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## Issue

Investigating the Body of Knowledge in Sport Management:  
A Content Analysis of the *Sport Marketing Quarterly*

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Earle F. Ziegler, a pioneer 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). One way to reveal this body of knowledge and determine what sport management scholars consider truly to be sport management is to examine what they publish. Taking a critical examination of the literature in a field can help determine what is on the cutting edge, considered valuable, or esteemed by academicians.

Such an inward look can reveal the future, for "academic journals mirror the direction of a discipline's research" (Van Doren & Heit, 1973, p. 67). Scholarly journals are considered a fundamental element of, and primary medium for, formal scholarly communication (Harter & Kim, 1996). In addition to their crucial role in the academic review and reward process, they also legitimize and assess scholarly discourses (Bowden & Finkenberg, 2001).

According to Danylchuk and Judd (1996), scholarly journals are a major source of information to academicians. Presumably this information is then applied to the classroom, in the field, and in further research. Therefore, a scholarly cycle of influence is perpetuated by the influence and reach of academic publications.

Because of this power, Pitts (2001) made a plea that those in sport management assess the current state of their literature. Such a critical self-examination can reveal advances and identify areas for improvement, as well as determine how accurately the literature reflects the sport industry. Therefore, the purpose of this investigation was to identify past research endeavors in sport marketing literature and examine the authors and topics that have preoccupied those researchers in this field. Through content analysis we examined the state of the literature published in *Sport Marketing Quarterly* (SMQ).

#### Review of Literature

The use of content analysis methodology to examine the research in academic publi-

cations is not uncommon in disciplines closely related to sport management (Baloglu & Assante, 1999; Bedini & Wu, 1994; Crawford-Welch & McCleary, 1992). In fact, analyzing the content of academic publications in the field of sport management is not new.

Parkhouse, Ulrich, and Soucie (1982), in their examination of 336 sport management doctoral studies listed in *Dissertation Abstracts International*, found that the topics of physical education and intercollegiate athletics almost exclusively dominated the studies examined. Paton's (1987) investigation of 122 sport management studies in "Completed Research in Health, Physical Education, and Recreation" found that 60% focused on the college and university setting.

Lambrech (1991), in looking at 45 articles published in the *Journal of Sport Management*, noted that 35% of the articles focused on college, university, and school issues while the remaining 65% covered numerous other topics. No single topic was represented more often than the college, university, and school setting.

Soucie and Doherty (1996) examined 288 NASSM conference abstracts and 207 sport management articles in seven journals from 1983 to 1993. They found that the highest cluster (20%) of articles/abstracts focused on sport management curriculum and professional preparation issues.

Finally, Barber, Parkhouse, and Tedrick (1998) examined 42 empirical studies from 1991 to 1995 in the *Journal of Sport Management*. They determined that 74% of the studies were survey research and that the topics most often focused on were personnel management (21%), curriculum (19%), organizational structure (14%), and Title IX, gender, and race issues (12%).

#### Methodology

The methodology for this study was a content analysis of all articles published in SMQ from its inception in 1992 through 2000. The study involved a descriptive analysis of all research articles included in the journal's 33 issues over those 9 years. Twenty-two measures were developed for

each article by the two primary researchers and independently coded by 13 coders. In an effort to test the coding system, train the coders, and determine any problem areas overall, a pilot study was conducted using seven randomly selected issues of the SMQ.

Reliability in content analysis measures the consistency of the coders' decisions. In order to assess intercoder reliability, each of the 13 coders was assigned the same seven randomly selected issues to provide a reasonable size (21%) for an overlap (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999). The lowest percentage of agreement between the coders for the 22 measures was 81%. Through the use of Scott's Pi, it was determined that all the coefficients for the corrections for chance agreement were .72 or higher.

This study's high reliability percentages and numbers, mostly in the middle 80s and 90s, were understandable as most of the material coded was manifest content in nature. Manifest content is observable "on its face," which makes it easier to recognize and count as opposed to latent content which asks the coders to "read between the lines" (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 1998, p. 107). Furthermore, the intercoder reliability percentages and numbers for this study confirm that the coders had become thoroughly familiar with the coding process, protocol, and code book by the time the study was conducted.

#### Results

In all, 33 issues (1992-2000) of SMQ were included in this study, with an average of just over five (5.2) articles per issue. Nearly three-quarters (74%) of the issues contained five articles. Four issues (14%) had six articles, while three issues (7%) had four articles. The first issue (Vol. 1, No. 1) contained seven articles, the most of any issue published.

