

An Interdisciplinary Take on Stress, Coping, and Aadaptation in the National Hockey League

Randy Cesar Battochio
Laurentian University

Abstract: The present article is about the interdisciplinary nature of the research relating to stress, coping, and adaptation of professional athletes in the National Hockey League. After contrasting the fields of interdisciplinarity and disciplinarity, the discussion turns to the contributions and integrations from several disciplines to inform the research objectives in the present article. Most notably, the fields of sport psychology, psychology, and sociology contributed to the conceptual developments, theoretical advancements, and research questions available for this study. The methodology was formed by advancements in the sport psychology, psychology, and nursing literatures.

Key words: stress, coping, adaptation, interdisciplinarity, disciplinarity, National Hockey League, individual interview

Résumé : Cet article traite de la nature interdisciplinaire de la recherche portant sur la gestion du stress et l'adaptation des athlètes professionnels de la Ligue nationale de hockey. Après avoir opposé les champs de l'interdisciplinarité et de la disciplinarité, la discussion a porté sur les contributions et l'intégration de plusieurs disciplines pour appuyer les objectifs de recherches de cet article. Les champs de la psychologie du sport, la psychologie et la sociologie ont notamment contribué aux développements conceptuels, aux avancements théoriques, et aux questions de recherches disponibles pour cette étude. La méthodologie a été constituée par des avancements dans la psychologie de sport, la psychologie, et les écrits en soins infirmier.

Mots-clés : gestion du stress, adaptation, interdisciplinarité, disciplinarité, Ligue nationale de hockey, entrevue individuelle

Interdisciplinarity is a research process whereby multiple disciplinary perspectives are integrated with hopes of solving one or more questions that, at least, have the potential for cognitive advancement (Repko, 2008). In 1979, interdisciplinarity was formally conceived when a professional organization and an academic journal were formed to study relevant concepts, theory, methodology, and education (Klein, 1990). Today, the field is a fundamental part of academia with institutions and departments dedicated to its advancement.

In this paper, I will try to differentiate between interdisciplinary and disciplinary research. In doing so, I will contrast these two fields of research at the conceptual, theoretical, methodological, and problematic levels.

Afterwards, I will attempt to demonstrate the interdisciplinary nature of the study of stress, coping, and adaptation in professional sport. I will argue, through an examination of relevant literatures, that these subjects include concepts that originate and have been developed in various disciplines. Then, instead of discussing concepts, the focus will be about how the research objectives will be answered through a methodology that originates and has been developed in various disciplines. The intent is to show how an interdisciplinary approach will generate more thorough and practical findings than a disciplinary approach.

Contrasting interdisciplinarity and disciplinarity

The differences between the fields of interdisciplinarity and disciplinarity have been informally and formally discussed for some time (Klein, 2001). Informally, interdisciplinarians will argue that their work ensures that a breath of knowledge is gleaned and complex problems are solved (Newell, 2001). Meanwhile, disciplinarians will assert that their work generates in-depth organized understandings and contributes to the

expert knowledge of a discipline. Even the formal definition of each term differs. According to Newell (2000), interdisciplinarity draws insights (e.g., concepts, methods) from two or more disciplines and integrates these insights into a comprehensive perspective with hopes of answering a question, addressing an issue, or solving a problem. Meanwhile, disciplinarity draws insights (e.g., concepts, methods) specifically from one discipline and only solve problems pertaining to the discipline in question. The tendency exists in research belonging to one discipline to ignore the findings produced in other disciplines (Palmade, 1977). When considering these two fields in greater detail, additional differences emerge and they vary in terms of concepts, theories, methodologies, and problems. A conceptual difference relates to the various concepts that pertain to specific disciplines within the humanities, social sciences, and/or natural sciences yet permeate across disciplinary boundaries. Similarly, theoretical, methodological, and problematic differences vary according to the two opposing fields as well.

