of the innovation process as a guideline. We also suggest that any external actors planning to propose innovative initiatives should consider incremental rather than radical innovations due to time being a limiting factor for mega-sport event organizing committees. Time was a primary reason some adopted innovations could not be fully implemented. Thus, parent organizations (e.g., IOC, FIFA) should consider selecting hosts earlier to give them more time to test and modify innovations that can make their events less costly and more efficient. Furthermore, our findings suggest that the transferring of innovation-related knowledge and practices from the immediately

previous host may be not helpful depending on the needs, resources, and goals of future hosts. For instance, POCOG has sought more insight from the 2012 London Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games than the more recent 2020 Tokyo Organizing Committee for the Olympic games because, like London, Paris seeks to increase fan engagement and maintain tradition, while Tokyo heavily encouraged technological innovation. Similarly, since the 2022 Qatar FIFA OC was able to spend a significant amount of money on new infrastructure projects, United 26 struggles to gain helpful insight there regarding leveraging existing infrastructure to reduce hosting costs. Thus, to benefit from the transferability phase of the innovation process, sport event organizers should look more to previous hosts whose available resources and strategies were similar to their own.

Conclusion

This study extends our understanding of innovation in transient sport organizations a conceptual model of the innovation process by mega-sport event organizing committees. In doing so, this study also highlights practical implications for sport event organizers seeking to enhance their innovation capabilities. Yet, as with all research, there are limitations of this study to address.

Limitations and Future Research

The findings of this study do not aim to generalize beyond the context of mega-sport event organizing committees. However, elements of the study may be analytically generalizable to other sport organizations. The units of analysis in this study were all in the pre-event phase of their hosting process at the time of data collection. Thus, future research should consider a post-event analysis to further enhance our understanding of the innovation process within mega-sport event organizing committees. A significant contribution of our study was the addition of the

transferring phase to the innovation process. Future research should consider further exploring the management of innovation-related knowledge transfer between previous and future mega-sport event organizing committees, as this was beyond the scope of this study. This insight would be advantageous given the importance knowledge transfer has on the success of sport organizations (Ratten, 2016) and the innovation process (Weidenfeld et al., 2010).

Additionally, co-creation for innovation purposes occurs when an organization collaborates with external stakeholders to enhance their innovative capabilities and create joint value for participating parties (Lee et al., 2012). Mega-sport event organizing committees and various external entities (e.g., tech start-ups, corporate 500s, local businesses) begin such collaborations during the first phase of the innovation process. Further research on these relationships should be conducted to provide empirical insight into how they are formed and managed. Future research should also explore the innovation-related knowledge management between past and future mega-sport event organizers. Moreover, additional research should consider exploring the process involved with specific types of innovations (e.g., commercial, social, technological, environmental). Doing so can provide more in-depth understanding of the innovation processes within the mega-sport event context. Findings also made it apparent that mega-sport event organizing committees often conduct trials of their adopted innovations at youth international sport events; thus, these events would be advantageous contexts in which to explore the phenomenon that is innovation.

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CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This dissertation explored innovation in mega-sport event organizing committees. To achieve the aim of this dissertation, three primary research questions were addressed: (1) In what ways are mega-sport event organizing committees innovating? (2) Why are mega-sport event organizing committees innovating? And (3) How do mega-sport event organizing committees undergo the innovation process? By addressing these research questions this dissertation expanded our understanding of innovation in the mega-sport event context.

This dissertation was completed in a manuscript-style format. Specifically, the completion of three articles presented in the previous chapters satisfied the main purpose of this dissertations. The first study (i.e., Chapter 2) addressed the first research question by exploring the multidimensional types of innovations POCOG, LAOCOG, and United 26. The second study (i.e., Chapter 3) focused on the second research question by exploring the factors that drove two OCOGs (i.e., POCOG and LAOCOG) to be innovative, barriers that hindered their abilities to do so, and strategies they implemented to overcome such barriers. Finally, the third research question of this dissertation was explored in the third study (i.e., Chapter 4) by exploring how mega-sport event organizing committees undergo the innovation process.

This chapter concludes this dissertation by overviewing the findings and discussing the theoretical and practical implications of this research project. Limitations and suggestions for future research are also provided.

Innovative Practices

Despite the increasing amount of scholarly work on innovation in sport, little is known about innovation in the mega-sport event context. When exploring innovation in an under-studied area, it is imperative to first understand the types of innovations being implemented (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010). Thus, the first study of this dissertation, *Exploring the Multidimensional Innovative practices of Mega-Sport Event Organizing Committees: An Embedded Multiple-Case Study Approach,* focused on exploring innovations pursued by three mega-sport event organizing committees. Corthouts et al's (2021) 3D-model of innovation framed this study.

Types of Innovations

Data analysis revealed that POCOG, LAOCOG, and United 26 were implementing six different multidimensional types of innovations: fan engagement technical products, commercial technical products, environmental administrative processes, environmental technical products, social administrative process, and organizational administrative processes (see Table 2.2). Specifically, this study found that fan engagement technical product innovations (i.e., non-transactional participatory and viewership services) was central approach by all three of the mega-sport event organizing committees, as represented by the Club Paris, Climate Coach, and the Carbon Footprint Calculator examples. These findings support the recent calls that have been made by scholars (e.g., Annamalai et al., 2021; Yoshida, 2017) for more research on sport event consumers' non-transactional behaviors and the use of modern media (e.g., social media, virtual reality, cellphone applications). Doing so can help sport event organizers better understand how modern media can be employed in even more innovative ways.

