Sport-for-Development: An Integrated Literature Review

Submitted version

Abstract

Despite the significant increase of published research in sport-for-development (SFD), to date there have been no attempts to rigorously review and synthesize scholarly contributions in this area. To address this issue, we conducted an integrative review of SFD literature to portray an overarching and holistic picture of the field. Through a comprehensive literature analysis following Whittemore and Knafl's (2005) five-step process, we provide evidence of the status quo of current SFD research foci, authorship, geographical contexts, theoretical frameworks, sport activity, level of development, methodologies, methods, and key research findings. Our study shows an increasing trend of journal publications since 2000, with a strong focus on social and educational outcomes related to youth sport, and with football (soccer) as the most common activity. A large majority of SFD research has been conducted at the community level, where qualitative approaches are dominant. The geographical contexts of authorship and study location present an interesting paradox: Though the majority of SFD projects are carried out in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, 90% of SFD authors are based in North America, Europe, and Australia. We conclude our study by providing new perspectives on key issues in SFD, and by outlining current research and theoretical gaps that provide the basis for future scholarly enquiry.

Keywords: sport-for-development, development-through-sport, integrated review, systematic review, meta-analysis, SFD research literature database

Sport-for-Development: An Integrated Literature Review

Over the past decade, the field of sport-for-development (SFD) has received significant attention from non-governmental organizations, government agencies, sport practitioners, and sport academics around the world. Sport-for-development has been defined as "the use of sport to exert a positive influence on public health, the socialisation of children, youths and adults, the social inclusion of the disadvantaged, the economic development of regions and states, and on fostering intercultural exchange and conflict resolution" (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011, p. 311). As a consequence of growing political and institutional support, the number of sport-based projects aimed at contributing to positive development in these areas has been constantly increasing (Coalter, 2007, 2013; Levermore & Beacom, 2009; Schulenkorf & Adair, 2014). The popularity of SFD stems from its ability to capture or "hook" a large number of people—particularly those interested in sport and physical activity—and use the momentum in and around sport as a strategic vehicle to communicate, implement, and achieve non-sport development goals.

In the academic domain, the continued growth of SFD projects has led to an influx of theoretical and empirical studies across numerous disciplines of sport, including management (Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010; Parent & Harvey, 2008), sociology (Coalter, 2013; Darnell, 2012), health (Crabbe, 2000; Eime, Payne, & Harvey, 2008), public policy (Giulianotti, 2011), gender studies (Meier & Saavedra, 2009; Pedersen & Seidman, 2004), education (Burnett, 2013; Jeanes, 2013), marketing (Vail, 2007), media (Coleby & Giles, 2013), as well as conflict and peace studies (Rookwood & Palmer, 2011; Sugden, 2006). Despite the prevalence of significant scholarship in this burgeoning field, to date there have been no attempts to rigorously review and synthesize SFD research studies, approaches, and findings, or to systematically reflect on the wider implications of SFD as a new and complex body of knowledge. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to provide an integrative review of SFD

with the intention to portray an overarching and holistic picture of the field. Through a rigorous literature analysis, we aimed to create a consistent and comprehensive panorama of SFD research, illuminating the status quo regarding research foci, authorship, geographical contexts, theoretical frameworks, sport activity, level of development, methodologies, methods, and key research findings. Finally, we outline current study strengths and research and theoretical gaps, and offer an outlook for SFD that includes recommendations for future scholarly enquiry.

Literature Review Approaches

Before presenting the findings of our SFD literature review, it seems important to highlight how review articles are able to make a significant scholarly contribution. In essence, review articles are important as they examine and summarize past research by drawing comprehensive conclusions from many separate studies that address a similar topic (Cooper, 1998; Jones, 2004; Keller, Fleury, Gregor-Holt, & Thompson, 1999). In this context, academics utilize a number of different approaches when wishing to synthesize what is already known about a particular topic. The "traditional" literature review is often used to support and inform journal articles. It varies from discipline to discipline but generally allows authors to cover a range of theoretical and empirical studies relevant to their research in an attempt "to formulate a general idea about the research results on the topic of interest" (Holopainen, Hakulinen-Viitanen, & Tossavainen, 2008, p. 74). While widely accepted and the dominant approach taken across different academic fields, the traditional literature review has been criticized for the subjective selection of literature as well as limited depth of investigation (Jesson, Matheson, & Lacey, 2001; Stanley & Jarrell, 1989).

As broader and more holistic alternatives, four encompassing methods of conducting "research of research" have been proposed: meta-analysis, systematic review, qualitative review, and integrative review. While there are commonalities in each approach regarding

the strategic gathering and evaluation of existing research, Whittemore (2005) pointed out that each has a distinct definition and purpose, as well as associated strengths and weaknesses pertaining to the sampling frame and type of analysis. For example, meta-analysis combines the evidence of multiple primary sources through statistical methods, which enhances the objectivity and validity of findings.

Similarly, systematic review has been dominated by a focus on quantitative enquiries that attempt to combine statistical analyses. Of the four different approaches to comprehensive research reviews, systematic review is perhaps the most widely known. It originated in medicine but is now used extensively in several other fields, including tourism and hospitality (Balaban & Marano, 2010; Cheng, 2008), disaster management (Lettieri, Masella, & Radaelli, 2009), and the wider social sciences (see Petticrew & Roberts, 2008). It differentiates itself from traditional literature reviews by aiming to identify all studies that address a specific (often clinical) question and to utilize a methodology that ensures rigor in both the article selection and data extraction processes (Hiller et al., 2011). However, Whittemore and Knafl (2005) suggested that while systematic review may well be appropriate for a range of medical studies—especially clinical trials—its quantitative focus does not always suit other disciplines, particularly those with a significant qualitative research emphasis.

In contrast, a variety of qualitative reviews including meta-syntheses, meta-studies, formal grounded theory, and meta-ethnography have been used to synthesize findings of individual qualitative work (Combs & Ketchen, 2003; Jesson et al., 2001). Each of these approaches is distinct in its analysis and level of interpretation; however, as the name suggests, qualitative reviews are restricted to qualitative research, which limits the breadth of samples as well as the generalisability of findings. In contrast, as the broadest type of literature review, integrative review possesses the ability to combine both qualitative and

quantitative data, as well as different types of research approaches and designs (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005). Within the academic community, integrative reviews are described as incredibly complex (Tavares de Souza, Dias da Silva, & de Carvalho, 2010). They are now recognized as the most comprehensive, evidence-based approaches to reviewing literature and providing guidelines for future initiatives (Torraco, 2005). According to Whittemore and Knafl (2005), they are increasingly forming the foundation of policy development, as they have the potential to build science, inform research, and develop practice.

There are warnings, however, that the complexity inherent in combining different research approaches and methodologies in one large integrative review study may come at the expense of academic quality and accuracy (O'Mathúna, 2000; Torraco, 2005). It is therefore of importance to formulate a stringent research framework with clear methodological strategies and processes to ensure academic rigor. If this can be achieved, then the integrated review is likely to offer the most sophisticated opportunity to combine a range of empirical and theoretical works with the ability "to create a consistent and comprehensive panorama of complex concepts" (Tavares de Souza et al., 2010, p. 107).

Research Agenda and Approach

With the intention to provide a comprehensive, explicit, and transparent research overview of SFD scholarship, we followed Whittemore and Knafl's (2005) five-step process of conducting integrative reviews: (a) problem identification, (b) literature search, (c) data evaluation, (d) data analysis, and (e) presentation. Applied to our context, the exposure of integrative review to the wider field of sport management (and SFD in particular) calls for more explanation, particularly of the latter four steps; problem identification was addressed in the introduction section.

