

Get ready to innovate! Staff's disposition to implement service innovation in non-profit sport organisations

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Abstract

While sport entrepreneurs are known for being risk-takers and for being proactive when implementing new ideas, little is known about individuals' attitudes within non-profit sport organisations. The present study draws on policy implementation and innovation theories to address this gap by investigating staff attitudes toward newness and its impact on innovativeness and change. An online survey was administered to representatives of regional sport federations in Belgium ($n=101$; 70 per cent response rate) in order to measure their attitude toward newness, the number of service innovation successfully implemented, and the levels of innovativeness and organisational change perceived. On average, sport federation staff show a positive attitude toward newness, which supports the implementation of service innovation. The number of service innovations and perceptions of innovativeness both have significant indirect effects on organisational change as perceived by individuals within sport federations. Managerial and policy implications are provided with regard to the need to develop positive attitude toward newness within non-profit sport organisations in order to foster innovation.

Keywords: service innovation; policy implementation, non-profit sport organisations; change; innovativeness

Introduction

Organisations face an increasingly competitive environment when trying to attract resources and grow. In response to this, they must differentiate themselves from competitors. One way of achieving this is to implement new services, products, and systems; in other words, to innovate (Damanpour 1991; Dess and Picken 2000; Lee, Ginn, and Naylor 2009; Tushman and O'Reilly 1996). Successful implementation of innovation can be viewed as a critical source of change (Fuglsang and Sundbo 2005; Hoffman and Hegarty 1993; Ramadani and Gerguri 2011), and relies heavily on the attitude (that is, evaluative beliefs regarding a particular entity) and support of key individuals within an organisation (Damanpour 1991; Musteen *et al.* 2010). Entrepreneurs are perceived as risk-takers when they develop and commercialise new ideas (Block *et al.* 2015; Kan and Tsai 2006; Stewart and Roth 2001), although some researchers have found no difference between entrepreneurs and managers in terms of their propensity to take risks (Brockhaus 1980; Masters and Meier 1988). While the non-profit sector is not known for particularly favouring risks and innovation (Hull and Lio 2006), little is known about individuals' attitude towards innovation within non-profit organisations, especially within the sport industry, which is seen as a sector in which managers are risk-takers and proactive (Ratten 2011a, 2011b; Ratten and Ferreira 2017).

Non-profit organisations (NPOs) are generally managed by a combination of board volunteers and employees. They exist within a competitive environment and strive for resources to provide services to their members and reach financial balance (McDonald 2007; Winand *et al.* 2012). NPOs face external control mechanisms (for example, scrutiny of regulatory bodies) and internal mechanisms (such as social mission and accountability to members), which restrict their strategic choice and decision-making flexibility (Anagnostopoulos *et al.* 2014; Damanpour 1996; Hull and Lio 2006; Winand and Hoerber 2017). Nevertheless, NPOs do engage in change processes as they develop new services to

satisfy and increase/maintain membership and financial support (McDonald 2007). Managers' attitude toward change is crucial for implementing successful innovation, as demonstrated by Musteen *et al.* (2010). Furthermore, research into policy implementation (Skille 2008; May *et al.* 2013) has stressed the importance of individuals in charge of implementing policies, which we understand as innovations in the present study. However, not existing studies have empirically examined either the disposition of these individuals to implement innovation or the extent to which their attitude explains organisational innovativeness and change. Drawing on policy implementation (Pressman and Wildavsky 1973; van Meter and van Horn 1975) and innovation theory (Damanpour 1991; Damanpour and Aravind 2012), the present study addresses this gap by examining the disposition of organisational individuals towards newness and the effect of service innovation implementation on organisational change in NPOs. Service innovation is defined as the introduction of new services to existing or new customers in order to increase the effectiveness of an organisation, its quality and/or customers' satisfaction (Damanpour and Aravind 2012; Lee *et al.* 2009; Ramadani and Gerguri 2011; Walker 2008). We address the following four main research questions: Do non-profit sport organisations' staff favour innovation? Do staff attitude explains successful implementation of service innovation? Do staff perceive their organisation innovates? Does service innovation impact organisational change?

Non-profit sport organisations (NPSOs) have been selected because it is only recently that NPSOs' managers have recognised the competitive pressure for performance and the need for their organisation to differentiate from commercial sport providers in developing new services (Vos *et al.* 2012). These organisations offer new activities (such as leisure sports and sport programmes) and services (for example, online services, sport equipment rental) in order to meet the expectations of their stakeholders (which can include members, government and sponsors) (Winand *et al.* 2016). NPSOs such as sport federations are a specific type of

NPOs, the study of which can inform the mainstream literature on non-profit management. The present study contributes to the literature on change and innovation by highlighting the important role that attitudes about newness play in service innovation and change management processes in NPSOs. The study contributes to the knowledge on service innovation as an important driver of organisational change within NPOs. Furthermore, it brings together theories on policy implementation and innovation to analyse non-profit organisational individuals' disposition to innovate.

The remainder of the study is structured as follows. First, we expand on the concepts of, and interconnection between, innovation and change, and suggest a theoretical framework to investigate the implementation of innovation through the lens of policy implementation, and subsequent change within NPSOs. This leads to the identification of hypotheses on the impact of attitudes toward newness on change, mediated by service innovation. We then present the method, including the research context, the analysed variables and the conducted statistical analysis. This is followed by presentation of the results and, finally, a discussion drawn from the analysis and research, along with suggestions for practical implications.

