



Master's degree thesis

IDR950 Sport Management

Are we ready to innovate? Organizational readiness for innovation into non-profit sport organizations. A case study of Norwegian Sports Federations.

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Preface

First and foremost, I want to thank my sister for being the greatest support in pursuing my dream of an international master's degree. I have the greatest gratitude for her, knowing that without her incentive, I wouldn't have the intellectual development and career uplift I gained over the past two years. Thank you to my parents for educating a strong character in me and making me the fearless, unstoppable woman I am today. Thank you for believing in every step of mine and pushing me to my fullest potential. Thank you to my brother for always supporting me! Exceptional thanks go to my twin nieces for bringing so much joy in my life and unconsciously becoming a big impetus during this exacting journey of achieving an international master's degree.

Proud is the emotion I am feeling as I think about my milestones! This thesis development is a result of my childhood and youth years in elite gymnastics which settled a strong passion for sports in me. All the difficulties I faced in such a small country like Albania reinforced the desire to study sport management, where I could be able to learn how to manage and develop a sport organization, to offer unlimited opportunities for athletes that dream big. Thank you, Molde Turnforening, in particular Kari and Seada, for opening all the doors for me, giving me the opportunities to show myself and all I have learned during my whole career and especially during my master's at Molde University College.

These two years at Molde University College have raised my academic skills, and I have grown as a person. Through the two years of my master's studies, I have had an internship at Protomore Kunnskapsparken, and I am very thankful for the opportunity. I want to thank Birnir Egilsson for the supervision and all the support given during the four months of my internship, in which I have learned a lot, and I hope they appreciate my efforts.

Last but not least, I would like to express my greatest gratitude to all the professors of the Sport Management department of Molde University College for two fantastic years full of invaluable academic knowledge. Special thanks go to my supervisor, Christos Anagnostopoulos, for his precious advice since the beginning of this study program, especially for his assistance and motivation conveyed during the accomplishment of this dissertation.

I feel proud that all the choices I have made until today brought me where I am now, writing a master thesis in Norway despite the global pandemic the world is facing since the beginning of my master's journey. Therefore, I hope my journey motivates the forthcoming students and they or/and other colleagues find use in this thesis as I found in many theses of antecedent postgraduates.

This thesis is dedicated to my mother. I strongly wish she is proud of me and even more of herself for being a noble-minded role model for her girl.

Oneda Reçi

Molde, 2022

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The author would like to thank all the participants for their valuable contribution to the provision of the research data, and Annika Bodemar, Oskar Solenes, and Solveig Straume for their assistance in ensuring higher participation in the data collection. Finally, sincere gratitude goes for Christos Anagnostopoulos for his precious guidance in writing this dissertation.

Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the perceived organizational readiness for innovation of sport managers and the opportunities and challenges they face with it when trying to implement an innovative change into the organization. Aiming to fill a gap in the literature and aid the onward studies in the sports management sector, this dissertation aspires to develop a contextual framework of organizational readiness for innovation relying on its interpretation by leaders of Norwegian sports federations. A qualitative study method will be used in order to gain a rich comprehension of the perceived organizational readiness from the sports managers perspective. It is considered the best way to effectively develop the framework because of the interpretative nature of the study and the organizational level in which the analysis will be based. The study will try to understand the fundamental nature of organizational readiness through the subjective eyes of the interviewed sport managers. Data collection was performed through in-depth interviews, which were analysed by thematic analysis throughout which codes, themes and patterns emerged and formed the conceptual framework of organizational readiness for innovation in non-profit sports organizations. Findings discovered the enablers and barriers of organizational readiness to innovate. Sport managers faced high resistant attitudes of organizational members when trying to innovate, therefore they are seen as important drivers of innovation, who can centre their strategies towards the enablers of organizational readiness for innovation in order to empower members' readiness and promote innovation in their organization. The theoretical framework applied to this study is useful in understanding organisational readiness and exploring the barriers that block innovation implementation and the enablers that facilitate it. It can further assist all sports managers in creating readiness for change to organizational members when aiming innovative initiatives in the organization.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction and purpose of chapter 1

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with the background needed to understand the concept of organizational readiness in sport. First, how the motivation to conduct a master thesis research on this topic arose. Second, addressing the absence of theoretical and empirical studies of organizational readiness, particularly in the sports context. Then it carries on by explaining the importance of further empirical research on organizational readiness for change in the sport's sector and the reasons why sports organizations should ensure high organizational readiness for innovation before implementing innovative operations into non-profit sports organizations, arguing that it is an essential element of successful innovation implementation. In addition, the research question is presented, followed by the aim and research objectives.

The chapter is concluded by an outline of the thesis's structure, presenting the content of each chapter included in this dissertation in order to get a better overview of the study cycle.

1.2 Motivation

My second year of master suddenly got a focus into innovation and entrepreneurship, first starting with the seminar in leadership and innovation, which challenged my entrepreneurial skills and second assisting in the 'Adventure Management' course. Following with the opportunity to participate in the 'Sportpreneurship' workshop between the Nordic and Baltic countries and the four months internship in an innovation center such as Protomore Kunnskapsparken, really got me into innovation and entrepreneurship. Being introduced with the needs of sport organizations to innovate and challenges they face meanwhile, intrigued my interest to explore into their readiness for innovation. Because, of course, organizational needs are strong incentives for change and innovation, but in order for the change to be successfully implemented, an organization needs to be ready for it.

Sincerely thanking Solveig Straume, Christos Anagnostopoulos and Birnir Egilsson for offering me all these opportunities and believing in my potential, I decided to undertake this master's dissertation exploring the organizational readiness for innovation of Norwegian (SSOs) from the individuals perspective.

1.2 Background

“Successful organizational change is highly dependent on an organization’s readiness (i.e., organizational culture, strategy or direction) and capacity to change (i.e., systems)” (Oakland and Tanner, 2007 in Casey et al., 2012, p. 111). Change management experts have emphasized the importance of establishing organizational readiness for change and recommended various strategies for creating it. “Change management is well-documented in the business and management literature.” (Casey et al., 2012, p.112). Although organizational readiness has been subject of extensive research in different disciplines such as: natural and applied sciences (Hutapea et al., 2021), especially in the healthcare system (Lehman et al., 2002; Schultz et al., 2017; Alwheeb and Rea, 2017; Shea, 2014), in business management (e.g., Weeks et al., 2004; Hussain and Papastathopoulos, 2022; Lokuge et al., 2019; Thorley et al., 2021), and in social sciences, in the context of implementation of health initiatives (Casey et al., 2012), there is limited research exploration of these issues, neither efforts to develop a conceptual framework or advance measurements in the sport context. “A conceptual framework involves concepts involved in a study and the hypothesised relationships between them.” (Veal and Darcy, 2014, p. 67) Furthermore, a high volume of research work discusses the need to evaluate the readiness aspect as an important point prior to any further act for applying new changes. (Weiner, 2009) Therefore, scholars call for more research on this topic in order to provide organizations, administrators, practitioners, and students with valuable, necessary instructions for initiating change in an organization. In the absence of theoretical studies on organizational readiness for innovative change in the sports sector, a contextual framework for non-profit sports organizations still lacks in the literature of sports management. That being the case, this dissertation endeavors to interrogate sports managers of Norwegian Sports Federations about the perceived understanding of organizational readiness for innovation, to address this gap, and develop a conceptual model, which will provide practitioners with valuable instruction to establish sufficient readiness accounting for one-half of all unsuccessful, large-scale organizational change efforts (Weiner, 2009), and will promote onward scholarly debate and stimulate empirical inquiry into an important, yet understudied topic in implementation science. Understanding an organization’s readiness for change is significant for gaining stakeholder support, providing appropriate leadership and direction, and planning change programs (Oakland and Tanner, 2007 in Cassey et al., 2012, p.111).

1.3 Research Question

Change is an essential issue of sports organizations to be consistently successful, reach competitive advantage and reveal their full potential. Simultaneously, it is one of the hardest initiatives to be implemented successfully in a sports organization. The sports ecosystem has been experiencing many disruptive changes during the last decade and, sports organizations have faced the need to be continuously innovative to survive and remain competitive. Winand and Anagnostopoulos (2017) point out that successful implementation of innovation can be viewed as a critical source of change, and positive attitudes towards the newness of key individuals within an organization are crucial to this process. That being the case, sports managers need to understand the organization's readiness for innovation when identifying a need for a new change in their organization so that they can breed collaboration to identify the appropriate operations to be changed and ensure a successful implementation of the innovative initiatives. Hence, naturally arises the question:

How do sport managers perceive organizational readiness for innovation in the Norwegian Sports Federations?

The study was set in Norway, and specifically Norwegian Sport Federations that had implemented innovative changes in the organization.

Sub research questions are:

- *What are the elements that make organizational members ready to innovate?*
- *What are the barriers of readiness for innovation?*

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceived organizational readiness for innovation of Norwegian sports federations and the opportunities and challenges sports managers face when trying to implement an innovative change into the organization.

1.4 Research aim

The main purpose of the project is to investigate the perceived organizational readiness for innovation of Norwegian Sports federations and the opportunities and challenges sports managers face when trying to implement an innovative change into the organization. It aims

to develop a conceptual framework within which non-profit sports organizations are guided to create organizational readiness before starting innovation implementation into the organization.

1.5 Research Objectives

To reach the research aim the following objectives are defined:

- To understand the concept of organizational readiness for change.
- Investigate the determinants of organizational readiness for change into Norwegian sports federations.
- To offer a conceptual framework that can be helpful for all sports organizations when preparing to make innovative changes into their organization.
- To offer recommendations on creating organizational readiness for change and how to successfully implement a necessary innovation in a non-profit sports organization.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

This dissertation is organized in six chapters:

- *Chapter one – Introduction*

The current chapter has already set an introduction on how this research will progress. The purpose, the motivation and the background of the research are presented as a first glance on the field of interest this paper is located. In addition, the research question, the research aim, the research objectives and a brief introduction on the structure of the thesis is layed out.

- *Chapter two – Literature review*

This chapter provides the reader with a preseantation of the organizational readiness for change theory used in the research study, followed by the concept of innovation and its types. Secondly, it connects together the main concepts, readiness and innovativeness, and finally both concepts are put into the context of sports, in which the study was carried out.

- *Chapter three - Methodology*

This chapter introduces the reader with the methodology used to analyze the data gathered and outlines the rationale for the selected approach to answering the research question. It provides a detailed description on how the data is collected, processed and analyzed, together with the used techniques, and it creates a roadmap of the way the conclusions are reached.

- *Chapter four – Results*

This chapter outlines the results of the study derived from the thematic analysis, together with an explanation of each concept presented in the emerged conceptual framework. It breaks down the concept of organizational readiness for innovation into two building blocks: the components that sport managers perceive as enablers of organizational readiness to innovate and the perceived barriers they face when trying to make an innovative change in the organization.

- *Chapter five – Discussion*

In this chapter the author elaborates on the results chapter. The findings are situated in terms of the research questions and interpreted and explained within the thesis. In addition, practical implications are presented together with the suggestions of future research.

- *Chapter six – Conclusion*

This chapter is a summary of the main findings and suggestions on how Norwegian National Federations can ensure higher levels of organizational readiness for innovation, and the potential use of the current thesis.

Chapter 2

Theoretical

Underpinnings and

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction of chapter 2

This chapter introduces the reader with the literature review of existing theories of organizational readiness for change, followed by the concept of innovation. Secondly, it connects together the main concepts, readiness and innovativeness, and finally both concepts are put into the context of sports, in which the study was carried out.