Findings of this study also go against existing literature that suggests innovation in organizational settings is hindered by formalization (e.g., Dedahanov et al., 2017; Eva et al., 2017; Oltra, 2018) as recent policies implemented by the IOC and FIFA seemed to have encouraged the mega-sport event organizing committees to be innovative. Specifically, data analysis suggests that both technical and administrative forms of environmental and social innovations are being pursued by the mega-sport event organizing committees under investigation. We argue that the mega-sport event organizing committees are implementing multiple forms of environmental and social innovations due to recent policies implemented by mega-sport event owners (i.e., IOC and FIFA). For instance, the IOC's *Agenda 2020+5* states that OCOGs and the Olympic Games "have a duty to remain at the forefront of sustainability by maximizing positive social, environmental, and economic impacts for the host communities" (2021, p. 5). Similarly, "to minimize the environmental impact of sporting events, to promote safe sport and to maximise the positive influence of football on people and communities around the world" is a key goal of FIFA's strategic decade-long roadmap titled *The Vision: 2020-2023* (2021, p. 15). Therefore, we argue that sport event organizers could use new policies as sources of inspiration to innovate as opposed to be deterred by them. In doing so, sport event organizers could also meet stakeholder expectations, a major determinant of an event's success (Chutiphongdech & Kampitak, 2021).

Moreover, Hoeber et al (2015) found that community sport organizations (CSOs) were more likely to implement process and administrative innovations, whereas this study found that mega-sport event organizing committees pursued more product and technical innovative practices. In short, we contribute this finding to mega-sport event organizing committees striving to leave lasting legacies. Legacy is a phenomenon that has been commonly associated with

mega-sport events (Thomson et al., 2019). However, more recent studied purport that smaller sport events are also looking to implement lasting legacies as well (Wäsche, 2020). Thus, our findings suggest sport events of all size and scope should look to implement more product (i.e., goods and services) and technical-related innovations when wanting to leave lasting legacies. For example, sport event organizers could consider transferring an already existing cellphone application to the sport event realm by providing athletes, spectators, and coaches with immediate up-to-date information regarding the events (e.g., time, location, weather delays). This initiative could be applied to a variety of sport events ranging from a youth soccer tournament to a collegiate basketball tournament. The disparity between the types of innovations pursued by CSOs and mega-sport event organizing committee further reflects the importance of understanding innovation as an inherently contextual phenomena.

Comparing Innovations

Findings of study one also illuminated innovation-related similarities and differences between OCOGs and FIFA OCs. For instance, all three mega-sport event organizing committees revealed waiting to pursue many innovative practices allowing for the further development of technology. These delays appeared to be a strategy for the mega-sport event organizing committees, but this may be more of a problem than a solution as technology will never stop developing. This is particularly problematic for temporary sport organization as successful innovation is a process that occurs overtime with innovations often needing to be tested and modified (Damanpour & Schneider, 2006; Rogers, 2003). Therefore, we suggest that sport event organizers need to identify technological innovations earlier in their pre-event stage to ensure they have ample time to test and modify them. In doing so, mega-sport event organizers may be

able to implement more technological-related innovations and therefore increase their innovation capabilities.

Albeit POCOG, LAOCOG, and United 26 were lacking technological innovations, the innovative practices that they were pursuing at the time of this study were all incremental. Incremental innovation "is an innovation with a low degree of novelty, as well as less risk and cost than radical innovation" (Souto, 2015, p. 144). Radical innovation, on the other hand, is when an innovation has "a high degree of novelty, which breaks with what existed previously and is the result of non-obvious paths or ideas" (Souto, 2015, p. 144). This finding aligns with those of Hoeber and colleagues (2015) who found that non-profit community sport organizations were also implementing more incremental innovations than radical ones.

Despite their similarities, a major difference between OCOGs (i.e., POCOG and LAOCOG) and FIFA OC (i.e., United 26) that emerged from data analysis was the number of innovations implemented by the organizations, that is to say, FIFA OCs appeared to be implementing less innovative practices when compared to OCOGs. This finding, at least in part, is contributed to the more traditional nature of soccer. The Olympic Games have been described by scholars as contemporary due to "the incessant pressures of commercialization and mediatization, and also the incessant development and applications of performance-enhancing medical and material technologies" (Roche, 2006, p. 30) associated with the Games. Conversely, soccer matches have been regularly identified as more traditional sport events (Green & Chalip, 1998). With this in mind, our study supports other research that has found that traditional sports are less likely to innovate (Hoeber et al., 2015; Winand et al., 2013). Therefore, moving forward it is imperative for scholars and practitioners alike to be mindful that not all mega-sport event organizing committees are innovative to the same extent.

Implications

This study enhanced our knowledge of innovation in mega-sport event organizing committees by exploring the multidimensional types of innovative practices being pursued by POCOG, LAOCOG, and United 26. Moreover, the comparison of innovations between OCOGS and a FIFA OC further developed our understanding of how innovation in specific mega-sport event contexts can influence the implementation of new practices and factors that may impact them. Notably, this study considered multiple dimensions (i.e., form, nature, and goal) when identifying innovations compared to much of the previous research that has only explored one innovation dimension (i.e., form, nature, goals) (e.g., Hoeber et al., 2015) or one attribute (i.e., product, process, technical, administrative, social, or commercial) (e.g., Tjønndal, 2017) when identifying innovations sport organizations. Thus, study one of this dissertation revealed the multidimensional nature of innovative practices by mega-sport event organizing committees. Future research should not limit innovations to one attribute. Additionally, this study also further expanded Corthouts et al's (2021) 3D-model of innovation by considering and identifying more than social and commercial goal-related innovations. In doing so, this study expands the use of the 3D-model of innovation and further illustrated how it can be employed to identify multidimensional innovations in varying sport organizational settings.

