

SCHOLARLY TOUCHDOWNS: A VISUAL EXPLORATION OF SPORT MANAGEMENT FACULTY IMPACT IN NORTH AMERICA

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Abstract

The field of sport management has seen tremendous growth over the past four decades. However, it is still considered a young discipline compared to business schools. This paper reviews the discussions of past Dr. Earle F. Zeigler Award winners on the credibility, status, legitimacy, and identity of the sport management field. The paper also discusses the concerns of past award winners and their recommendations for the future of the field.

Keywords: Sport management, Dr. Earle F. Zeigler Award, Credibility, Status, Legitimacy, Identity

1. Introduction

Over the past four decades, the academic field of sport management has seen tremendous growth around the world. Since the inception of the first sport management master's degree offering at Ohio University in 1966 (Stier, 1993), institutions that offer sport management degrees (i.e., undergraduate and/or graduate degrees) have grown from 44 programs in 1982 (Lewis, 1982; Parkhouse, 1987) to 211 programs in 1993 (Weese, 1995), to a recent level of 462 sport management programs in the United States, 17 sport management programs in Canada, 26 in Europe, 18 in Asia and 13 in Australia (NASSM, 2015a).

While this growth has occurred in a short amount of time, the sport management field is still considered a young discipline compared to the likes of business schools around North America and the rest of the world (Chalip, 2006; Doherty, 2012; Mahony & Pitts, 1998).

Beginning in the late 1980s and continuing today, scholars used platforms such as the North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) conference and the *Journal of Sport Management* to discuss topical issues. During the NASSM Annual Conference, the Dr. Earle F. Zeigler Award winner often offers feedback about their experiences to the NASSM constituents in attendance as well as through the subsequent publication in the *Journal of Sport Management*. Award winners often focus their discussions on broad areas such as credibility, status, legitimacy, and identity. In addition to offering recommendations for the future of the sport management field, award winners also express their concerns. Areas of concern such as the need to shift to a broad-based "domain" of sport management (Slack, 1996, p. 97), and the call to examine all aspects that affect the overall credibility of the sport management field (Pitts, 2001) were addressed in the past. Further concerns of past award winners critically reviewed "teaching, practice and research" (Frisby, 2005, p. 1) within the field in addition to the opportunities for sport management to solidify its own identity (Chalip, 2006).

It was Pitts' article (2001) and her Zeigler Award lecture that drives the current research. Her primary concern was related to the "the state of the field" (p. 8). As a relatively young field, sport management has improved upon its proverbial reputation (Chalip, 2006; Parkhouse & Pitts, 2001; Pitts, 2001) year after year. These improvements have not been easy as the field of sport management is interdisciplinary in its own right and does not "fit neatly" as a single discipline like sociology or law (Shilbury & Rentschler, 2007, p. 31). With certain identity struggles, it was Pitts (2001) that suggested the need to hold those in the field of sport management accountable through areas such as assessment and to be critical of their work and future work to build upon the growth of the field.

Critical analysis of organizations can be the lifeblood for improvement. According to Weese (1995) and Cuneen and Parks (1997), the NASSM contingency should be continually evaluated to build upon the mission of the society to better the relationship between academics and practitioners. Previous studies on the improvements of sport management programs previously focused on the assessment of topics such as sport management curriculum (DeSensi, Kelley, Blanton, & Beitel, 1990; Eagleman & McNary, 2010; Hardy, 1987; Kelley, Beitel, DeSensi, & Blanton, 1994; Parkhouse, 1987; Petersen & Pierce, 2009; Floyd-Jones, Brooks, & Mak, 2008) and faculty preparation and qualifications (De Haan, 2011; Mahony, Mondello, Hums, & Judd, 2004; Nite & Singer, 2013).

The purpose of the current study fills a gap in the assessment literature through the exploration of sport management faculty career profile characteristics of journal publications and conference presentations to continue the efforts of assessment within the field.

A population of 479 NASSM documented sport management programs in the United States and Canada were reviewed for sport management faculty career profile characteristics. These characteristics were previously deemed by several scholars as necessary toward possibilities of enhancing the growth and credibility of the academic field of sport management (Costa, 2005; Doherty, 2012; Pitts, 2001; Slack, 1991, 1996). This type of assessment provides a unique look at a large component of what academics do to maintain standards institutions and faculty set for them that may translate into the field's overall growth.