Innovation, Policy Implementation and Change

At the organisational level, innovation is usually defined in general terms, such as the adoption of an idea or behaviour that is new to the organisation (Crossan and Apaydin 2010; Damanpour 1996; Damanpour and Schneider 2006; Hage 1999; Hansen and Wakonen 1997; Perri 1993; Ramadani and Gerguri 2011). The new idea should be brought into use (Mohr 1969) and be useful for the adopter (Camisión-Zornoza *et al.* 2004). Activities or processes adopted by an organisation for the first time are considered to be innovations. Indeed, from an intra-organisational point of view, the concern is not so much that the idea is new to the sector but more that it is new to the organisation and the individuals adopting it. Innovative

organisations show high levels of innovativeness as they ‘exhibit innovative behaviour consistently over time’ (Subramanian and Nilakanta 1996, p. 633) by implementing successful innovations. Drawing on policy implementation, we consider innovation as policies that are implemented by organisational individuals. Implementation research is concerned with exploring why programmes and policies are developed occurred (Pressman and Wildavsky 1973). Two main approaches have been highlighted in policy implementation: top-down and bottom-up (Sabatier 1986). While the top-down approach considers that individuals at the local level would be expected to implement the policy decided at the upper level, the bottom-up approach applies a local contextual perspective to the development of policies. According to May *et al.* (2013), supporters of the top-down approach argue that successful implementation occurs when policies have well-defined objectives, clear levels of responsibility, a linear action plan and hierarchical authoritative relationships. However, the authors also argued that this approach fails to consider the level of cooperation and interpretation of the individuals responsible to implement the policy, their attitude, values and behaviour. These individuals should be considered as active agents (Skille 2008), as they are directly related to the success of the policy and might choose to approve or reject it. The bottom-up approach suggests the development of policies in consultation with local agents (Lipsky 1980). Researchers (deLeon and deLeon 2002; May, Harris and Collins 2013) feel that this approach is more realistic because it is tailored to the challenges faced at the local level and involves those agents who will implement the policy.

From the research on policy implementation, it is interesting to note that the disposition of implementers is a critical element for successful implementation, as identified by previous studies (Ewalt and Jennings 2004; Goggin *et al.* 1990; Mazmanian and Sabatier 1983; Van Meter and van Horn 1975). The innovation literature also recognises the critical role of implementing agents. Similar conceptual logics have been argued by innovation

theorists (Rogers 1995; Damanpour 1991; Van de Ven 1986). In order for innovation to be adopted and successfully put into practice, individuals need to gain knowledge about the innovations, be persuaded about their merits, decide to adopt them, put them into practice, and confirm (or reaffirm) their decision over time (Rogers 1995). In early stages of the development of innovations, managers' attitude is critical for innovation (Crossan and Apaydin 2010; Damanpour 1991; Damanpour and Schneider 2009; Frambach and Schillewaert 2002).

Eagly and Chaiken (1993, p.1) defined attitude as 'a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour.' Therefore, enthusiasm for change and newness is one of the key elements that facilitates innovation (Damanpour and Aravind 2012). In a study on innovation and change within NPOs, Musteen *et al.* (2010) showed that managers with liberal attitudes toward change favour innovation more than managers with conservative attitudes. Individual readiness for change and innovation – that is, the extent to which individuals perceive change as necessary, their capacity for developing it (Choi 2011) and willingness to accept new ideas (Damanpour and Schneider 2009) – is crucial through the innovation process (Rogers 2003).

Although innovativeness and organisational change are related, they should be seen as two different constructs. Innovativeness relates to the ability of the organisation to successfully offer new services or products and to keep offering these advances development over time (McDonald 2007; Subramanian and Nilakanta 1996). Organisational change is the introduction of practices that are different from those currently in use (Damanpour and Aravind 2012) and that impact the whole organisation, its structure, strategy, human resources, operations and even culture (Rowley *et al.* 2011; Slack and Hinings 1992). Individuals' perceptions of change (that is, their interpretation of organisational change based on an individual's knowledge) generated by innovation do impact organisations. According to

Greenhalgh *et al.* (2004, p. 598), 'people are not passive recipients of innovations.' They are actively involved in what occurs in their organisation and interpret organisational change from their individual perspective (Choi 2011). Therefore, individual interpretation is critical, given that the adoption of any innovation depends on how people perceive it in the context of their organisation and how they interact with it. Individuals' attitude towards innovation and their readiness for change can be related to the disposition of implementers in policy implementation research.

Previous research (Barett *et al.* 1995; Ford *et al.* 2008; Green 2004) has shown that individual interaction and perceptions of any change in the adoption process are more important than the objective advantages and results of that change. Perceptions of change within organisations are critical for engaging people in change management processes and innovation (Choi 2011). Furthermore, individuals' reactions to innovations and change in their organisation are likely to influence their beliefs regarding the development of future new ideas and change management processes, and therefore their attitude toward future innovations.