The clearly defined parameters inherent to the literature search are central pillars that distinguish integrative reviews from alternative approaches. In this particular study, there

were two distinct variables, *sport* and *development*, that clearly delineated two of the three

key boundaries of the literature search. As search terms, these two variables allowed us to

collate all articles within our catchment area whereby there was convergence and a distinct—

albeit contested—theory of "development," as well as the emergence of "sport" as a social

construct. However, defining sport and applying the term in practice, research, and policy

domains has not been without complications (DFAT, 2013; Richards et al., 2013; United

Nations, 2006). For example, in the field of SFD there is often an overlap of sport, play,

leisure, and physical activity, and these terms are at times used interchangeably. In fact, the

"de-sportized nature" of many activities within SFD has led some academics to argue that

SFD should in fact be referred to as PFD (play for development; (see Sterchele, in press).

Hence, we also included all articles with a clear PFD or development-through-physical-

activity focus into our study.

The third key boundary for this study was the exclusion of all material that was not

peer-reviewed and published in academic journals. Hence, all book publications and grey

literature—including opinion pieces, editorials, newspaper articles, and any unpublished

works—were removed. This is not intended to detract from—or comment on—the value of

many of these publications, but rather to maintain a targeted focus for this research. Given

the fact that a number of (edited) books (e.g. Bennett & Gilbert, 2012; Coalter, 2007, 2013;

Darnell, 2012; Hanrahan & Schinke, 2012; Levermore & Beacom, 2009; Schulenkorf &

Adair, 2014) have arguably had significant impact on the SFD field, we acknowledge the

restricted scope of this review as a limitation of our research. It should be noted, however,

that an integrative review does not presuppose to be exhaustive on any given topic or topics,

but rather exhaustive within its predetermined and declared boundaries (Torraco, 2005).

The literature search process involved searching two key databases, SPORTDiscus

and Scopus, for peer-reviewed journal articles that were published between January 2000 and

February 2014. The year 2000 was chosen as a starting-point because with the exception of

early pioneering work (see e.g. Sugden, 1991), dedicated and focused research in the SFD

field began in the early 21st century (Schulenkorf & Adair, 2014). The search was restricted

to full-text, English articles which we acknowledge as a limitation of our research. The

inclusion of literature published in other languages would certainly impact the results found

and we see this as a valuable opportunity for future research. We also acknowledge that the

two chosen databases cannot encompass nor contain *all* empirical and theoretical research

concerning studies related to SFD and/or development through sport. However, they were

chosen because SPORTDiscus provides a sport-specific representation of published material,

while Scopus covers a broad range of social sciences literature, allowing for the search to

delve into papers related to SFD published in journals beyond the sport domain (e.g., in

community development or health journals). Moreover, preliminary testing of these two

databases indicated that most sport-related journals were covered, and relatively high search

results were achieved. In addition to the two databases, a conscious decision was made to

manually search (and include papers from) the three sport management journals associated

with the major sport management associations of the world (i.e., *Journal of Sport

Management*, *Sport Management Review*, and *European Sport Management Quarterly*).

Also, the newly established *Journal of Sport for Development* (http://jsfd.org/) was

individually scanned given the specific relevance and focus of the journal.

The literature search included the terms *sport* (NOT *transport*) AND *develop*. These

search terms were applied to the domains of title, abstract, and/or keywords. This was an

issue of practicality, expediency, and consistency, given that a full search of Scopus without

such restrictions returned in excess of 200,000 results. It was therefore agreed that if *sport*

and *develop* did not feature in any of the three key domain areas, then there was insufficient

focus on the topic to warrant consideration.

For the data evaluation process, one author first screened each of the database hits (over 15,000 across the two databases) to exclude those articles that were not specifically related to the topic of SFD/development through sport. The article title and/or information contained within its abstract were used to inform decision-making at this stage. Unclear cases that did not fit the inclusion/exclusion criteria were highlighted and subsequently examined by the second and third authors before a final decision for inclusion or exclusion was reached (see Table 1 for details). Of the 610 articles selected for inclusion by the first author, independent agreement was reached between the second and third authors that resulted in the inclusion of 437 of those articles and exclusion of 173 articles.

Insert Table 1 about here

Table 1 provides a summary of the general inclusion and exclusion criteria used by the research team in determining the relevance of individual articles. This was a complex process and no hard and fast rules could be applied. Rather, these inclusion and exclusion criteria guided discussions and judgments regarding each article's potential relevance. Any articles that could possibly be considered as having met an inclusion criteria were added to the article database in the first round of analysis (narrowing down the list to 610 articles). The breadth of topics noted in the exclusion criteria column in Table 1 highlights the wide-reaching body of literature identified using the specified search terms. Numerous articles that related specifically to corporate social responsibility, elite athletes, coaches, umpires, risk management, and influences on participation (amongst others) were returned in the searches of the two specified databases; however, most of them held little relevance to the concept of SFD.

A selection of article focal points was also treated with particular caution in determining their relevance to the SFD body of knowledge. For example, where charity sporting events were a major focus of an article, to be included in the database, the study

needed to focus more on livelihoods or improved participation (i.e., raising money for a

charity or increasing activity levels of the population) rather than on commercial operations

or marketing aspects of these events. Disability sport was another challenging area where

papers which focused on the inclusive aspects of disability sport were included, while those

emphasizing elite athlete progression outcomes were excluded. Overall, the articles that were

the most difficult to classify (include/exclude) were those focused on the following topics:

disability sport, events (particularly charity events), legacy impacts, Masters sport, and

physical education. This is because many of these areas can be very relevant in an SFD

context, but not all articles are related specifically to developing individuals or communities

through sport.

With respect to data analysis, the relevant 437 articles were examined against a series

of categories drawn by the authors from journal meta data (see Table 2). Details of each

article were recorded and a comprehensive SFD research literature database was developed

(available from authors on request). Once established, this database was examined and

analyzed for patterns, themes, and anomalies. The authors remained open to emerging

patterns and trends throughout the analysis process, which resulted in the development of

additional categories, such as *sport as a concept*.

<div align="center">Insert Table 2 about here</div>

Once the data analysis was complete, we were able to approach the final step of

Whittemore and Knafl's (2005) integrative review process: the presentation of research

findings. In this case, key findings of our integrated review on SFD will be described and

subsequently discussed in the remainder of this paper.

<div align="center">**Findings**</div>

In this section, we provide the outcomes of our analysis. Where appropriate, data are

presented as a frequency table or graph providing a snapshot of research undertaken in the

SFD field. Outcomes from our data analysis that required interpretation or a summary (see

Table 2) are presented as a statement or overview of key themes; in these instances, simple

"counting" was not appropriate to represent the more complex data sets. In the presentation

of findings, our intention is to provide the big picture of the SFD field of research, rather than

the minutiae of individual articles.

Article Title

All article titles were entered into the NVivo 10 software program and analyzed to

identify the top 50 high frequency words. To ensure an accurate representation of words and

terms used within the SFD literature titles, words were condensed to root level; for example,

the word *sport* includes all mentions of sport, sporting, and sports. The top 50 words were

then prepared as a word cloud (see Figure 1) to illustrate the most frequent words and terms

used in article titles.

Insert Figure 1 about here

As seen in Figure 1, sport and develop(s) are the two most common words used in

article titles. The top 10 terms also included: social, youth, physical, community activity,

health, educators, and participation. These terms present a snapshot of the current areas of

focus in SFD research, with a strong prevalence of social and youth sport initiatives. It is

also interesting that the only sport-specific activity identified in the top 50 terms was football

(soccer), clearly identifying it as the most commonly included sport in SFD programs and

initiatives.

Year of Publication

When analyzing the year of publication of the articles within the data set, a clear trend

(see Figure 2) emerged of exponential growth in publications over the last decade, reaching a

peak of 96 in 2013. As we only included articles published before February 2014 in our

analysis, we decided not to list 2014 publications in Figure 2.