The conceptual difference between interdisciplinarity and disciplinarity relates to the permeability of boundaries. A review of any literature specific to a discipline will reveal concepts, themes, and jargon that can be found in another discipline's literature. Disciplinarians have taken these concepts and operationally described them so they can be effectively categorized within their discipline. Concepts are considered for various investigative purposes but are defined by disciplinarians according to the discipline's mandate. Star and Griesmer (1988) coined the terms "boundary object" and "boundary concept" to describe concepts that are featured in at least two disciplines. For example, a psychology researcher might emphasize individual differences in relation to a given concept while a sociology researcher would prefer to assess the implications of the same concept in relation to a group of individuals or a societal group. Following one's mandate creates and maintains

a boundary within which, one can further elaborate on a given concept. Disciplinary researchers remain within their respective boundaries and try to generate in-depth expert knowledge about the concept in question. When we consider the existing disciplines, disciplinarians within the natural sciences have argued that their boundaries are the most evident while people within the disciplines belonging to the social sciences and humanities are more permeable (Klein, 1996). Essentially, concepts are examined from one disciplinary perspective until all avenues are presumably exhausted. That said, concepts are hybrid and can cross existing disciplinary boundaries (Gordon & Paugam-Moisy, 1997). When examining concepts, interdisciplinarians must acknowledge each discipline's mandate prior to examining the concept in question. The examination process also includes understanding a discipline's perspective and identifying the areas of interest which enables them to pursue research opportunities across relevant disciplines. Therefore, each discipline contains additional information about each concept from its own perspective.

Theoretical differences can also distinguish interdisciplinarity from disciplinarity (Klein, 1996). According to Repko (2008), many disciplines are comprised of theories (i.e., narrow-ranged), and in more definitive instances laws, that characterize research within the discipline. However, few theories (i.e., grand) that can cross disciplinary boundaries exist. For example, Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy is a well-established yet narrow-ranged theory since it belongs to the discipline of psychology. Researchers from another disciplinary perspective have yet to examine Bandura's theory as a grand theory capable of generating novel insights (i.e., a breath of knowledge) for their discipline's literature. Perhaps, a historian could show how traditional views regarding one's roles and responsibilities might negatively affect one's level of self-efficacy despite the individual having already proven to be quite competent

a given task. Sociologists might offer novel information and thus a greater understanding about the two interpersonal sources of self-efficacy: (a) vicarious experiences, and (b) credible others. Such interdisciplinary research could potentially elevate Bandura's theory to the status of a grand theory that traverses multiple disciplines. Disciplinarians will focus on, as Bandura did, developing a given theory only in relation to relevant disciplinary concepts when it remains to be seen how additional disciplinary perspectives could help generate an even more comprehensive understanding of a given concept. Conceptual theories could thus be enhanced (i.e., labeled "grand") or lowered through the collective analysis of multiple disciplinarians or an interdisciplinary approach.

Similar to concepts and theories, methods are another area where differences between interdisciplinarity and disciplinarity can be found. Each discipline and sometimes a group of disciplines have preferred methodological approaches in terms of ontology, epistemology, and research tools. Interdisciplinary researchers are inclusive of the various assumptions that exist while disciplinarians seem to favour certain ontological and epistemological beliefs over others. For example, disciplines categorized as natural sciences are known for following in a realist ontology and positivist epistemology. When researchers in the natural sciences conduct interdisciplinary work, their assumptions might be challenged by researchers that hold differing ontological (e.g., relativist) and epistemological (e.g., social constructivist) beliefs. Researchers with experience conducting interdisciplinary work are likely capable of making meaningful contributions to the resolution of the research problem by aligning their assumptions with co-researchers. With regard to research tools, Klein (1996) argued that observational data is sought in astronomy and geology. Laboratory experiments where researchers isolate variables, termed independent, with hopes of

identifying their influence on another variable, termed dependant are common in physics, chemistry, biology, and psychology. Moreover, surveys and questionnaires are regularly used in sociology, psychology, and economic research. Though methodological commonalities exist across disciplines, additional research tools must also be acknowledged since the aforementioned methodological tools listed by Klein cannot be used to answer every possible research question. Other exemplary tools for data collection include interviews, which are employed to gain an understanding of an individual's values, beliefs, and thoughts or focus group meetings, which can be used to gain the overarching perceptions of a group of people (Patton, 2002). Though some tools are associated with specific disciplines, methodological approaches and tools have begun to cross the boundaries of disciplines and form another area where disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity can be differentiated.