Non-profit sport organisations and innovation

NPSOs deliver sporting services to their members and are expected to develop or improve those services (Enjolras 2002; Hoeber *et al.* 2015). There are differences in terms of environmental demands, managerial roles, managerial perceptions, structures, decision-making processes and staff attitudes between for-profit and non-profit sectors and organisations (Damanpour 1991). NPSOs possess unique characteristics that influence the way change and innovations are perceived by their stakeholders, staff and managers. NPSOs are made up of paid staff and volunteers, have a mixed economy that balances grants, revenues from sponsorship and membership, and operate via a sport network, which means

they are regulated by national and international sport systems (Bayle 2005). Hull and Lio (2006) suggested that resistance to innovation and change is greater in NPOs than in for-profits. NPOs' staff are not profit-driven. They are motivated by societal change and recognition achieved through their work and their organisation (Mirvis *et al.* 1991; Hull and Lio 2006). The staff may not recognise the benefit or the need to innovate if they feel that it could prevent their ability to enact societal change. Thus, they would have negative attitude toward newness and would be risk-averse; this, according to Hull and Lio (2006), could explain why NPOs tend to be less innovative than for-profits. Nevertheless, some NPOs are willing to take risks by raising money and engaging in risky activities.

According to Newell and Swan (1995), NPSOs need to innovate in order to acquire the resources they require in order to survive and to promote their sport. Although Ratten (2011a) argued that sport is an entrepreneurial process in which being innovative, favouring risk, being proactive and creating value is crucial, NPSOs support and value tradition (Taylor 2004). NPSOs range from large, professional organisations that attract a lot of resources from membership, sponsors and media (such as FIFA and the International Olympic Committee) to small, amateur organisations run by volunteers that have few resources from grants and membership (for example, regional sport federations and local sport club). Some NPSOs are traditional/informal and appear to resist current management concepts, whereas others are contemporary/formal and are concerned about organisational performance (Taylor 2004). Response to change and innovation in these two types of NPSOs may vary, as would staff's disposition and attitude to implement innovation. Shilbury and Ferkins (2011) noted the culture change of national sport federations toward professionalisation, although this may not be shared at lower levels characterised by a heavily reliance on volunteers to deliver sport to the community. Nevertheless, research has shown that non-profit sport clubs exploit both internal and external sources to innovate, and that provide a valuable illustration of interactive

and open innovation (Hoeber and Hoeber 2012; Wemmer et al. 2016; Wemmer and Koenigstorfer 2016). Indeed, NPSOs develop new activities, initiatives or services for the first time in order to (better) satisfy their members and attract new ones (Newell and Swan 1995; Winand *et al.* 2013).

Previous research within the sport management field (Girginov and Sandanski 2008; Kikulis *et al.* 1992; Skinner *et al.* 1999; Slack and Hinings 1992) has highlighted how sporting organisations have undertaken organisational change processes to become more professionalised. However, the impact of service innovation on the organisation overall has not been fully empirically examined. Two notable exemptions exist in the current literature. Wemmer *et al.* (2016) identified that non-profit sport clubs that engage in collaboration-competition relationships (i.e. cooptation) and that they use external knowledge implement more innovations and perform better, according to their board members. Hoeber *et al.* (2015) demonstrated that NPSOs adopt administrative (e.g. online registration system) and technical (e.g. sport programs) innovations, mostly resulting in minor adjustments or changes. This latter study reports that radical innovations are also implemented and that they include new governance structure or corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities (Hoeber *et al.* 2015). The organisation of beach volleyball competitions is an example of service innovation adopted by non-profit volleyball organisations (that is, sport federations and clubs) that led to a change of structure and functioning, such as the creation of committees in charge of beach volleyball, its specific regulations and the monitoring of summer competitions.

Case studies on innovation in NPSOs have shown that a large part of innovation success is due to professional management and commitment, as well as innovation implementation (Caza 2000; Hoeber and Hoeber 2012; Winand *et al.* 2013). Innovation requires commitment from the individuals in NPSOs and an attitude that favours the development of new services. Research has highlighted the importance of committed

individuals (that is, innovation champions) who advocate for innovation in organisations, particularly when tradition is favoured over change, as in NPSOs (Hoerber and Hoerber 2012; Winand *et al.* 2013). In return, attitudes can be influenced by the perceptions that individuals have regarding the change that occurs following the implementation of innovation.

Research model, variables and hypotheses

The research model applies the concept of service innovation as a mediator and explores the relationship between attitude, innovation and change. Service innovation is separated into two different mediator variables: the number of successful service innovations implemented and the extent to which the organisation is innovative (that is, its level of innovativeness) as perceived by staff. Organisational change is understood as considerable change that has occurred in the activities, people and functioning of the organisation, as perceived by its staff. The conceptual mediation model is shown in Figure 1, with relevant hypotheses detailed below.

[Figure 1 about here]

Previous research (Damanpour 1991; Damanpour and Schneider 2009; Frambach and Schillewaert 2002; Musteen *et al.* 2010) has shown that attitudes toward newness are critical for conducting change management processes and implementing innovation. Managers from NPSOs whose attitude favours newness are likely to support change and innovation. They would perceive that their organisation has considerably changed (H1) and their positive attitude would favour the implementation of service innovations (H2). Successful innovative activities generate change that impacts the whole organisation, its functioning, structure and related activities (Damanpour and Aravind 2012; Grima and Trépo 2003; Slack and Hinings 1992) (H3). The number of successful service innovations developed by NPSOs is considered

to mediate the effect between attitude toward newness and organisational change (H4), as mentioned in the literature on readiness for change and innovation (Choi 2011; Rogers 2003).

H1: Attitude toward newness has a significant positive direct effect on organisational change.

H2: Attitude toward newness has a significant positive impact on service innovation.

H3: Successful service innovations have a significant positive impact on organisational change.