Insert Figure 2 about here

Journal

The complete data set was analyzed to identify the 10 journals with the highest number of SFD manuscripts published between January 2000 and February 2014 (see Table 3). The two leading outlets were journals that focus specifically on the social aspects of sport (sociology discipline); however, these were closely followed by the three leading sport management journals. The *Journal of Sport for Development*, which was established in 2013, was also represented in the top 10 journal outlets. Its ranking is expected to increase in the future due to its specific focus on SFD research.

Insert Table 3 about here

Thematic Area

The *Journal of Sport for Development* lists seven specific thematic areas of SFD practice and research: disability, education, gender, health, livelihoods, peace, and social cohesion (for descriptions see http://jsfd.org/). Although research in some of these areas overlaps, we attempted to assign articles to the most relevant area in order to provide a general picture of the current focus of SFD work. We combined data extraction and interpretation techniques for these assignments: Where study keywords and disciplines were listed, we used them to classify papers. In cases where this information was absent, we read through the article and manually assigned articles to the most relevant thematic area(s).

As captured in Figure 3, there were thematic areas that were well-represented in the sample of journal articles (i.e., social cohesion and education) and areas which were found less frequently in the SFD literature (i.e., gender, disability, and livelihoods). It is important to note, however, that one-fifth of the literature analyzed was cross-disciplinary, spanning different thematic areas.

Insert Figure 3 about here

Geographic Representation: Researchers and Location of Research

The complete data set was analyzed to identify both the geographic location of the researchers (journal article author details) and the location of the research (SFD program or initiative). Figures 4 and 5 provide a comparison by continent, where it can be seen that a significant majority of the total 383 researchers were based in Europe (37%), North America (36%), and Oceania (predominantly Australia and New Zealand; 19%). However, the location of the research in comparison was more evenly spread, despite the strong representation of SFD research conducted on programs or initiatives in North America.

Insert Figure 4 about here

Insert Figure 5 about here

When the data were further broken down by country of researcher and research location (see Table 4), it became apparent that much of the SFD research was indeed being undertaken in the "home countries" of the researchers. In particular, Table 4 illustrates that the top five nations for academics undertaking SFD research (USA, UK, Australia, Canada and South Africa) were also the top five research sites. This indicates that much of the SFD research publications were based on geographic proximity to the researchers.

Additionally, local contributors from the countries under investigation were often not represented in the research team. When analyzing the data set for use of in-country or program staff as part of the research team, only 28 journal articles noted their inclusion.

Insert Table 4 about here

Theoretical Framework

Across the complete data set, 294 papers were identified as having an applied research focus and 143 were identified as having a conceptual focus. Analysis of the specific theoretical foundation of the applied focus journal articles (see Table 5) indicated that positive youth development (47 articles) and social capital (38 articles) were the two most commonly

applied theoretical frameworks in the SFD literature. Other theoretical frameworks used less

frequently included: critical development perspective, ecological systems theory, feminist

theory, human capital development, neo-liberalism, symbolic interactionism, theory of

planned behavior, and multi-level analysis.

Insert Table 5 about here

Sport: Programs and Initiatives

Two hundred twenty-five articles discussed sport as a concept, rather than specific

sport activities. However, when analyzing the specific sport activities in the remaining

articles, a broad range of sports and physical activity programs was identified, with general

physical activity (as opposed to sport-specific activities) and football (soccer) as the most

common choices (see Table 6). There was also a substantial body of research investigating

SFD in the context of mega-events, as evidenced by journal articles discussing SFD benefits

and challenges related to the Olympics ($n = 14$) and FIFA World Cup ($n = 8$).

Insert Table 6 about here

Level of Development

SFD programs are designed for—and researched at—different levels of development,

from individual outcomes to community (club, specific cohort of the population, policy, or

program), state/region, national (cohort, policy, program), and international outcomes

(organization, policy, or program).

As evidenced by Table 7, community level programs and outcomes were most

commonly found in the research literature analyzed, with all other categories (with the

exception of state level programs) being relatively evenly represented within the data set.

This finding reflects broadly the level of development for SFD programs on the ground (see

http://www.sportdevelopment.org/).

Insert Table 7 about here

Research Methodology

Research within the SFD domain was predominantly undertaken with a qualitative

research approach (see Figure 6), closely followed by conceptual research. Studies using

quantitative and mixed method approaches were less commonly found within the data set of

research articles.

Insert Figure 6 about here

Data Collection

The data set was analyzed to identify the most common methods of data collection

(see Figure 7). The use of multiple methods of data collection (e.g., a combination of

interviews, observation, and document analysis) was most commonly reported, closely

followed by the use of standalone questionnaires and research interviews. For a large

majority of studies, multiple methods were used to generate data from research participants.

Insert Figure 7 about here

Research Findings

The SFD literature presents a diverse range of findings specific to the focus of each

study; however, many of the findings fell broadly into three categories: (a) the

appropriateness of specific SFD programs and activities for particular groups within the

community (e.g., culturally and linguistically diverse individuals, women, individuals with

disabilities, and indigenous people); (b) the implications of findings for the design of future

SFD programs, activities, and policies (e.g., programs to engage teachers, culturally

appropriate activities, and opportunities to increase access to programs); and (c) the

limitations of programs in achieving stated outcomes (e.g., successful outcomes only within

subsets of participants, issues with funding or facilities, and lack of clarity in desired

outcomes). Additionally, conceptual articles referred to the development of a theoretical

understanding of the SFD field, or applied a specific theoretical paradigm to program aims and outcomes.

Future Research and Research Limitations

When outlining future research and reporting limitations, authors most often argued for either the extension of their existing study to broader or different populations and locations, or for further testing and confirmation of the findings through alternative data collection and analysis methods (e.g., following up on an exploratory qualitative study with a more structured qualitative study or a quantitative survey instrument). Limitations were most often cited to be methodological constraints, restrictions of sample size or sample suitability, and a lack of transferability or generalizability of the results to other programs or populations.

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Discussion

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The findings from our integrated literature review have provided a detailed account of SFD research and the development of the field in general. Building on this newly gained information, we now discuss key factors that underpin or may have contributed to our findings and the status quo of the field. We also identify gaps in SFD research and suggest opportunities for further scholarly enquiry. In doing so, we aim to provide a strong basis and reference point for future research in SFD.

Publication Outlets

Our findings indicate that scholarship in SFD has been growing significantly since the start of the new millennium. Initiatives such as the 2001 establishment of the United Nations Office for Sport for Development and Peace and the 2003 Magglingen Declaration provided significant official recognition, awareness, and legitimacy to the field (Schulenkorf & Adair 2014). Since then, research in SFD has increased annually, leading to nearly 100 articles published in 2013 alone. Given the increased number of academics focusing on SFD—as well as the number of journals now incorporating SFD research into their repertoire

(including the specifically designed *Journal of Sport for Development*)—this trend is expected to continue into the future. Our review found that journals with a focus on sport sociology are still leading the way in number of published articles. However, it was interesting to see that sport management journals—including those associated with the largest sport management associations around the world from North America, Europe, and Australia/New Zealand—have increasingly published SFD manuscripts. In this context, the focus often shifts from merely investigating specific social and cultural contexts, or reporting case studies and impact assessments, to strategically designing, managing, and leveraging SFD projects and events for (wider) community benefit (see e.g. Frisby & Millar, 2002; Kellett, Hede, & Chalip, 2008; O'Brien, 2007; O'Brien & Gardiner, 2006; Sawrikar & Muir, in press; Schulenkorf, 2010; Schulenkorf, 2012; Schulenkorf & Edwards, 2012; Skinner, Zakus, & Cowell, 2008; Thomson, Darcy, & Pearce, 2010; Vail, 2007).