Findings from this study can also help mega-sport event organizers better understand and explain the types of innovations they may be looking to implement. Identifying the innovative practices being pursued by mega-sport event organizing committees can also serve as a source of inspiration for other sport events who are looking to innovate. In this same vein, mega-sport event hosts can also use these findings to encourage more innovation in this realm where is appears to be currently lacking. For instance, the next host awarded the rights to stage an edition

of the Games or FIFA World Cup could use information from this study to encourage earlier testing and modifications of technological innovations so they can be implemented in time for their event. Moreover, data analysis suggests that practitioners should look to new policies for innovative ideas. Doing so could shed light on different ways mega-sport event organizing committees could be innovating and enhance their hosting capabilities by means of meeting stakeholder expectations.

Pressures to Innovate

Following the examination of the multidimensional innovative practices being pursued by mega-sport event organizing committees, a dive into understanding why such sport event organizers are innovating was completed. This second study of this dissertation, *Innovation Drivers, Barriers, and Strategies of Organizing Committees for the Olympic Games: An Embedded Single-Case Study Approach,* explored the drivers, barriers, and management strategies of innovating using Damanpour's (2020) conceptualization of organizational innovation as a guiding framework.

Drivers

Data analysis suggested that varying environmental (i.e., sponsor expectations, IOC recommendations, consumer demands, and athlete empowerment), organizational (i.e., culture, previous hosting image, and legacy), and internal (i.e., pro-innovation leadership) drivers caused the two OCOGs under investigation (i.e., POCOG and LAOCOG) to be innovative. The presence of pressures to innovate from all three levels of organizational innovation (i.e., environmental, organizational, and individual) is consistent with other research that has also identified determinants of innovation in sport organization settings (e.g., Corthouts et al., 2020;

Hoeber & Hoeber, 2012; Winand et al., 2013). However, unique to this study was the emergence of competing innovation-related pressures, an emergent barrier identified in this study.

Barriers

When organizations face pressure from various stakeholders that are contradictory, competing institutional logics occurs (Pache & Santos, 2013). Institutional logics are "the set of material practices and symbolic constructs" that ultimately shape the behavior and actions of social actors, as described by Friedland and Alfred (1991, p. 248). In this vein, findings from study two suggested that the OCOGs felt pressures to innovate from external, internal, and individual stakeholders. Yet some stakeholders were also risk averse when it came to innovating. This finding is congruent with the first study of this dissertation that also highlighted the presence of risk aversion among key mega-sport event stakeholders regarding innovation. This further illustrated the need for mega-sport event organizers to identify innovation-related salient stakeholders. Once identified, salient stakeholders could serve as change agents by encouraging other stakeholders to reduce their risk aversion, as suggested by existing literature (e.g., Jaakkola et al., 2018; Walling & Fuglsang, 2017).

Strategies

POCOG and LAOCOG reported strategies used to overcome innovation-related barriers such as establishing relationships and implementing more formalized systems. Specifically, findings revealed that the OCOGs established strategic partnerships with various entities ranging from local start-ups to Fortune 500 companies in order to enhance their innovative capabilities. When innovating, the process of strategically establishing external linkages to harness additional resources (i.e., knowledge) is referred to as open innovation (cf. Chesbrough, 2003). Thus, it is logical to assume that the OCOGs undertook open innovation. Little is known about innovation

in mega-sport event organizing committees from an open innovation lens. As it was beyond the scope of this study, future research should consider exploring who exactly OCOGs establish these relationships with and how they are managed.

Implications

To date, no research that we are aware of has examined the pressures mega-sport event organizing committees face to be innovative. This study helped fill this gap by exploring the pressures that drove the OCOGs to innovate, the barriers that may prevent them from doing so, and strategies they implemented to overcome these issues and enhance their innovative capabilities. By doing so, this study extended existing research that has thus far employed organizational innovation as a framework in other sport organization contexts (e.g., Hoeber & Hoeber, 2012; Næss & Tjønndal, 2021; Newell & Swan, 1995).

Drivers to innovate should be understood by event managers in order to ensure they are meeting stakeholder expectations. Additionally, the barriers identified in this study should also be kept in mind by sport event organizers as they too may be potential roadblocks for innovating. By acknowledging these barriers sooner, sport event organizers may be able to address them early on. Moreover, the main contribution of this study lies in advancing our understanding of the strategies that sport event organizers can implement to enhance their innovative capabilities. For instance, since establishing relationships beyond organizational boundaries is helpful for temporary organizations to overcome internal knowledge constraints (Davies et al., 2014; Worsnop et al., 2016), OCOGs should continue to leverage existing partnerships and establish new external relationships to obtain innovation-related knowledge. Such partnerships could be with local universities and research teams to develop, test, and help implement a variety of innovations.

Innovation Process

Despite the increasing pressures on mega-sport event organizing committees to be innovative as illustrated in study two of this dissertation and researchers calling for more empirical research on the innovation process in sport organizations (e.g., Hoeber & Hoeber, 2012), there was no clear understanding of the innovation process in context of mega-sport event organizing committees. Therefore, the third and final study of this dissertation, *Initiate, Adopt, Implement, and Transfer: Exploring the Innovation Process within Mega-Sport Event Organizing Committees*, focused on exploring how POCOG, LAOCOG, and United 26 undergo the innovation process. Doing so further expanded our understanding of the innovation process in mega-sport event organizing committees.

Innovation Initiation

Data analysis of this study suggested that initiation is the first phase of the innovation process for mega-sport event organizing committees. During this initial phase, mega-sport event organizing committees look for solutions to identified problems in both their internal and external environments. Existing literature has found that small to medium sized firms more so benefit from their external environment than their internal one to hardness innovation-related resources compared to larger organizations that have the capacity to have internal research and design teams (e.g., Bjerke & Johansson, 2015; Chesbrough & Brunswicker, 2014). However, scholars (e.g., Kupp et al., 2017) have recently found that organizations utilizing both internal and external resources is most ideal when innovating in order to enhance their overall innovation capabilities, regardless of the organization's size. Thus, we would encourage mega-sport event organizing committee to continue to leverage both internal and external resources when initiating innovative solutions to predetermined problems.