Finally, the two fields differ in terms of the research problems they solve. According to Klein (1996), it is quite plausible to state that not all research problems can be categorized solely within one discipline. There are certainly problems that are categorized within a traditional discipline. But the scope (i.e., number of disciplines transcended) of some research problems depends on the accumulative literature of several disciplines such as the stress/coping literature. Stressors and coping strategies are complex, multi-dimensional concepts and subsequent research questions can easily cross one disciplinary boundary into another discipline. Interdisciplinary research problems are also likely to hold larger practical implications for policy makers, technologists, and communities. Confining the scope of a research problem to one discipline may hold practical implications that are likely inferior to those obtained following interdisciplinary research. On the other hand, interdisciplinarians may struggle to argue that the answers to their questions hold more academic implications than a disciplinarian.

The problem is an integral part of establishing whether a disciplinary or interdisciplinary approach is necessary and must be clearly defined prior to selecting a corresponding approach. In fact, the problem typically indicates the concepts and theories to study as well as the methodology to be selected (Cahoun & Rhoten, 2010).

In all, interdisciplinary research is oftentimes conducted to better understand and solve complex issues for policy makers, technologists, and communities. On the other hand, disciplinary research is mostly done to develop concise theories and achieve causal explanations about concepts bound to a discipline through the elimination of relevant complex factors. The results are that each field can be separated, as explained above, according to the application of concepts, theories, methodologies, and problems in a research setting. With this in mind, I will introduce the research purposes in the present dissertation and then explain how I will meet these purposes through the most effective corresponding approach, an interdisciplinary approach.

The second question is about the interdisciplinary nature of stress, coping, and adaptation in professional sport. I will argue, through an examination of relevant literatures, that the present dissertation includes conceptual insight from various disciplines. The final question relates to unpacking the methodology and methods borrowed from various disciplines as well as their application and justification for use in the present interdisciplinary dissertation.

Following an in-depth examination of the literature, an attempt will be made to answer three general research questions in the present dissertation. First, what are the monumental sport challenges encountered by athletes in the NHL as well as the competitive, organizational, and personal stressors associated with each monumental challenge? Second, in relation to each monumental challenge, what pathways

and within-pathway strategies are employed to reach the outcome of adaptation? Third, according to the participants in the present dissertation, how do support staff members (e.g., coaches, administrators) assist future or current NHL players with overcoming de-stabilizing challenges? Essentially, the research questions are geared towards understanding the challenges and stressors that de-stabilize NHL players as well as the subsequent process selected to reach adaptation. Once challenges, stressors, and individual processes leading to adaptation are identified, processes employed by an NHL player's support network will also be identified.

Interdisciplinarity: Concepts and theories

Based on the purposes of the present dissertation, several concepts and associated theories have been identified as highly relevant. In a general sense, the concepts are: (a) monumental challenges, (b) stressors, (c) coping, (d) adaptation, and (e) professional sport. Through an interdisciplinary approach, these concepts extend beyond the boundaries of sport psychology and into other disciplines such as psychology, and sociology. Additional disciplines such as human kinetics, anthropology, history, and political science contain information semi-relevant to the concepts in question. Prior to tracing back each concept's origin within the disciplines, an identification of the general guidelines pertaining to each of the aforementioned disciplines will occur.