Article Titles and Research Foci

Article titles generally described the specific focus of a particular study. It is therefore hardly surprising that in SFD literature, *sport* and *development* were the most frequently found terms. What was more interesting was the dominance of the terms *social* and *youth* over related terms in the title section. In other words, there is a clear indication that a majority of SFD research has focused its attention on social development outcomes, rather than specific physical or economic development (see Thematic Areas below). Similarly, programs were most often designed for youth rather than adults. This may well be justified by the enhanced potential to engage—and positively influence—the younger generation in sport. However, it also suggests that SFD programs for parents (and particularly mothers) need to be improved, given the importance of their roles and responsibilities as enablers, supporters, and role models for children (Meier & Saavedra, 2009; Sawrikar & Muir, in press; Siefken, Schofield, & Schulenkorf, 2014).

The only specific sport that appeared on the top 50 list of key terms was football (21st place). Unsurprisingly, the World Game received the most attention by SFD practitioners and academics, and this dominance has been well justified by the global reach, cost-effectiveness, and easy-to-follow rules of the game (Martinez, 2008). However, this finding should also be an encouragement for other sports—and researchers interested in other sports—to engage more closely with SFD. Clearly, sports such as basketball, volleyball, and ultimate Frisbee, or general physical activities such as walking or gardening may be equally relevant to specific development efforts and they all provide opportunities to entice different participant groups. In the future, scholars may investigate the specific benefits and challenges of incorporating alternative sports and opening up SFD to new markets.

Thematic Areas

An important finding of our integrated review relates to the thematic areas that SFD programs aim to address. A significant focus has been placed on initiatives aimed at creating social cohesion (e.g., Sherry, 2010) and providing opportunities for education (e.g., Burnett, 2010), often for members of disadvantaged communities (e.g., Sherry & Strybosch, 2012; Welty-Peachy, Cohen, Borland & Lyras, 2013). However, our findings also revealed that in order to establish a strong evidence base for SFD, more research is needed particularly in the areas of disability, gender equality, and livelihoods. Arguably, disability research in SFD is still in its infancy because of the limited amount of funding and relatively small number of projects focused specifically on disabled community members. In other words, while there were a number of articles that focus on the Paralympics and elite athletes with disabilities, grassroots disability sport studies with a clear focus on improving health outcomes or achieving specific SFD targets were hard to find (e.g., Wilhite & Shank, 2009). Similarly, there are still not enough projects dedicated specifically to the advancement of access and rights for girls and women (e.g., Siefken, Schofield & Schulenkorf, 2014).

Most surprising, perhaps, is the limited amount of research conducted on livelihoods. It seems that in many cases, financial independence—a key aspect of what was described as livelihoods—played a central part in improving living conditions and generating associated social benefits (Coalter, 2010; Portes & Landholt, 2000). Therefore, we encourage scholars to conduct more research on SFD programs that focus on job skills training, employability, rehabilitation, and the creation of social enterprises; in particular, we believe that the SFD sector would benefit from collaborative research between social scientists and economists regarding new approaches, innovative strategies, and creative tactics to improve the livelihoods of disadvantaged people around the world.

Level of Development

Almost two-thirds of SFD studies in the literature focused on the community level of development. Within this category, studies predominantly examined specific programs, projects, or events that communities offered or participated in, as well as the impacts and/or consequences for the (participant or wider) community. This finding relates to current research trends in the related field of event management, where significant attention has been paid to impact analyses, triple-bottom-line examinations, and input–output evaluations (Mair & Whitford, 2013). Moreover, similar to social and cultural projects in the events sector, SFD faces increasing pressure to justify government and donor spending (Schulenkorf & Adair, 2014). Hence, studies on the impacts of SFD come as no surprise given the interest and need for organizers and communities to justify their programs' worth.

On a larger scale, the majority of SFD studies that related to the national level of development focused on policy development initiatives. In contrast to research in event management (see Mair & Whitford, 2013), the important link between SFD and policymaking has therefore received some scholarly attention. This seems of particular significance in the current political climate in which some of the countries considered world

leaders in SFD (e.g., Australia, Canada) struggle to receive renewed support and commitment—as well as ongoing funding—from their respective federal governments. Therefore, links and networks to related governmental sectors such as social services, foreign aid, health, and international trade become new spaces for SFD to connect with and for researchers to interact and cooperate.

Finally, only 10% of research studies in our sample examined SFD on the international level. This outcome may be unexpected to many in the field, especially given the popular rhetoric around sport for peace and reconciliation between countries. The less than expected international focus may well result from the more difficult logistics, higher costs, and increased time commitment when conducting research abroad. It may also be reflective of health scares in certain regions and security concerns in war-torn or post-war societies that keep academics from becoming physically involved in international SFD. However, to be more certain, we encourage scholars to explore international SFD (research) in more breadth and depth in the future.

Authors and Research Teams

In recent years, the field of SFD has received significant criticism regarding the dominance of international implementers from high-income countries conducting work in low- and middle-income countries (Levermore, 2009; Lindsey & Grattan, 2012). In some cases, accusations of misusing "bio-power" or applying neo-colonialist tendencies have been made (Coalter, 2013; Darnell & Hayhurst, 2012). Our review further stresses the divide between local and international actors in SFD, both on the ground and in the research context. On the ground, only one in two SFD projects described in the articles used local (in-country) staff, which means that a remarkable 50% relied solely on "international experts" to implement programs. Negative consequences resulting from such a "helicopter approach" can be significant, particularly regarding community support, empowerment, and ownership,

as well as the wider sustainability of projects (Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010; Schulenkorf & Adair, 2013). Given that a helicopter approach may lead to disastrous outcomes for local communities, the 50% figure should give aid programs, funding bodies, sport managers, NGOs, and policymakers something to think about.

Similarly, only a small number of SFD studies were conducted by authors from low- and middle-income countries. Whether this imbalance results from a lack of qualified researchers in these countries or inadequate opportunities for local researchers to lead or cooperate in research projects, the trend is certainly worrying and deserves more attention and scholarly investigation in the future. In regards to geographical background, a staggering 92% of researchers were from North America, Europe, and Australia. Authors from the African continent only accounted for 5% of contributors (with the majority from South Africa) and contributors from Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific Islands were hardly represented at all. These figures are remarkable, especially when taking into account that more than 20% of SFD studies were actually conducted in the latter regions (9% in Africa, 9% in Asia, and 3% in Latin America). Moreover, according to the Swiss Academy for Development, over half of all SFD projects worldwide are implemented and delivered in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Bringing these findings together, there are literally hundreds of SFD projects— particularly in Africa, Asia, and Latin America—that do not benefit from any kind of research engagement or academic support. We therefore argue that the popular call for "capacity building" in SFD (see e.g. Lindsey & Grattan, 2012; Wright, 2009) needs to expand beyond the areas of program implementation and management. In particular, from a research perspective, capacity building should focus on the integration of—and collaboration with— academics in low- and middle-income countries to improve their access, skills, and/or opportunities for research and publications in peer-reviewed academic journals.

Theoretical Frameworks

To present their work in academic journals, most SFD scholars build on a specific theoretical framework or use a particular lens to underpin their research. Many of these stem from a wider social studies or community development context; interestingly, the two frameworks most often used are positive youth development (e.g. Agans & Geldhof, 2012; Holt, Sehn, Spence, Newton & Ball, 2011) and social capital theory (e.g. Schulenkorf, Thomson & Schlenker, 2011; Sherry, 2010). The latter has often been praised as highly productive and "successful"; however, it has also been criticized as an ambiguous "last resort" for studies that do not seem to find or apply any better framework. For example, Bjørnskov and Sønderkov (2013, p. 1226)argued that "social capital has come to mean so many different things to different researchers that it may border on the meaningless" (p. 1226). Given that the understanding of social capital is heavily context-specific and potentially illegitimate as the basis for generalization (Fine, 2001), SFD scholars should be aware and critical of the relevance and potential contribution of this particular framework when utilized in empirical investigations (Schulenkorf, 2013).

