Leading With Legacy - Exploring the Concept of Legacy as a Behavioral Intention in Sport Organization Leadership

Adam Copeland, University of Michigan
Kathy Babiak (Advisor), University of Michigan

Abstract 2021-015
10-minute lightning talk (including questions) Mode: Synchronous
Session: Lightning Talks Thursday June 3, 2021, 11:00 AM - 11:10 AM

The concept of legacy has emerged in the sport management literature as a framework to analyze the impact of typically large mega-events such as the Olympic Games or other major international sport events. Scholars have assessed the legacy of mega-events on cities, communities or regions (Girginov & Hills, 2008; Preuss, 2019; Reis et al. 2016). Legacy has also appeared in the management literature, typically applied to organizational leadership (Galford & Maruca, 2006; Shirley, 2014; Watton et al, 2019). There is, however, a gap in understanding the role of legacy in the sport leadership context. This presentation will attempt to bridge the gap between organizational leadership legacy research and sport leadership legacy and will propose a conceptual framework for understanding the function of legacy in sport leadership.

Management research has found direct implications of intention and behavior on leadership legacy (Hambrick, Geletkanycz & Fredrickson, 1993) and has noted the relevance of organizational practices around concretizing leadership legacy, such as “strategic succession management” (Akin & Eaton, 2020). Legacy, within the sport management literature, typically is framed at the organizational level through events and considers their long-term effects (Thomson et al., 2013; Holt & Ruta, 2015). Those event outcomes can be categorized as, “...planned and unplanned, positive and negative, tangible and intangible.” (Preuss, 2007). Preuss’ taxonomy of event legacy can apply to leadership intention as well. Leaders leave their legacy in both planned and unplanned ways, legacies of leaders can be positive or negative, and their legacies have tangible and intangible aspects. In viewing legacy as a leadership intention, this presentation will draw from the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and frame legacy as an antecedent to behavior.

While not very much attention has been paid to legacy in the context of sport leadership intention, there has been a great amount of scholarship on leadership theory, leadership behavior, as well as leadership style (Behrendt et al. 2017; Burke et al., 2006; Derue et al., 2011; Peachey et al., 2015). We consider which leadership theories, behaviors, styles most align with the concept of legacy. The aim of this presentation is to offer a conceptual framework of legacy in sport leadership. It is also the intention of this presentation to put forward a path of inquiry into the role of legacy in different leadership and organizational contexts, such as professional, non-profit, and community. By understanding how legacy operates as a leadership intention, we hope to elucidate new possible modes of legacy-conscious leadership that might guide firms to both greater success and impact now, and in the future.