Sport psychology. Sport psychology is generally regarded as “the scientific study of the behavior of people engaged in sport and the application of the knowledge gained” (Weinberg & Gould, 2003, p.20). Though sport psychologists are also known to focus on physical activity, they primarily seek to understand how psychological factors affect an athlete's performance. The discipline's origins can be traced back to the early 20th century but was formally labeled an academic discipline

in the mid-1960s. Sport psychology is now a sub-discipline alongside motor learning, physical education, and kinesiology within the overarching discipline of human kinetics (Weinberg & Gould, 2003). Further, sport psychology researchers and practitioners have a lengthy history of collaborating with other disciplinarians namely neuropsychologists or physiologists, sociologists, and cognitive-behavioural psychologists. The concepts and theories identified in the present dissertation have experienced a significant amount of evolution through empirical data that is due in large part to recent research conducted by sport psychology disciplinarians. As a result, important general concepts such as monumental challenges, stressors, coping, and adaptation were elaborated and contextualized in various sport populations. The elaboration of these concepts led to the addition of five monumental challenges (e.g., relocation, promotion), numerous stressors originating from three contexts (i.e., competition, organization, and personal), emotion-focused or problem-focused coping strategies, and adaptation sub-strategies (e.g., understanding team structure, controlling distractions). Essentially, each of the aforementioned concepts has been studied and empirical evidence has provided an additional level of concepts that enhance the specificity of the broader original concepts or theories. Sport psychology researchers have also studied numerous elite amateur and professional sport populations and learned that broad and specific concepts differed according to the population examined. The differences were even greater when level of experience (e.g., Battochio, Schinke et al., 2009; 2010) was considered. For example, consider the differences between adaptation sub-strategies, which are derived from adaptation theories originating from psychology and sociology, employed by NHL rookies and veterans/experienced players. Rookies expressed less awareness about their own strengths and weaknesses compared to veteran players who knew themselves and where they fit within the NHL team's structure (Battochio, Schinke et al., 2010). In all, sport psychology researchers

have generated much detailed insight supported by empirical data about the broader concepts (e.g., monumental challenges) related to the present dissertation. The subsequent findings in the present dissertation will hold implications for sport psychology researchers hoping to re-stabilize professional athletes experiencing monumental sport challenges. Researchers will also provide an understanding through the use of vignettes about the general and unique pathways selected by the participants to reach adaptation.

Psychology. Psychology is generally viewed as a discipline that is comprised of information related to human behaviour most notably, “the cognitive constructs individuals develop to organize their mental activity” (Repko, 2008, p.20). Psychologists seek explanations for behaviour and focus on the influence of genetics and individual differences. The discipline is known for being extremely diverse with a range of theories affecting disciplinary literatures in both the natural and social sciences. In the natural sciences, psychology researchers examine biological concepts to explain the relationship between one’s mind and the observed behaviour. In the social sciences, behaviour is believed to result from thoughts and emotions of the individual. The present dissertation can be aligned with the latter form of psychology since the general purpose is to understand the challenges and stressors that de-stabilize NHL players as well as the subsequent coping pathways selected to reach adaptation. From the purpose, three major psychological concepts will be examined in detail: (a) stress, (b) coping, and (c) adaptation. First, stress as a concept dates back to Seyle’s (1974) work when he explained that there were two types: (a) eustress, and (b) distress. More recently, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) paralleled Seyle’s types of stress when they proposed their own version: (a) challenge, and (b) threat. However, the conception of stress in the present dissertation can be situated within Lazarus’ (1991) transactional perspective where stress

