A Comparison of the Job Satisfaction of Sport Management Alumni Working Within and Outside of the Sport Industry

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There is a growing number of universities and colleges offering sport management and related degree programs (Hancock, Darvin, & Walker, 2018). The goal of these post-secondary programs is to create opportunities for students to advance their knowledge in core concepts and prepare them for future careers within sport organizations (Parks & Parra, 1994). However, little is known about the level of job satisfaction that sport management graduates experience in their careers, or how this may compare with those who choose to explore careers in other industries. Moreover, an underrepresentation of women in sport leadership positions is still seen despite the growth in opportunities to participate in sport for women and girls (Burton, 2015). A lack of support from administration in athletics is found to be decreasing job satisfaction and creating differences between male and female experiences in the industry (Laskowski & Ebben, 2016). Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the job satisfaction experienced by both female and male sport management alumni who are currently working both in and outside of the sport industry.

To carry out this investigation, an online questionnaire, hosted by Qualtrics, will be distributed via email and social media to graduates of bachelors and master’s degree programs in sport management from a Canadian university over the past ten years (2009-2019; N ~ 300). Job satisfaction will be measured using the 72-item Job Descriptive Index (JDI; Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969) and the 18-item Job in General scales (JI; Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson, & Paul, 1989), where the subjects will indicate ‘Y’ if the statement reflects how they feel, ‘N’ if it is not reflective of how they feel, and ‘?’ if they are unsure. Both the JDI and JIG have demonstrated acceptable internal reliability (alpha = 0.88 and 0.90, respectively) in previous studies (Balzer et al., 1990). Demographic information, including gender, level of program(s) completed, and the field of current occupation, will also be collected. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) will be used to test for differences in job satisfaction across groups, with post hoc analyses of variance (ANOVA) being employed to identify where group-level differences may occur. This project is currently seeking research ethics approval, with data collection scheduled to take place in early 2020.

Extending previous research (e.g., Parks & Parra, 1994), this study will provide a gendered analysis of the job satisfaction reported by those who have completed an undergraduate or master’s degree (or both) in sport management and are employed within or outside of the sport industry. From a practical perspective, the results of this study may help confirm or dispel common myths and misconceptions people (particularly students) may have about working in the sport industry (Hums & Goldsbury, 2012).