2.2 A theory of organizational readiness for change

Organizations undergo change all the time. Some of them might be incremental, requiring little effort to be adopted, while some others can be radical or disruptive changes which are innovations that need much more effort, time, energy, and resources to be implemented. Innovation is a subset of change. Meaning that innovation means always change, and it requires effort, generates resistance, and needs vision and leadership. (Güell, 2018) Accounting to this dissertation's focus on organizational readiness for innovation, the notions of change and innovation will, therefore, be used interchangeably.

As mentioned above, innovation requires much effort and resources, qualities that sometimes an organization might miss. Hence, organizational members tend to resist and avoid new changes that face them in many unknown situations. Being afraid of the unknown and insecure about their organizational capabilities, or just refusing to enhance their efforts and go out from the comfort zone, makes organizational members less ready to undergo a monumental change in the organization, which causes unsuccessful innovation implementation. Organizational readiness is the most important factor in successfully implementing change, and this is something that often organizations 'overlook in the eagerness to unveil something new'. Thus, it is of high importance to ensure organizational readiness before implementing a change in the organization. (McKnight, C. 2022)

According to Weiner (2009), organizational readiness for change is a multi-level and multi-faceted construct. With multi-level construct he means that it can be present at the individual, group, unit, or organizational level, and each of these levels of analysis has a difference in the relationship between construct's variables (i.e. meaning or measurements). On the other hand, a multi-faceted construct represents all the variables that generate organizational readiness for change. "Specifically, organizational readiness refers to organizational members change commitment and change efficacy to implement organizational change."

(Weiner, 2009, p. 2). Furthermore, these variables are affected by other factors also, such as change valence, task demands, organizational resources, or situational and contextual factors.

In defense of this argument, Weiner (2009) builds upon motivation theory and social cognitive theory and proposes several conditions or circumstances that promote organizational readiness, aiming to develop a theory of organizational readiness for change. Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) started as the Social Learning Theory (SLT) in the 1960s by Albert Bandura, and developed into the SCT in 1986. SCT considers the unique way individuals control and maintain their behavior in order to achieve a goal-directed one while considering the social environment in which they perform the behavior. (The Social Cognitive Theory, 2019) It refers to behavior, cognition, and the environment as a causal relationship that influences each other in a dynamic model. Deriving from Gist (1992) work of self-efficacy as a 'comprehensive summary or judgment of perceived capability to perform a task', Weiner (2009) suggests change efficacy as a concept delivered by the cognitive appraisal of the organizational members to perform well the change implementation, regarding the capability of the task demands, resource availability and situational factors. (Weiner, 2009) In other words, the self-efficacy of each member in a collective environment.

As stated by Weiner (2009), a complex organizational change has a higher probability of successful implementation when the change efficacy is high thus, the members share a common and favorable assessment of task demands, resource availability, and situational factors. They share a sense of confidence in the capability to implement a complex change together as a group.

"Drawing on motivation theory, Weiner proposes that change commitment is largely a function of change valence." (Weiner, 2009, p. 3). Arguing that members' commitment differs depending on the degree to which members appreciate the value of the change. Members might value the change because of their willingness to change, because they might find it effective and with beneficial outcomes, or because it is urgently needed and leaders want and support it. However, change commitment reaches its highest levels when members value the change because of their willingness to change or improve. "Commitment based on 'want to' motives reflects the highest level of commitment to implement organizational change." (Weiner, 2009, p. 2). As a result of the collective valuation of change, the

commitment to implement the change will be high too. Therefore, change implementation will be successful.

Finally, Weiner (2009) argues that contextual factors such as organizational culture, policies and procedures, resources, or past change experience, can affect the members' change valence or their efficacy on task demands or situational factors. For instance, if the organization has a risk-taking culture, the members' willingness to change will be higher than in a non-risk-taking culture. Also, if the organization has a positive past experience in change implementation or change effectiveness, then members will value the change or vice versa. On the other hand, if the organization's policies do not support change or there are not enough resources to effectively take charge of the demands of the tasks, members will not commit to change. (Weiner, 2009).

2.3 Innovation

Innovation can be defined as the introduction of something new, a new idea, method, or device, which often results in a new product, a new process, new ways of organizing business, and opening up a new market and new sources of supply (Baprikar, 2017 found in Ratten, 2021, p. 122).

Innovations usually are implemented to gain a competitive advantage, grow, or increase productivity and profitability. However, innovating does not always mean higher revenues. The challenge is to 'escape' imitators and have such successful innovative ideas that create value in the market, and you can capture this value in order to be able to offer further R&D investments to bring up the next innovations. Hence, be able to be constantly innovative. (Tobias, 2021, p. 47)

A good way organizations can do it is by exploiting the benefits accruing in the business ecosystem and constantly innovating their business models, building them around the new opportunities emerging in the market. "Business models create and capture value over the product life cycle according to solutions delivered" (Ratten, 2021, p. 123). According to Drucker (1985), "the discipline of innovation (and it is the knowledge base of entrepreneurship) is a diagnostic discipline: a systematic examination of the areas of change that typically offer entrepreneurial opportunities. " (Drucker, 1985, p. 35) The new, pioneering opportunities analysis that change offer has to be the starting point of purposeful, systematic innovation.

According to Schumper (1934), innovation is the cause of discontinuous change and disequilibrium that leads to technological development. He emphasises the importance of combination of resources and technology for creation of new product methods and products. (Tobias, 2021)

“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. Activities or processes adopted by an organisation for the first time are considered to be innovations.” (Winand and Anagnostopoulos 2017, p. 580-581). According to Drucker (1985), successful entrepreneurs aim high and are not content with only improving existing competencies in the market they already work. Conversely, they aim to create new values and transform their existing resources into new valuable ones. "The most productive innovation is a different product or service creating a new potential satisfaction, rather than an improvement." (Innovation Nation, 2009)

Furthermore, Drucker points out that “to be a successful change leader, an enterprise has to have a policy of systematic innovation.” (Drucker, 1985, found in Innovation Nation, 2009). Tobias also supports Drucker’s highlight by arguing that an innovation strategy helps organizations create a system that matches their individual competitive needs and that organization’s leaders are central to its innovation strategy because they are regarded as enablers of innovation. (Tobias, 2021)

Managers are perceived as entrepreneurs. As reported by Winand and Anagnostopoulos (2017), some researchers have found no difference between entrepreneurs and managers in terms of their propensity to take risks. Hence, managers must head towards innovations that create new potential and open up new markets to ensure the most productive innovation initiatives.

2.4 Readiness and innovativeness

‘Readiness’ can be understood as the ability, preparedness, and willingness of an organization to apply leading-edge thinking around a particular topic. Hanapachern (1997) defined readiness as “the extent to which individuals are mentally, psychologically, or physically ready, prepared, or primed to participate in organization development activities.”

(Self, 2008, p. 4) Whereas, Beckhard and Harris (1987) referred to readiness as having to do with "...willingness, motives, and aims..." (cited in Self, 2008, p.4).

"Readiness for change is comprised of both psychological and structural factors, reflecting the extent to which the organization and its members are inclined to accept, embrace, and adopt a particular plan to purposefully alter the status quo. Psychological factors involve individual and collective attitudes, beliefs, and intentions." (Holt et al., 2010, p. 51)

Therefore, in order to be innovation ready, organization members need to aim, want, and believe that they have the capability and preparedness to be successful in innovation implementation.

On the other hand, 'innovativeness' relates "to the ability of the organization to successfully offer new services or products and to keep offering these advances development over time" (Winand and Anagnostopoulos, 2017, p. 581) "The ultimate goal of innovation is positive change, to make someone or something better" (INSEAD, 2009, p. 8), but many organizations are handicapped by low levels of readiness, lacking in many key elements necessary to reach this goal. Although it is evident that now, organizations understand the importance of innovativeness, only investing in innovation is not enough. They need to manage these innovations in order to translate their investments into benefits and new opportunities and make the most of the potential of innovation initiatives. A low level of readiness creates a gap between the stated innovation goals of an organization and its ability to achieve them. This makes organizations not able to reap the full benefits of their investments. (INSEAD, 2009)

"80% of organisations have maintained or increased innovation investment in the downturn, however, a lack of readiness or maturity in innovation management means this investment is effectively wasted." (INSEAD, 2009, p.9)

According to Greenhalgh et al., (2004), people are not passive recipients of innovations. People in the organization are part of the organizational change that happens when initiating innovation, and they are actively involved in it. Hence, their interpretation is critical given that they will be the ones who will adopt the new changes, and the way how they perceive it affects the implementation success. (Winand and Anagnostopoulos, 2017) In this regard,

organizations' leaders play a central role. They are the ones who present that a change is necessary and that a new, innovative way of initiating it is effective and will solve the organizational problem. The communication way leaders use, the energy, and the confidence they transmit, while introducing the change is crucial to how organization members will perceive innovation. Armenakis et al., (1999) believed that readiness for change is created in the message delivered by management to the organization's members. (cited in Self, 2008, p. 4).

Perceptions of change within organisations are critical for engaging people in change management processes and innovation. 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 towards future innovations. (Winand and Anagnostopoulos, 2017, p. 582)

2.5 Organizational readiness for innovation in sports

Organizational readiness has been the subject of extensive research in different disciplines, with an emphasis on the healthcare system. However, it has also emerged in the non for profit literature of sports management. Casey et al., (2012) explored organizational readiness and capacity-building strategies of Victorian State Sporting Organization (SSOs) in Australia to implement health promotion programs, whereas, Hull and Lio (2006) examined differences between non-profit and for-profit organizations in innovation adaptation, and Winand and Anagnostopoulos (2017) examined the disposition of organizational individuals towards newness and the effect of service innovation implementation on organizational change in non-profit organizations (NPOs). Nevertheless, organizational readiness for innovation is still a new and understudied topic in the literature of sports management.

According to Voss et al., 2012, non-profit sport organizations' (NPSOs) managers only recently have recognized the competitive pressure for performance and the need for their organization to differentiate from commercial sports providers in developing new services. (Winand and Anagnostopoulos, 2017) Therefore would be insightful and of high importance to conceive a contextual framework that provides the basis for a holistic analysis of the factors involved in goal attainment and, more broadly, organizational effectiveness. "NPSOs

such as sports federations are a specific type of NPOs, the study of which can inform the mainstream literature on non-profit management.” (Winand and Anagnostopoulos 2017, p. 580). According to Winand and Anagnostopoulos (2017), "NPSOs possess unique characteristics that influence the way change and innovations are perceived by their stakeholders, staff, and managers." (Winand and Anagnostopoulos, 2017, p. 582) Literature shows that because of its characteristic mixed economy of public and private funds, revenues from sponsorships, and memberships, its operation via a sports network makes people in non-profit organizations resist change and innovation. Hull and Lio (2006), in their research examining the differences between non-profit and for-profit organizations, find that 'concerning learning capability and risk-taking propensity, non-profit organizations are extremely risk-averse'. (Hull and Lio 2006, p. 63) An explanation for this is that NPOs members are not profit-driven, and being motivated by societal change makes them less risk-takers and more resistant to change and innovation if they do not feel the need to change and benefit from it. (Winand and Anagnostopoulos, 2017)

On the other hand, Winand and Anagnostopoulos (2017) contradict Hull and Lio's (2006) findings by revealing that managers and board volunteers within NPSOs do, in fact, favor newness even if it carries risk. As a result, they are disposed to innovate. They argue, relying on previous research results from Winand et al., (2013), that NPSOs are a competitive market, competing for performance, financial support, and membership participation hence, they innovate to maintain their competitive position in the market. (Winand et al., 2013) Ergo, competitiveness pressure encourages positive attitudes towards innovativeness. (Winand and Anagnostopoulos, 2017)

It is also supported by the ‘sport entrepreneurship’ concept, which refers to ‘the set of the values that influence an organizations/individuals propensity to create and develop innovative activities’ (Ratten, 2012, p. 67), and according to Ratten (2011), NPSOs belong to a sport system context which fosters the set of these values. (stated in Winand and Anagnostopoulos, 2017)

Innovation and entrepreneurship are crucial in sport in order to deal with uncertainties and integrate into societal advancements. (Ratten, 2021) Thus, sport managers need to be entrepreneurs who can cater to the need to innovate to ‘acquire the resources NPSOs require in order to survive and to promote their sport.’ (Winand and Anagnostopoulos 2017, p. 582) Taking care of the organizational needs, being risk-takers, innovating, creating, and capturing value will make sports managers meet higher levels of profits.