Adoption Decision

After an innovative initiative is proposed, mega-sport event organizing committees must decide to reject, re-evaluate, or adopt an innovation. Interestingly, findings suggested that the OCOGs (i.e., POCOG and LAOCOG) and the FIFA OC (i.e., United 26) differ regarding innovation adoption decision making. Specifically, POCOG and LAOCOG's innovation adoption decision making power varies across multiple individuals or groups of people. For instance, commercial innovations such as LAOCOG's evolving emblem was decided upon the commercial and marketing team whereas the Climate Calculator was spearheaded by many teams within POCOG (e.g., innovation working group and environmental specialists). This form of decentralized decision making is said to foster innovation and increase the adoption of new practices (Prakash & Gupta, 2008). Conversely, United 26 interviewees felt they had to have FIFAs approval to adopt any innovations no matter the type or magnitude. Consequently, this more centralized approach to innovation adoption decision is purported to hinder innovation in organizational settings (Priemus et al., 2008) and may contributed to United 26's lack of innovative practices compared to POCOG or LAOCOG. Therefore, we suggest that future mega-sport event organizing committees and their event owners who are looking to be innovative should consider taking a more decentralized approach to innovation adoption decision making.

Implementing Innovations

After an innovation has been decided to be adopted, data analysis suggested that the innovation then undergoes the third phase of the innovation processes where it will often be tested and modified before being executed. Trialing and modifying innovations are important parts of the innovation process to ensure that an innovation can be successfully implemented (Rogers, 2003). However, some innovations are not successfully implemented due to mega-sport

event organizers not having enough time to continue to test and modify them. This supports Brujin and Leijten (2008) who purported that an innovation may no longer be necessary or meet an organization's needs the longer it takes to test and modify. Therefore, we suggest that mega-sport event organizers test and modify innovations earlier on in this hosting phase to ensure more adequate time to test and modify innovation in time.

Knowledge Transfer

Although mega-sport event organizing committees are temporary, their innovation-related knowledge is not. Thus, mega-sport event organizing committees sharing their innovation-related practices and knowledge to future hosts emerged as a key finding of this study, resulting in transfer being the last phase of the innovation process. The practice of knowledge transfer has been recognized as an important process within mega-sport events (Ellis et al., 2016; Parent et al., 2014). Regarding innovation, these findings correspond with other research that knowledge transfer is a key factor when innovating in tourism and hospitality sectors (Nieves et al., 2014; Weidenfeld et al., 2010) and empowers sport employees to implement innovative practices (Miryousefi and Darekordi, 2020). However, despite the importance of knowledge transfer, data analysis of study three revealed that innovation-related knowledge was transferred mostly through informal observations and group discussions (i.e., tacit knowledge) (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) more so than through formalized documentation (e.g., written reports, databases) (i.e., explicit knowledge) (Becerra et al., 2008). Although tacit knowledge is said to stimulate innovation (Leonard & Sensiper, 2008), the lack of explicit knowledge is problematic as numerous scholars (e.g., Asbari et al., 2019; Le et al., 2020; Magnier-Watanabe & Benton, 2017) have found that organizations are more successfully innovative when they implement both tactic and explicit knowledge practices. Therefore, it is

suggested that future mega-sport event organizing committees continue to participate in tactic knowledge practices but also consider implementing more explicit knowledge management practices by providing more tangible documentation to future hosts (e.g., manuals, journals, statistical databases, audio videos). These sources of knowledge are said to be easier to be transferred to other entities and shared with others (Becerra et al., 2008).

Data analysis of study three also suggested that the innovation knowledge obtained from one host organizing committee may not be transferable to the next host as stakeholder expectations, organizational goals, available resources, and government support may differ. Therefore, mega-sport event organizing committees strongly benefit more so from local nearby sport events and organizations than a mega-sport events with completely different expectations, values, and objectives. These findings counter suggestions from Weidenfeld and colleagues (2010), who argued that organizers of tourism attractions are more likely to share innovation-related knowledge with entities more spatially distant than local ones as a result of competing for consumers. Thus, we encourage mega-sport event organizers to keep establishing relationships with local entities and know that the most recent host of a mega-sport event may not provide applicable innovation-related insights.

Implications

This study contributed to advancing our understanding of innovation in mega-sport event organizing committees by exploring the innovation processes undergone by POCOG, LAOCOG, and United 26. Arguably, the greatest contribution of this study was suggesting that the implementation phase is not necessarily the end of the innovation process as it has been often illustrated as such by many seminal scholars (e.g., Damanpour & Schneider, 2006; Rogers, 2003). Moreover, this study enhanced our understanding of knowledge transfer in sport

management literature. Due to the transient workforce of many large-scale and mega-sport event organizing committees, the active processes of transferring knowledge from one sport entity to another has been found to be more complex compared to other sport organizations that do not disband after their event concludes (Schenk et al., 2015). Thus, this study suggested that feedback loops can help facilitate the transferring of innovation knowledge between previous and future mega-sport event organizing hosts. Furthermore, the findings of this study resulted in a conceptual model of the innovation process undergone by mega-sport vent organizing committees. This conceptual model could be used as a guideline for other sport event organizers who are wanting to innovate.

While this section of the dissertation offered discussion points for each individual study, there are meaningful insights that span across the dissertation. These are explained in more detail below.

Cumulative Themes

Three broad themes emerged from this research project that focused on better our understanding innovation in mega-sport event organizing committees: discrepancy between words and actions, the influence of external actors, and time as a resource.