is referred to as demands situated in a dynamic relationship between the individual and her/his environment. Second, the concept of coping has largely developed in correspondence with the stress literature and Lazarus and Folkman (1984) are responsible for organizing the most widely-used coping strategies, which are problem- and emotion-focused coping. These two coping strategies formed the basis under which the pathways towards adaptation were examined. Psychologists may benefit from having within-pathways strategies identified and described in association with each of the two aforementioned coping strategies. Lastly, the concept of adaptation, as defined in the present dissertation, originates from the discipline of psychology. Helson (1964) introduced adaptation-level theory and defined the concept as “adjustments to environing conditions” (p.38). Yet, adaptation-level theory addressed the general biological and physiological adaptation responses that are meant to restore equilibrium within one’s self (Helson, 1964). Only when Taylor (1983) introduced the theory of cognitive adaptation did psychological adaptation strategies emerge as means to achieve adaptation. Taylor (1983) examined the strategies employed by people hoping to overcome personal tragedies such as cancer, cardiac disease, and the death of a loved one and highlighted three cognitive strategies: meaning, mastery, and self-enhancement. The three strategies formed Taylor’s theory of cognitive adaptation. However, the theory was about individual attempts made to overcome personal tragedies and failed to recognize the importance of others (e.g., family members). The theory is aligned within the boundaries of psychology however, when the issue of overcoming personal tragedies is considered, it is much more complex and requires an interdisciplinary approach. The present dissertation will include the cognitive strategies in Taylor’s theory as part of a more comprehensive theory to overcoming personal tragedies or, in the case of NHL players, monumental sport challenges and achieving adaptation. Empirical evidence supporting the theory might

illuminate psychologists examining personal tragedies with novel adaptation pathways or simply identify specific relevant sub-strategies that could be housed within each of Taylor's cognitive strategies.

Sociology. Sociology can be described as the examination of “social structures, collective human action, social relationships, culture, and even the impact of the social context on individual behaviour” (Repko, 2008, p.69). Sociologists differ from psychologists because they examine the actions of a group of individuals as opposed to the actions of one individual. In the present dissertation, one major theoretical framework about pathways leading to adaptation has been influenced by a sociologist. Originally, Taylor (1983) developed the theory of cognitive adaptation which was about cognitive strategies an individual would use to overcome personal tragedies. The theory focused solely on the individual. However, Fiske (2004) argued that people do not work in isolation and that they depend on others to overcome personal tragedies. Consequently, she added two interpersonal strategies to Taylor's framework and developed her own conception (i.e., Fiske's core motives) of the pathways to adaptation. Fiske's framework captures the global pathways to adaptation (e.g., trusting) and sport psychology researchers have used it to glean within-pathway sub-strategies or specific adaptation pathways (e.g., trusting coaches). Employing Fiske's framework is an acknowledgement that the pathways towards adaptation include concepts pertaining to the psychology and sociology literatures. The implications for sociologists are an understanding of the impact of social structures on the lives of NHL players and vice-versa.

Human kinetics, political science, anthropology, and history. Additional disciplines such as human kinetics, political science, anthropology, and history contain information relevant to the concepts in question. Human kinetics is a discipline that encompasses sport and physical activity sub-disciplines including biomechanics, kinesiology,

physical education, and sport psychology (Weinberg & Gould, 2003). Though the sub-discipline of sport psychology has been discussed already, the remaining sub-disciplines must also be included in the discourse about the present dissertation's interdisciplinary approach. When athletes experience monumental sport challenges filled with stressors that are perceived as threats, there are internal psychological and emotional responses that occur. These responses can be evidenced through physical manifestations such as the execution of technique recorded by biomechanic and kinesiology researchers. For example, increased uncertainty about a competitive stressor (e.g., underestimated opponents) can lead to increased anxiety and muscle tension which impede technical execution of a given skill and is in essence mal-adaptive during competition. The implication for human kinetic researchers outside of sport psychology is that they will understand how psychological and sociological perspectives of a construct influence their study of the same concept (e.g., adaptation). Political science is the study of authority and its influence on relationships among groups of people such as governments, organizations, and associations (Repko, 2008). Political scientists are concerned with how authority is gained, used, and lost among groups of people. When considering the purpose of the present dissertation, only elite ice-hockey players qualify for the National Hockey League and political scientists might want to know what qualities these players possess or achievements have occurred to give them the authority to be among the highest paid ice-hockey players in the world. One possible implication for political scientists is that players discuss organizations and associations that they belonged to and how these organizations or associations were structured to facilitate promotions to the NHL. Anthropology researchers examine major concepts related to the development of human cultures within their environmental context. Their work often corresponds with researchers in psychology and sociology. In relation to the purpose of the present dissertation, one of the monumental challenges that de-stabilize NHL