Nonetheless, as mentioned before in this dissertation, change and innovation in an organization is an operation that requires collaboration and willingness from organizational members too. Thus sports managers not only need to have an entrepreneurial spirit but also leadership skills to communicate the need for innovation, the benefits derived from it, and finally, to provide a sense of confidence in the team's ability to capture those benefits. As claimed by Winand and Anagnostopoulos (2017), 'attitudes can be influenced by the perceptions that individuals have regarding the change that occurs following the implementation of innovation.' (Winand and Anagnostopoulos, 2017, p. 583)

Winand et al., (2013), also states:

"A large part of the success of innovations is due to professional management alongside innovation implementation (Caza, 2000). Committed staff and managerial support favor innovation in NPSOs (Hoerber and Hoerber, in press). Volunteer board members' crucial role in the governance and management of sports federations might have an influence on the successful implementation of innovations." (Winand et al., 2013, p. 9)

That being the case, national sports federations are the basis of this research thesis. Perceptions from managers and sport practitioners in Norwegian federations about organizational readiness for innovation in their organization are analyzed and framed in a contextual model of organizational readiness for innovation in sports, which can be the foundation to establish high levels of readiness for change in National federations, and not only.

2.5.1 Organizational members' commitment and efficacy for innovative change

Commitment and efficacy are the key determinants of building organizational readiness for innovation. Particularly, in non-profit sports organizations, which are seen as more 'complex sociotechnical systems' (Hulme et al., 2019, p. 1), by having a combination of paid staff and volunteers, a mix of private and public funds, and multiple strategic goals (Winand et al., 2012) - factors that influence organizational members' behavior.

"Damanpour and Schneider (2006) noted top managers heavily influence organizational capabilities by establishing organizational culture, motivating and enabling managers and employees, and building capacity for change and innovation" (Hoerber and Hoerber, 2012, p. 215) Authors have defined organizational commitment as an affective attachment or a strong

emotional identification with the goals and values of an organization and the willingness to make efforts for the organization itself, apart from its own capabilities. (Vecina et al., 2013; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986).

According to O'Reilly and Chatman (1986), organizationally committed individuals are more likely to exhibit behaviors that benefit the organization. Organizational commitment reaches its highest levels when these behaviors happen because organizational members are willing to do so to make the organization successful. In other words, having an affective commitment to the organization. Preston and Brown (2004) state that affectively committed members are emotionally connected to the organization and that employees with strong affective commitment work harder and more effectively at their jobs than those with weak affective commitment. (Preston and Brown, 2004).

In addition, organizational members commit because of moral and necessary motives (normative and continuance commitment), either feeling an obligation to work for the organization's sake or need to do so because of the costs of losing their job.

Since non-profit organizations combine paid staff and volunteers, their strategies to communicate organizational values and objectives can be different from one member to another because volunteers do not rely on continuance commitment. It can be stated that if non-profit organizations wish their volunteers to commit to innovation implementation in the organization, then there must be a focus on developing an emotional attachment to the organization.

However, it should be noted that in the organizational level of analysis these psychological factors should be conceptualized as a 'shared team property', (Weiner, 2009, p. 4), which means that all organizational members effected by the change need to have collective commitment for change and innovation. "Collective commitment refers to organizational members' shared resolve to pursue courses of action that will lead to successful change implementation" (Holt et al., 2010, p. 51)

Moreover, Preston and Brown (2004) results show that affective commitment has a positive relationship with performance, and members that are emotionally attached to the organization are more involved and actively engaged in organizational servicing behaviors. By performing well towards the change implementation, organizational members will have a high change efficacy too. This affirmation derives by Weiner's (2009) concept of change efficacy as a cognitive appraisal to perform well the change implementation, as mentioned earlier in this review. The positive relationship between performance and efficacy is proved

also by Hysong and Quiñones (1997), results of which are consistent with the general self-efficacy literature.

Therefore, it would be favorable for non-profit sports organizations to develop similar strategies that promote identification for both paid staff and volunteers and build collective efficacy, which “refers to organizational members’ shared belief in their conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to implement change successfully.” (Holt et al., 2010, p. 51)

2.6 Literature Review Matrix

This sub-chapter contains the literature matrix which compiles relevant sources and those papers that influenced this thesis. These sources can be found here below in table 1.

Table 2. Literature Review Matrix

Author/ Date	Publication type	Theoretical Concept	Research Purpose	Methodology	Results	Conclusion	Contributions to Sport Management literature / Future Implications
Weiner (2009)	Implementation Science	Organizational readiness for change theory Motivational theory Social cognitive theory	To promote further scholarly discussion and stimulate empirical inquiry	Draws on social cognitive theory and motivation theory to explain how greater organizational readiness could result in more effective change implementation.	Development a theoretical link between two disparate bodies of research: organizational readiness for change and implementation theory and research.	When organizational readiness for change is high, organizational members are more likely to initiate change, exert greater effort, exhibit greater persistence, and display more cooperative behavior. Hence, more effective implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing some of the conceptual ambiguity in the meaning and use of the term 'readiness.' Illuminates the theoretical basis for the various strategies that change management experts recommend for creating organizational readiness. Defining the notion of implementation effectiveness and distinguishing implementation effectiveness from innovation effectiveness.
Casey et. al., (2012)	Sport Management Review	Change management approaches, and capacity building frameworks.	To understand how SSOs in Australia implemented capacity building strategies to promote health.	This study used a stratified-purposeful sampling method to select SSOs with major variations, and qualitative methods (interviews) to explore capacity building strategies to promote health through sport.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very large SSOs (n=3) → VicHealth funding = 900,000+ Large SSOs (n=2) → 300,000–899,999 Medium SSOs (n=2) → 125,000-299,999 Small SSOs (n = 3) → <125,000 	The findings highlight that organizational readiness to implement HP was facilitated by sporting organizational capacity and size. Greater levels of organizational capacity and size resulted in more sophisticated capacity building strategies to implement and sustain change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlights opportunities and challenges for policy makers to fund HP within sporting organizations. SSOs could benefit from the provision of funding to implement formalized and systematic HP controls. Maintaining a baseline level of funding is important for continuing to exert influence on SSOs to practice HP. SSOs need to consider a broader range of partners to grow their sport and address health and social issues.
Tobias (2021)	Ph.D. Dissertation	Innovation theory Business Model Innovation theoretical framework	To provide a framework within which MNOs are guided to innovate their business model for organizational sustainability	An interpretivist epistemological and a subjectivist ontological approach are followed in an overall inductive research setting. A case study method is applied in a mono-method qualitative setting.	A modified conceptual framework for the reinvention of Mobile Network Operations (MNOs') current business model	The framework suggests MNOs continue to focus on the network infrastructure by keeping it up-to- date with the latest technology and by covering as many areas as possible with high speed, fast access and sufficient capacity. Access to customers is seen as a crucial asset that MNOs must never lose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The outcome provides the baseline for holistic and well-grounded advice on adapting MNOs' business models to the changing market. MNOs applying the results of this paper in practice can reinvent their business models by taking advantage of the data they have in combination with BI, Big Data and software robotics, and thus reach organizational sustainability.

Winand and Anagnostopoulos (2017)	International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics	Policy implementation and innovation theories	To analyze service innovation within sport federations as a mediator between attitude and organizational change.	An online survey sent to 144 regional sport federations in Belgium in order to assess their attitudes towards newness, innovativeness, the number of service innovations implemented and perceptions of organizational change.	On average, sport federation staffs show a positive attitude towards newness, which supports the implementation of service innovation.	Service innovation is an important driver for organizational change. The number of service innovations and perceptions of innovativeness, both have significant indirect effects on organizational change as perceived by individuals within sport federations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates the important role of organizational actors' attitude in service innovation implementation. • Identifies a key determinant of innovation in non-profit; 'the attitude or disposition of organizational actors towards newness', by bringing together policy implementation and innovation theories. • Suggests a retroactive relationship between attitude, innovation and change.
INSEAD (2009)	Logica (report)	Innovation Readiness Model	To explore the innovation collaboration within and among organizations.	Hypothesis → In-depth analysis of an online survey data and interviews with 200 senior executives from leading organizations	Development of an Innovation Readiness Model: a unique way of benchmarking organizations' innovation readiness in four key areas: Leadership and ambition; Organization and collaboration; People and culture; Implementation and measurement.	Innovation is viewed as essential to success, but a lack of 'innovation readiness' is crippling potential. Creating effective collaborative innovation ecosystems is vital for enhancing access to knowledge from around the globe and speeding up the conversion of that knowledge into value adding products and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IRM allows organizations to assess where they are and how efficiently they are progressing on the path of innovation readiness. • IRM can help organizations to measure their ability of collaborative innovation to innovate successfully. • IRQ – offers a synthetic single index of innovation readiness, and a comparative analyses across geographies and sectors. • The Innovation Scan tool helps organizations to visually identify and benchmark their performance along the four pillars of the IRM, and to compare organizations within a particular sector or national market.
Hull and Lio (2006)	Journal of Change Management	A theoretical comparison model for non-profit and for-profit organizations	To explore the differences between non-profit and for-profit organizations	Literature review of business literature to innovation in non-profit organizations.	The two types of organizations have differences in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive responsibility structure of non-profit organizations. • Motivations and compensations of employees. • Overall goals of the organization. 	Non-profit organizations are extremely risk-averse, and may often be at a disadvantage on learning capacity. When the adoption of innovation can be seen as a beneficial decision for the organization, external or cooperative innovation is a substantially better choice for the organization.	Enriches the business literature with a useful theoretical model to identify and classify organizational differences, and evaluation of organizational learning capability, risk-taking and innovation use, which can be applied to specific organizations of either sort.

Preston and Brown (2004)	Non-profit Management and Leadership	Meyer and Allen's Three-Component Model of Commitment	To examine the relationships between board member commitment and individual performance.	Surveys distributed to 533 board members of the 101 mid-sized, social service non-profit organizations in the Orange County, California, area.	Committed board members reported more involvement and are perceived by the executive to be more engaged and valuable, and there is a positive relationship between Affective Commitment and board member performance.	Building relationships that allow board members to feel an emotional connection to the organization and each other may contribute to stronger, more involved board members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draws important implications for leaders within non-profit organizations. • Gave voice to and validated practitioners' claims that commitment is a factor associated with higher-contributing board members. • Fosters Affective Commitment among board members, which may be a valuable strategy used to improve board members' well-being, involvement in board-related activities, and board performance.
Winand et al., (2013)	International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing	Determinants of service innovation	To develop an explorative typology of sports federations based on their attitudes and perceptions of determinants of innovation and their innovation capacity.	An online survey sent to all of the 144 Belgium, regional sports Federations, recognized by the public authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport federations favor positive attitudes regarding paid staff involvement (M = 4.08, SD = 0.76), and newness (M = 3.81, SD = 0.6) • 53% new/renewed service innovations in previous 4 years • Significant difference between traditional (M = 1.09, SD = 0.85) and competitive (M = 2.7, SD = 2.31) sports federations regarding sport service innovations 	PSOs innovate to maintain their sports sector position. They implement service innovations to retain their affiliated members/users and to attract new ones	Useful for the management and marketing of non-profit sports organizations.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction and purpose of chapter 3

The purpose of this chapter is to present the reader with the methodology used to analyze the data gathered and outlines the rationale for the selected approach to answering the research question. It provides a detailed description on how the data is collected, processed and analyzed, together with the used techniques, and it creates a roadmap of the way the conclusions are reached.