Therefore, the research question related to this purpose becomes *what journal publications and conference presentations are represented by sport management faculty in North America?* Results from this type of research can prove beneficial in several ways. First, it adds to the sport management assessment literature to give a distinctive first look at where academics are in relation to their publications and conference presentations. Next, sport management faculty may begin or continue to focus their efforts towards a variety of conferences or journals to broaden their own career domain. Additionally, this research is beneficial for the leaders of the sport management field (i.e., NASSM executive committee) as they may accumulate additional ideas for future conference and journal themes or additional partnerships with organizations not previously considered. The downside of conducting this research was there are no comparable studies related to sport management faculty career characteristics.

The ability to see if the field is showing improvements and declines or make predictions compared to previous and leans on the side of futility without previous empirical evidence.

This paper is organized into several parts beginning with a literature review regarding the variance of perspectives areas such as credibility have in academia. The credibility section below was deemed necessary for this research as subjective credibility discussions often stem from assessment literature but rarely review the intentions of credibility holistically. Since the current research is the first of its kind, this same literature review includes an overview of several forms of previous sport management field assessment research. Next, the methods are discussed expanding on the data gathering and analysis procedures. This is followed by the results of sport management faculty career characteristics and discussion of these findings, concluding with limitations and recommendations for future research.

2.1 Literature Review

Several of the past and present trailblazers of the sport management field argue that assessment is critical to its growth. These same researchers often use the term credibility to describe aspects of this growth, however, credibility is difficult to measure, if at all, and at the least is a subjective term. Regardless of attempting to measure credibility, (which the current research is not) recognizing areas within academia that should be assessed must be considered paramount. Improving the idea of credibility (with or without measurement), as Doherty (2012) suggests below, within those directly related to the field of sport management academia is necessary.

“We should think outside the lines: Critique what we each have done to date, and reflect on what else we might do; and, look across our respective units, faculties and universities, and consider what other disciplines and particular research projects resonate with our own.” (p. 8)

The current research does not suggest that if assessment occurs and improvements are made from such an assessment, that credibility would improve. The current research simply highlights credibility as a necessary component to the assessment discussion.

2.2 Credibility

The concept of credibility stems from several theoretical perspectives that include legitimacy, status, and reputation. According to Suchman (1995) legitimacy is “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions” (p. 574). Washington and Zajac (2005) suggested that status relates to the social aspects developed through relationships and those relationships develop sequential organization. Deephouse and Suchman (2008) defined reputation as “a generalized expectation about a firm’s future behaviour or performance based on collective perceptions (either direct or, more often, vicarious) of past behaviour or performance” (p. 59-60). It is apparent here that credibility is a multi-level concept that refers to a source of reliable information (Bocking, 2004), in addition to the expertise and trustworthiness of such information (Hovland, Janis, & Kelly, 1953; Metzger, 2007). It can be seen by the above definitions that through establishing credibility for an organization, concepts such as legitimacy, status, and reputation follow. “Organizations that are of high quality can develop reputations for quality over time, which can then serve a useful signaling function when other forms of direct and credible information on quality are lacking” (Washington & Zajac, 2005, p. 283).

Efforts to improve credibility within the sport management field were recognized by several scholars through assessment of (i) education quality and accreditation (Fielding, Pitts, & Miller, 1991), (ii) increased specialization in sport management (Mahony & Pitts, 1998), (iii) consideration of where sport management programs should be housed within a college or university (Chalip, 2006), and the (iv) improvement of interdisciplinary research within the field (Doherty, 2012). While these and other areas of assessment are valid towards improving perceptions of the sport management field as a whole, bridging the gap between assessment and credibility, and understanding that any assessment is another step towards credibility, begins with the ambiguity of the term credibility. Addressing credibility here is important, as numerous sport management researchers have used the term in the past to describe the state of the field. Parkhouse (1987) referred to the term “credibility” (p. 94) with regard to the future of the industry where she expressed meaningful concerns about the quality of the sport management curricula.

Boucher (1998) argued that the sport management field’s credibility could be lost in academic circles through the selection of research problems that are self-serving as opposed to having purposeful applications for practicing sport managers. These views are slightly limited in nature as they each relate to only one aspect of the sport management field.

