

Assessing the Body of Knowledge in Sport Management: A Preliminary Descriptive Study of Current Sport Management Books

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Introduction

Dr. Earle F. Zeigler, one of the pioneers of the North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM), noted in 1987 that, “any profession must have a sound body of knowledge to undergird it if it is to survive with its professional status fully recognized by society” (p. 15). Academics have been challenged to assess the body of knowledge in sport management by several sport management scholars (e.g., Barber, Parkhouse, & Tedrick, 2001; Chelladurai, 1992; Danylchuk & Judd, 1996; Olafson, 1990; Parks, 1992; Paton, 1987; Pitts, 2001). In fact, a body of literature ought to reflect and define a field. To date, however, the few studies that have assessed the literature in sport management have focused only on journals, and no studies have involved textbooks or other materials. Therefore, it was the purpose of this study to begin an examination of the content of sport management textbooks. Specifically, we sought to determine whether: (a) current traditional textbooks are available in each of the sport management content areas; (b) the content provides adequate coverage of a content area; and (c) the textbooks are inclusive of a majority of sport business industry segments. For the first phase of the study, the analysis was limited to a preliminary descriptive study of book authors, editors, guest or contributing authors, page length, publishers, date of publication, country of publication, and categorization into sport management content areas.

Method

Sport management books selected for this study were limited to those written in English published from 1990 through to February 2004 inclusive. Both traditional textbooks and supplemental reading books were included. The identification of the books was conducted using personal and university campus libraries, as well as liaison with sport management colleagues. This process resulted in the identification of 118 books. These books were grouped into 14 content areas as identified by an assessment using categories from previous studies and the NASPE-NASSM Sport Management Curriculum Standards content areas. Of this original list of 118 books, 21 were not included for analysis for the first phase of the study because they could not be located in our personal and campus libraries. Therefore, data for this study included 97 books in 14 content categories—ethics (3), event management (1), field experiences/internships (1), international sport (4), management (17), organizational theory (3), performance appraisal and program evaluation (2), sport economics (4), sport facility management (2), sport finance (14), sport governance (1), sport law (8), sport marketing (33), and sport tourism (4).

Results

Almost two-thirds of the books (64) were published during the past six years from 1999 to 2004. The majority of the books (85%) are authored books whereas the remaining books (15%) are edited. There are a total of 163 authors and editors, of which 136 (84%) are authors and 27 (16%) are editors. The average number of authors/editors per book is two and more than two-thirds (78%) of the authors/editors are male. One-fifth of the books have contributing authors. Of these books, the number of contributing authors ranges from one to 53. Among these authors, 76% are male and 24% are female. As identified by the author(s) and/or editor(s), nine books are targeted at the undergraduate audience, one at the graduate level, nine at both undergraduate and graduate levels, and one at the high school level. A large majority (78) does not indicate a target audience. The books comprise an average of 285.9 pages (total of 29,332 pages), of which 14.9 are front matter pages, 258.3 are body pages, and 27.29 are back matter pages. In addition, the books average 12.45 chapters/papers/cases. The number of publishers is 43, of which the vast majority is in the USA, while others are in the UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Most publishers published 1 book, while a few publishers produced several books. These include Human Kinetics with 14 books, Fitness Information Technology with 11 books, and Routledge with 7 books.

Discussion

Findings from this study indicate that sport management educators have a number of books from which to choose, although the number of books in each content area varies from 1 (e.g., Field Experiences/Internships, Governance) to 33 (Sport Marketing). In fact, in 11 of the 14 content areas, the number is fewer than 10. The field could develop strategies to enhance those content areas with low numbers. It is encouraging that several new books have been published within the past five years, which suggests that this trend may continue. The majority of the books is authored and/or edited by males. This finding matches the average of male authorship (78%) in previous research on three sport management journals. The field should perhaps give consideration to this difference and develop strategies to increase the number of female authors and editors as it would be encouraging to see a greater number of books written or edited by females in the future. The majority of publishers are located in the USA, although there is a gradual increase in the number of books being published in other countries. This research is useful in helping with the development of the sport management body of literature.

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