3.2 Research design and philosophical stance

This research project aims to investigate the perceived organizational readiness for innovation of Norwegian Sports Federations and the opportunities and challenges they face with it when trying to implement an innovative change in the organization. According to Veal and Darcy, “research methods should ideally be selected on the basis of their suitability to answer the research question posed” (Veal and Darcy, 2014, p.151). As it is evident, the research question this project aims to answer to is quite broad and covers a wide scope of the subject. Therefore, an exploratory research design is selected to gain insights regarding organizational readiness for innovation. Exploration means examining, analyzing, or investigating something, which is very much in line with the research question and sub-questions of this project, as advised by Veal and Darcy (2014). According to Stebbins (2001), in the innovative sense, the goal of exploration is to gain a degree of familiarity with the important features and procedures that are needed to manipulate to achieve the desired effect or product. By investigating and generating insights and explanations of the innovative changes implemented by sports managers in Norwegian sports federations, an understanding of the challenges faced and the culture shared in the organization will contribute to the development of a conceptual framework of organizational readiness for innovation within non-profit sports federations, which will through light on practical managerial implications that sports managers of non-profit sports organizations of different levels can find opportunities to create organizational readiness before initiating innovation into their organization. Still deriving from the research aim to investigate the ‘perceived’ organizational readiness, human nature is in focus, and the objectives are aiming to understand the main concept (organizational readiness). “Qualitative data methods have the greatest appeal when we need to determine the meaning people give to their lives and actions.” (Bachman and Schutt, 2020, p. 171). Hence, a qualitative research method would be appropriate to inquire and create a deep understanding of the human social issue. Any research design may collect both qualitative and quantitative data, but qualitative methods

observe natural behavior as it is experienced by the individual. (Bachman and Schutt, 2020). Qualitative research is, by definition, exploratory and used to go deeper into issues of interest and explore nuances related to the problem. (Beals, 2019) Unlike the quantitative approach, which tends to focus on a large number of subjects rather than on detailed information, the qualitative approach, conversely, is prone to a large amount of detailed information about relatively few cases. (Veal and Darcy, 2014)

In this case, perspectives from general secretaries and sports managers responsible for initiating innovation in Norwegian sports federations are gathered through semi-structured in-depth interviews. Being those who lay the first stone of change in the organization makes them the ones, who face the first reaction of other organizational members and provides them with an extensive spectrum of organizational members' behavior towards the change. “Qualitative research is generally based on the belief that the people personally involved in a particular situation (in this case innovation into non-profit sports organizations) are best placed to describe and explain their experiences and world-view in their own words...” (Veal and Darcy, 2014, p. 252) Within the various qualitative data collection methods, the semi-structured in depth-interviews were chosen as the best fit to reach the objectives of this research project. In-depth, semi-structured interviews are verbal interchanges where the interviewer seeks to generate information from another person by semi-structured questioning. (Longhurst, 2009).

“This particular interview style can be free flowing when required, allowing deep exploration of the respondent’s comments to gain greater understanding of matters of particular interest. The ability to probe specific issues provides a way of assessing the perspectives of the respondent/interviewee, their individual understanding, values, beliefs, experiences, and perceptions, and allowing those nuanced accounts to become the primary source of knowledge to explore in greater depth and breadth.” (Scanlan, 2020).

Philosophical stance

According to Burrell and Morgan (1979), to understand alternative points of view, a theorist must be fully aware of the assumptions upon which his own perspective is based.

Developing a framework of organizational analysis, they suggest that assumptions about the nature of science and the nature of society can be analyzed in terms of two key dimensions

of analysis; one is the subjectivist or/and objectivist dimension that can analyze assumptions about the nature of science, and the other one is regulation or/and radical change dimension, which explain assumptions about the nature of society. These dimensions include four paradigms that fall under each of these two series of dimensions. “The four paradigms thus define four views of the social world based upon different meta-theoretical assumptions with regard to the nature of science and of society.” (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p.26)

The *interpretive paradigm* tends to understand the world as it is, to understand the fundamental nature of the social world at the level of subjective nature. “It seeks explanation within the realm of individual consciousness and subjectivity, within the frame of reference of the participant as opposed to the observer of action.” (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p. 28) The goal of interpretive paradigm is to generate descriptions, insights, and explanations of events so that the system of interpretations and meaning, and the structuring and organizing processes, are revealed.

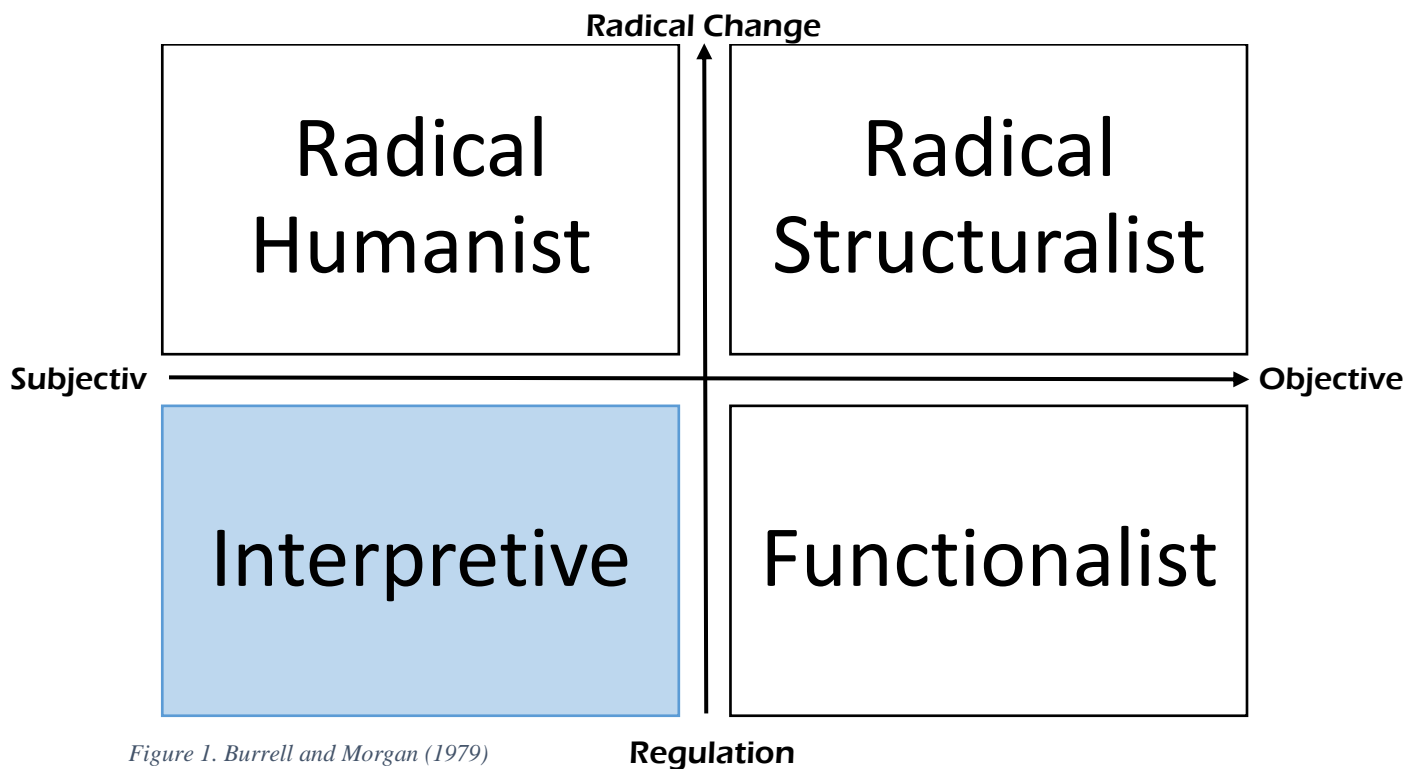


Figure 1. Burrell and Morgan (1979)

The functionalist paradigm represents the study subject from an objectivist perspective of the social world. It is problem-oriented and provides rational explanations of social affairs without subjectivism but solely a rational description. This paradigm understands society in a way that generates knowledge that can be put to use to reach practical solutions to a particular issue.

The radical humanist paradigm is “committed to a view of society that emphasizes the importance of overthrowing or transcending the limitations of existing social arrangements.” (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p. 32). This paradigm concerns finding ways how human beings can transcend the spiritual bonds that tie them into existing social patterns and thus realize their full potential. Radical humanist paradigm allows designing of a theoretical model that will provide a critique of the status quo and will lead to its’ radical change. Its’ main goal is to develop a sociology of radical change from the subjectivist point of view.

Whereas, the *radical structuralist paradigm* aims a structural change within an objective thinking. It has a view of society and organizations which emphasizes the need to overthrow or transcend the limitations placed on existing social and organizational arrangements. Researchers making assumptions under this paradigm are committed to radical change and concentrate on a structural relationship within a realist social world fits best. (Burrell and Morgan, 1979).

This research falls under the interpretative paradigm because it has to do with human beings and the data is collected in a qualitative method. As mentioned earlier in this section, the research question and objectives have in focus the human nature, therefore the methods are selected to understand the human social issue as it is experienced by the interviewee. Therefore an interpretive paradigm is appropriate because its’ goal, to understand the fundamental nature of the social world at the level of subjective nature, aligns with the research objectives to understand the concept of organizational readiness for change from the subjective eyes of the sport managers of Norwegian sports federations, and investigate the determinants of organizational readiness for innovation to offer a conceptual framework that can come in hand to sports practitioners. However I do not intend any radical change, but only offering recommendations and encouraging further research.

Grounded theory

This study employs a grounded theory as a methodological framework for data collection. It studies the innovation process in sport organizations, which involves many individuals. Grounded theory is adapted in order to generate an exploratory understanding of the participants' interpretation of organizational readiness for innovation in Norwegian Sports Federations. After deciding on a clear purpose and the research question, the researcher provides a theoretical perspective relying on the existing theory and variables of organizational readiness for change and outlines the research design. Then the collection of in-depth interviews, refinement, inductive thematic analysis, and conceptual framework development is performed in an intertwining way. (Veal and Darcy, 2014) The study led to the development of an empirically grounded conceptual framework that outlines the variables of organizational readiness for innovation in non-profit sports organizations.

3.3 Research setting

Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (NIF from here on) is the umbrella federation for all sports in Norway and the supreme governing body for organized sports. The NIF system has two branches; Special Sports Organizations (SSOs) and District Sports Organizations (DSOs). "Within this umbrella, it is conceived that all aspects of sports provision are catered for: mass and elite, center and periphery (geographically), old and young, professional and amateurs, the able-bodied and those with disabilities." (Skille and Säfvenbom, 2011, p. 293)

Each of these branches of NIF has bi-annual general assemblies of its own, whereas NIF holds its General Assembly every four years. (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2020). The Norwegian sports governance model is decentralized from the state policy-making but is internally centralized with guidance from NIF, where all sports organizations must operate in accordance with its rules. NIF is completely independent and develops its laws related to sports without reference to the national constitution and without parliamentary approval. (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2019).

"Sport in Norway is rarely politically controversial." (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2019, p. 61) Sports are considered autonomous, and related issues are not debated in political forums. This is because there is no public support from the national budget. It is politically independent. Norwegian sport is financed by the national lottery.