Cutting through the ambiguity of understanding credibility, Pitts (2001) provided a holistic definition of credibility described as the “quality, accountability, and credentials” (p. 7) among the field. Pitts (2001) suggested that areas in which to improve credibility lie among criteria such as guidelines, curriculum and accreditation, and faculty preparation and qualifications. She goes on to designate other areas necessary to analyze and boost credibility. Pitts (2001) stated that to “attain and sustain” (p. 7) credibility, its members must measure and assess its merit in several areas including conference representation, industry literature, and scholarly association. By establishing a holistic definition rather than a varied definition of credibility assumed by previous scholars, the field of sport management can continue to assess itself with a clear level of critical analysis.

This critical analysis was shown by Costa (2005) through her indications of credibility enhancement using a Delphi Study by enlisting 17 leading sport management scholars to provide their professional opinions regarding the status and future of the field. Costa further explained that improvements to sport management program’s infrastructure (e.g., journal publication acceptance) would help attain increased status. The term infrastructure can be linked to the term credibility, as Costa (2005) suggested “the status of the field is related to the field’s infrastructure, particularly university programs, recognition and reward systems, and publication outlets” (p. 130).

While Pitts (2001) and Costa (2005) called for credibility improvements among several infrastructural areas, others have proclaimed an upgrade in areas such as research design (Frisby, 2005; Olafson, 1990) and in an accreditation process (Boucher, 1998; FloydJones et al., 2008; Mahoney & Pitts, 1998). However, it was Slack (1991, 1996) who envisioned the best intentions of success for the field by suggesting that a broadening of practitioner and researcher endeavors are necessary to be influential amongst all academics, not simply sport management academics.

However, establishing ourselves as the experts in the management of sport will not only require us to broaden the range of organizations that we study, it will also necessitate a considerable change in the theoretical bases of our work, a broadening of the places we publish and present our research, a re-examination of the topics we study and the adoption of new approaches to doing research. (Slack, 1996, p. 98-99)

It was this quote by Slack (1996) in addition to Pitts' (2001) definition of credibility that drives the current research to expand the assessment of the sport management field by studying its members.

2.3 Sport management program assessment

The importance of academic program assessment is to determine whether the program has merit (Cuneen, 2004). Assessment in sport management previously focused on areas such as sport management curricula and the preparation for becoming a sport management faculty member.

Establishing quality curriculum for any academic program, including sport management, is a primary tenant for the United States Department of Education accreditation process. The common goal for colleges and universities must be "to ensure that education provided by institutions of higher education meets acceptable levels of quality" (US Department of Education, 2014, n.p.).

In 1986, the National Association for Sports and Physical Activity (NASPE) developed a special committee to identify and develop guidelines for college and university programs that offered sports and sport management classes. Shortly thereafter, the NASPE partnered with NASSM to develop an accreditation process strictly for sport management programs (Eagleman & McNary, 2010). Between 1990 and 2009, numerous sport management scholars suggested or directly recommended the necessity to have an accreditation body for sport management (c.f., Fielding et al., 1991; Mahoney et al., 2004; Zakrajsek, 1993). Currently, the Commission on Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA) is the lone accreditation body for sport management academia. As of March 2015, COSMA has accredited 42 sport management programs with 14 programs in the candidacy stages (NASSM Newsletter, 2015). With the NASSM and COSMA membership base continuing to expand, continued assessment of the sport management field is essential to properly manage such growth (Amis & Silk, 2005; Chalip, 2006; Cuneen & Parks, 1997; Pitts, 2001).

2.4 Curriculum assessment

Scholars have previously indicated that studies regarding assessment of sport management curriculum are limited (Eagleman & McNary, 2010). Over the course of the last several decades, however, several important studies have assessed curriculum in an investigative manner. Shortly after the establishment of NASSM and the *Journal of Sport Management*, Parkhouse (1987) analyzed the status of curricula for 83 institutions with sport management programs. Data was collected in the areas of undergraduate and graduate foundational and applicable sport management subject areas. Her findings suggested that many of these sport management programs did not offer a consistent base for sport management course offerings. DeSensi, Kelly, Blanton, and Beitel (1990) reviewed the perspectives of sport management constituents (e.g., employers, academics, and students) in developing curricula models to aid curricula developers and determine the appropriate course for a sport management program. Similarly, Fielding et al. (1991) reached out to 109 sport management programs in North America to collectively determine

the characteristics of a quality program. Although many responses were conflicting, results suggested that characteristics necessary for a quality sport management program revolved around the education of the instructors and the coursework offered to its students.

