

New Age of Sport Management Education in Europe, The Case of Greece

Kosta, George; Tsitskari, Efi; Matsouka, Ourania; Yfantidou, Georgia and Astrapellos, Kostas

Department of Physical Education & Sport Science, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece
gkosta@phyed.duth.gr

Aim

This project aims to the development of Sport Management educational policy on national level all over Europe in a more efficient, effective and closer to the labor market manner.

Theoretical Background

Most sport and recreation services require multiple roles of their employees, which require a range of personal and interpersonal competencies. Moreover, Minten and Forsyth (2014) commented on the low infiltration of graduates into the sport industry, although annual surveys conducted by IHRSA (2013) revealed a significant increase in the number of sport and recreation organizations. Therefore, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are expected to develop a wide range of competencies and skills to enhance students' employability (Minten & Forsyth, 2014). Skills needed for a future sport manager to become effective in his/her workplace and the respective role of the HEI's curricula in developing these competencies should regularly be examined, as the sport industry is normally subject to changes caused by globalization and internationalization.

Research Design

Data were collected through a questionnaire which was translated into Greek through a back-to-back procedure and a small pilot was contacted. Then, researchers contacted through telephone and e-mail 123 representatives of different sport organizations (sport clubs, federations, private sector and public sector), from which 112 agreed to participate in the study, to whom was sent the link of the webropol. Unfortunately, the questionnaire's size was not as much attractive to the respondents and a second phone/mail attempt took place soon after this (a week after). As most of the possible respondents described the procedure as rather time-consuming, we decided to help them with the filling in. In some cases (approximately 12) we met with the manager/owner of the sport organization, gave him/her the questionnaire and waited for him/her to fill it in. In other cases, we sent the questionnaire as an attached file through e-mails and waited for their response. Out of the 112 managers/owners that initially agreed to participate in the survey, 68 returned the questionnaires on time (a response rate of 60.7%).

Results

Out of the 68 questionnaires, the 23.88% were from managers, marketing managers, directors of sport teams and sport academies, 25.37% from Sport Federations, 23.89% from private companies, such as recreation companies and fitness clubs, 2.98% from municipalities' sport organizations, 16.42% from Ministries, 7.46% from Higher Education and another public sector. According to the most important findings the respondents declared in an 84% that they believe that the commercialization of sport will have an effect in their working area, in an 82% that the internationalization of sport will affect their working area and, in a 97% that the development of information technology will change their work. A 73% of the respondents declared that they know that people with sport management education are employed in other occupational areas, mostly in the tourism sector and in cultural and another event management. In the question concerning their opinion whether there are people with other

education background than sport management working in their area, an 87% responded positively. More specifically, the members of the sample replied that most commonly, people with educational background such as economics, law, computer sciences and general management are those who are working in sport management positions. Regarding the current cooperation of the respondents' organizations with an institute that teaches sports management, most members of the sample (64%) gave a negative answer. The respondents evaluated 72 current competences included in the questionnaire in a 5-Likert point scale and they gave the higher evaluation in: i) Ethical commitment, ii) Desire to succeed, iii) Organizational skills, and iv) Teamwork. They gave the lowest evaluation to: i) Legacy planning, ii) Sports related legislation and iii) Stakeholder management. Respondents evaluated the similar variables as above but with a future orientation, and they highly evaluated: i) Digital marketing, ii) IT skills, iii) Sport tourism, iv) Sponsorship management, v) Capacity for applying knowledge in practice and vi) Capacity to learn. They evaluated lower than the rest, the competences: i) Sports related legislation, ii) Legacy planning, iii) Ability to work autonomously.

Conclusion and Implications

Employers assess as important all skill factors when they seek to recruit and retain efficient staff to achieve competitive advantage in today's fast changing and demanding environment. The results of both this survey, and of other researchers (Emery, Crabtree & Kerr, 2012; Ramli, Nawawi & Chun, 2010; Tsitskari, Goudas, Tsalouchou & Michalopoulou, 2017), show that sport employers demand their colleagues/employees to portray professionalism and develop their knowledge. This means that they wish their (future) partners to be willing to gain new knowledge, to strive for a higher level of performance, and aim to produce a better result. The concept of continuous professional development should be introduced in the sport HEIs curriculum. Students and graduates should realize the importance of being reliable, of gaining new knowledge and keeping up to date, of being positive and energetic.

References

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