Discrepancy Between Words and Actions

The discrepancy between the words of the mega-sport event organizing committees and their actions as it pertained to innovation was a common theme in this research. Specifically, in their bid books and candidature files, all three of the mega-sport event organizing committees under investigation (i.e., POCOG, LAOCOG, and United 26) spoke about making radical change, but in reality, more commonly created incremental change. For instance, the United 26 bid includes the following excerpt:

> Together, with FIFA, we will work tirelessly to deliver a FIFA World Cup of the highest standards – one that is far-reaching, inclusive, innovative, and inspiring; one that embeds respect for human rights and respect for fundamental freedoms and values at its core; one that takes a crown jewel of sport to new levels, making it even more valuable to our partners, and in turn generating resources that will be invested back into the game through the member associations; once that fulfills FIFA's vision for the future (p. 1).

Yet, when it came to their actions, key informants saw innovation as less important due to their long-standing market and fan loyalty. Similarly, LAOCOG argued in their candidature file that "[they] will communicate to a national and international audience, LA's diversity, energy, and cutting-edge innovation" (p. 166). However, all three of the organizations intentionally delayed technological innovations in order to gain a stronger understanding on advancements in the future. Following Rogers' (2003) diffusion of innovation, this finding would, therefore, argue that mega-sport event organizing committees are possibly more like early adopters than actual innovators. Moreover, the interviewees; perceptions of innovating to produce legacies seem to be incompatible with incremental innovation. One could argue that the more radical the change, the more likely it would be to leave a viable legacy. These findings support arguments that mega-sport event bid books should not be taken as a neutral stance given they ultimately serve the interests of the parent organizations (Beissel & Kohe, 2020).

The Influence of External Actors

Findings from this dissertation revealed that external actors play a significant part regarding innovation in mega-sport event organizing committees. Specifically, mega-sport event organizers work with external actors to implement innovative practices (i.e., study one), feel pressure from various external stakeholders to innovate (i.e., study two), and scan their external environment for innovation-related inspiration (i.e., study three). This finding supports Svensson and Hambrick's (2019) suggestions that external stakeholders play a pivotal role in innovation in sport organizations. Additionally, this finding underlines the need for mega-sport event

organizing committees to support an open innovation process (cf. Chesbrough, 2003) by establishing relationships with other entities beyond the confinements of the organization itself. The importance of establishing external relationships further warrants the need for more research on innovation in mega-sport event organizing committees from the open innovation perspective.

Time as a Resource

It is widely known that mega-sport event organizing committees are temporary in nature in that they operate within a limited timeframe. As a result, and illustrated in study two, the pressure of operating within a limited timeframe was identified as a barrier that hindered mega-sport event organizing committees' ability to innovate. Additionally, study three revealed that adopted innovations can be rejected at a later date due to the event organizers not having enough time to trial and modify them. Thus, this dissertation suggests that scholars and practitioners consider time being as great a problem to innovation in mega-sport event organizing committees as other resources (e.g., finances, infrastructure, human) have been found to impact innovation in other sport organization contexts (Newell & Swan, 1995; Winand & Hoeber, 2017).

Managerial Implications

This dissertation and the three studies that embody it enhanced our understanding of innovation in mega-sport event organizing committees. In this section, numerous practical implications for sport event organizers are discussed.

The first insight is the importance of understanding the multidimensional nature of innovations in mega-sport event organizing committees. That is, when implementing innovative practices, it is important for sport event organizers to simultaneously consider the different forms, nature, and goals of innovations they can implement. Moreover, sport event organizers should look to newly implemented policies and strategic plans for innovation inspiration. For

instance, World Rugby implemented a strategic plan titled *A Global Sport For All: World Rugby Strategic Plan 2021-2025* where enhancing global participation, increasing fan engagement, and better supporting players are key targets they want to achieve (2021). Therefore, future host organizing committees should look to this document for inspiration and consider implementing innovative initiatives that would meet each of the abovementioned targets to meet stakeholder expectations. Regardless of where innovative inspirations come from, those that mega-sport event organizers do implement should perhaps continue to be more incremental than radical due to the limited time frame they must operate in and event owners being more risk-averse to radical innovations.

Moreover, drawing from the second study of this dissertation, findings illuminated the importance of mega-sport event organizing committees establishing relationships to enhance their innovative capabilities. Specifically, OCOGs and FIFA OCs should continue to establish strategic partnerships with entities ranging from local start-ups and universities to established Fortune 500 companies. For instance, future mega-sport event organizing committees could partner with local universities and researchers to work together developing, testing, and implementing a variety of new practices. In doing so, the host organizing committee would be able to enhance their capacity to innovate while the university could leverage the event as a space to work and ideally make contributions to their field. Additionally, the importance of identifying and meeting salient stakeholder expectations within sport event organizations is well documented (Hautbois et al., 2012; Kristiansen et al., 2021; Parent & Deephouse, 2007). Yet, findings of study two revealed that mega-sport event organizers struggle to innovate due to competing stakeholder expectations. Therefore, sport event organizers should consider

identifying innovation-specific salient stakeholders to prioritize their expectations. Doing so can enable the event organizers to be more proactive in their innovative approach.

Finally, the third study of this dissertation supported existing literature that centralized decision making can impede organizational creativity and innovation (Prakash & Gupta, 2008). Therefore, sport event owners who are wanting to implement additional innovative practices should consider letting event organizers take a more decentralized approach. Furthermore, although previous studies have noted that knowledge transfer within transient sport organization is a challenging task to achieve (Schenk et al., 2015), this study found it to be a significant part of the innovation process. To help facilitate better transfer of knowledge from one mega-sport event organizing committee to the next, event organizers should implement more explicit knowledge practices as they have been purported to be more easily transferable between entities (Becerra et al., 2008). For instance, LAOCOG should not just let the 2032 Brisbane host OCOG observe and merely converse about their innovation-related practices and knowledge. Instead, LAOCOG should consider more explicit knowledge practices such as stakeholders providing innovation-specific reports and empirical data. This explicit knowledge approach could help sport event organizers be more reflective on innovation and provide additional insight for future hosts moving forward.