More recent assessment of sport management curricula used a distinctive approach when Petersen and Pierce (2009) surveyed sport industry professionals (e.g., NFL, MLB, and the NBA). The results from 32 surveys evenly collected from these professional sport associations indicated that a student's field experience was most important followed by legal aspects, ethics, management and leadership, marketing, economics, budget and finance, governance, and socio-cultural aspects.

Shortly thereafter, and using a quantitative content analysis methodology, Eagleman and McNary (2010) examined 227 undergraduate sport management programs using COSMA guidelines as a means for the analysis. Results concluded that curriculum offered among the sample sport management programs in the study was inconsistent and, in fact, the course offerings varied greatly. These results showed that many sport management programs were not meeting the academic standards (i.e., curriculum) related to career preparation requested by sport industry professionals.

2.5 Faculty preparation

Sport management academics have long been concerned about their own development as teachers, researchers, and community builders. It was Weese (1995) that broke the proverbial silence and called out sport management academics to upgrade their own research agendas to meet the needs of a wider audience, such as the general business industry, rather than be limited to the sport industry. Cuneen and Parks (2001) added to this by suggesting that sport management faculty expand their own dialogue in relation to professional preparation. Weese (2002) reiterated his own sentiments by strongly advocating the need for properly trained sport management faculty, as this need may not meet the demand of students in existing programs. He noted that sport management undergraduate and graduate programs would continue to expand with hurdles likely to follow without proper leadership. Hurdles such as "under-employment" (p. 15) of students may occur without quality faculty to provide students with sound decision making skills and the ability to communicate effectively. He also referenced Mondello, Mahony, Hums, and Moorman (2002) and the importance of their study in which sport management search committee chairs were discouraged by the lack of qualified sport management candidates.

Weese's previous concerns have spurred other studies related to the preparation of sport management faculty, including the Mahony et al. (2004) review of 24 doctoral programs in North America. They directed their research towards gathering data on doctoral graduates produced each year, including the skills and qualities being developed during their programs. These results were then cross-referenced against sport management job qualifications advertised during the time of data collection. Conclusions from this study suggested that doctoral programs place high emphasis on teaching and research; however, not all doctoral programs have sport management undergraduate programs, which limits the opportunity for doctoral candidates to hone their teaching abilities leading into their first years of academic teaching.

2.6 Faculty profile research

Research is limited from the perspective of reviewing faculty profile characteristics. Floyd-Jones et al. (2008) did however provide an overview of 50 sport management programs responding to a survey consisting of infrastructure characteristics (c.f., Costa, 2005) such as program profile (including program size, approval status, admittance requirements, and faculty/student ratio) and faculty profile (including adjunct faculty members, gender, ethnicity, terminal degrees).

Additional highlights of these results showed a lack of diversity (e.g., gender and ethnicity) among faculty, as well as employing faculty without a terminal degree. Floyd-Jones et al. (2008) did collect one specific faculty career characteristic in *research interests*, but the results were unclear as to specific research interest topics, simply noting that 68.2% of respondents “had a strong research interest” (p. 87). The Floyd-Jones et al. study did offer a glimpse of conference results similar to the results found in this study in addition to faculty profile data, however, the authors offered limited direction toward other faculty characteristics. They found their respondents attended top sport management conferences of NASSM and the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. Floyd-Jones and colleagues concluded their outline of sport management programs by offering recommendations for sport management programs in the area of hiring more females in addition to seeking out accreditation status.

The present research assesses the sport management field faculty constituency and their career characteristics of journal publications and conference presentations. This research is timely as it adds to the existing literature of assessment from a distinct perspective and expands the discussion to enhance the growth and credibility of the field. “We must be vigilant in critically examining all that we have accomplished, make changes as needed, and push ourselves to grow” (Pitts, 2001, p. 7).

