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The Career Preferences and Trajectories Among Sports Management

Students

I. Introduction

The field of sports management has become dynamic and interdisciplinary, and a student needs to evolve a wide range of skills beyond traditional business and sports skills. Sports management, as an academic discipline, first appeared in the late 1960s and 1970s and exponentially grew by 40 per cent mainly in the U.S. 78 per cent of universities offering sports management have integrated this major into business schools (Seifried et al., 2021). The shift also sheds light on how the industry has relied on professionalism from a business acumen, marketing, and regulatory point of view. On the other hand, studies indicate a persistent gap between the competencies taught in academic programs and those demanded by employers (Wohlfart et al., 2022). Many students in the sector, however, tend to prioritize a career with a passion for sports and, often hailing from families that occupy such high-profile sports positions, tend to practice sports to keep in shape just to appear presentable at these big events. The importance of experiential learning is shown by Kryshchanovych et al. (2021) and the need to acquire a curriculum that combines theoretical instruction with practical training. This gap will never be bridged unless students can easily transition from an academic environment into a professional role. Sports management education needs

to adjust itself to train the students with technical and interpersonal skills to suit the needs of the competitive labor market.

Seifried, C., Agyemang, K. J., Walker, N., & Soebbing, B. (2021). Sport management and business schools: A growing partnership in a changing higher education environment. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 19(3), 100529.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1472811721000781>

Seifried et al. (2021) examine the evolving relationships between the sports management program and business schools in the changing landscape of higher education. A major trend also comes from this: The number of universities offering sports management programs has grown by 40 per cent in the past two decades, and 78 per cent are located in business schools. This shift underscores that sports management is simultaneously considered legitimate and valuable to the broader business education arena. The authors discuss how it is beneficial to both domains. Incorporating sports management programs in business schools has a distinctive student body that will be drawn there and provides an avenue for interdisciplinary research. On the other hand, combining the business school's resources, such as faculty expertise in finance, marketing, and organizational behaviour, is critical for understanding the sports industry and vice versa; sports management programs benefit from the business school.

The paper, however, lists the challenges within this partnership. A concern is to protect the unique face of sports management programs while maintaining the tough

standards imposed on general business education. Despite sports management having been in a separate program, the authors argue that it should be harmoniously combined with the financial courses taught in business schools. Seifried et al. (2021) also note that academic offerings should be aligned with industry needs. The author(s) suggest that curricula should evolve to include such emerging areas as data analytics, digital marketing, and global sports governance to ensure the effective preparation of the graduates. Finally, the study concludes by suggesting the continuation of cooperation among academia and industry stakeholders for sports management education to be relevant and supportive to the changing sports business of the world.

Wohlfart, O., Adam, S., & Hovemann, G. (2022). Aligning competence-oriented qualifications in sport management higher education with industry requirements: An importance-performance analysis. *Industry and Higher Education*, 36(2), 163-176.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/09504222211016284>

Wohlfart et al. (2016) look into the alignment between competencies taught in sport management higher education and the qualifications needed from the industry. An importance-performance analysis is used to identify critical skill gaps that hamper the employability of graduates. According to the authors, there is an abundance of coverage of theoretical knowledge, such as organizational behaviour and sponsorship, for instance, but there is less emphasis on practical learning, for example, on digital marketing, data analytics, and the management of the crisis. This disparity implies

that graduates may lack the skills to succeed in today's fast-changing sports business.

The study should address these deficiencies by developing a thorough revision of curricula in sport management. With it, we have key suggestions for integrating hands-on training, real-world case studies, and mandatory internships to bridge the gap between theory and practice. The authors argue that such experiential learning opportunities are crucial in increasing students' readiness for professional roles. Additionally, the paper stresses the importance of soft schools training. The skills deemed essential for managing athlete relations and nailing ethical problems inside the sports business incorporate leadership, communication, and conflict resolution competencies. The study urges educational institutions to pay more attention to these facets of education to produce thorough graduates who can provide cubicles to the multifaceted demands of their profession.

Kryshtanovych, S., Bilyk, O., Shayner, H., Barabash, O., & Bondarenko, V.

(2021). Study the experience of forming professional competence in future managers of physical education and sports. *Revista Romaneasca Pentru Educatie Multidimensionala*, 13(1Sup1), 162-176.

<https://lumenpublishing.com/journals/index.php/rrem/article/view/3005>

Kryshtanovych et al. (2021) consider professional competencies developed by freshman aspiring managers who intend to join the physical education and sports sectors. The research examines present educational programs' ability to educate students with theoretical knowledge and technical expertise that would help them

succeed in the industry. The results are that the students feel correctly whether they understand theoretical concepts in sports administration, the only difference being the practical problem-solving skills distinction. Having made this finding, it may be suggested that academic programs tend to stress classroom instruction at the expense of experiential learning opportunities. Leadership and communication skills are another point of least talent development identified by them. According to the authors, negotiation skills and conflict resolution training are necessary for managers and representative roles, which include team management. They recommend using simulation-based training and case study analysis to better prepare the students for learning real-life problems.

Additionally, the paper discusses the benefits of interdisciplinary education. It is demonstrated that sports management graduates benefit from integrating courses from specialties such as psychology and economics to improve their decision-making skills. The authors suggest that universities should adapt to the need to produce well-versed professionals by adopting a more holistic approach to curriculum design by integrating diverse disciplines. Finally, Kryshchanovych et al. (2021) suggest that sports management programs should increase educational priorities. However, they stress that theory must be accompanied by practice to guarantee that graduates are ready to navigate the sports industry's complexities per evolving job requirements.

The sports management field has evolved, and the necessity for students to learn to possess a wide skill set is far reflected. Modern trends in sports management education pay attention to knowledge in digital marketing, regulatory knowledge, and

leadership skills (Seifried et al., 2021; Wohlfart et al., 2022). However, the gap prevails between academic training and professional expectations, exposing the graduates to unpreparedness for the workforce. It has been noted by Kryshchanovych et al. (2021) that this problem can be addressed by experiential learning, i.e., by curricula that combine theoretical and practical knowledge. Athletic administration graduates may fail to find positions that complement their ambitions without strategic changes. Thus universities need to modify the programs to incorporate industry standards, and students should be scientifically knowledgeable but gifted with the required critical thinking and the adaptability to thrive in the altered sports administration tessellation.