H4: Successful service innovations have a significant positive mediating effect between attitude toward newness and organisational change.

People are not passive recipients of innovation. They are actively involved in what occurs in their organisation (Choi 2011; Greenhalgh *et al.* 2004; Skille 2008) and, as such, interpret innovation and interact with each other. Therefore, an organisation that implements a high number of service innovations is likely to be perceived by its staff as innovative (H5). At the same time, individuals who favour newness are more likely to perceive that their organisation is innovative than those who favour the status quo (H6). Individuals' perceptions that their organisation is innovative are likely to have an impact on the change that they perceived has occurred (H7) (Damanpour and Aravind 2012; Grima and Trépo 2003; Slack and Hinings 1992). Innovativeness perceived by individuals is likely to mediate the effect between attitude toward newness and organisational change (H8).

H5: Successful service innovations have a significant positive impact on innovativeness.

H6: Attitude toward newness has a significant positive impact on innovativeness.

H7: Innovativeness has a significant positive impact on organisational change.

H8: Innovativeness has a significant positive mediating effect between attitudes toward newness and organisational change.

The effect that attitudes toward newness have on the perceptions that an organisation has changed is mediated by the number of successful service innovations and the degree to which people feel their organisation innovates (H9).

H9: Successful service innovations and innovativeness have a significant positive mediating effect between attitude toward newness and organisational change.

Methods

This section provides an overview of the data collection and analysis. It starts by introducing the research context and research design, and then presents the statistical analysis undertaken as well as the methodological limitations.

Research context

This study focuses on regional sport federations in Belgium that are recognised by the public authorities (that is, the Flemish or Walloon regions). As sport is organised and coordinated by the regions, most of the Belgian sport federations have had to split into regional sport federations in order to obtain grants from their governments (Scheerder *et al.* 2011).

Consequently, regional sport federations in Belgium are in charge of the tasks and activities that, in other countries, are normally associated with national sport federations in other countries. There are 144 regional sport federations in Belgium, which provide services to members and clubs in exchange for a membership fee (Piéron and De Knop 2000).

Research design

In this article we have analysed individuals' perceptions of innovativeness and change in sport federations. We developed an online survey in 2010 and sent it to the 144 regional sport federations in Belgium in order to assess their attitudes toward newness, innovativeness, the number of new services (that is, service innovation) their organisation had recently implemented, and perceptions of organisational change. One key individual (such as the chair, the general secretary, the administrative or sport director) in each sport federation was invited to complete the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to rate 12 items (statements) on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). The questionnaire was intended to assess attitudes toward the development of new services, perceptions that their sport federation is innovative and perceptions that their sport federation has changed considerably over the last five years (for full details on each scale used, see Winand *et al.* 2013). Respondents were also asked to identify new services that their sport federation had implemented between 2006 and 2010, according to a list of general categories. A similar approach to collect data on service innovations was designed by Subramanian and Nilakanta (1996), who used a list of services adopted by banks. Categories in the present questionnaire referred to services sport federations can offer (for example, organisation of sports disciplines, sports activities for young or elderly members, websites, and elite sports training system). Respondents described these services and provided information about their sustainability over time. Four years was the period during which a service could still be considered new, which is in line with the sport federations' quadrennial strategic plans and studies that have imposed a time restriction (Gopalakrishnan and Damanpour 2000; Jaskyte 2013; Jaskyte and Dressler 2005; Subramanian and Nilakanta 1996). We computed the total number of new services developed by each sport federation, after first filtering them their descriptions in order to include only successful new services; that is, services implemented for the first time during the preceding four years (between 2006 and 2010) and which were continually in place.

In total, 101 sport federations participated in the survey; a response rate of 70 per cent. Respondents possessed sufficient experience within their sport federation in order to provide reliable answers and assess recent changes. The average level of experience within their sport federation was 11.8 years ($SD=6.9$) and 80 per cent of respondents had at least five years of experience. The majority of respondents were managers (39 per cent administrative managers and 24 per cent sport managers), followed by board volunteers (15 per cent chairs and 22 per cent general secretaries).

Statistical analysis

The statistical analysis aimed to identify relationships between variables, particularly the mediating effects of service innovation and innovativeness between attitudes toward newness and organisational change perceived. Principal component analysis (Jolliffe 2002) was used to construct factors, validated by Cronbach's alpha (Cortina 1993), related to the attitude toward newness, innovativeness and organisational change. We computed the average score for each factor through the average scores of items per factor and measured the average number of new services successfully implemented in the previous four years. Correlational analysis between variables and hierarchical multiple regression was performed using SPSS 19 to investigate the relationship between variables and the factors (that is, attitudes towards newness, number of successful service innovation and level of innovativeness) predicting organisational change with the control variables status of the respondents (volunteer vs manager), type of sport (featuring at the Olympic Games or not), and organisational size (measured by the number of affiliated members; Winand *et al.* 2014). Multicollinearity was tested using the variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance (Bowerman and O'Connell 1990; Menard 1995), and the normal distribution of residuals was tested using the Shapiro-Wilk test with SPSS 19. Finally, the mediation effects of service innovation and innovativeness were measured through a

parallel multiple mediator model (Model 6, Hayes 2013), executed with SPSS 19 and the PROCESS procedure developed by Hayes (2013).

