Insights about Publishing Qualitative Research From 'Reviewer 2': Conversations and Collective Learning

Larena Hoeber, University of Regina
Katie Sveinson, Temple University
Sally Shaw, University of Otago
Katie Misener, University of Waterloo
Kyle Rich, Brock University
Chen Chen, University of Alberta

Method - Other (Other)
60-minute symposium, roundtable, or workshop
Session: Symposium/Roundtable/Workshop 2

Journal editors and reviewers are accountable to the field as key players in the dissemination and communication of research. There have been numerous workshops and articles published on submitting manuscripts, writing reviews, and responding to reviews (see Cunningham et al., 2018; Gardner, 2020; Vogelsang Lester, 2020; Zhang et al., 2020). While these are helpful in providing overall guidelines, few devote significant time or space to aspects of rigour related to qualitative methodologies and methods. When advice is provided on methods in sport management, the focus is more often on quantitative work (e.g., Byon & Zhang, 2019; Kim & Lee, 2019).

The purpose of this workshop is to address the question of rigour of qualitative research in sport management. We aim to achieve this purpose by sharing our insights as reviewers, answering questions that scholars may have about qualitative research, and discussing some of the opportunities for and improvements to qualitative journal submissions. The epithet of ‘reviewer 2’ is often invoked as a malevolent or insurmountable figure (Peterson, 2020). In this interactive workshop, we invoke it to stimulate discussions that will challenge participants to unsettle their assumptions and explore the epistemological, ontological, and methodological groundings of their work (Newman, 2014). Potential topics to be covered include designs, positionality and reflexivity, epistemologies and ontologies, axiology, and data analysis approaches.

We see a need for this workshop for three reasons. First, there has been growth in the use of qualitative research methods in the sport management field, which means more qualitative work is being submitted to and accepted in our journals (Shaw & Hoeber, 2017; Singer et al., 2019). Second, in spite of this growth, one of the challenges - particularly for novice researchers - is that concepts, approaches, and guidelines for qualitative research methodologies continue to evolve (Wolfhart, 2020). Third, many undergraduate and graduate sport management programs still do not have specific course requirements and training related to qualitative methodologies (James, 2018). As Reviewers, we are responsible for supporting research development and are accountable to continue our own learning related to methodologies. This workshop is a response to Wolfhart’s (2020, p. 1) call for “experienced researchers to accompany us on this path” of learning about qualitative methodologies.

We propose this workshop in the spirit of collective learning. As workshop leaders, we identified proposed topics based on our lived experiences and positions as qualitative researchers, reviewers, and editors. Western academia, characterized by Euro-white supremacy, colonialism, and epistemological racism, has been actively attempting to exclude, erase, and/or delegitimize ways of being, knowing, and knowledge production protocols and processes of the marginalized ‘other’ communities that do not fit the criteria of ‘objective’ and/or ‘rigorous’ scientism (Grande, 2018; Smith, 2012). Sport management scholars have voiced similar concerns (Chen & Mason, 2019; Singer, 2005; Stewart-Withers et al., 2017). We hope that through continued conversation and reflection, we can strengthen the qualitative methodological rigour in sport management and better achieve our research aims.