Against this background, Welty Peachey recently called for contributions to a special issue on theory building in SFD to be published in 2015 in the *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*—an initiative that follows earlier endeavors to develop a "sport for development and peace theory" (Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011). Although it is not the purpose of this review to advance theory or develop a new theoretical framework for SFD, we are however in a position to provide insight into common features and constructs presented in the body of research that together may inform future theoretical development. While,it may be argued that the breadth and diversity of SFD themes (from gender equity to peace; education to healthy lifestyles; social inclusion to livelihoods) make it unrealistic to expect one *single* theory of sport for development to emerge, there appear to be key

constructs and important programmatic features within much of the research that may

contribute to a more specific theoretical understanding of how SFD operates. In particular,

the following appear to be common across – but not limited to – the majority of SFD studies:

- The importance of a key figure, role model or change agent in the

  establishment and delivery of successful SFD programs (e.g., Armour &

  Duncomb, 2012; Schulenkorf, 2010),

- A participatory approach to program design, delivery and evaluation with

  those on the ground participating in the program itself (e.g., Coalter, 2007,

  2013),

- The provision of opportunities for multiple levels of engagement over a period

  of time (e.g., Sterchele, in press),

- A clear programmatic design for the desired development outcome (e.g.,

  education) to be embedded into the SFD program during the design,

  implementation, delivery and evaluation phases of the program (e.g., Coalter,

  2007, 2013).

- The creation of 'safe spaces' for community engagement and development

  (e.g., Spaaij & Schulenkorf, 2014); and

- A strong desire for sustained SFD practice that includes a commitment to

  (funding) support and an empowerment process that transfers management

  knowledge and responsibilities to local communities (e.g., Lyras & Welty-

  Peachey, 2011).

Some of these key features are represented in recent research literature that has aimed

to advance our theoretical and conceptual understanding of SFD (see e.g. Coalter, 2007;

Lyras & Welty-Peachey, 2011; Schulenkorf, 2012; Spaaij & Schulenkorf, 2014). Against this

background it will be interesting to see what new theoretical approaches, models, frameworks

and concepts emerge in the future and whether the field is indeed welcoming or rejecting the idea of a standalone SFD theory. In fact, there is significant debate surrounding whether SFD as a field of study is "ready" for—and indeed worthy of—its own theories, or if the trend of "borrowing" and applying theories and frameworks from parent disciplines—such as sociology, management, gender studies, cultural studies, anthropology, and psychology—will continue into the future.

Methodology, Approaches, and Methods

Scholars have used a potpourri of research approaches and methods for their analyses of SFD initiatives. On a general level, qualitative approaches have been dominating over quantitative modes of enquiry. Given the significant number of publications in sociology and development journals—areas that are traditionally known for qualitative work—this outcome is hardly surprising. Similarly, the health-specific journals have a much higher number of quantitative studies and intervention/evaluation studies, which is reflective of research conducted in the health science disciplines. It is interesting to see, however, that publication outlets are increasingly interested in publishing research that applies "non-traditional" approaches. In this context, non-traditional not only relates to the methods themselves but also to the presentation of research findings. For example, more accessible, innovative, and user-friendly ways of presenting research have increasingly been encouraged (Garbutt, 2009); this seems particularly important for the SFD community which by nature has a very close practitioner–scholar link. For instance, in the context of sport-for-health, researchers have recently attempted to go beyond statistics, presenting findings as posters and word clouds (Siefken, Schofield, & Schulenkorf, in press). However, the SFD community is only starting to see the benefits of alternative approaches and could perhaps learn from other fields in which research findings have been presented more creatively (e.g., as pictures and poems; (see Carroll, Dew, & Howden-Chapman, 2011). Such visual communication of research is

likely to assist SFD practitioners and participants on the ground, particularly if they come from disadvantaged communities and lack an academic background or the research qualifications necessary to understand complex statistical presentations.

Limitations and Future Research

When outlining study limitations and opportunities for future research, authors most often argued for either an extension of their existing study to broader or different populations and locations, or for further testing and confirmation of the findings through alternative data collection and analysis methods. These results speak to the young age of the SFD field and the opportunity—and necessity—to do more research. Our findings also indicate that a majority of published research focused on individual case studies and program evaluations. Due to the specific social and cultural context of many of these studies, transferability of results to other programs was described as restricted. In addition, limited sample sizes or sample suitability often prevented researchers from generalizing results to wider populations and contexts. In line with the previously mentioned call for theory building in SFD, it will be interesting to see whether future research goes beyond case studies and moves towards designing standardized SFD questionnaires, surveys, and models—similar to those developed in festival and event management (Delamere, 2001; Preuss, 2006; Small, Edwards, & Sheridan, 2005). Because of its qualitative nature, such a step is likely to be controversial in the social science area of SFD; however, in the health space, an increased number of standardized SFD testing can be expected in the future.

(De-)Limitations of this Integrated Review and Future Research

In this article, we have presented findings from our integrated literature review of SFD research in an open and transparent form. In line with this, we would like to acknowledge some of the limitations of our study. For example, we realize that our literature research may have missed studies that did not include the term *sport* anywhere in the paper.

In particular, studies with a sole focus on development through physical activity may fall into this category. We are also aware that in assigning research studies to the level of development and the seven specific thematic areas of SFD (see Figure 3 and Table 7), there is a certain level of ambiguity, particularly if categories or dimensions are closely linked. A study on sport-for-reconciliation could, for example, be assigned to *sport for peace*; however, it may also be relevant to the *sport for social cohesion* category. While we made every attempt to triple-check our classifications, we acknowledge that the manual assignment process remains imperfect.

Finally, we are aware that some of the most influential research in SFD is published in books, book chapters, and research theses. Arguably, books and edited volumes by authors such as Coalter (2007, 2013) and Levermore and Beacom (2009) have had significant impact on the development of SFD as a critical field of study. However, for our integrated review we decided to focus our analysis on published research articles in peer-reviewed journals—a delimitation that is noted and that could be examined in follow-up studies. In fact, we encourage other SFD scholars to make use of the detailed SFD research literature database (available from authors) and to extend our work into different spheres of SFD. We believe that there are numerous opportunities for further qualitative and quantitative research on contemporary and challenging topics in SFD, including SFD and social media, SFD and local/international funding, as well as new and engaging data collection methods, such video and online techniques.

Conclusion

Integrative reviews examine, criticize, and synthesize representative literature on a particular topic; they are intended to highlight the status quo and yield provocative, new perspectives on key issues in a particular field (Torraco 2005). We believe that our integrated review on SFD has done exactly that; it has provided a rigorous review and a strong synthesis

of SFD research that portrays a consistent and encompassing panorama of current SFD research.

In our endeavor to provide a holistic picture of current SFD research, we were able to highlight the increasing trend of journal publications in the field since the year 2000. In general, scholars have predominantly focused on social and educational outcomes related to youth sport, with football (soccer) the most common sport activity. A large majority of SFD research has been conducted at the community level, where qualitative approaches to enquiry are dominant. To underpin their studies, researchers have most often referred to positive youth development and social capital concepts as their guiding theoretical frameworks, despite the criticism surrounding these concepts. Finally, the geographical context of authorship and study location presents an interesting paradox: Despite the fact that a majority of SFD projects were carried out on the ground in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, a remarkable 90% of SFD authors were based in North America, Europe, and Australia. In other words, there is a clear practitioner–scholar divide in SFD and a significant need for capacity building not only in sport management, but also in the research domain.