3.1 Method

The current research was descriptive in nature. According to Andrew, Pedersen, and McEvoy (2011), descriptive research is appropriate when a study concentrates on “what is happening rather than on why it happens” (p. 8). Slack (1991, 1996) and Pitts (2001) call for sport management academics to broaden their career characteristics outlook focused the current research, but less is known about sport management faculty career characteristics such as journal publications and conference presentations. The data collected concentrated on faculty listed journal publications and conference presentations. The sport management faculty population was obtained via the NASSM website by clicking on all represented sport management program links. All sport management programs in the United States and Canada that offered a bachelor, masters, and Ph.D., or a combination of these three types of degrees listed on the NASSM website were reviewed for available faculty career characteristics.

3.2 Data collection

At the completion of data collection, NASSM provided direct website links to 479 sport management programs (462 in the United States and 17 in Canada). A list of college and university names was accompanied by a hyper-link that was associated with each institution on the NASSM website. All functional links were utilized and reviewed. In the event a link did not work, a simple Internet search was conducted for that sport management program’s main web page. From the NASSM website a three-

phase search process for sport management faculty profiles ensued. The three-phase search process for faculty journal publications and conference presentations.

The NASSM website served as a one-stop shop for many of the sport management programs around North America. One click here presented all fee paying sport management programs associated with NASSM. This list of programs provided sport management main web pages offering direct links to aid in searching for faculty profiles, this was considered phase one of the data collection process. If a faculty list link was not found on the main sport management program website during the phase one process, phase two followed and the use of the main institution's search engine was enacted with the key terms such as *sport management*, *sport administration*, *sport leadership* and *sport studies* were inserted in the search bar. If a search did not produce a list of members of the sport management full-time faculty, the program was coded as 'Sport Management Full-Time Faculty Not Applicable' in the main Microsoft Excel database.

If the phase-two search produced only a sport management faculty name or list of names, the institution's search function was used once again by searching each individual's name for faculty profiles. This process was considered the third search phase. If this list did not produce career profiles, the individual(s) were calculated as part of the total faculty data set and no journal or conference data were calculated.

If a curriculum vita was available it was considered a part of the faculty profile, collected as data, reviewed, and analyzed for this study. For the purpose of this study, conference presentation and journal publication data were collected through faculty member profiles or curriculum vita. Faculty members with at least one conference presentation or one journal publication were counted (c.f. Buchheit, Collins, & Reitenga, 2002; Hasselback, Reinstein, & Schwan, 2000). All titles of each conference presentation and journal publication that were available on its program's website (i.e., faculty profile or curriculum vitae) were collected and inputted into the master database for analysis. Individuals with job title designation of *Adjunct Faculty*, *Instructor*, or not labelled (<10) were not included in the data collection. During the data collection process it was determined that there was no way of knowing if a sport management faculty member did or did not have academic obligations at the time data were collected. To be consistent with the data collection process, if the faculty member was listed and data was available, all journal publication and conference presentation data were collected for that faculty member.

For organizational purposes, Microsoft Excel was utilized for database management intentions to collect all sport management program website listed faculty member, conference presentations, and journal publication, if any. All entries of conference presentation and journal publication locations by a single faculty member were collected and entered into this database. One conference presentation listing was considered one frequency. One journal publication was also considered one frequency. Once all data were collected for journals and conferences, a 0/1 coding process determined sport related and non-sport related conferences and journals to better understand the fields overall domain and interdisciplinary outlook.

3.3 Data analysis

Content analysis was used to determine if a journal or conference had a sport or nonsport related aim and scope (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The published aim and scope of the conference website and journal website was analyzed in determining sport or non-sport related designation using sport and sport-related key word searches (e.g., athletics, physical activity, recreation, sport). A 0/1 coding process followed the content analysis phase to finalize sport and non-sport journals and conferences.

Determining non-sport related journals and conferences was considered new angles of sport management assessment called for by previous scholars (c.f., Costa, 2005; Floyd Jones et al., 2008; Mahony et al., 2004; Pitts, 2001; Slack, 1991, 1996) to assist in broad based growth of the academy. Once all data were collected, the Excel sorting function was used to itemize an alphabetical list of journal publication and conference presentation locations to easily view, count, and determine the total number of conferences and journals and the frequencies. Similarly, Hasselback et al. (2000) used a *counting* methodology to calculate and analyze publication records from a population of 3878 accounting faculty for promotion and tenure standards within the top-40 highest rated accounting journals in the industry. The authors noted that while counting articles did provide “objectivity and simplicity” (p. 81), however, the process was not as simple as it appeared.