players is the relocation from one country to North American cities that host NHL teams. Many of the participants in the present dissertation relocate to North American cities and must effectively navigate through relocation challenges that are mostly unfamiliar (Schinke, Gauthier, et al., 2007). The implications for anthropologists are that nationalism and the relationship history among the participants and people in North American cities might affect the process leading to adaptation. Similarly, historians focus on important events that shape the values and beliefs of groups. The purpose of the present dissertation is to identify monumental challenges that de-stabilize NHL players and how these players re-establish adaptation. Perhaps monumental challenges can be exacerbated by tension among team members resulting from recent (e.g., Canadian men's ice-hockey team won the gold medal at the 2010 Olympic Games) or long-standing (e.g., Canadian men's ice-hockey junior teams' success) historical events. The implications for historians are that certain historical events might have an effect on the pathways selected to achieve adaptation. Trusting relationships among team members might once again be hindered based on the history among two cultural groups.

Interdisciplinarity: Methodology

The general purpose of the present dissertation is to understand the challenges and stressors that de-stabilize NHL players as well as the subsequent pathways selected to reach adaptation. Concepts and theories pertaining to the aforementioned purpose have been discussed as well as each concept's origin and development within the corresponding discipline. The objective was to show that the present dissertation necessitates an interdisciplinary approach. Adding to the cause is how the methodology used to answer the research questions can also be considered a product of interdisciplinarity. The forthcoming section is

devoted to describing the methodological approaches (i.e., oncology, epistemology, and research method) favored by each discipline highlighted in the conceptual section as well as an explanation for the selection of a particular methodology to directly answer the research questions in the present dissertation.

Sport psychology. The majority of sport psychology research is comprised of methodological approaches that can be categorized within the oncology of realism and an empirical epistemology. Realism is the search for one truth that can only be achieved through strategies that distance researchers from their work (i.e., objectivity). In the present dissertation, distancing strategies will include consulting an expert panel, co-authoring with contextual knowledge, and having the participants' voices in the results section. Combined, the strategies do not provide an entirely objective account of the experiences of NHL players and therefore, can be classified within the realist oncology. An empirical epistemology is achieved when data is gathered and analyzed in a systemic and trustful manner. Here, Maxwell's (2002) trustworthiness guidelines, which have been applied in previous sport psychology research, will be used since they have been successfully employed in previous sport psychology research about NHL players. As for research methods (i.e., sport population, data collection and analysis), the concepts of monumental challenges, stress, coping, and adaptation in professional sport have received varying degrees of attention from sport psychology researchers. Stress and coping have received considerable attention though most of the research was done with national and international amateur athletes. Noblett and Gifford (2002) in addition to Holt and Hogg (2002) were among the first to examine professional athletes and they used one-on-one interviews and focus groups to discuss the stressors prevalent according to professional football players in Australia and soccer players in the United States. Soon after, additional professional sport populations

were examined including World Cup soccer coaches (Salmela, Marques, Machado, & Durand-Bush, 2006) and professional rugby players (Nicholls, Jones, Polman, & Borkoles, 2009). In most cases, data collection was comprised of structured individual interviews with the participants to specifically learn about the stressors experienced and coping strategies used. Nicholls et al. (2009) provided an exception when they utilized an adapted diary comprised of five sections: (a) stressor checklist and boxes, (b) open-ended coping response boxes, (c) coping effectiveness Likert-scale, (d) emotion-response section, and (e) emotion response Likert-scale. However, the stressors and coping responses in the present dissertation will be identified through an individual interview which is the most common data collection tool used with not only professional athletes but elite national and international athletes. Individual interviews are a common and useful method for gaining a professional athlete's insight since athletes regularly grant interviews for newspapers, journals, radio, television, and internet video providers. As for monumental challenges and adaptation, these concepts have received less attention from researchers because they are relatively new concepts compared to the stress and coping literatures. Schinke et al. (2010) have recently organized a comprehensive framework that begins with a monumental challenge that includes numerous stressors. Athletes appraise these stressors as relevant and identify potential coping strategies to apply. Following appraisal, athletes apply coping strategies with hopes of overcoming the stressors and effectively reaching the outcome of adaptation in a monumental challenge. Despite the recent conceptual changes, individual interviews remain the ideal research method to learn about the chronological process. The data pertaining to the process can then be analyzed and organized into vignettes which illustrate the pathways taken to overcome each monumental challenge. Vignettes are a form of data analysis which enables the researchers to present the data according to their own