At the end of 2020, there were 175,233,330 members in 7845 sports clubs, 55 special sports organizations (SSOs and 11 district sports organizations (DSOs). Sports clubs are members of both SSOs and DSOs, while the latter are members of NIF. (Frantzen, I. B. 2021) “The SSOs are the governing bodies of the specific sport(s) in the country, especially regarding laws and education, and the link to the international bodies of the focal sport” (Skille and Säfvenbom, 2011, p. 293), whereas the DSOs serve as collective bodies for sports within each of Norway’s 11 counties (Sisjord et al., 2017). However, DSOs are responsible only for common sports issues in the district, but they do not govern sports activity due to no direct contact with the sports clubs where the activity is provided. This makes the role of DSOs controversial. (Skille and Säfvenbom, 2011)

In addition, in every municipality with more than three sports clubs is established a local sport council (LSC), whose primary role is to represent all local sports clubs in relation to municipal authorities. “There are LSCs in 366 of the 430 municipalities of Norway.” (Skille and Säfvenbom, 2011, p. 294)

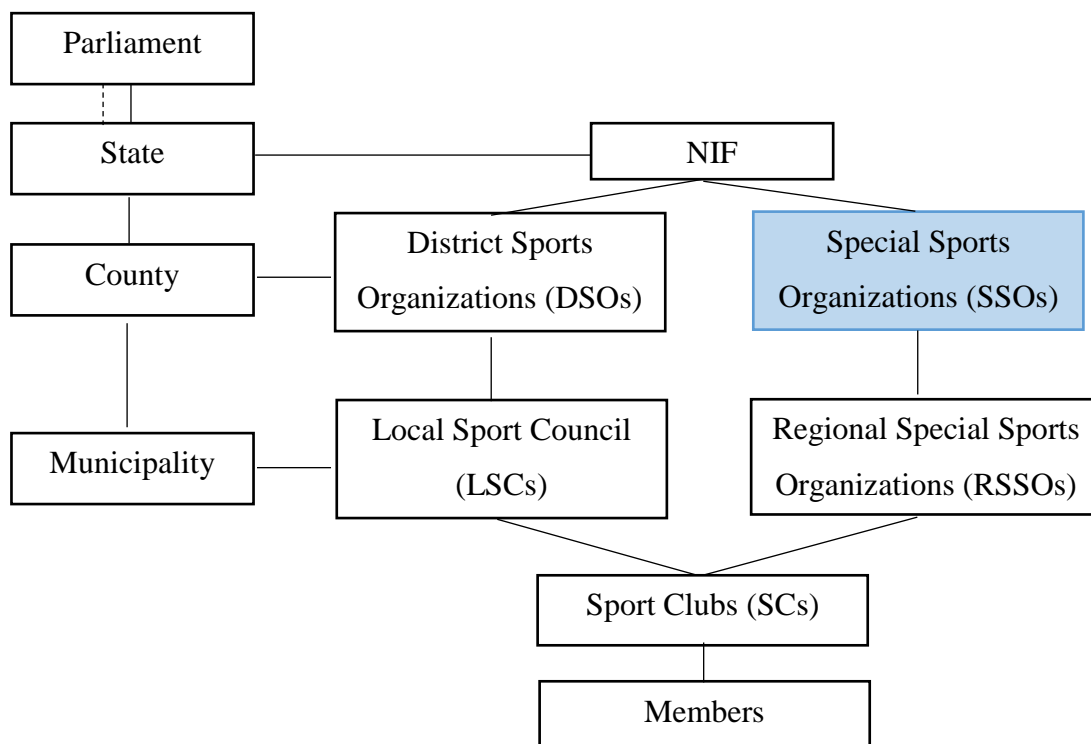


Figure 2: (Skille and Säfvenbom, 2011)

Regional Special Sports Organizations (RSSOs) are subunits of the national federations (SSOs) and are based geographically either in counties or in larger regions. Not all sports are organized in RSSOs. It depends on the widespread and the membership capacity of a specific sport. Only one-third of all sports are organized in RSSOs. “The RSSOs have the

responsibility for organizing regional leagues and other competitions and are an extension of the national special sports federation regarding the governance of laws and with regard to education of local leaders, coaches, and referees.” (Skille and Säfvenbom, 2011, p. 294)

NIF is the largest voluntary organization in Norway. All of the clubs and organization members of NIF are volunteers, and none of its members are incorporated. It includes about 2.1 million members out of a population of a bit more than 5 million. (Sisjord et al., 2017)

“Sport is conventionally understood as a competitive activity taking place during leisure time where participation is on individual membership basis in sport clubs in which the provision of activity is based on voluntary work. Research shows that in 90% of the sport clubs, 90% of the work is voluntarily conducted. It is estimated that the value of the voluntary work in Norwegian sport clubs amounts to 7300 million NOK (€900 million) In addition, this voluntary work generated marked incomes worth 1700 million NOK (€200 million). In other words, the economic value of the voluntary work in Norwegian sport clubs is about seven times the amount of state subsidies and grants.” (Skille and Säfvenbom, 2011, p. 294)

“For both the state and the sports federation, the overall aim is ‘sports for all’, even though considerable amounts of resources and attention are also devoted to elite sports.” (Sisjord et al., 2017). The main goal of NIF is to guarantee all people the opportunity to practice sports based on their wishes and needs and without being exposed to unreasonable and disproportionate discrimination. (Frantzen, 2021)

Norwegians widely support organized sports and physical activity because of its health benefits, social inclusion and integration, and the joy of sports itself. They have an overwhelming interest in winter sports.

3.4 Data collection

First of all, an online application was sent to the Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD) for processing personal data. NSD is a Norwegian government-owned company responsible for managing data for the research community of Norway. After approval, all the 55 SSOs in Norway were invited to participate in the research. An information letter, approved by NSD providing them with detailed information about the research project and the

management of their personal data, was sent to general secretaries and sports managers of each sports federation, inviting them to join the research project.

Interviewees were contacted by email, and the contact information was found on their specific sports federation website, and some of them were referenced by professors of Molde University College. Due to the pandemic situation in which this research was conducted, the participants were asked to have the interview on teams/zoom or by phone call and were asked permission to record for the purpose of better analysis. Prior to the data collection, interviewees were ensured a consent form that could inform them about their rights and personal data protection. Moreover, interviewees had a demographic diversity regarding age, gender, education, and longevity position in the organization.

Participants

A total of nine (N = 9) interviews were conducted. The participants were general secretaries (n = 4), or individuals holding a leadership position in sports development (n = 3), or deputy technical director (n = 1), and chief of social sport (n = 1), who had initiated innovative change in their sports federation to obtain testimonies of their experiences and comprehension of the challenges they face when commencing a new change in their organization. The participating SSOs represented a range of organizations organized in branches with a total number of four (n = 4) in more than 3 branches, and a total number of five (n = 5) organized in up to two branches. Five of the participating SSOs (n = 5) represented team sport, three of them (n = 3) represented individual sports and one (n = 1) represented a multi sport organization. Two interviews (n = 2) were considered unqualified for this research because one was in a very early stage of implementation of digital educational program and the other because of the unclear language, which was hard to understand what the interviewee meant. So the analysis consisted on seven (n = 7) in-depth interviews. The theoretical saturation increased from interview to interview.

Table 3: Study's participants

Job title	Position length	Type of innovation	Interview details
Development officer	3 years	Digitalization	44:59
General secretary	3 years	Digitalization	36:30
General secretary	2 years	Media platform	37:52

Deputy technical director	4 years	Cultural change	01:05:56
General secretary	10 years	Structural change	01:19:48
Top level sports manager	6 years	Cultural change	01:08:36
General secretary	24 years	Educational program	01:06:06

3.5 Data analysis

All the interviews were recorded, encrypted, and stored in the one drive file provided and protected by Molde University College. The interviews were ‘teams’ recordings except for one phone call, which was because of the limited time of the participant. Each interview was transcribed verbatim, and then the researcher made changes using Microsoft Word while double-checking the recordings to ensure a precise transcription. Bold font was used for the interviewer to distinguish between the interviewer and the interviewee. The transcribing process occurred parallel with the data collection and lasted approximately a month, from which a total of 90 pages of results was produced, with a total interview time of roughly 9 hours.

Examples of questions during the interview included: What is your role in the federation? How long have you been working there?; Have you done any innovative change during this period you have been working in the organization?; Did you experience resistance to change? How did you react to it?; How did you experience the commitment of organizational members in the implementation of this change?; Did the organizational members value the change?; Did the organizational members engage to make sure the implementation phase goes at its best?; Did the organization have the resources needed to effectively implement the change?; How did the organizational members appraise the task demands regarding to available resources the organization had?; Did they share the same confidence regarding the effective change?; How was the organizational culture?; How is the past experience on innovation implementation?; How are the policies and procedures in the organization? Are they flexible?; Did you face uncommon stances within organizational members regarding the change?; What were the challenges you faced when getting ready to implement a change into your organization?; What were/are the outcomes from which the organization got advantage from, regarding organizational readiness for future change?

There are various ways of analyzing interview transcripts, but the essence of this procedure is to return to the main research question. (Veal and Darcy, 2014) “The information gathered should be sorted through and evaluated in relation to the concepts identified in the conceptual framework, the research question posed or the hypothesis put forward.” (Veal and Darcy, 2014, p. 430). Thereby, the data was analyzed using inductive thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set. (Nowell et al., 2017) “Thematic analyses move beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focus on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data, that is, themes. “ (Guest et al., 2012, p. 9) According to Nowell et al., (2017), the thematic analysis should be a foundational method for qualitative analysis because it provides core skills for conducting many other forms of qualitative analysis. (Nowell et al., 2017)

Continuous reading, highlighting of main ideas, and codifying led to the disclosure of concepts, themes, and relationships that were incorporated into the emerged conceptual framework. First type of coding was done by highlighting parts of the interviews and compressing the idea concisely, while reading the interviews. A total of 907 open codes were generated into comments aside the document. Second phase of analysis consisted in generating codes from the compressed ideas of the first phase, which resulted into 70 codes, where a point of theoretical saturation was reached and no new notions were produced. Therefore, an axial coding was performed and these codes were then classified in groups of synonyms having the same meaning, in order to assimilate and reduce the generated codes. As a result, the initial 70 codes produced 21 axial categories. The next step was to find possible links between the axial categories and allocate them in themes that can define the organizational readiness for innovation. The generated themes aimed to direct the two sub-research questions and find the enablers and barriers of the perceived organizational readiness for innovation from the perspective of the Norwegian sports managers. Each axial category represents a social process that sports managers face when getting ready to implement innovative changes in their federation, and each theme was produced on aiming to give an answer to the sub-research questions, which then explains the way how sports managers perceive organizational readiness for innovation. Meaning that they find barriers of creating organizational readiness for change and implement strategies that enable it, in order to facilitate a successful change implementation.