4.1 Results

The intent of the current research was to review all NASSM (United States and Canada) recognized sport management programs websites and the faculty available within each of these programs during the 2013-2014 academic year. A comprehensive collection of data represented sport management faculty career characteristics in the areas of conference presentation locations and journal publication locations. The purpose of the current research was to explore the career characteristics of journal publications and conference presentations of sport management faculty the intention of becoming a baseline study for sport management faculty career characteristic research. At the time of data collection, there were 462 sport management programs represented on the NASSM website from the United States and 17 sport management programs in Canada bringing the total population for this study to 479. During the initial assessment of sport management programs in the United States, it was determined that 26 programs be omitted from data analysis phase of this project. Of these 26 programs, 14 institutions were non-degree granting programs. The remaining 12 institutions were removed from analysis because they were strictly online sport management programs. Online programs were removed due to the possibility that faculty for online sport management programs may also be faculty at other institutions.

The removal of these programs was done to increase reliability and improve the accuracy of the results, bringing the sample size for the current study to 453. Additionally, 67 or 13.9% of the sport management program population, did not have functioning links (e.g., “error 404 – page could not be found”) from the NASSM website to their sport management website. In this event, additional search measures took place as described in the methods section.

A total of 801 sport management faculty members were identified through the links via the NASSM website. Of these faculty members, 612 faculty members had a Ph.D., 100 had a Masters degree, six had

only a Bachelors degree and 83-faculty member's level of degree earned was not found. Further analysis noted that 442-sport management faculty did not have at least one conference presentation or one journal publication represented on their profile. It should also be noted here that 141 United States sport management programs and 6 sport management programs from Canada had links to sport management program websites, but through the three-stage search process, no sport management faculty representation was evident.

A list of conference and journal frequencies is represented in Table 1. A total of 4571 conference presentation frequencies were represented from the sample of sport management faculty. From this total, 4028 were designated as sport management related conferences and 543 were non-sport management related conferences. Therefore, 88% of the conferences being presented by the faculty population had a sport focus and 12% had a non-sport conference focus. This was a 7.4 to 1 faculty sport to non-sport conference presentation ratio. This suggests that for approximately every seven sport related conference presentations by the North American NASSM cohort; one non-sport related conference presentation was conducted. There were 665 different conferences represented. A total of 4903 journal publications were collected. From this total, 3706 were designated as sport management related journal publications and 1197 were non-sport management related journal publications. Therefore, 74% of journal publications by the faculty population had a sport focus and 24% had a non-sport journal focus. This was 3.09 to 1 sport to non-sport journal publication ratio. This suggests that for every three sport related journal publications represented by the North American NASSM cohort only one non-sport related journal article was published. There were 1008 different journal publications represented. Tables 2 and 3 represent the 10 most frequently represented journal publications and conference presentations by the population for this research.

Table 1: Sport management faculty conference presentation and journal publication frequency representation

(n=801)

	Frequency	Sport	Non-Sport	Representation	Sport to Non-sport Ratio	Percentage Sport/NonSport
Conferences	4571	4028	543	665	7.4 to 1	88/12%
Journals	4903	3706	1197	1008	3.09 to 1	76/24%

Table 2: Sport journal locations Frequency Non-sport journal locations Frequency

Journal of Sport Management	335	Sex roles	33
Sport Marketing Quarterly	247	Marketing Management Journal	20
International Journal of Sport Management	224	Cultural Studies	19
Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport	160	Critical Methodologies	
		Journal of African Studies	15

Sport Management Review	152	Tourism Management	15
International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing	99	Advances in Consumer Research	12
Journal of Contemporary Athletics	95	Journal of Applied Marketing Theory	12
Journal of Legal Aspects of Sport	75	Journal of Economics and Business	12
Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Sport	70	Journal of Business Ethics	11
Applied Research in Coaching and Athletics Annual	70	Journal of Urban Affairs	11

Table 3: Sport conference locations Frequency Non-sport conference locations Frequency

