



Collaborative self-study: Lessons from a study of wearable fitness technology and physical activity

Bradley J. Baker^{a,*}, Xiaochen Zhou^a, Anthony D. Pizzo^a, James Du^b,
Daniel C. Funk^a

^a Temple University, School of Sport, Tourism & Hospitality Management, 111 Speakman Hall, 1810 N. 13th St., Philadelphia, PA 19122, USA

^b Florida State University, Department of Sport Management, Tully Gymnasium, 139 Chieftan Way, Tallahassee, FL 32304, USA

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 1 February 2016

Received in revised form 20 October 2016

Accepted 25 October 2016

Available online 13 December 2016

Keywords:

Collaborative self-study

Collaborative self-ethnography

Collaborative autoethnography

ABSTRACT

While researchers in related disciplines have embraced and benefited from use of unconventional contemporary qualitative research methods extending beyond interviews and case studies, sport management researchers largely have not thus far. The purpose of this article is to encourage greater use of collaborative self-study (autoethnography and self-ethnography) within sport management research. Based on our experience with a collaborative self-study research project examining the influence of wearable fitness technology on physical activity, we explore key methodological considerations focusing on the ethics of self-study, and the benefits, challenges, and opportunities associated with employing this underutilized qualitative method in sport management research. Collaborative self-study offers the opportunity to address questions and examine sport phenomena from perspectives rarely addressed by traditional approaches. Through reviewing collaborative self-study, we provide guidance for sport management researchers and encourage researchers to consider this method in their future projects.

© 2016 Sport Management Association of Australia and New Zealand. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Frisby (2005) and Amis and Silk (2005) called for greater acceptance of epistemological and methodological diversity within sport management research. Rinehart (2005) specifically called for increased use of personal narrative in sport management research, citing the ability to examine research questions from a novel perspective. Yet, a decade later there is minimal evidence of substantial change reflected in the contents of leading sport management journals (Harris, 2015). While there is a growing acceptance of qualitative research methods, sport management research continues to be dominated by institutional pressure favouring quantitative approaches (Edwards & Skinner, 2009).

Beyond sport management, even when using qualitative approaches, most researchers limit themselves to conventional options such as participant observation and in-depth interviews (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). In turn, methodological standardisation has led to overly formulaic research which suffers from a lack of creativity, theoretical impact, and practical

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: bradley.baker@temple.edu (B.J. Baker), tue69893@temple.edu (X. Zhou), anthony.pizzo@temple.edu (A.D. Pizzo), jdu3@fsu.edu (J. Du), dfunk@temple.edu (D.C. Funk).

relevance (Alvesson & Gabriel, 2013). Anderson and Austin (2012) recommend autoethnography as an emerging method with considerable untapped opportunity in leisure research, which encompasses sport management.

While a variety of academic disciplines have embraced personal reflection and ethnographic research, sport management journals have rarely included autoethnographic approaches (Kerwin & Hoeber, 2015). Shaw and Hoeber (2016) suggest this may reflect either researchers' concerns that unconventional qualitative methods will be poorly received or a lack of awareness of innovation in qualitative methodology within our discipline. Articles such as the current one are designed to address these concerns and respond to calls to present novel methodologies, raising awareness and making the methods more accessible (Shaw & Hoeber, 2016).

Autoethnographic research methods are more prominent among sociology of sport researchers (e.g., Allen-Collinson & Hockey, 2007; Bridel & Rail, 2007; Dashper, 2013; Fisette, 2015; Purdy, Potrac, & Jones, 2008). While sociology represents a distinct discipline from sport management, Love and Andrew (2012) highlighted connections between the two, noting that sociological aspects of sport are frequently included in sport management textbooks and accreditation standards. They argued that the nexus between sport management and sociology offers benefits to both disciplines in terms of methodological diversity and research applicability. Building on sport management's ties to sociology, wider use of autoethnography represents an opportunity for sport researchers to lead mainstream management in establishing techniques that set the standards for strong, rigorous qualitative research. Theoretically, the emergence of these techniques should be embedded in the questions we examine and the manner in which we conduct sport management research and build sport-oriented theories. The authenticity of ethnographic research should build upon in-depth critical analysis and echo reflexive consideration of personal experiences (Anderson, 2006).

In autoethnographic research, focusing on the researcher as the subject of the research provides intimate insights, adding depth to phenomenological understanding (Chang, 2008). Collaborative autoethnographies expand upon this concept by addressing some of the idiosyncratic issues related to self-study, potentially making the findings and implications more universal (Chang, Ngunjiri, & Hernandez, 2013). Collaborative approaches also respond to criticism that autoethnographic research is narcissistic or self-indulgent (Holt, 2003; Sparkes, 2002). Tacit experience documented through the collaborative ethnographic process can provide insight into sensitive topics in sport management, best captured through personal experience and self-reflection. Autoethnography can be applied to understanding the tacit and lived experiences of sport fans and consumers, athletes, sport managers, and other key figures in sport management (Hoeber & Kerwin, 2013; Kerwin & Hoeber, 2015).

The method allows researchers to provide voice directly to researched populations, gaining insight into lived experience and moving beyond mere descriptions of those being studied (Rinehart, 2005). For instance, Hoeber and Kerwin (2013) were able to explore the experiences of female sports fans, finding that they saw themselves as outsiders in the sport fan world and that they marginalized other women at sport events. Their findings relied on self-reflection and offered rich data and insight on the dual roles of researcher and research subject, beyond that from typical approaches based on asking participants to respond to a series of prescribed questions (Kerwin & Hoeber, 2015).

Autoethnographic approaches provide sport management researchers with a promising toolkit to advance our knowledgebase and develop sport-centric theories, challenging existing dominant paradigms and ideologies. Ultimately, this effort benefits the field by promoting interdisciplinary research across a broad spectrum of social science (Amis & Silk, 2005). Building on personal narrative, autoethnographic research is particularly well suited for investigating the meaning individuals bring to their world, how individuals decipher and make sense of their experiences, and conveying those interpretations to readers (Rinehart, 2005). Promising areas for autoethnographic research in sport management include investigating innovative products or experiences, where first-hand experience can aid researchers' understanding, research questions focusing on interpreting experiences or place within community, and reflective practices explaining phenomena.

The primary purpose of our current work is to encourage sport management researchers to consider self-study as an appropriate and useful methodological approach. Collaborative self-study offers distinct advantages and insights beyond those available through solo efforts, including data enrichment, gains in research efficiency, and community building (Chang et al., 2013). We review each of these benefits in subsequent sections of this article. Thus, we further encourage sport management researchers to consider collaborative models of self-study. While there is no one correct approach to conducting or writing about self-study research (Rinehart, 2005), we review methodological considerations based on both our own work and a review of others' descriptions of how they have engaged in self-study. We draw on our experience with a collaborative self-study research project examining the influence of wearable fitness technology on physical activity to illustrate use of the method.

Our separate and collective experiences establish an exemplar context for examining collaborative self-study as a research practice. In subsequent sections, we review collaborative self-study, describe our experience using the method in a research project, and discuss general methodological considerations including (i) ethics of self-study, (ii) benefits, and (iii) challenges related to collaborative self-study. Finally, we conclude with observations on the implications for the sport management discipline of continued growth in self-study research.

2. Collaborative self-study

Collaborative self-study is an overarching term describing any of several related research methods whereby researchers study themselves and their surrounding social environment, including collaborative autoethnography and collaborative self-

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/4762038>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/4762038>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)