Limitations

The response rate was high (70 per cent) and gave a good representation of sport federations, although some sport federations that are not innovative might have chosen not to answer the questionnaire. Method variance generated in the present study is acknowledged given that the perceptions and innovation activity was provided by a single respondent from each sport federation. Although no directives were provided about whom the respondent should be, other than that they should be at strategic or managerial positions, or what the questionnaire intended to assess (that is, service innovation and change), sport federations might have asked individuals who advocate innovation that could favour a pro-innovation attitude. Therefore, not all individuals within the organisation would necessarily have had the same attitudes as the person who answered the survey. However, the respondents did have a high level of experience and knowledge within their organisation, which allowed them to identify the services their sport federation developed and assess the level of change that has occurred in their organisation. Perceptions were collected according to closed questions for which a degree of agreement was requested. This process allows for cross-sectional analysis in order to compare the sport federations surveyed, but might have restricted the nuance each respondent would have wanted to provide. Only service innovations that were continually in place were kept for analysis, hence focusing on the number of successful service innovation and assuming each is worth the same by neglecting their radicalness.

[Table 1 about here]

Results

This section presents the results of the research for the attitude toward newness, number of service innovations implemented, and perceptions of innovativeness and of organisational change. The hypotheses within the mediation model are also tested.

Attitude, perceptions and service innovation

Table 1 presents the factor analysis showing three consistent factors (loadings $>.6$ and Cronbach's alpha $>.7$) of (1) organisational change, (2) innovativeness and (3) attitude toward newness. Table 2 shows average scores for these three factors. On average, respondents indicated an attitude favouring the development of new services ($m_a=3.82$; $SD=.59$) and perceived that their sport federation is innovative ($m_{pi}=3.53$; $SD=.85$) and has changed ($m_{pc}=3.60$; $SD=.87$). The average number of new services that sport federations developed during the preceding four-year period was 4.53 ($SD=3.32$). During the four-year period, sport federations implemented an average of one service innovation a year. These service innovations are new and different from what sport federations have done in the past. They relate to the core activity of sport federations – such as organising sport competitions, running sport programmes and offering training opportunities – as well as new services operated in support to sport federations' core activity, such as administrative procedures, staff training and online services. The majority of respondents (60 per cent) had attitudes favouring newness and perceived that organisational change has occurred, although 11 per cent of respondents had attitudes favouring newness but did not recognise change has occurred. A further 11 per cent of respondents had attitude that did not favour newness but recognised change had occurred. Consequently, although related, attitude towards newness is different from the perceptions that change has occurred. A small portion of individuals perceived change to have happened, but did not have positive attitudes towards newness.

[Table 2 about here]

Table 2 shows correlational coefficients between variables. Attitude toward newness is significantly correlated ($r=0.21$; $p<.05$) to the number of service innovations implemented by sport federations. Attitude favouring newness supports the development of service innovations. Innovativeness and organisational change perceived are significantly correlated ($r=0.35$; $p<.01$), and both are significantly correlated to the number of service innovations implemented ($r=0.26$; $p<.01$ and $r=0.34$; $p<.01$). Logically, individuals from sport federations that implement a higher number of service innovations perceive their organisation as innovative and as having changed considerably. Finally, innovativeness and organisational change are significantly correlated ($r=0.32$; $p<.01$ and $r=0.37$; $p<.01$) to the attitude toward newness. A strong attitude favouring newness is related to a high level of perceptions that organisations are innovative and that they have changed.

[Table 3 about here]

Hierarchical multiple regression was employed to predict perceived organisational change (Table 3). A four-step predication model was applied with model 1 (not significant) presenting control variables volunteer, Olympic and size. Model 2 ($p<.05$) included the attitude toward newness variable. Model 3 ($p<.01$) added the number of service innovations variable to Model 2. Model 4 ($p<.001$) added the innovativeness variable. Model 4 (Table 3) with control variables predicts 28 per cent of the variance in perceived organisational change through attitude towards newness ($r=.29$, $p=.05$), service innovation ($r=.06$, $p<.05$) and innovativeness ($r=.28$, $p<.01$). Tolerance and VIF were between 0.84–0.99 and 1–1.19, respectively, so there is no multicollinearity (Bowerman and O'Connell 1990; Menard 1995)

between variables in the Hierarchical multiple regression, and residuals are shown to be normally distributed ($p=.41$).

[Figure 2 and Table 4 about here]

Mediation model

The total effect of attitude toward newness on organisational change is significant ($c_t=0.55$; $SE=.137$). This is broken down into significant direct ($c'=0.35$; $SE=.138$) and indirect ($c_i=0.20$; $SE=.088$) effects. Figure 2 and Table 4 present the direct effect of attitude toward newness on organisational change and isolated impacts between variables. Table 5 shows the indirect effects of the mediator variables; that is, service innovation and innovativeness. Tolerance and VIF are 0.84–0.89 and 1.12–1.19, respectively, so there is no multicollinearity (Bowerman and O'Connell 1990; Menard 1995) between variables in the mediation model presented in Figure 2.

Hypotheses 1–3 and 5–7 are validated by the mediation analysis presented in Table 4. Attitude toward newness has a significant direct effect (c') on organisational change (H1). Attitude toward newness has a significant impact ($a_1=1.28$; $SE=.527$) on service innovation (H2). The number of successful service innovations has a significant impact ($b_1=0.06$; $SE=.025$) on organisational change (H3). The number of service innovations has a significant impact ($d_{21}=0.06$; $SE=.026$) on innovativeness (H5). Attitude toward newness has a significant impact ($a_2=0.41$; $SE=.139$) on innovativeness (H6). Innovativeness has a significant impact ($b_2=0.25$; $SE=.097$) on organisational change (H7). Attitude favouring newness supports the implementation of service innovation, which leads to higher level of innovativeness and organisational change perceived. The number of successful service

innovations implemented by sport federations has a direct effect on the perceptions that organisations are innovative and have changed.