views as well as those of the participants. Vignettes originate from outside the sport psychology discipline and have only been used to describe participants' experiences in recent sport psychology research project (see Blodgett, Schinke, Peltier, Jo Wabano, Fisher, Eys et al., 2010; Dubuc et al., 2010).

Psychology. The majority of researchers in psychology employ a positivist approach (i.e., realist ontology and empirical epistemology) where objectivity is sought throughout the research project, particularly in the methodological procedures. The research method believed to be the most objective is the experimental design which distances the researcher from the findings (i.e., dependent variable) so that any influence may be attributed to an independent variable or group of independent variables (Willis, 2007). Outside of the experimental design, psychology researchers may use correlation research while a minority employs other methods such as interviews, observations and case studies. Patton (2002) explained that a minority of psychologists preferred setting research objectives that are met through the use of individual interviews. In the present dissertation, an individual interview will be held with the help of an interview guide to learn about the experiences of each NHL participant since, as discussed in the aforementioned section about sport psychology, interviews are a common way to gain insight into the experiences of professional athletes. The purpose is to learn about the various possible pathways towards adaptation and it is believed that an interview guide will yield generic responses across the participants in addition to novel insights based on their experiences.

Nursing. Though the concepts in the present dissertation originated and were developed by researchers in the fields of sociology, human kinetics, political science, anthropology, and history, the methodology is evidently grounded in fewer disciplines. So far, the ontology, epistemology, and research tools have been thoroughly examined and

they are rooted in the disciplines of sport psychology and psychology. However, one aspect about the research tool has received little consideration: vignettes. The intent in the present dissertation will be to analyze the interview transcripts and organize them into vignettes based on the monumental challenge experienced by the participants (e.g., promotion, avoiding de-selection) and the corresponding adaptation pathways selected. Within each challenge, the pathways taken by the participants will be described by not only the researcher but also through the inclusion of the participants' words. Hughes and Huby (2002) noted that vignettes are a form of narratives and they were originally used sparingly in the disciplines of anthropology and psychology but more heavily and recently applied in nursing research. In nursing research, vignettes are typically a descriptive fictional scenario that is presented to people receiving and providing health care so they may comment on the scenario even if it involves a sensitive topic. As a result, insight is gained into a person or group of people's values, beliefs, and thoughts (Wilks, 2004). Outside of fictional scenarios, vignettes can be used during an analysis to summarize a particular theme (Ely, Vinz, Downing, & Anzul, 1997). In the present dissertation, the latter application occurred as the researcher and NHL participant collaborated to summarize stress episodes in the NHL.

Conclusion

The present dissertation is an attempt at learning about the stress episodes of male professional ice-hockey players in the NHL. Stress episodes are comprised of multiple concepts that originated from and have been developed in various disciplines. Concepts such as stressors, coping, and adaptation have received various levels of attention from researchers in sport psychology, psychology, and sociology among others. The specific research questions posed and methodology being applied

(e.g., interview, vignettes) can also be traced back to the literature belonging the aforementioned disciplines in addition to anthropology and nursing when considering the use of vignettes. Evidently, the concepts, research questions, and methodology are not grounded and expressed solely according to the literature of one particular discipline. Instead, the proposed dissertation is arguably an interdisciplinary attempt, through necessity, at thoroughly examining through individual interviews and the construction of vignettes the monumental challenges and stressors therein as well as the subsequent adaptation pathways taken by NHL players hoping to re-stabilize themselves and prolong their careers in the NHL.

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