Limitations

As with all research, there are limitations worth noting and this dissertation is no exception. For instance, at the time of this study there were other mega-sport event organizing committees of upcoming Olympic Games and World Cups that could have been considered such as the 2022 Qatar FIFA World Cup and the 2026 Milan and Cortina Winter Olympic Games. However, data analysis would have been time consuming regarding the timeframe associated

with completing this dissertation. Therefore, in order to address this issue, this dissertation focused on two North American mega-sport event organizing committees (i.e., LOCOG and United 26) as well as the next upcoming edition of the Olympic Games (i.e., POCOG). This limitation coincides with my ontological approach as a critical realist, accepting that I cannot achieve the truth with absolute finality or exact precision. Within this in mind, it is also imperative to explicitly note that this dissertation does not seek to generalize beyond the context under investigation. However, it should also be noted that in understanding the Olympic Games and FIFA World Cup as mega-sport events and their host organizing committees as temporary organizations, it is hoped that elements of this study may be analytically generalizable. According to Yin (2017), analytical generalization involves drawing conclusions back to theories and concepts. In this vein, the findings of this dissertation may be generalizable back to the frameworks used (i.e., 3D-model of innovation, organizational innovation, innovation process).

Regarding the frameworks of this study, there are also limitations worth noting. Specifically, the 3D-model of innovation omitted variables that could be considered when identifying different types of innovations such as its magnitude (i.e., degree of change). While this limitation was also highlighted by Corthouts et al., (2021), future research should consider implementing a 4D-model of innovation that includes the form, nature, goal, and magnitude of an innovation.

Moreover, this dissertation focused specifically on mega-sport event organizing committees, which may limit the application of the findings to other types and sizes of events, such as small and medium sport events. However, it should also be acknowledged that the examining of mega-sport event organizing committees allowed this dissertation to offer insights

for researchers and practitioners due to the events' complexity (e.g., number of involved stakeholders, transient in nature, and global appeal).

Another limitation worth noting is that the empirical findings of this dissertation are also limited to cases in the North American (LAOCOG) and European (POCOG) contexts. Consequently, innovation drivers, barriers, and strategies may differ for OCOGs in other geographical locations, as innovation is a context-specific phenomenon and stakeholders may influence OCOGs differently. Examining other mega-and large-scale sporting events that also change hosting locations and are temporary in nature (e.g., FIFA World Cup, Superbowl, Rugby World Cup) would serve as interesting and valuable avenues of future research into sport innovation

Future Research

The findings and limitations of this dissertation illuminated numerous opportunities for future research. For instance, broadly, this dissertation explored the "what" (i.e., study one), "why" (i.e., study two), and "how" (i.e., study three) of innovation in mega-sport event organizing committees. Albeit meaningful insight and discussion points emerged from each study, it is suggested that future research explore the "who" regarding innovation in this particular context as this specific inquiry was beyond the scope of this dissertation. For instance, future research could pinpoint more specific individual roles by exploring the intrapreneurs of mega-sport event organizing committees. An intrapreneur is a "proactive change agent" (Nadan et al., 2015 p. 41), whom Carland and Carland (2007) further describe as "a person who focuses on innovation and creativity and who transforms an idea into a profitable venture by operating within the organizational environment" (p. 84). Given the strong relationship between

intrapreneurship and increased innovativeness (Staub et al., 2019), such insights are important to our understanding of innovation in mega-sport event organizing committees.

More specifically, findings revealed that mega-sport event organizers attempt to strategically delay implementing technological innovations to enable these innovations to mature and develop; yet, the organizing committees must operate in a limited timeframe. Consequently, this active delay of technological innovation then becomes a major conundrum for mega-sport event organizers. Therefore, future research should consider specifically exploring the innovation process of a technological innovation undergone by a transient organization such as a large-scale or mega-sport event organizing committees. For instance, a future research study could explore the initiation, decision to adopt, and implementation of one or more modern technologies emerging in the sport realm, such as online betting, virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and even the metaverse, to name a few. Doing so would enhance our understanding of technological innovation in sport events, provide practical insight for sport event organizers who may be seeking to implement such innovative practices, and work towards answering calls that have been made for sport research to look to the digital future (Pizzo et al., 2022).

Moreover, mega-sport event organizers experience contradictory pressures from stakeholders regarding innovation as some push for innovative practices to be implemented while others are more risk averse. Such competing stakeholder expectations demonstrated the presence of competing institutional logics. Competing stakeholder expectations can hinder innovation (Arundel et al., 2019) and stakeholder conflict has been shown to impact the effectiveness of mega-sport events (Byun & Leopkey, 2021). Therefore, it is suggested that future research simultaneously employ institutional logics and stakeholder theory to further understand how sport event organizers can better manage competing stakeholder expectations

and institutional adaptation to organizational innovation (Nite & Washington, 2017) In doing so, researchers could shed light on how institutional logics and stakeholder theory could be intertwined in the sport event management literature and offer sport event organizers practical insight on how to manage stakeholder conflict regarding innovation.

The concept of open innovation also surfaced in the data. Open innovation holds that organizations that focus on solely using internal resources to innovate are prone to missing opportunities to harness additional resources from external actors (Chesbrough, 2003). In this vein, LAOCOG, POCOG, and United 26 relied on strategic external relationships to hardness additional resources (i.e., innovation-related knowledge and solutions), illustrating open innovation. Despite this finding, little is known about open innovation in mega-sport event organizing committees. This is problematic as external strategic relationships can help sport event organizers enhance their innovative capacity. Therefore, future research should further investigate the relationships between external entities and innovation in mega-sport event organizing committees by asking the following questions: (1) What external linkages do mega-sport event organizing committees rely on to enhance their innovative capabilities? (2) How are these relationships established? (3) Howe are these relationships managed? And (3) What are the outcomes of establishing such relationships? This line of future research could advance sport event scholarship by using open innovation as a unique lens to enhance our understanding of innovation in a mega-sprot event organizing committee context.