Table 4: Examples of extracted data during open coding of interviews

Extracted data from interviews	Open codes	Description and reflection
<p>“So there's hardly anyone talking about how to actually change the organization, how to develop an organization into a modern standard, because we're all stuck in the in the old days...” (structural change)</p>	<p>Lack of information</p>	<p>The code “lack of information” used on this extract refers to one of the reasons why sports organizations are scared and unsecure to innovate</p>
<p>“They probably wanted me to focus more on sport and activity, employers and stuff like that, but I don't think that... that's not the right way to do it. When you have a strategy, and you come up with the goals and innovations that you think will help you in the future, you need to stand by it. It's tough. When it comes to that I didn't have people on my side all the time.” (media platform)</p>	<p>Core business oriented</p>	<p>This extract was coded “core business oriented” by referring to the challenges managers face when introducing the change to the organizational members. The interviewee emphasizes the focus of organizational members in the core business and describes it as a barrier to implementing the innovation.</p>
<p>I think that's what's lacking in many of the Federation's boards, because they're maybe too concerned about the sport, and not about the decisions... (digitalization)</p>	<p>Core business oriented</p>	<p>The code “core business oriented” is presented again in this extract to show evidence that it is faced by different organizations</p>
<p>People in general feel like they have enough tasks, responsibilities, and whatsoever, which, of course, can make changes even more scary, because what does this mean for me? Will it mean that I have to, like, do more work? (media platform innovation)</p>	<p>Insecurities</p>	<p>This extract was coded “insecurities” as evidence on the confidence regarding the increased responsibilities and task demands that come during the innovation implementation process.</p>

Table 5: Examples of extracted data for each category

Themes	Categories	Extracted data	
Enablers	Compassionate communication	<i>You have to clarify words, processes, involvement inclusion, you have to do these things in a great extent in the start. So, I should have done that better in the start.</i>	
	Assurance	Members' empowerment	<i>Because now I find the whole organization so much more interested in new projects in actually changing and changing direction and doing new things. The whole organization has changed.</i>
		Members' appraisalment	<i>Whenever, for instance, a club or an area does something really good. We really appreciate that we tell them that we appreciate that. They're really good and communicating.</i>
	Organizational performance		<i>So if the core business, our activities and stuff like that doesn't work, then you're not going to be able to make changes. Because then people will be in opposition to you, and you will spend more time arguing about why core business isn't working and less time on being able to make the changes.</i>
	Willingness		<i>The people are there because they're volunteers, they're willingly being part of something.</i>
	Team building		<i>That we could take people out to dinner or create just small things, but give something and that was vital to get the culture going, get the initiative going, create new needs, and then go to the next level...</i>
	Expertize competence		<i>And all that knowledge and the competence, of course, was really valuable when presenting idea to the organization because then I had a lot more components to bring to the discussion. And of course, my thoughts were well argumented, there was thought through. I think that was... I think that is a vital part of making changes you need to know as much as possible about it.</i>
	Leadership mindset		<i>So in order to change that, especially when we had the leadership when the new department came up, we managed to create a more safe culture.</i>

Barriers	Sport context	Human democracy	<i>But that's all about the individual is because you are set to be to have your own voice in organization, you don't have that same kind of voice in the business, you know, you just have to, you will meet your demands, that's all.</i>
		Value diversity	<i>The whole field of sport and change management is really difficult. And not only sport, I think organizations in general because the values are so, so many.</i>
	Separate culture		<i>So I felt that we were not an organization working in the same direction, I felt that a lot of the decisions that were made was, I would not say worked against but at least not followed.</i>
	Resistant attitudes		<i>So it was kind of resistance to change the websites.</i>
	Precariousness		<i>People in general feel like they have enough tasks, responsibilities, and whatsoever, which, of course, can make changes even more scary, because what does this mean for me?</i>
	Resource availability		<i>But it's the cost thing, because we don't have the money to put into making digital courses. It's quite expensive.</i>
	Time restraint		<i>They don't find time to do it, and they are. ...they don't think it's important. And yeah, it's more like, it's not resistance to the system is it's that they don't think it's important enough for them to use their time.</i>
	Ambiguous benefits		<i>We might not directly see how we can benefit from now but maybe I think that was one of the issues tried to find some low hanging fruits to give in. So when everyone got their first analysis work. That was a win, because then "okay, we came together, we asked this with us".</i>
	Change complexity	Disconsolation	<i>First of all, its changes, doesn't feel good for anyone. That's the hard truth. So if you have to do something new or change the way you work or change priorities, then people generally don't like that.</i>
		Diminution	<i>I think that some of the reasons why you are not flexible enough in order to change within the organizations also I think it's some level of protectionism; my job, my ideas, my thoughts, my structure.</i>

3.6 Trustworthiness

According to Veal and Darcy (2014), in the quantitative research terms, validity and reliability arose as criteria from the positivist approach and are particularly related to experimental studies. Being exploratory in nature with a qualitative data collection method employed, the use of the same criteria would not be fully adequate for this research study. Therefore, the widely accepted and easily recognized criteria of trustworthiness adapted by Lincoln and Guba (1985) are used to replace validity and reliability. (Veal and Darcy, 2014; Nowell et al., 2017)

Trustworthiness refers to the validity of the research and is a “way researchers can persuade themselves and readers that their research findings are worthy of attention. “ (Lincoln and Guba, 1985 in Nowell et al., 2017, p. 3). The trustworthiness of the positivist approach is presented by four components: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, respectively paralleling the internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity, of the non-positivist approach.

Credibility correlates with the data collection process. As mentioned in the data collection section, a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews was applied, arguing that a deep understanding of the human social issue and nuances related to the problem would be necessary for the development of a conceptual framework. The participants were given a detailed interview guide beforehand to ensure a smooth and efficient process. This could allow them to get to know the background of the research and the questions that would be involved so they could prepare themselves well before the execution of the interview. In addition, the interview consisted of open questions so that the respondents could not be influenced.

“*Transferability* refers to the generalizability of inquiry.” (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 3). In qualitative methods, the research cannot be assessed using the rigorous, quantified tests of quantitative methods (Veal and Darcy, 2014), however the sample chosen in this study, have some degree of representativeness since the interviewees have a leadership position in a national sport organization. This was the reason why the research aimed for several interviews. Hence, we can say that the results are applicable to some people among the population, but the extent cannot be quantified. (Veal and Darcy, 2014) Moreover, the research is put into context, and the reader is ensured with background information about

the participants. In this way, the reader can determine if the study can be transferable to his/her own setting.

Dependability is concerned with the reliability of the research. To increase the dependability of this research, participants were required permission to record the interviews. The thematic analysis was conducted concurrently with the double-checking of the transcriptions and the recordings. By going back and forth, from the recordings, to the transcripts, a real understanding of what the respondent meant was ensured, and a better codification could be revealed. The reader is unfolded with a detailed description of the research process in the methodology chapter. “When readers are able to examine the research process, they are better able to judge the dependability of the research.” (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 3).

Confirmability relates to the objectivity of the analysis, which was ensured through continuous discussions with the supervisor.

3.7 Ethical issues

This study was first approved by the Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD). After approval, invitations were sent by email to the potential candidates. Together with the invitation and the interview guide was sent a consent form explaining to the participants what it would mean for them to participate in this research, how their personal data would be treated, and how their anonymity and confidentiality would be protected. All the participants were asked to sign the consent form, the template of which was taken by NSD. Although the study aimed to keep the anonymity and not include sensitive personal data, if not necessary, the participants were ensured the right to access and delete or change their personal data. In addition, they were given the right to withdraw from the project anytime they would want to. In the end, they were informed erasure of all the data gathered after the closure of the project.

Chapter 4

Findings &

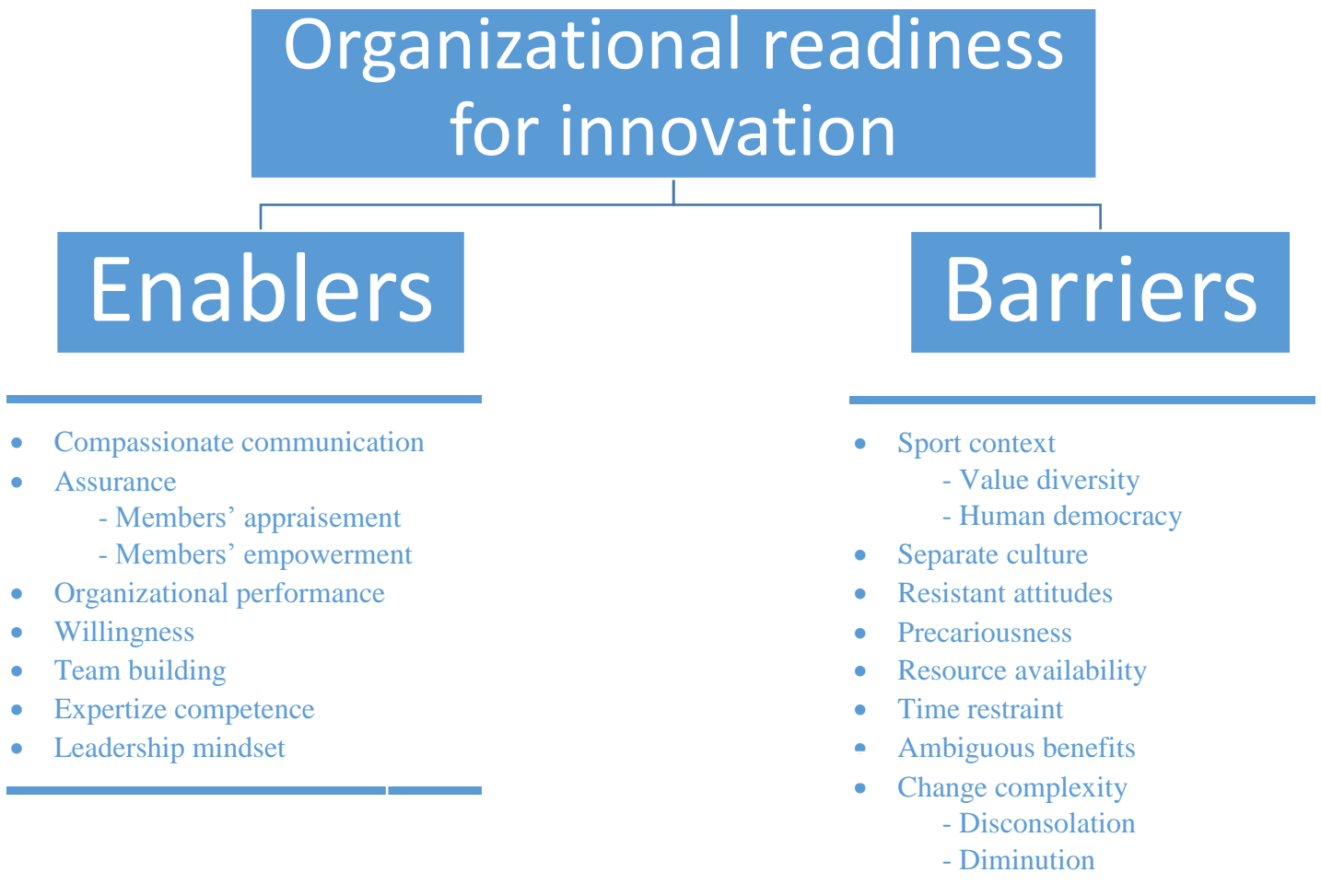
Discussion

4.1 Introduction of chapter 4

This chapter outlines the results of the study derived from the thematic analysis, together with an explanation of each concept presented in the emerged conceptual framework. It breaks down the concepts of organizational readiness for innovation into two building blocks: the components that sports managers perceive as enablers of organizational readiness to innovate and the perceived barriers they challenge when trying to make an innovative change in the organization.

4.2 Findings & Discussion

Figure 3: Conceptual framework of organizational readiness for innovation



The conceptual framework presents the two main building blocks that influence the readiness for innovation of organizational members of sports organizations. It displays the barriers sports managers face with the organizational members' attitude when trying to

innovate and the enablers they take advantage of to prepare organizational members for the change.

Barriers - Enablers

4.2.1 Sport context: value diversity & human democracy – compassionate communication

Interviewees describe sport organizations as very complex due to its various organizational values. “Core organizational values represent foundational principles established to guide employee decision making toward achieving both short- and long-term goals.” (Kerwin et al., 2014, p. 28) According to Kerwin et al. (2014), organizational values connect an organization’s mission to its vision to create shared understanding and coordinated action. Hence, members of organizations develop shared principles that guide their behaviors towards their defined strategic goals. However, the respondents agreed that the various values non-profit sport organizations associate themselves with, face them with many challenges in building a shared culture within organizational members.