[Table 5 about here]

The indirect effects of service innovations and innovativeness – that is, mediating effects between attitude toward newness and organisational change – are presented in Table 5 and relate to Hypotheses 4, 8 and 9 in Figure 1. These effects use the Bootstrap method for significance (Bollen and Stine 1992). All indirect effects are significant at 95 per cent confidence intervals (that is, Bootstrap intervals exclude '0'). The number of successful service innovations has a significant mediating effect ($Ind_1=0.08$; $SE=.05$) between attitude toward newness and organisational change (H4). Innovativeness has a significant mediating effect ($Ind_3=0.10$; $SE=.063$) between attitude toward newness and organisational change (H8). The number of service innovations and innovativeness has a significant mediating effect ($Ind_2=0.02$; $SE=.016$) between attitude toward newness and organisational change (H9). This model explains 27 per cent of the variance in organisational change perceived ($R^2=0.269$; $p<.001$).

Discussion

Contrary to Hull and Lio (2006), who argued that staff of NPOs are risk-averse and might not see the benefit to innovate and change, the present study showed that managers and board volunteers within NPSOs do in fact favour newness, even if it carries risk. Hence, they are disposed to innovate. As previous research has shown (e.g., Vos *et al.* 2012; Winand *et al.* 2013; Winand and Hoerber 2017) one factor that could encourage such attitudes is the competitive pressure for performance at national and local levels. The context and sport

system to which NPSOs belong and operate in could foster innovation and the creation of added value to membership in line with what has been coined as ‘sport entrepreneurship’ (Ratten 2011b). Alongside the professionalisation of NPSOs (Girginov and Sandanski 2008), personnel therein might become more open to change as a result of external pressures. This suggestion is also in line with Shilbury and Ferkins (2011), who noted a sector in transition toward professionalisation with NPSO’s boards increasingly realising their role in terms of governance, and consequently the need to perform and innovate. Moreover, the present study demonstrates that individuals’ positive attitude toward newness fosters the implementation of service innovation within sport federations. This finding is in accordance with previous research on innovation (Crossan and Apaydin 2010; Damanpour 1991; Damanpour and Aravind 2012; Damanpour and Schneider 2009; Frambach and Schillewaert 2002) and with policy implementation research (deLeon and deLeon 2002; Lipsky 1980; May *et al.* 2013; Skille 2008) supporting the idea that the disposition of active agents explains successful implementation. Individuals within NPSOs are not passive recipients of service innovation but, on the contrary, as also suggested by Greenhalgh *et al.* (2004), tend to perceive and interpret change. Attitudes toward newness and individuals’ perceptions seem to play a key role in the implementation of service innovation in NPSOs, and ultimately in change processes.

Furthermore, the current study demonstrates that service innovation is a key mediating variable between attitude toward newness and perceptions that considerable change has occurred. This result supports previous studies (e.g., Damanpour and Aravind 2012; Musteen *et al.* 2010; Rowley *et al.* 2011) in suggesting that innovation in general is a major source of change, by demonstrating its application to the context of NPSOs, particularly that service innovation is a key driver of organisational change within NPSOs. In return, perceptions that change has occurred seem to favour a positive attitude toward newness and innovation,

thereby strengthening the disposition to implement innovation. These results suggest that reinforcing perceptions within NPSOs that successful innovation and change have occurred would strengthen a positive attitude toward newness, thereby facilitating future innovations and change. This supports the underlying assumption about the readiness for change and the *unfreezing process* (Choi 2011; Lewin 1947/1997) that precedes change; that is, the process by which people beliefs and attitude are modified so that they perceive change as necessary and likely to succeed. This finding may be transferable to the theory of policy implementation as local agents' dispositions toward future policy would be influenced by previous (un)successful implementation.

The findings herein have implications for research on the broader context of NPOs. NPOs have generally been thought of as risk-adverse. However, the current study argues that the opposite idea could also be the case, as the NPOs under examination can embrace and support innovation. Moreover, sport federations' staff favour consulting sport clubs about innovative ideas; this is in line with the bottom-up approach of implementing policies (Lipsky 1980). However, further investigation is necessary in order to identify the extent to which clubs and local agents are being consulted. Respondents considered sport federations that implement a higher number of service innovations as more innovative. However, as Hoerber *et al.* (2015) showed recently, the magnitude of change these services have generated (the radicalness attribute) could have fluctuated from radical to incremental. More specifically, Rowley *et al.* (2011) argued that service innovation results in incremental innovations – that is, improvement of service to make it more attractive to users – and not radical change. Further studies could measure the impact of service innovation on organisational change by assessing the degree of radicalness (that is, radical versus incremental) of service innovations and their impact on the whole organisation. There is a need to study the processes of change and innovation in NPOs, a core activity of which is to provide services. Such research would

allow a better understanding of the innovation process in NPOs; that is, the factors that facilitate and/or constrain the innovation to occur from the formulation all the way to the implementation phase, thereby better informing decision makers.

