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# SPORT MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES IN HIGHER EDUCATION ACROSS EUROPE – AN EXPLORATORY INVESTIGATION

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## Abstract

### AIM OF ABSTRACT - RESEARCH QUESTION

This explorative research aims to map existing programme offers in sport management (SpM) in higher education (HE) in European countries.

Based on developing indicators on strategic positioning, the main research target is to provide a (European) market analysis and to map the market in SpM education on several layers. In detail we explore:

(1) Which HEIs (Institutions in higher education) offer SpM (or related) programmes in Europe? How is SpM education structured on different levels, according to the Bologna structure?

(2) Where in Europe are HEIs offering SpM education located? Are there national or regional clusters in SpM education?

(3) Initial exploration of programme content and what are areas of specialization offered?

### THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Globalization, technology innovations, massification and new competition from private institutions in HE are the main factors that increased the pressure for HEIs to internationalize their curriculum, student body, faculty, staff and institutional structures. Knight and de Wit (1995) summarized, that HEIs need to integrate the international dimension into the teaching, research and service functions. These developments and the decline in public funding increasingly aggravate the pressure for HEIs to act entrepreneurially at a corporate level and to enter foreign or new markets, like sport or event management. This research aims to contribute to a knowledge base for HEIs when making decisions on programmes. Thus we build on earlier research that HEIs are inundated with strategies as consistent patterns of actions: within study programs and HE developments, about research funding and industry developments, etc. (Mintzberg & Rose, 2003).

## METHODOLOGY, RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA ANALYSIS

The chosen methodology reflects the exploratory nature of our research and is based on the suggestions to a systematic review by Lipsey and Wilson (2001). To conduct this research we applied a qualitative content analysis, exploring the websites of institutions of HE in Europe and other public available sources to investigate scope and content of existing SpM programmes. These searches yielded a number of documents that were placed in the literature pool. Next, using NVivo, we applied a qualitative content analysis in order to identify structural categories, based on content and teaching, following the method suggested by Mayring (2000). Coping with different languages across Europe is a methodological challenge. But at the same time also a dimension for research as the language of instruction is an important element, both when it comes to programme marketing and possibilities for student intake.

## RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

As this is an ongoing research this abstract only holds preliminary findings from Germany, Great Britain and Scandinavia (Norway and Sweden), but this will be developed in the final paper. Currently there are more than 60 Bachelor and close to 40 Master SpM programmes offered by German HEIs. Our preliminary findings from Great Britain show almost 60 Bachelor and 20 Master SpM programmes, while in Scandinavia the number is slightly smaller with ten Bachelor and five Master programmes offered by HEIs. Compared to other established fields of study, it is remarkable that SpM study programmes are offered nearly equal in numbers by private and state institutions in Germany. In Scandinavia and Great Britain the HEIs offering SpM are mainly state institutions. The study programmes offered in Germany by private HEIs are introduced during the last decade, with annual tuition fees for a two to three years programme ranking between 15,000 and 40,000 EURO. This indicates that offering SpM education seems to be a viable business opportunity – however there are no figures provided in public sources on the number of students accepted or graduated. In Germany the education offered by private HEIs covers the first cycle of the Bologna process (BA in SpM) and only a few offer (additional) programmes on the Master level (MA in SpM). Some of those private institutions offer parts of their programmes in collaboration with other private HEIs from abroad. Despite the international collaborations, English speaking courses are limited both in Germany and Scandinavia. One of the Scandinavian Master Programmes are offered as a full fledge program in English, but this seems to be the exception. In regard to content the majority of SpM study programmes seem to cover a combination of sport with media, communication and event management as well as health, journalism, innovation and technology or elite sport.

## References

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