The whole field of sport and change management is really difficult. And not only sport, I think organizations in general because the values are so, so many. There's so many reasons why you would like to join... why you would like to be volunteer... why you would like to be an athlete. You have all these different values. So it's so complex and I think that's also why you see sport organization worldwide are stuck 25 years behind the rest of the society. They have their structures there. So called democracy... (structural change)

The findings are in line with the study of Winand and Anagnostopoulos (2017), and show that SSOs have unique characteristics, that influence diverse perceptions of change and innovation from volunteers, administration and managers, leadership or other organizational members. The present study shows that these unique characteristics refer to the diversity of the values sport organizations have and the freedom of the organizational members to express their opinion extensively in the organization. Interviewees emphasize a difference between sport organizations and business on readiness for innovation. They accentuate the various roles human play within and their resistant attitudes as some of the many challenges that the complexity of sport organizations brings to innovative leaderships.

Because we have always done it this way. Why should we do it differently? But that's all about the individual is because you are set to be to have your own voice in organization, you don't have that same kind of voice in the business, you know, you just have to, you will meet your demands, that's all. (structural change)

Given that the organizational readiness for change is a multi-level construct (referring to the theory presented in chapter 2), which can be present in different levels of an organization, the inclusion of a diverse staff (paid and unpaid) makes sports managers face unlike readiness for change in different levels of organizational members when trying to innovate. There is a combination of paid staff and volunteers in all levels of the organizations and managers are faced with divergent perceptions of change within. There are various actors in a sport organization, starting from leadership and the administration, where volunteer board members have to make decisions together with general secretary that is part of paid staff. Following with the whole paid administration, who executes the decisions made by the board and cooperate together towards the organization's strategic goals. On the other hand, there are also athletes, coaches and volunteers of a lower level in the organization. All them are a very important part of the organization, therefore their opinion has influence in it. This makes it difficult to share a common understanding about change and innovation in an organization.

And when we have so many people knowing the right thing. It's and it's quite a heavy task to agree about the direction. So to make a team to bring dedication forward. It's quite a heavy task. (educational program)

Therefore, in order to create a shared culture that makes organizational members share common beliefs, values and work towards the same strategic goals the organization itself has (referring to the theory of Weiner 2009, of organizational readiness for change), it is of high importance that sports managers encourage open communication within the organizational members. Open communication will facilitate sports managers the chance to communicate continuously the strategic goals the organization have and their importance in order to influence organizational members perceptions and beliefs.

Norwegian SSOs become even more complex when there is the type of organization that includes many branches, such as for example, Norwegian SSO of martial arts, which includes 5 branches of different martial arts, and the fifth branch (multi-sport) includes many other 'mini' branches of various styles of martial arts. Similar organizations increase the diversity human perceptions and of strategic goals that the leadership wants to address the different sport values.

4.2.2 Precariousness – Assurance

The complexity that comes from the diversity of values and human democracy can be the reason why non-profit organizations are extremely risk-averse, as presented by Hull and Lio (2006) in the literature review section. Resistant attitudes towards innovation in Norwegian SSOs were perceived to a great extent. This can be the reason why leaders might find it easier to deal with all the context complexity by only focusing in the core business, and not risking to change, which together with its benefits brings precariousness too.

So there's hardly anyone talking about how to actually change the organization, how to develop an organization into a modern standard, because we're all stuck in the in the old days... (structural change)

They probably wanted me to focus more on sport and activity, employers and stuff like that, but I don't think that... that's not the right way to do it. When you have a strategy, and you come up with the goals and innovations that you think will help you in the future, you need to stand by it, it's tough. When it comes to that I didn't have people on my side all the time. (media platform innovation)

I think that's what's lacking in many of the Federation's boards, because they're maybe too concerned about the sport, and not about the decisions... (digitalization)

Findings indicate that they either focus on their administrative task to keep the activity going, or focus on the activity and stay on the 'field' to take care about the results. They are scared of doing something more than what they have already done for many years just because it worked out very well in the past.

People in general feel like they have enough tasks, responsibilities, and whatsoever, which, of course, can make changes even more scary, because what does this mean for me? Will it mean that I have to, like, do more work? (media platform innovation)

Something to not forget is the global pandemic the world faced the last couple of years, and probably still facing. It of course, impacted the sport industry also, which can be another cause that made innovation and organizational change more scary due to its uncertainty. "The COVID-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented situation worldwide. It has affected all aspects of human existence, sports included. As IOC President Thomas Bach stated: "With the global COVID-19 pandemic, we are all living in much uncertainty." (Crespo et al. 2022, pg. 2)

Despite the open communication, organizational managers must cultivate assurance to organizational members in order to avoid resistant attitudes because of the precariousness they feel towards change and innovation. Appraisal and empowerment of organizational members are perceived as factors that influence their assurance and build confidence. Weiner (2009) emphasizes shared confidence as a very important factor to successful change implementation. Sport managers must show appraisal attitudes towards organizational members contributions and efforts to increase their level of confidence and involve them in the change implementation process by giving adequate responsibilities so they can feel themselves important and valuable to the organization. Because people are active recipients of innovations (Greenhalgh et al., 2004), they are the ones adapting the change, therefore their involvement is important to achieve higher readiness of organizational members to innovate.

...I should have taken them more seriously, at an earlier stage, and clarified what their kind of level of involvement should be. (structural change)

Sport managers agree that the involvement of organizational members and clarification of their role in the changing process overcomes the lack of resource availability and the resistant attitudes and make organizational members more ready to innovate.

... they're spending time giving of their own spare time, many of them. You have to discuss with them on a different level and on the business level, you have to clarify

words, processes, involvement inclusion, you have to do these things in a great extent in the start, because if not, they will, they will easily say well, you don't involve me, I quit or you don't involve me, I don't agree. (digitalization)

And we have not been good enough to describe what they can do. And that's why I'm saying that in order to maintain the volunteerism in, in all aspects in your organization, you have to take that in consideration before you start changing. (structural change)

Volunteers need to be involved, to know their responsibilities and their roles very well in order to have the motivation to continue volunteering for a long time. However, it is important to say that albeit interviewees agree that involvement is important, they doubt that they would manage or try to do it in every changing process, because a wide inclusion of organizational members requires time and probably will extend more the change implementation process.

I am currently working as part of a very big digital change with the CRM system for the whole Sports Federation. And I see these are the pros... and I see how they do it involve the whole organization in the process, you know, they're very good at. Mmm... But I'm, so I would like to be a person like that, but I'm not patient enough to do it. Because you can't. This project has all stranded like two times already. And it's like gone a year, that takes a lot of time and effort. And you have to be really, really strong to do it. (digitalization)

4.2.3 Resource availability and time restraint – organizational performance

However, change came with an increase in task demands, ergo resource availability was essential for the organizational members to feel ready to change. Either it was human resources, financial or time factor, resource availability resulted in an important component for organizational members to feel confident enough to change. Participants agreed that financial insecurity affected the organizational members' assurance regarding successful change implementation because task demands that came up from the change were often just postponed or not prioritized due to time restraint of other tasks.

Yes, was quite difficult to build confidence in what my idea was put to the table to implement... (structural change)

There was trouble with getting the employee that had to do the creation of the media platform on our website. It took time wasn't prioritized. Didn't understand. And it was, it was slow. Probably a combination, both of her lack of commitment or whatever and time consuming other consuming tasks as well. (media platform innovation)

They don't find time to do it, and they are. ...they don't think it's important. And yeah, it's more like, it's not resistance to the system is it's that they don't think it's important enough for them to use their time. (digitalization)

An increase in resource availability resulted in omission of insecurities and built organizational members' assurance on effective change implementation. It then helped in laying the foundations of readiness for innovation by fostering empowerment.

On the resource delay has been clear resistance or influence on the way because you can show people look, now we got the benefit, it takes too long from selling the project to you getting the benefit. So now people can see... (cultural change)

Then it is my president and I we have we have been in the Federation very long time and we have we have experienced time when it's not money to spend at all. ... So it's easier to say yes, this, we believe in this, and we want to invest in this. We have to... you have to do this. So it's easier to make these decisions than 10 years ago. (Educational program)

Sports managers must develop strategies and make smart decision that support their organizational performance. Organizational performance, in case of absence of resource availability, can be improved by increasing organizational members' commitment and efficacy. By involving and engaging organizational members in an effective way, an increase in organizational performance happens. As presented in the literature review section, commitment and efficacy are key determinants of building organizational readiness for change. Hence, organizational performance would enable resource availability and members' readiness to innovate.

In addition, due to successful operations members feel more confident and can accept a change believing that will still impact positively organizational performance. On the other hand, if the organizational performance is not at its best, if the core business is not performing well, insecurities increase, therefore organizational members tend to resist because of the change precariousness and their confidence level.

I need to make sure that our core business, whatever activities that we have, it needs to be taken care of. And it needs to work, if you're going to sort of have the time and space and commitment from others to work on changes. So if the core business, our activities and stuff like that doesn't work, then you're not going to be able to make changes. Because then people will be in opposition to you, and you will spend more time arguing about why core business isn't working and less time on being able to make the changes. (media platform innovation)

4.2.4 Ambiguous benefits - willingness

Ambiguous benefits refer to the hidden, not obvious and arguable benefits a change might have. Referring to Winer's theory of organizational readiness for change, in order for people to commit they need to find the change important and valuable. Thus, they will change because of 'want to' motives. Members will find either a personal benefit on the innovation, or will understand that the specific change is beneficial to their organization. For people to feel ready and have a willing to change, they need to see the benefits of the innovation well before the implementation phase. Sport managers perceived the ambiguous benefits of change as a barrier to create organizational readiness for innovation. Results indicate that organizational members were resistant when they found ambiguous benefits to change, and that sports manager found it hard to communicate clear and obvious benefits before the implementation phase. Winand and Anagnostopoulos (2017) explain the risk-averse ability of sport organizational members because of the non-profit driven value. This might be the explanation of resistant attitudes deriving from the ambiguous benefits of change, because the non-profit value of sports organization makes it hard to find a direct benefit on it. Non-profit sports organizations are more value driven and focus on activity results and the other non-profit values they aim to transmit in the society, rather than focusing on financial profits. Moreover, the non-profit value makes sports organizations apathetic to the market, without

concerning to be competitive, therefore the sports managers perceive the organizational members as only working to keep the organization alive and not trying to develop it. Organizational members are often led by their egocentrism and must find a personal benefit in their particular role to support a change and continue volunteering. Ambiguous benefits makes them get influenced by change precariousness and resist to involve if they do not find at least a personal benefit on it. For this reason, sports managers must try to cultivate an objective thinking and communicate clearly the reason the leadership is aiming to innovate a particular thing in their organization and develop strategies focus on increasing willingness to change.

4.2.5 Change complexity – team building and expertize competence

Finally, another pivotal barrier of organizational readiness for innovation is the complexity of change. According to Weiner (2009), implementing complex organizational changes involves collective efforts and contributions by many people towards change implementation. Hence, the challenges sports managers face regarding organizational readiness depends also by the complexity of the change they are trying to implement in the organization. Results of this research data collection present change complexity as the disconsolation and diminution of organizational members. *Disconsolation* is presented as the discomfort ability change brings.

First of all, its changes, doesn't feel good for anyone. That's the hard truth. So if you have to do something new or change the way you work or change priorities, then people generally don't like that. To begin with. (media platform innovation)

So depending on the complexity of change, organizational members feel different levels of comfortability regarding change, and this comfortability effects how they welcome the introduced change.

Whereas, *diminution* is connected with the power and the importance of their position in the organization. The impact of innovation to their power in the organization effects members' attitude towards change. Often innovations that are disruptive and radical impact ones meaning in the organization, which could be in a positive way or vica verce. If this impact means their power and meaning in the organization is decreasing, organizational members tend to resist to change and be protectionist of their value in the organization. They lose the

idea of what their contribution should be. However, incremental and architectural innovations might impact less their existence in the organization, hence their attitude would change also and be less protective and more welcome towards the change.