As for practical implications, it is necessary for organisational actors in NPOs to develop positive attitudes toward newness in order to facilitate the implementation of innovation. New ideas should help fulfil the organisation's mission, its performance, and what motivates NPOs' staff – namely, social change and recognition (Mirvis *et al.* 1991) – for instance through sporting achievement for NPSOs. Spreading those beneficial contributions and previous successful innovations through different communication channels within a NPO might reinforce the positive attitudes of individuals toward newness. Although 11 per cent of respondents in the present study did recognise that change had occurred but did not have an attitude favouring newness, it seems important that communication and information sharing systems within NPOs spread the message that successful innovation and change occurs in order to facilitate positive attitude toward newness in the future. Individuals across all levels within NPOs should be made aware through internal email communication, activity reports and/or acknowledgment of successful innovations at general assemblies and events that their organisation innovates and has changed. This can potentially strengthen staff readiness for change and facilitate future innovations. The role of individuals in change and innovation management processes within NPOs could be investigated further. Given that personnel, particularly within the nonprofit sport setting, demonstrate a high degree of passion for their work (see Anagnostopoulos *et al.* 2016), the influence of key individuals and their profile (for example, an innovation champion encouraging colleagues to embrace innovation) could be highlighted, as could any incentive for innovation in the non-profit context that might highlight how service innovation contributes to societal change and recognition that NPOs' staff seek through their organisation. Further research could also examine the impact of

innovation on readiness for change within NPOs, particularly how much people's awareness of previous successful innovation impacts their attitude to newness and future innovations.

Sport policy makers could use the present findings to foster innovation in sport organisations by incentivising change and newness and rewarding those (organisations or individuals) that make it happen. Reinforcing positive disposition towards innovation would encourage a bottom-up approach, the implementation of innovation, and change within sport organisations.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to analyse service innovation within sport federations as a mediator between attitude and organisational change. This is the first study to show empirically that NPSOs are not generally resistant to innovation. In fact, volunteers and employees within NPSOs demonstrated positive attitudes toward newness, which is crucial in the implementation of new ideas. The present paper contributes to the literature on non-profit and innovation by demonstrating the important role of organisational actors' attitude in service innovation implementation. Bringing together policy implementation and innovation theories, this paper contributes by identifying a key determinant of innovation in non-profit; namely, the attitude or disposition of organisational actors towards newness. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that the particular type of innovation investigated in the sport context – service innovation – is an important driver for organisational change. Finally, it suggests a retroactive relationship between attitude, innovation and change, whereas awareness of successful innovations and subsequent change that has occurred would reinforce positive attitude toward future innovation. This finding contributes to the literature on policy implementation as local agents' dispositions or attitude would be affected by previous successful implementation of policies and their overall impact.

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Table 1: Factor analysis of the attitude toward newness, innovativeness and organisational change

	Loadings	Eigenvalues	% of variance	Reliability alpha
FACTOR 1 : ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE				
1.1 These last five years, we considerably change the activities and services offered to our members	.829	3.63	40.31	.79
1.2 These last five years, we considerably change our board members	.805			
1.3 These last five years, the functioning of our sport federation has considerably changed	.782			
FACTOR 2 : INNOVATIVENESS				
2.1 Our sport federation provide innovative services	.901	1.54	17.06	.86
2.2 Our sport federation is innovative	.877			
FACTOR 3 : ATTITUDE TOWARD NEWNESS				
3.1 Sport federations should deliver new expectations of their members	.802	1.12	12.41	.73
3.2 Suggestions of sports clubs should be taken into account	.779			
3.3 Each sport federation should invest in the development of new services	.685			
3.4 More financial investments (even risky) should be achieved by sport federations to develop new services for members	.625			

Note. Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 4 iterations
69.78 % of variance explained by the three factors. Reliability: Cronbach's alpha
Nine of the 12 items showed significance (>.4)

Table 2: Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients between factors

	Mean	SD	Min	Max	1	2	3	4
Service innovation	4.53	3.32	0	15	1			
Attitude toward newness	3.82	.59	2	5	.21*	1		
Innovativeness	3.53	.85	1	5	.32**	.26**	1	
Organisational change	3.60	.87	1	5	.37**	.34**	.35**	1

Note. N=99, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 3: Hierarchical multiple regression (n=91) predicting organisational change from attitude toward newness, number of service innovations and innovativeness.

Predictor variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Volunteer	-.16	-.14	-.07	-.07
Olympic	.11	.1	.11	.12
Size	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
Attitude toward newness		.49***	.38*	.29#
Service innovation			.08**	.06*
Innovativeness				.28**
R ²	.02	.13	.21	.28
R ² change	.02	.11	.08	.07
Significance of F Change	.63	.001	.004	.009

Note. # p=.05, * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001; Tolerance [.84 - .99]; VIF [1 - 1.19]

Table 4: Regression Coefficients, Standard Errors, and Model Summary Information for the direct and indirect effects of attitude toward newness on organisational change mediated by service innovation and innovativeness.