Furthermore, a main contribution of this dissertation was enhancing our understanding of the innovation process by adding transfer (of knowledge and practices) as the final stage of the innovation process undergone by mega-sport event organizing committees. As it was beyond the scope of this study, future research should consider further exploring innovation-related

knowledge management of mega-sport event organizing committees given this finding. This research objective could be met by employing the knowledge-based view (KBV) as a theoretical framework. An extension from the resource-based view (RBV), KBV argues that knowledge is the most strategically advantageous and significant resource of a firm (Eisenhardt & Santos, 2002). Findings of such research would expand on the findings of the third study of this dissertation focusing on the transfer of innovation-related knowledge.

Methodically, a limitation of this study was that it is limited to two North American and one European contexts. Further research on innovation (e.g., practices, pressures, and process) in mega-sport event organizing committees in other geographical contexts, such as the upcoming 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand, would be advantageous as innovation is a context-specific phenomenon (Baregheh et al., 2009) and stakeholders may influence event organizers differently. Moreover, POCOG, LAOCOG, and United 26 were all in the pre-event stage of their hosting process at the time this dissertation was completed. Therefore, a post-event analysis of innovation could offer a unique perspective when compared to the pre-event findings of this study. A comparison of innovation in Summer, Winter, Paralympic, and Youth Olympic Games organizing committees as well as the FIFA Men's World Cup versus the FIFA Women's World Cup could elevate our knowledge of how innovative practices may differ in these similar yet different events. Beyond the Olympic Games and FIFA World cup, other sport events and their organizing committees (e.g., Rugby World Cup, Formula One Circuits, Cricket World Cup, X-Games) could also provide unique insights on innovation as they may differ in terms of stakeholder expectations, available resources, and organizational structures.

Finally, different qualitative research approaches could be useful for enhancing our understanding of innovation in mega-sport event organizing committees, such as narrative analysis and ethnographic research. For example, in the embedded unit of analysis of POCOG, local residents got to participate in an innovative fan engagement service of Club Paris. Therefore, employing narrative and ethnographic analysis could be useful in exploring the experience and stories of these groups of people (Gubrium & Holstein, 1999) and be beneficial for understanding the resultant impact innovative practices have based on residential perspectives. Additionally, more quantitative and mixed-method approaches could be used to further examine innovation in mega-sport events. For instance, a survey could be used to explore the competing stakeholder expectations regarding innovation and analyze different perspectives of sub-groups and categorize them based on various factors (e.g., age, gender, years of experience, position rank).

In summary, this dissertation found that mega-sport event organizing committees are innovating in various ways (i.e., study one). Mega-sport event organizers are pursuing these innovative practices because they face many environmental, organizational, and individual pressures to be innovative; yet, they also experience barriers that may prevent them from being able to innovate but employ strategies to overcome them (i.e., study two). In doing so, mega-sport event organizing committees undergo the innovation process by initiating, adopting, implementing, and transferring their innovation-related knowledge and practices to future hosts (i.e., study three). Based on these findings and the limitations associated with each study, numerous fruitful avenues of future research have been suggested. Conducting the suggested future scholarly work would enable us to continue to enhance our understanding of innovation in

mega-sport event organizing committees for many more years to come, long after the completion of this dissertation that first paved the way.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Participant Recruitment Script

Dear (name of potential participant),

My name is Kristina Hoff, and I am a Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Kinesiology at the University of Georgia. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Becca Leopkey on innovation in mega sport event organizing committees. As part of my dissertation research, I am conducting interviews with stakeholders involved with the 2028 L.A. Olympic Games and the 2026 FIFA World Cup. Your participation in this study will help provide us with key information on identifying and understanding innovation in the context of mega sport event organizing committees. Please see below for additional background information.

The interview would last about 30 to 60 minutes and be arranged at a convenient time for you. The questions are quite general and will concentrate on discussing the innovative initiatives of mega sport event organizing committees. Involvement in this interview is entirely voluntary, and this study will not subject you to any foreseeable risks. With your permission, the interview will be recorded. Otherwise, I will simply take notes during the interview. All information you provide will be considered confidential and kept in my office at all times under lock and key. You are not obligated to participate in this study. If you opt to participate, you are free to refuse to answer particular questions or withdraw from the study at any time for any reason.

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance from the Institutional Review Board from the Human Research Protection Program at the University of Georgia. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the study, you may contact my supervisor or me. Ethical concerns regarding my participation in the study should be directed to the Office of Research, University of Georgia, Tucker Hall, 310 East Campus Road, Athens, Georgia 30602, telephone: 706-542-5969, email: ovpr@uga.edu.

If you would be interested in participating in this interview, please contact me by either responding to this email (k.hoff@uga.edu) or calling me at 704-941-1893. I have attached an information sheet and a consent form for your review so that we can set up a time for the interview. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best,

Kristina Hoff

APPENDIX B

Participant Consent Form

Researcher's Statement
I am/We are asking you to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is essential that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. This form is designed to give you information about the study. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information. When all your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent." A copy of this form will be given to you.

Principal Investigator: Dr. Becca Leopkey
Department of Kinesiology
E-mail bleopkey@uga.edu
Office: 706-542-1224

Purpose of the Study
This study aims to examine innovation in mega sport events, using the 2028 L.A. Olympic Games and the 2026 FIFA World Cup as case setting. You are asked to participate because you have been identified as a stakeholder for one of the above-mentioned events.

Risks and Discomforts
We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research. However, if discomfort arises during participation, the interviewee has the right to stop the interview at any time and may choose not to no longer partake in the study.