I think that some of the reasons why you are not flexible enough in order to change within the organizations also I think it's some level of protectionism; my job, my ideas, my thoughts, my structure. So I think some of the reasons are also individual based because they're able to run the..., let's say a business for years and years and years. Because this is the way we already always run it. And if any new ideas comes up or any asking for change comes up. It's more it's both the insecurity but it's also has to do with I think, the individual protectionism within the organization. (medium SSO – structural change)

Sport managers must ensure a shared understanding of the change from the organizational members before taking further steps on the implementation phase. They must organize team building activities in order to open the communication within the organization, create cooperation and foster a shared culture. Team building activities ensures opportunities to other organizational readiness enablers mentioned earlier in this section, such as: compassionate communication, organizational members empowerment and appraisal, assurance and higher organizational performance. Moreover, in cases when managers face challenging precariousness barrier due to the change complexity, they must bring new expertise competence in the organization. Expertise competence will increase organizational members assurance and will assist in increasing their confidence to having a successful change implementation.

4.2.6 Leadership mindset

Nevertheless, sport managers indicate various strategies that facilitate organizational members readiness for innovation despite the organizational complexity, change precariousness, and all the barriers of members' readiness to innovate. Leadership mindset is an essential component sport managers found to enable change and innovation in the organization.

So in order to change that, especially when we had the leadership when the new department came up, we managed to create a more safe culture.

Regardless of all the barriers, the analysis showed that the leadership plays a significant role in readiness of organizational members. Although the resource availability might not be supportive to change, if leadership is neutral and supportive to change, they will commit themselves in organizational members empowerment and will foster compassionate communication. Organizational members' appraisal strategies, team-building, and compassionate communication could foster assurance and therefore, members will commit to change willingly. Leadership efforts and patience to laying the foundations of readiness for innovation helped organizational members slowly realize the benefits of change, which further increased their positive attitudes towards change.

Just like we work and work and work and, and we are very patient. And the people I have who helps me are also very patient, they are not never angry and saying this is good for you or just patient and yeah. (digitalization)

The people are there because they're volunteers, they're willingly being part of something. (digitalization)

These foundations of readiness-building increased confidence and cooperation within the organization, which led to shared values, beliefs and empowerment. Hence, a shared culture.

Nevertheless, results showed that innovating requires expertise competences. Even though willingness to change could be higher, successful innovation implementation did not seem possible without expertise competence. Hence when implementing an innovative change, sport organizations often got new people in the organization. Expertise competence could strengthen the assurance and willingness to change of the organizational members.

And all that knowledge and the competence, of course, was really valuable when presenting idea to the organization because then I had a lot more components to bring to the discussion. And of course, my thoughts were well argued, there was thought through. I think that was... I think that is a vital part of making changes you need to know as much as possible about it. (media platform innovation)

But when I started there, it was no innovation, but still, they wanted to hire to have me as a sports manager to do this changes. (cultural change)

And during this time we got a new employee in the federation... So he has the whole responsibility of education in our federation. (digitalization)

These are consistent with Winand and Anagnostopoulos (2017) and Drucker (1985), in understanding sports managers as entrepreneurs that enable innovation in an organization. Winand et al., 2013 states that volunteer board members are highly influential to successful implementation of innovations. This finding is also in line with Hoerber and Hoerber (2012), who state that top managers influence organizational culture and enable organizational members and employees to innovate. Hence, sports organizations must be aware of the leadership importance in the development of the organization and choose the leadership accordingly. Moreover, sports managers and innovation initiators must first focus on creating a leadership mindset towards innovation and then shift their strategies to the other organizational members. They should be aware that innovation implementation requires time and precursory actions. Therefore, the creation of organizational readiness for innovation needs to be a continuous process in sports organizations, if they want to improve their stance regarding change and innovation.

5.2 Practical implications

It is highly important that organizational actors of non-profit sports organizations develop an innovative mindset and have positive attitudes towards change and innovation. Organization leaders and sports managers should develop entrepreneurial skills and focus their strategies towards fostering a shared culture between organizational members to increase empowerment, team building and willingness to innovate. Sport managers can enable these important factors through compassionate communication, expertize competence and showing appraisal to organizational members. This can nurture readiness to innovate to the organizational members and encourage future innovation. This study assists practitioners from the non-profit sports sector to develop better strategies on building organizational readiness for innovation, understanding the barriers that hamper readiness to innovation and the enablers that can foster organizational readiness to innovate.

Future studies that can investigate the findings of this research project in a qualitative method are encouraged.

Conclusion

This study explored the organizational readiness for innovation of Norwegian Special Sports Organizations from the subjective eyes of Norwegian practitioners. The unique findings of this research highlight that organizational readiness to innovate is enabled by the leadership mindset and compassionate communication that focuses on organizational members' empowerment and support to building a shared culture within. Finally, this study suggests that organizational leaders and sports managers are an important driver of organizational change and innovation, and they can lean their strategies towards the enablers of organization readiness for innovation in order to nurture an innovative mindset in the entire organization.

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Appendix

Interview Guide

- What is your role in the federation?

- How long have you been working there?
- Have you done any innovative change during this period you have been working in the organization?
- How and when did you understand or decide that the organization had to make that specific change?
- What were the phases/steps you undertook to implement the innovation into your organization?
- Did you experience resistance to change? How did you react to it?
- How did you experience the commitment of organizational members in the implementation of this change?
- Did the organizational members value the change? How did they perceive it (necessary, important, beneficial, worthwhile etc.)?
- Did the organizational members engage to make sure the implementation phase goes at its best?
- Did the organization have the resources needed to effectively implement the change?
- How did the organizational members appraise the task demands regarding to available resources the organization had?
- Did the organizational members share a common assessment of the task demands, available resources and situational factors to effectively implement the change?
- Did they share the same confidence regarding the effective change?
- How was the organizational culture?
- How is the past experience on innovation implementation?
- How are the policies and procedures in the organization? Are they flexible?
- Did you face uncommon stances within organizational members regarding the change?
- What were the challenges you faced when getting ready to implement a change into your organization?
- What were/are the outcomes from which the organization got advantage from, regarding organizational readiness for future change?

Consent form

Are you interested in taking part in the research project

“Are we ready to innovate? Organizational readiness for innovation into non-profit sport organizations. A case study of Norwegian Sports Federations.”

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to investigate the perceived organizational readiness for innovation of Norwegian Sports federations and the opportunities and challenges they face with it when trying to implement an innovative change into the organization. In this letter we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

Change management experts have emphasized the importance of establishing organizational readiness for change and recommended various strategies for creating it. It seems like organizational readiness has not been a subject of many theoretical and empirical studies. Therefore, researchers call for more research and studies in this topic in order to provide organizations, administrators, practitioners, and students with valuable instructions that are necessary when initiating change into an organization. Some authors suggest that failure to establish sufficient readiness accounts for one-half of all unsuccessful, large-scale organizational change efforts (Weiner, 2009, p. 2).

Inspired by Weiner’s study of the theory of organizational readiness based upon the motivation and social cognitive theories, I decided to undertake my Sport Management master thesis relying into this theory and developing a contextual framework of organizational readiness into sports, with a case study of Norwegian Sports Federations. This dissertation endeavors to interrogate sports managers of Norwegian Sports Federations about the perceived understanding of organizational readiness for change, to address this gap, and develop a contextual model, which will provide practitioners with valuable instruction to establish sufficient readiness into their organizations, being these federations, regional confederations, or sport clubs, and will promote onward scholarly debate and stimulate empirical inquiry into an important, yet understudied topic in implementation

science. Understanding an organization's readiness for change is significant for gaining stakeholder support, providing appropriate leadership and direction, and planning change programs (Oakland and Tanner, 2007 in Cassey et al., 2012).

According to many experts, greater readiness leads to more successful change implementation. This claim can be explained by the social cognitive theory, which suggests that when organizational readiness is high, organizational members are more likely to initiate and support change, and exert greater efforts in facing obstacles during change implementation. (Weiner, 2009, p. 5)

Finally, this research will be useful for students and researchers interested in change management and innovation into non-profit sport organizations, and encourage further scientific research.

This master thesis will be handed in in 17th of May, and the interviews are planned to be taken in the first half of March. The data collected will be used only for the purpose of this study.

Who is responsible for the research project?

Molde University College will be responsible for this project. I will be conducting the research in practicality, and Christos Anagnostopoulos (*Associate Professor at HiM*) is responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

The sample has been selected on the basis of sports managers who are working in Norwegian Sports Federations and are responsible for the development of the organization. Approximately 40-55 federations will be invited to participate in this project by deciding an adequate person to be interrogated. I hope you will take the time to contribute to my project.

What does participation involve for you?

In order to answer the research question and develop a contextual framework of organizational readiness for innovation, there are planned interviews with one representative of each of the 55 Norwegian sport federations, who can be an administrator, manager, general secretary, or a development consultant. The representatives need to have experience in initiating innovation in the federation in order to be able to talk about any implementation

phase of any innovative change into the organization. The interviews are planned to be conducted in order to satisfy the interview objectives' preference in regard to time and method. In this time of Covid-19 situation, where less travels are encouraged, zoom meetings will be offered and in case agreed by the interviewees, it will be recorded in order to have a better overview of the data to carefully codify and analyze. In any other case notes will be taken during the interview.

“If you choose to take part in the project, it will involve that you be interviewed either online or physically and recorded by sound or video, depending on the situation of the interview. It will take approx. 60-80 minutes. The survey includes questions about your role in the federation and your understanding of the organizational readiness determinants during innovation implementation in the organization, for instance, organizational members' resistance towards change, or commitment and efficacy during implementation phase.

Your answers will be recorded electronically and stored in an encrypted database, where it will be anonymized and coded.

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data

We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act). Data and information will be used in a way where it will not be possible to identify the individual sport managers. In connection with the institution responsible for the project:

- I as a student and research manager, as well as my supervisor, I will have access to the data through the institution responsible for treatment.
- To ensure that no unauthorized person has access to your personal data, your name and contact information will be replaced with a code stored on your own name list

separate from other data, the data material will be stored on research servers that will be locked and encrypted.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The project is scheduled to end on 30.06.2022. Your personal details and recording of interview, as well as the coding for anonymity will then be deleted.

Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with Molde University College, Data Protection Services has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

- Molde University College at Christos Anagnostopoulos
(email: chrsitos.anagnostopoulos@himolde.no or telephone: +47 711 95 823)
- Our Data Protection Officer: Merete Ludvigsen
(email: merete.ludvigsen@himolde.no or phone: 71 21 41 18)
- Data Protection Services, by email: (personverntjenester@sikt.no) or by telephone: +47 53 21 15 00.
NSD - Norwegian Center for Research Data AS, by e-mail (personvernt services@nsd.no) or by phone: 55 58 21 17.

Yours sincerely,

Project Leader

Student

Christos Anagnostopoulos

Oneda Reçi

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project “*Are we ready to innovate? Organizational readiness for innovation into non-profit sport organizations. A case study of Norwegian Sports Federations.*” and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- to participate in an interview*
- to participate in (insert other methods, e.g. an online survey) – if applicable*
- for my/my child’s teacher to give information about me/my child to this project (include the type of information)– if applicable*
- for my personal data to be processed outside the EU – if applicable*
- for information about me/myself to be published in a way that I can be recognised (describe in more detail)– if applicable*
- for my personal data to be stored after the end of the project for (insert purpose of storage e.g. follow-up studies) – if applicable*

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. 30.06.2022

(Signed by participant, date)