#### Editors and Reviewers

The gender makeup of the editorial staff for each of the 33 issues was determined: editors, section editors, associate editors, and guest editors. There were no female editors in any of the issues. The number of male

editors for each issue ranged from one to six. In all, the combined total of 92 editorial opportunities were all filled by men. In comparison to the editorial board, however, there was some female representation on the review board. On average there were 4.6 female and 8.5 male reviewers per issue. The number of female reviewers for each issue ranged from 1 to 9 while the number of male reviewers ranged from 7 to 11. There was a combined total of 430 opportunities for reviewers. Just over one-third (35%) of the reviewers were women (150) while the remaining 280 (65%) reviewers were men.

### *Research Articles*

The 33 issues in this study yielded 168 research articles for examination. There was an average of 19 articles published each year, for a total of 1,241 pages. The articles ranged from 2 to 14 pages in length, with an average of 7.4 pages.

The type of research used in each article was identified. They were evenly divided between qualitative (86, or 51%) and quantitative (83) methods. Of the qualitative articles, over half (47, or 55%) were descriptive in nature. Seventeen articles were theoretical, while the remaining articles were observational (7), historical (6), focus group (4), interview (4), and "other."

Of the quantitative articles, the highest percentage (44%) consisted of descriptive research, including means, frequencies, z-scores, and other descriptive statistics. The remaining quantitative articles used chi square (15), t-tests, and ANOVA (13), regression (6), MANOVA (3), discriminant analysis (2), correlation (2), factor analysis (2), "other" (2), and ANCOVA (1).

### *Sport Marketing Element*

The research articles were examined to determine the sport marketing component or element upon which they were focused. The Pitts and Stotlar Sport Marketing Management Model (1996) was used as the guide. The results revealed that there was at least one article about each component of the model.

Thirty-seven (22%) of the research articles dealt with marketing management strategies and 29 (17%) articles involved consumer analyses of spectators. Twenty-one (13%) articles were coded as promotion, 16 (10%) involved consumer analyses of both spectators and participants, 14 (8%) dealt with research, and another 13 (8%) focused on the product aspect of the sport marketing mix. The remaining articles dealt with con-

sumer segmentation (10 articles), marketing management evaluation (9), consumer analysis of participants (7), the mission (5), industry segmentation (4), place (2), and price (1).

### *Sport Marketing Segment*

The segment of the sport industry addressed by each article was identified using the model designed by Parks, Zanger, and Quarterman (1998). Every industry segment was represented by at least one article. Professional Sport was the segment written about the most, claiming 61 articles or 36% of all the articles included in this study.

The second most frequent segment was Sport Marketing, with 31 articles (19%). This was followed by Intercollegiate Athletics with 20 articles (12%), Participant Sport with 14 articles (8%), Sport Management and Marketing Agencies with 12 articles (7%), and Sport Communication with 11 articles (7%). Eight articles dealt with International Sport, four involved Sport Event and Facility Management, three belonged to the Sports Medicine segment, two were coded as Campus Recreation, one was Health Promotion, and one was Sport Tourism.

In addition to the identification of segments, the coders were asked to specify the article's particular focus within the segmented industry. Over half (98, or 58%) of the articles were focused on multiple sports. Basketball, with 14 articles (8%), was the single most frequently examined sport. It was followed by baseball (11 articles), football (9), golf (9), the Olympics (6), soccer (4), tennis (3), hockey (3), and auto racing (3). Horse racing and rugby had two articles each. Volleyball, softball, wrestling, and the Gay Games each had one article.

### *Gender Focus of Articles*

It is general knowledge that females make up roughly half of the population and have made significant gains numerically as participants, spectators, and consumers of sport, as well as becoming managers and owners of sport businesses. Our study examined the extent to which the literature reflected this. Of those with an identifiable gender focus, 47 articles (28%) dealt specifically with male sports and 13 articles (8%) involved female sports. There was no identifiable gender focus for 68 articles (41%), while 40 articles (24%) were focused on both genders.

### *Authorship of Articles*

The 168 research articles examined were the work of 333 authors. The number of authors per article varied from one to six. Sixty-

eight articles (41%) had two authors and another 59 articles (35%) were the work of only one author. Thirty articles (18%) had three authors, eight (5%) had four authors, two (1%) had five authors, and one article (1%) had six authors.

Of the 333 authors, 59 (18%) were solo authors, as noted above, while 165 (50%) were secondary authors (second, third, etc.). Over three-quarters (260 authors, or 78%) were male, 68 (20%) were female, and the gender of the five remaining authors (2%) could not be identified. Of the 59 single-authored articles, 46 (78%) were by men and 13 (22%) were by women. Of the 165 secondary authors, 130 (79%) were men and 32 (19%) were women; the gender of the other 3 (2%) could not be determined.

