

On education and compensation of sports managers. Revealing the backbone of the German sports branch

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Introduction

The sports branch in Germany has been researched since the 1990s (Trosien (Ed), 1994, 2000; and Trosien, 2012). Accordingly, the sports branch consists of three sectors (the 3 "Ps"). Amateur associations and their federations belong to the so-called Private sector and include all non-profit organizations. These are supported through subsidies of the state, e. g., departments of sports of the numerous national, regional and local authorities, also called the Public sector. The next sector is referred to as the Profit sector, i.e., sports businesses, including all companies from sporting goods manufacturers to sports rights marketers, and professional sports clubs to fitness studios. However, a detailed and comprehensive study about the people in the three sectors (e.g., professional development, salary, influence) is not yet available (cp. Semblat, 2016).

Research question

Our research objective is to better understand the composition of top and middle management in the sports branch. Specific research questions are: 1) What are typical career paths in the branch including education (e.g., specific sports management degrees vs. others), permeability within the sports branch (i.e., between the three sectors mentioned above), and to and from other branches, duration per position (e.g., years of service, turnover rates) compared to other industrial sectors and age in specific leadership levels again compared to other industries? 2) How does the salary differ across the sports industry, sports commerce or sports services? 3) What is the public awareness and influence of the top managers of the sports branch (Trosien, G. et al., 2015)?

Methodology

We are planning to conduct an online survey within the German sport manager community via a cooperation with the VSD, the umbrella organization of German sports managers, thus reaching out to 2,500 users of the VSD online newsletter. Besides this professional association, which started in 1996 and represents a significant share of the employees and entrepreneurs in the German sports branch, the Adecco Foundation in Germany is another research partner that supports this comprehensive research. Given the huge amount of data generated during this survey in June 2016, we will – in the first project phase until the EASM in September – limit the analyses to the real 700 members of the VSD and limit the presentation to three categories of the questionnaire:

firstly, education (what qualifications do sports managers possess?);

secondly, actual position (of which jobs does the German sports branch consist?);

and thirdly, compensation (what is the salary in each level and each sector?). All other data will be analysed and published later.

Results and implications

Pre-tests and preliminary studies (Trosien, G. et al. (2015)) have indicated that there is a significantly higher share of sports management degrees in the younger target group (reflecting the recent increase of institutions offering corresponding degree programs). Permeability of the sports business sector to and from other industries is higher than within the branch (namely to the Public Sector), presumably due to the disparity in salary levels. We will present these findings of a nation-wide and long-term study about all sports managers; the further aim is to explain and to evaluate the increasingly important factor of human resources in the sports branch – first nation-wide, later on an international level.

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