Overall, we believe that our integrative review on SFD has been able to give much needed coherence to a complex academic field. We have provided a detailed account of recent SFD research and a strong reference point for future studies in SFD. Such studies could, for example, aim to fill the current gaps in SFD research, including studies in the areas of disability, gender equality, and livelihoods. More importantly, as a contribution to researcher empowerment and capacity building, studies could be conducted jointly between academics from high- as well as low- and middle-income countries. This would allow for rich debates and new contributions in the areas of methodology and theory building, where a combination of different cultural philosophies and management approaches could underpin innovative 'glocalised' SFD research. For any future research endeavors, we encourage

scholars to use our newly established SFD research literature database to stimulate new lines

of research inquiry and to contribute to innovative practice, theory, and policy development

associated with SFD.

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Table 1

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Articles were *included* if they focused primarily on any (or a combination) of the following:	Articles were *excluded* if they focused primarily on any (or a combination) of the following:
• Sport as a vehicle to achieve developmental outcomes related to individuals and their communities. Major examples include: - Disease prevention/management - Improved physical or mental health outcomes - Development of life skills related to teamwork and cooperation (or otherwise) - Building confidence or self-esteem - Social inclusion - Education - Gender equality - Livelihoods - Reconciliation - Peace-building/peacekeeping • Physical education (PE) as a means to develop children or adolescents as people (rather than sport or general outcomes) • Physical activity and health promotion programs if a clear reference was made to sport/recreational activities (i.e., not clinical exercise interventions). • Disability sport (where elite outcomes were not a focus)	• Influences on/determinants of participation, such as gender, race, geographic location • Sport specific motor skill development (if no links made to fundamental life skills) • Sport tourism and/or events (unless a very clear links with community development outcomes) • Preventing sport dropout/discontinuation • Elite athletes, umpires, coaches, or volunteers • Studies on injury risk prevention/management • Virtual forms of sport (video games) • Corporate social responsibility • Historical accounts of sport issues • Exercise prescription interventions (treadmill programs etc.), and yoga/fitness specific activities

Note. The themes for inclusion were largely similar to the thematic categories identified by

the *Journal of Sport for Development*.

Table 2

Publication Aspects Examined

Category	Description	How were data gathered?
Bibliographic details	Article title, journal, year, issue, volume	Direct extraction
Author details	Author institutions	Direct extraction
Theoretical framework (conceptual or applied)	Whether the article presented outcomes from applied or conceptual research.	Direct extraction
Theoretical frameworks	Captures the finer detail of the research. The specific theoretical framework(s) or bodies of literature explicitly mentioned by the author(s) were entered into these columns.	Direct extraction
Local staff	Whether the research under review included local people to conduct the research. Possible responses for this column were: *not stated* (when the authors had not explicitly expressed their use of local staff to conduct the research); *yes* (those research projects that had employed local staff to conduct the research); and *not applicable* (those papers whose research design precluded the use of local staff).	Direct extraction
Country of research	The location in which the research was conducted. Possible responses for this column were: the name of the country or countries in which the research was conducted, or *international* if the article was concerned with research conducted across a number of countries and its outcomes pertained to international issues, not contained within specific countries.	Direct extraction
Sport as a concept	Sport as a concept captured the articles which, although centrally relevant to discussions about SFD, discussed sport as a concept, as opposed to sport as an activity.	Interpretation
Sport Activity	All sports explicitly mentioned in the article were recorded.	Direct extraction
Thematic area	Articles were sorted into themes identified by the *Journal of Sport for Development* using the article keywords (where available), or reviewing the article itself.	Direct extraction and interpretation
Level of development	Level of development recorded the strata of society that the research examined. Possible responses in this column were: *individual*, *community*, *national*, *international*, and *not applicable*. *Individual* captured research examining individuals; an example of inclusion is provided by an article examining an intellectually disabled man's sporting experiences.	Interpretation

Community (location) included articles examining a specific geographical location; for example, Fort Stockton, Texas.

Community (cohort) included articles examining a specific cohort of the population; for example, at risk youth in urban locations.

Community (program) included articles that examined a specific program; for example, The First Tee (a golfing program aimed at youth).

Community (club) included articles in which the research focused on clubs; for example, a sports club in a suburban area.

Community (org) included articles that examined a specific organization; for example, an article about sport on a college campus, or the provision of physical education in schools.

National included articles which were about sport for development at the national level; for example, a theoretical article which put forward a discussion about the "Indianization" of cricket.

National (cohort) included articles discussing a particular cohort of people, but specifically at a national level (as opposed to the more constrained community (cohort) level.

National (policy) included articles that examined a national policy.

International (org) included articles that examined international organizations; for example, the International Olympic Committee.

International (program) included articles about programs that operate across country borders; for example, a Football for Peace (F4P) program operating in Israel with the collaboration of various international partners.

International (org) included articles examining international organizations, such as Nike RED.

Not applicable included articles which were not about a particular level of development; these articles were typically theory developing or conceptual and were about the sport for development sector itself; for example, an article which advocated the use of specific kind of methodology or perspective.

| Methodology | Methodology captured how the research was conducted by recording its broad approach; possible responses in this column were: *qualitative*, which captured studies emanating exclusively within the qualitative paradigm; *quantitative*, which captured studies working within the positivist paradigm; *mixed–qualitative & quantitative*, which captured studies employing mixed methods; and *conceptual* which captured studies which were conceptual in nature. | Direct extraction |

Data collection	Data collection captured the data collection techniques employed in the study. Possible responses included *questionnaire/survey*, *interviews*, *focus groups*, *observations*, *secondary data*, *document analysis*, *literature search and review*, *mixed methods* (multiple forms of data collection used), and *other* (could not be classified into other groups).	Direct extraction
Data analysis	The first column recorded the broad approach to analysis. Possible responses in this column were *interpretive*, *statistical analysis*, and, in a very few cases, *not applicable (descriptive)*. The following columns, also dedicated to capturing data analysis procedures, contained the stated ways in which authors had analyzed their data. When specified, the exact phrases were recorded; examples include *thematic analysis*, *grounded theory*, and *emergent coding scheme* for the qualitative work; and *descriptive statistics*, *hierarchical linear modelling techniques*, and *exploratory factor analysis* for quantitative work. Where stated, the specific scales, instruments, and analyses were recorded, with additional columns added as required.	Direct extraction
Findings	What were the main findings?	Summarized
Future research	What future research opportunities came from the study?	Summarized
Limitations	Specific constraints of the research as a result of its design or implementation were recorded.	Summarized

Table 3

Top 10 Journal Outlets

Journal Title	Frequency
Sport in Society	29
International Review for the Sociology of Sport	26
Sport Management Review	21
Journal of Sport Management	16
European Sport Management Quarterly	13
Physical Education and Sport	13
Third World Quarterly	12
International Journal of Sport Policy	10
Journal of Sport for Development	10
Sport Education and Society	10

Table 4

Researchers and Research Sites (Greater Than 5 Publications)

Research Site		Researcher Location	
USA	88	USA	128
Australia	49	UK	113
UK	47	Australia	87
Canada	33	Canada	69
South Africa	24	South Africa	22
Israel	6	Sweden	9
Zambia	6	Denmark	8
Denmark	5	NZ	7
Germany	5	Finland	6
Sri Lanka	5	Greece	6
		Norway	6
		Switzerland	6
		Belgium	5
		Germany	5
		Holland	5
		New Zealand	5

Table 5

Theoretical Frameworks (With 5 or More Articles)

Type of Theoretical Framework	Frequency
Positive Youth Development	47
Social Capital	38
Social Learning Theory	9
Sport for Development and Peace	9
Identity Theory	8
Community Development	7
Social Cognitive Theory	7
Capacity Building	5
Hegemony Theory	5
Social Inclusion Theory	5
Social Education Model	5

Table 6

Sport Activity

Sports/Activities	Tally
General physical activity	108
Football	102
Basketball	35
Multi-sport programs	17
Mega-events (Olympics)	14
Volleyball	12
Swimming	10
Mega-events (FIFA)	8
Cricket	7
Athletics	7
Netball	6
Running	6
Tennis	6
Cycling	6
Baseball	5

Table 7

Level of Development (Target Population)

Level of Development	Frequency
Individual	41
Community	256
State	1
National	57
International	39
Not Applicable	43

Figure 1. Article title word cloud (top 50 condensed words).