The 333 authors came from 119 academic or corporate settings. Eighty-eight (74%) of the affiliations were universities and colleges. The remaining 31 affiliations were sport organizations. The 333 authors represented 32 states, the District of Columbia, and eight countries. Most of the authors (267, or 80%) were from the U.S. The location of seven (2%) of the authors could not be determined. The remaining 59 (18%) authors were from: Australia (30), Canada (13), Israel (4), England (4), Greece (3), Japan (3), and Germany (2).

There were 109 (33%) authors with a PhD, 60 (18%) with an EdD, 22 (7%) with an MS, 10 (3%) with an MA, 5 (2%) with a JD, and two (1%) with a BA degree. The degree status of just under one-third (102, or 31%) of the authors was not provided. Furthermore, 23 (7%) of the authors had degrees other than what was included in the code book.

Regarding academic or professional level, most of the authors came from the academy. Of the 333 authors included in this study, 234 (70%) were employed by a university or college in some capacity as a professor or instructor. There were 30 (9%) student authors, 43 (13%) authors from nonacademic backgrounds, and 26 (8%) classified as "other."

A total of 65 (20%) of all the authors were employed as assistant professors. Professors were second, with 52 (16%) authors. There were 42 (13%) associate professors, 12 (4%) lecturers, 12 (4%) senior lecturers, and two (1%) instructors. A total of 49 (15%) authors had academic employment but their faculty position was unspecified. Furthermore, 40 (12%) authors had a corporate identity, 29

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*Analysis of the SMQ  
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(9%) were graduate students, three (1%) had a government identity, and one was an undergraduate student.

### Conclusions

*Sports Marketing Quarterly* has contributed 168 research articles to the body of knowledge in the area of sport marketing. Although the research methodologies were found to be fairly evenly divided between quantitative and qualitative methods, an overwhelming majority (83%) of statistical analyses used involved descriptive statistics. The journal has no control over the types of articles submitted. However, perhaps the findings of this study should signal to researchers in sport marketing that they might want to address this issue and employ a greater variety of research designs and statistical analyses to enhance the body of knowledge.

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*...it appears that the SMQ has a long way to go to achieve gender equity in relation to its editorial and review board positions.*

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Of the 333 authors who contributed to the research literature in this journal, the results showed an alarming disparity in the number of authors in relation to gender. A journal has no control over the demographics of authors who submit articles for publication. The difference in the gender numbers might simply reflect the gender of the authors submitting to this journal. There is a need for caution, however, as such a discrepancy does not reflect well in light of today's emphasis on diversity.

While a journal has no control over the demographics of the authors submitting articles, it does have control over the demographics of the editorial and review board positions. A journal's editors and reviewers have power, within certain parameters, in relation to the final determination of published works. In light of this, it appears that the SMQ has a long way to go to achieve gender equity in relation to its editorial and review board positions.

There are dangers here for the SMQ that should be given serious consideration if this journal wishes to enhance its relevancy as the sport management field develops. Indeed,

within certain interpretations (e.g., gender studies, organizational theory), it could be suggested that the body of knowledge found in this particular journal is the result of an all-male power structure with selective parameters in relation to its editorial structure and the topics allowed to be published. Again, a note of caution regarding the appearance of hegemonic masculinity in the editorial and review makeup of this journal.

In the literature published thus far in the *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, there are uneven amounts of coverage of the basic sport marketing components, sport industry segments, and different sports. This uneven coverage might be reflective of author interests and might simply be a reflection of the different percentages of topics submitted for review. The journal should exercise caution at this point in its development and examine why this is happening.

In light of the findings of this study, it is clear that the SMQ has made some contributions to the body of knowledge in sport marketing. However, the disproportionate representation of certain areas should be noted and discussed by the journal's proprietors and by researchers in sport marketing.

Perhaps research on these particular shortcomings will contribute to an understanding of the gaps, and thus inform strategies for addressing them. Perhaps strategies could be developed that would encourage researchers to address those areas that have received little attention. For instance, special topic issues could be commissioned that would focus on those components, industry segments, and sport businesses that have received little or no attention. With the sport industry estimated at \$213 billion (Broughton, Lee, & Nethery, 1999), there is always room for broadened scope of research inquiry.

This study should be replicated in the future and compared to the present results to look for changes in future issues of the journal. Additionally, there is a need for further critical self-examination of the other journals in this relatively young and developing area of academic study.

The field of sport management has only produced academic journals over the past two decades while other disciplines of study have journals dating back to the early part of the 20th century. Currently there are 18 outlets for theoretical literature in the field of sport management, most of which began in the 1990s.

With this in mind, the advancement of the discipline requires that the field of sport management take an inward look at these scholarly publications. In addition to determining

whether the current state of literature is reflecting what sport management scholars believe to be the sport business industry, this critical self-examination is needed in order to identify what advances have been made and where improvements might be made.

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