Benefits
Participants may find it beneficial to share their personal experiences knowing that the information will inform future mega sport event organizing committees and related stakeholders. Additionally, other event stakeholders may find this study beneficial as members of the general public are impacted when hosting mega-events like the Olympic Games and World Cup.

Study Procedures
If you agree to participate, you will be asked to:

- Voluntarily partake in open-ended interview questions.
- The duration of the interviews will be one session for approximately 60 minutes in length.
- An open-ended interview will be conducted as it allows for fluid conversation. An example of an interview question could be, "How would you describe what innovation means to you?"
- Upon your consent, this interview will be audio recorded.

Audio/Video Recording
Audio recording will be used as a means of reference. Parts of the audio, if not all, will then be transcribed. Upon completing the research, the audio recordings will be archived after the transcribing process is done. These recordings could be used in the future as an analysis tool when comparing and contrasting stakeholder experiences in other sport event contexts.

Please provide your initials below if you agree to have this interview audio recorded. You may still participate in this study even if you are not willing to have the interview recorded.

_____I do not want to have this interview recorded.
_____I am willing to have this interview recorded.

Privacy/Confidentiality
Interviews may be done via Zoom, telephone, or in-person. Researchers will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent unless required by law. Moreover, this study claims that this research involves the transmission of data over the Internet. Every reasonable effort has been taken to ensure the effective use of available technology; however, confidentiality during online communication cannot be guaranteed.

Taking part is voluntary
Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to stop or withdraw from the study, information up to your withdrawal point will be kept as part of the study and may continue to be analyzed.

If you have questions
The principal researcher conducting this study is Dr. Leopkey, a professor and advisor of Kristina Hoff at the University of Georgia. If you have questions, you may contact Kristina Hoff at k.hoff@uga.edu or 704-941-1893 or Dr. Leopkey at bleopkey@uga.edu or 706-542-1224. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chairperson at 706-542-3199 or irb@uga.edu.

Research Subject's Consent to Participate in Research:
To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. Your signature below indicates that you have read this entire consent form and have had all of your questions answered.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Signature	Date

Please sign both copies. Keep one copy and return the other to the researcher.

APPENDIX C

Interview Guide

Background information

1. Name, title, and amount of time spent with organization?

Study 1: In what ways are mega sport event organizing committees are being innovative?

1. How do you define innovation?
2. Do you think this sport event organization is being innovative?
   If not, why not?
3. How is the organization being innovative with using new technologies?
   -Fan experience
   -Officiating
   -Communication

4. What are ways the organization itself is being innovative?
   -New positions
   -Rules & policies
   -Funding

5. How is the organization being innovative with community initiatives?

   -Addressing local-specific issues?

6. How is the organization been innovative regarding social issues?

   -Gender inclusion
   -Sport for development & peace
   -Environmental

7. What are innovative commercial (i.e., marketing) initiatives being implemented by the organization?

8. Beyond the innovations already mentioned, can you think of and tell me more about other innovations the organization is pursuing?

9. (If certain innovation types are often mentioned the most), why do you think the organization is more commonly being innovative in regards to (insert innovation type) compared to other types of innovations?

10. (If certain innovation types are not mentioned), why do you think the organization is not innovating in regard to (insert innovation type)?

Study 2: Why are mega sport event organizing committees being innovative?

1. Does the organization experience pressures to be innovative?

    If not, why not?

2. What or who pressures the organization to be innovative?

    Are they external to the organization?
    - -Social
    - -Legal
    - -Technological
    - -Political
    - -Customers
    - -Suppliers
    - -Competitors

    Are they internal to the organization?
    - -Lead managerial expectations
    - -Organization's mission
    - -Existing partnerships
    - -Enhance efficiency
    - -Reduce uncertainty

    Why do you think you experience pressures from these specific actors you mentioned and not others?

    If some of these pressures are not present, why do you think that is the case?

    How does stakeholders' feedback influence innovation?

3. Who (or what group) makes decisions in the organization?

    What about as it pertains to innovation?

    If and how do you believe these decision makers impact why the organization is innovative or not?

4. How would you describe the structure of your organization? How big is it? What about the different teams, etc.?

    If and how does this structure impact why the organization implements innovative initiatives?

    Does it impact decision making, communication, or other relevant factors related to innovation with the organization?

6. Can you describe if the relationships this organization has with other entities fosters innovation?

If not, why not?

If so, are pressures to innovate from external relationships different? How are they managed?

7. How has the availability of resources impacted the organization's ability to innovate?

Can you explain if access to additional resources impacts why (or why not) the organization innovates?

Objective 3: How mega do sport event organizing committees undergo the innovation process?

1. How does this organization innovate?

What is the process that you follow?
- Identifying a problem
- Scanning for solutions (where do you look?)
- Becoming aware of existing innovations
- Identifying suitable innovations
- Proposing innovations for adoption

Once an innovation is proposed, how is it then adopted within the organization?
- Who evaluates the innovations?
- What factors need to be considered for its adoption? (e.g., technical, financial, strategic)
- How do you obtain and allocate resources needed for the innovation?

How does the organization implement innovations?
- Can you explain if and how an innovation is modified?
- Can you tell me how the organization is prepped for the innovation?
- How fast is an innovation implemented (e.g., quickly or slowly)?
- Do the innovations become part of the organization's identity?

2. Did the organization adopt any innovations created by previous hosts?

If so, can you explain that process of obtaining information about an innovation and implementing it in this edition of the event?

It is ever modified, if so how?

3. What obstacles did the organization face during the innovation process?

Stakeholder conflict

-Internal
-External

Organizational capacity/resource availability
-Knowledge
-Technology
-Financial

4. How did organizers overcome these obstacles?
-Establish relationships
-Create new positions

Other

1. Is there anything else you would like to discuss about the topics we have gone over?

2. Are you aware of any documents that you think might be useful to our research?

3. Do you have any suggestions for others in the industry that we should interview?