Year of Publication
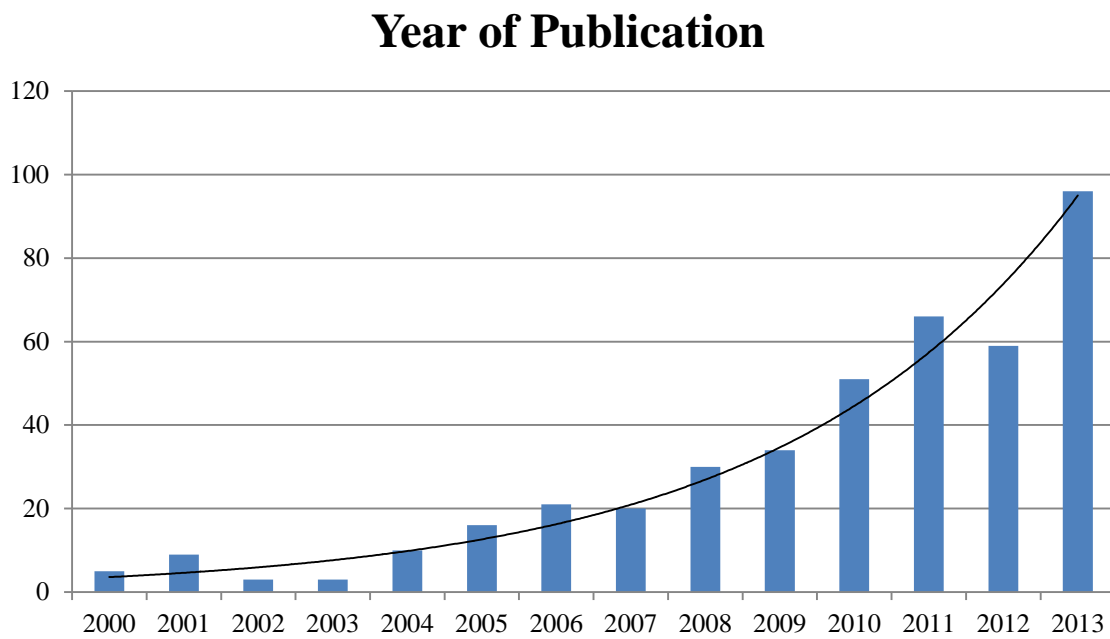
Figure 2. Year of publication by number of articles.
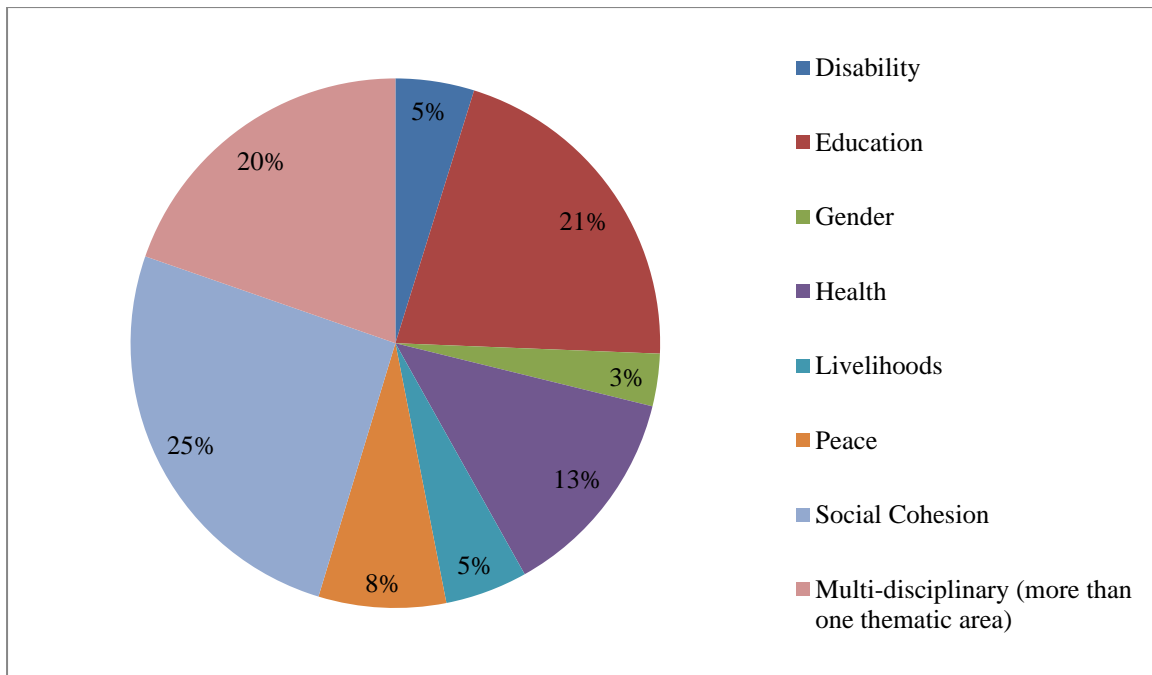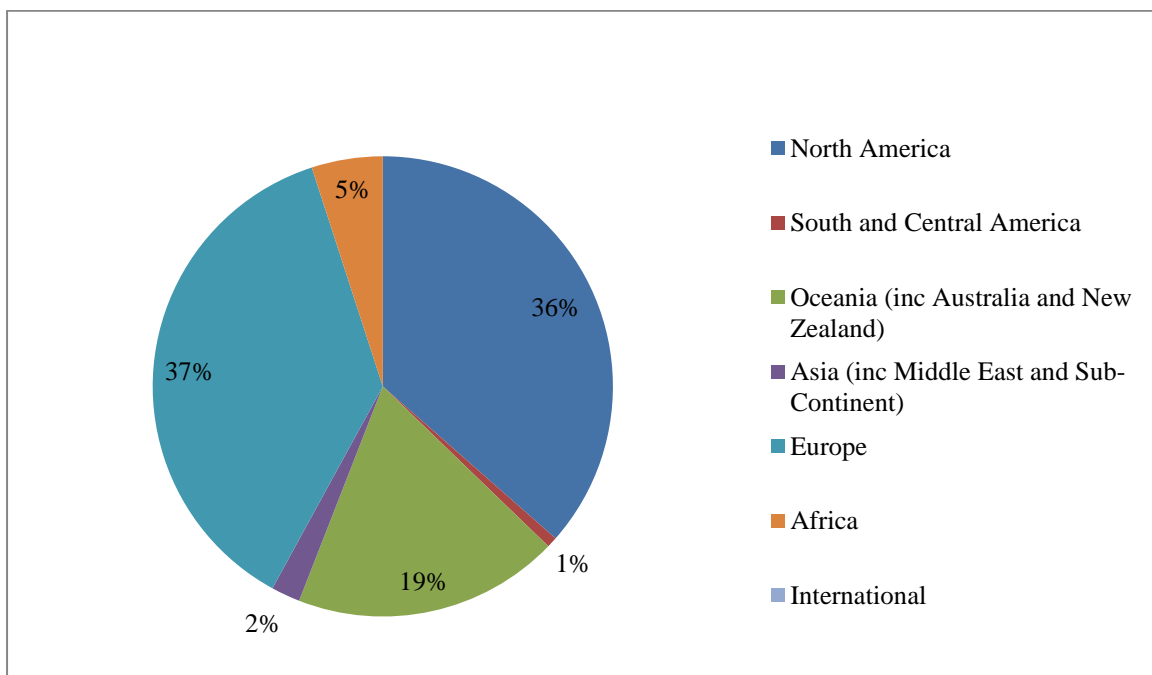
Figure 3. Thematic areas.