North American Society for Sport Management	1115	Western Economic Association	28
Sport Marketing Association	392	Association of Marketing Theory & Practice	22
America Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance	392	Academy of Management	13
College Sport Research Institute	292	Hawaii International on Education	13
North American Society for the Sociology of Sport	195	Travel and Tourism Research Association	13
Sport and Recreation Law Association	125	American Marketing Association	12
European Association for Sport Management	96	International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry	10
Sport Entertainment & Venues Tomorrow Conference	59	Forum on Design Management Research and Education	9
National Recreation and Park Association	51	Academy of Marketing Science	8
International Conference on Sport Business and Entertainment	49	National Communication Association	7

5.1 Discussion and Conclusion

Several decades have passed since the initial call to expand the focus of what the field of sport management can contribute to the greater sport management industry and society. Several studies have successfully assessed areas of the sport management field, but less is known about direct faculty characteristics. The current research is evidence of several consistencies and future opportunities previous researchers such as Slack (1991, 1996), Pitts (2001) and others called for decades ago. However, without previous research related to sport management faculty profile characteristics, the current study offers baseline data that contributes to further interpretations of sport management assessment and adds to the existing discussion of future growth and credibility within the field.

While the current research is a starting point for future assessment of sport management faculty characteristics there is no way to gather if the current results show that faculty journal publications and conference presentations show added legitimacy of the sport management field as a whole. The results appeared to have that those in sport management academia show a high comfort level with the context of sport with arguably slight limitations toward an interdisciplinary approach (c.f., Doherty, 2012). This is noted with the larger sport to non-sport percentage and ratio toward conference presentations and journal publications. The results are not intended to present satisfactory progress toward growth or credibility, or present the good or the bad of the sport management academy at this time. Simply put, this study lays the groundwork for future sport management career characteristic profile research. As previous management scholars suggested, assessing the career profile characteristics may indicate a form of enhancing credibility and with this the academy can continue to develop future trends toward credibility, status (Washington & Zajac, 2005), reputation (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008), and legitimacy (Suchman, 1995).

A tremendous amount of diversity was indicated through the data of journal publication and conference presentation locations accumulated. This gives indication of great effort toward an overall interdisciplinary research agenda (Doherty, 2012) and a broadening of the sport management domain (Slack, 1996). By these expanding perspectives of sport and non-sport conference presentations and journal publications, other fields such as political science or the technology industry (Slack, 1996) may view the sport management academy differently. Given the frequencies, percentages, and ratios noted in Table 1, 2, and 3, the argument can be made that the current sport management faculty has established a fine threshold of credibility and other fields should take notice. Moreover, to address the possibility of actual credibility measurement of the sport management field, qualitative and quantitative studies could be undertaken by requesting other disciplines (e.g., business or political science) to respond to their perceptions or credibility of the field. Future research could embark on a Delphi study (c.f. Costa, 2005) to begin to respond to these types of queries.

There were unexpected findings worth noting. First, 147 sport management programs were recognized by the NASSM website, but during the three-phase search process there was no full-time sport management faculty found representing the program.

While Parkhouse (1987) noted that to be a verified sport management program it must offer sufficient curriculum to merit a minor or concentration, Mondello et al. (2002) and Mohoney et al. (2004) suggested that qualified faculty with a terminal degree within this field be among the qualifications for sport management programs. Here, we do not know if there are qualified sports management faculty within these programs as data was not available. Additionally, while the author understands that faculty have different journal publication and conference presentation requirements, it was surprising that 801 sport management faculty were found, 442 members of this population did not have record of at least one conference presentation or one journal publication. This is not to say that this portion of the population did not present at conferences or publish their research, the data were simply not available through the program websites.

The percentages and ratio results were interesting in several ways. While previous research does not show quantitative data on sport management career characteristics, the author expected a higher percentages and ratios of journal publications and conference presentations. This anticipation was based on the literature review and continued calls over the years for improvements in areas such broadening the sport management domain (Slack, 1996), theoretical framework (c.f., Doherty, 2013; Frisby, 2005), providing continued assessment in the field (Costa, 2005; Floyd-Jones, 2008; Mahoney et al., 2004; Parkhouse & Pitts, 2001; Weese, 2002), and interdisciplinary research (c.f., Doherty, 2012; Slack, 1996).

One question that became evident to the researcher during the analysis of results phase was why were sport conference presentations more than double to that of sport journal publications? This could be that conference requirements are less stringent to that of journal publications (i.e., review process). Also, the funding support for attending conferences could be discipline focused suggesting funds are only available to sport management faculty attending sport conferences. Furthermore, once a faculty member presents at a sport conference a *salami slice* effect takes place (Pfleegor, 2014), and through collaboration with colleagues a faculty member could develop several publications from a conference presentation idea (or vice versa) and send those manuscripts to non-sport journals or conferences.