Antecedent	Consequent											
	M ₁ (Service innovation)			M ₂ (Innovativeness)			Y (Organisational change)					
	Coeff.	SE	p	Coeff.	SE	p	Coeff.	SE	p			
X (Att. newness)	a_1	1.276	0.527	.017	a_2	0.410	0.139	.004	c'	0.349	0.138	.013
M ₁ (Service innov.)	-----	-----	-----	d_{21}	0.059	0.026	.024	b_1	0.062	0.025	.016	
M ₂ (Perc. innov.)	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	b_2	0.251	0.097	.011	
Constant	i_{M1}	-0.395	2.037	.847	i_{M2}	1.694	0.521	.002	i_Y	1.116	0.522	.035
		R ² =0.057				R ² =0.160				R ² =0.269		
		F(1, 97) = 5.875, p=.017				F(2, 96) = 9.118, p<.001				F(3, 95) = 11.649, p<.001		

Note. Coefficients are unstandardized

Table 5: Indirect effect(s) of attitude toward newness on organisational change

Effect	SE	95% Lower Bound CI	95% Upper Bound CI
Total	0.201	0.088	0.076 0.414
Ind1	0.080	0.050	0.011 0.209
Ind2	0.019	0.016	0.002 0.068
Ind3	0.103	0.063	0.014 0.281

Note.

Ind1: Att. newness -> Service innovation -> Organisational change

Ind2: Att. newness -> Service innovation -> Innovativeness -> Organisational change

Ind3: Att. newness -> Innovativeness -> Organisational change

Figure 1: Conceptual mediation model and hypotheses

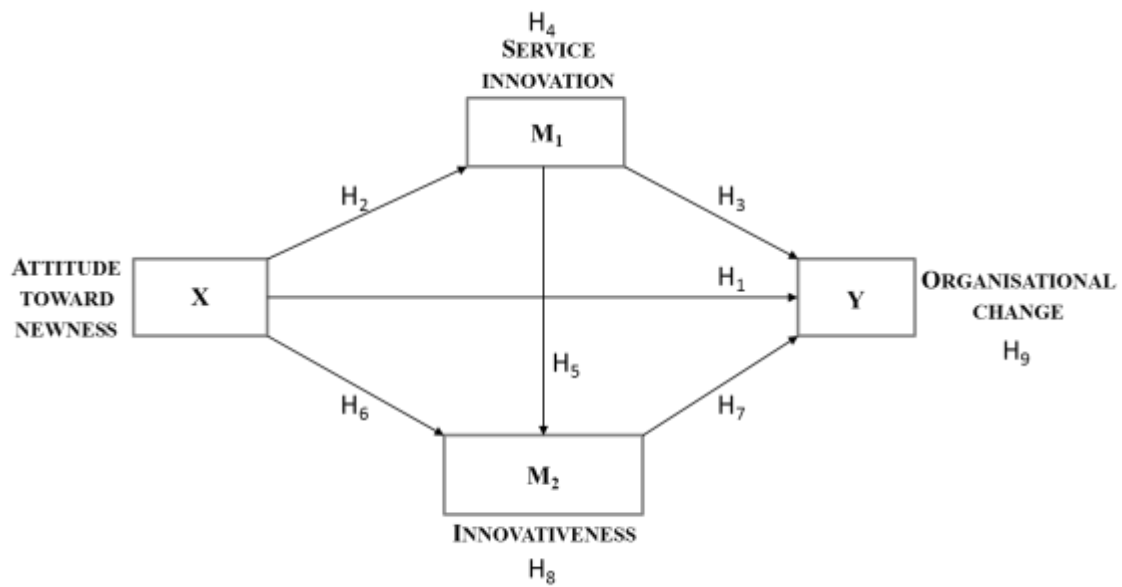
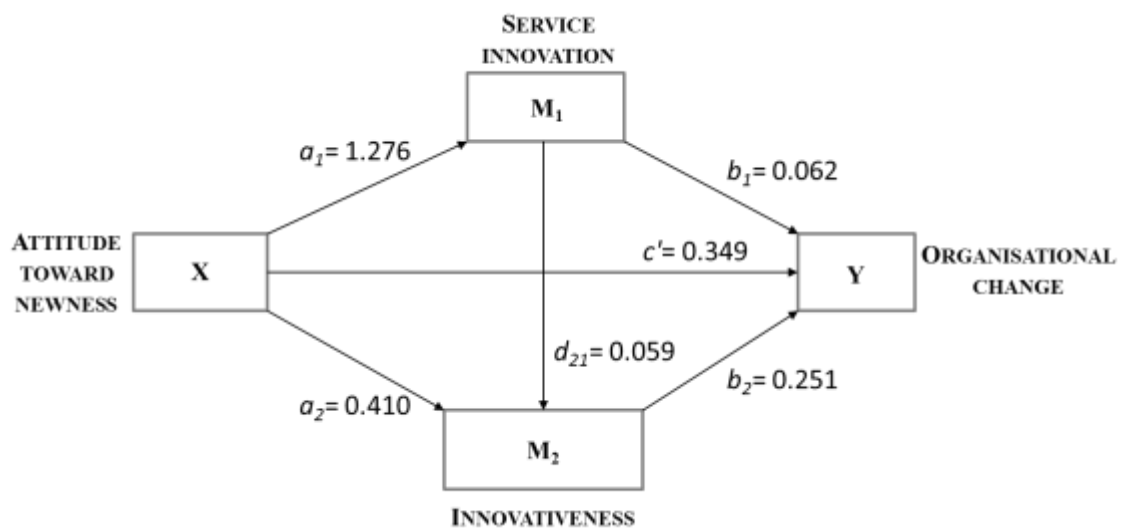


Figure 2: Mediation model for perceptions of organisational change



Note. Coefficients are unstandardized. All coefficients are statistically significant