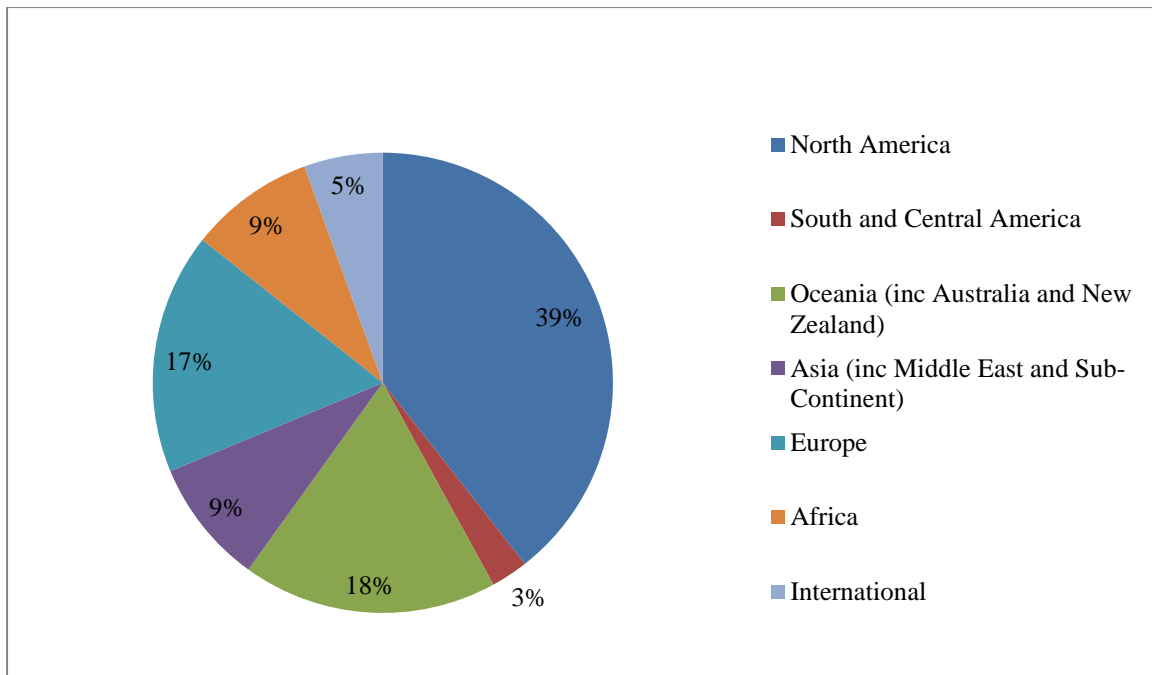*Figure 4.* Researcher location (by continent).
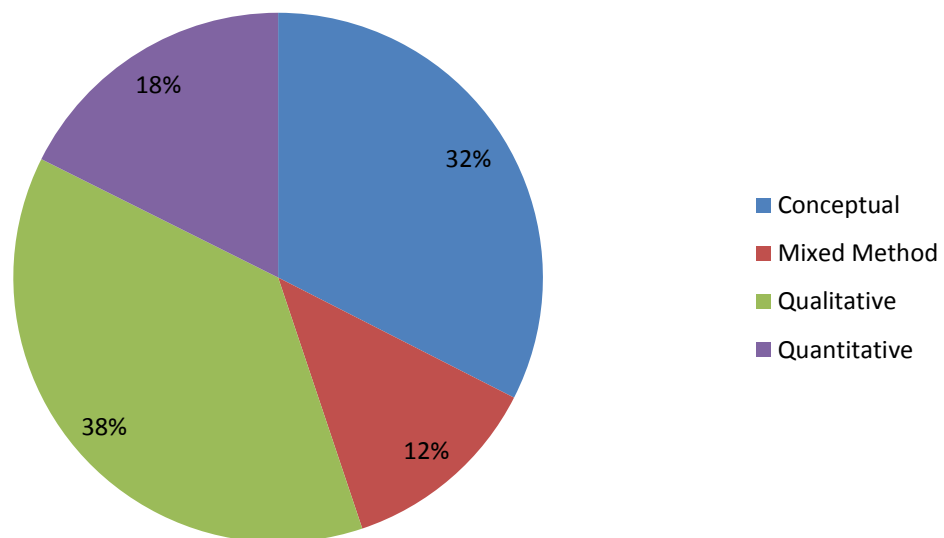
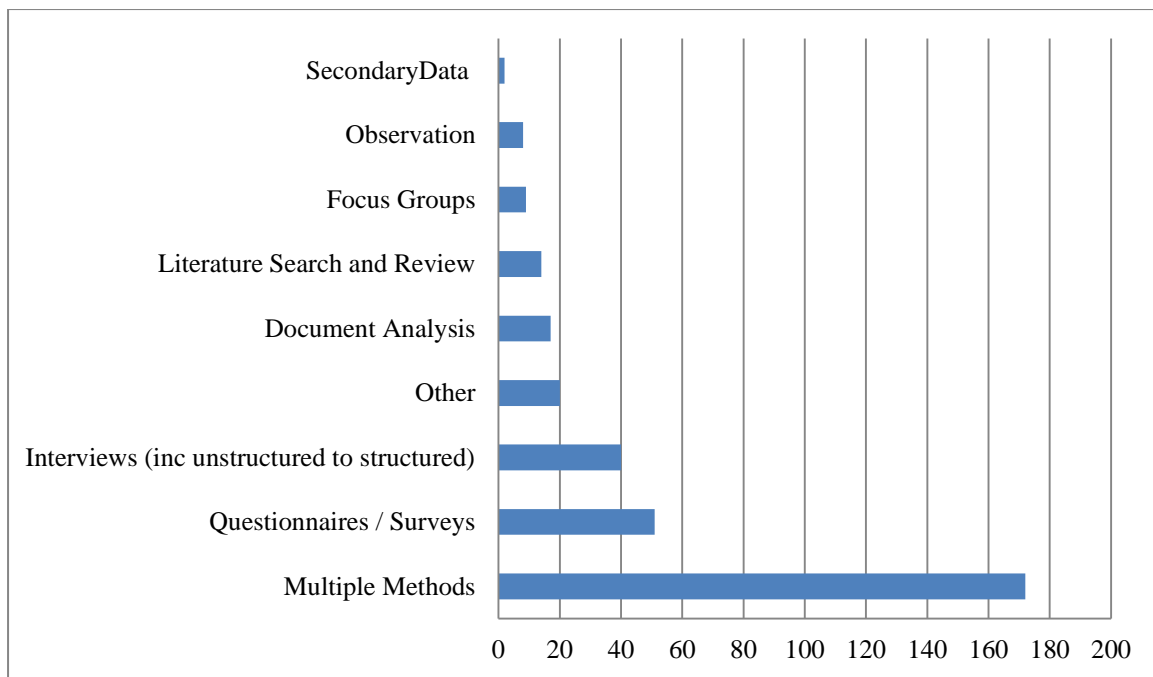Figure 5. Location of research (by continent).

Figure 6. Research methodology.

Figure 7. Data collection method.