There was a significant amount of data collected for this study; however, limitations became apparent during and after data collection and analysis. Profiles and curriculum vita appeared to not be regularly updated.

Furthermore, numerous faculty members had an abbreviated curriculum vitae listed with only selected conference presentations and selected publications. While all career characteristic data were collected, it was probable that abbreviated faculty journal and conference data did in fact affect the results. The author determined that the only way to alleviate the concern about reliability of abbreviated data was to not be selective and collect all data available on all sport management program faculty web pages. Additional limitations came from collecting data from the NASSM website. This site is for sport management programs that pay a fee to NASSM to be a part of their website sport management program directory. There may be many more sport management programs in the United States and Canada that chose not to pay this fee.

Other limitations arose throughout the data collection process that longitudinal data of when faculty presented and published their research would have been ideal. It was considered impossible to collect this longitudinal information, as dates did not always accompany listed conference and publication references. Along these lines, it would also have proven beneficial to generate a standard deviation of conference presentations and journal publications between represented faculty members. This aspect would have shown where (i.e., yearly journal publication and conference presentation progress) these accomplishments were greatest and weakest among faculty through a regression analysis.

Additional limitations remain with the recent literature on sport management field assessment. While much of the literature review with the current research was relevant, it was quite dated and further analysis of similar topics should be an on-going process. Additional limitations lie with the possibility of faculty using their institution's websites to manage their career profiles. Resources such as *Linked-*

in, *Research Gate*, or *Academia* were not used as a part of the data collection process for this study and may be utilized by sport management academics and updated more often. Finally, researchers such as Slack (1996) and Doherty (2012) suggested sport management academics should take more of an interdisciplinary approach towards their research presentations and aim for publications. It was unknown if previous faculty submissions were rejected to non-sport conferences and journals, but then submitted to sport journals and vice versa.

Future research toward sport management faculty career characteristics could follow that of Smith and Washington (2013) where they collected athletic director detailed curriculum vita career path analysis. They found that athletic directors, while expected to have business experience to manage million dollar budgets, had minimal business experience. The current research could follow a similar line by showing sport management faculty career progression through academic and non-academic endeavors that may benefit the future assessment of faculty. Other future research implications may be important to the credibility discussion in areas of combining sport management career characteristics and journal prestige assessment.

In their evaluation of sport management journals, Shilbury and Rentschler (2007) evaluated and rated 13 sport management journals using four criteria: (i) journal prestige and contributions to the following areas (ii) theory, (iii) practice, and (iv) teaching. Calling upon 45 senior sport management academics to use these criteria to evaluate these journals with the *Journal of Sport Management*, *Sport Management Review* and the *Sociology of Sport Journal* receiving an 'A' letter grade. Future research could use the current study's existing data from Table 2 and 3 and cross-reference it with Shilbury and Rentschler's (2007) work to not only add to the credibility conversation, but also discuss the field's legitimacy and status with other fields. Further expansions of this study could focus on the research interests of sport management faculty to further understand the possibilities of expansion into multiple disciplines. Additionally, a North American comparison over the rest of the world (i.e., Asia, Europe, and Australia) may also prove beneficial toward further assessment.

As the field of sport management moves forward with the understanding that growth and credibility is in the mind of the receiver, several questions must continually be asked. For instance, is building credibility, legitimacy, and status important for the growth of the field? Is improvement in these areas necessary for the sport management field itself, or is it more self-serving (c.f., Boucher, 1998)? Either way, a shared and conscious effort should continue to take place through personal accountability (e.g., updating faculty profiles) and organizational accountability (e.g., continuing to promote interdisciplinary research and continued assessment). The field of sport management has seen tremendous growth over the years, primarily through the growth of its programs offered around the world. Additional areas of growth may come in the form of faculty as well as the increasing amount of sport management journals available (NASSM, 2014) with more growth on the way. Accomplishments among NASSM members are plentiful.

Continuing to assess and build upon the field's infrastructure will certainly aid in enhancing the sport management field perspectives amongst peers both inside and outside of the academy.

6.1 References

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