

SOURCE OF PROFESSIONALISM AND KNOWLEDGE AMONG SPORT INDUSTRY  
PROFESSIONALS IN INDIA WITH LIMITED SPORT MANAGEMENT HIGHER  
EDUCATION

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## DEDICATION

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## ABSTRACT

SANDHYA MANJUNATH

### SOURCE OF PROFESSIONALISM AND KNOWLEDGE AMONG SPORT INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS IN INDIA WITH LIMITED SPORT MANAGEMENT HIGHER EDUCATION

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A comprehensive review of the literature reveals that sport industry research is progressing in every country worldwide at its own pace. However, there is very little research evidence about the Indian sport industry and the country's limited higher education sport management programs. While India has some of the most ardent sports fans and events in the world, sport management education programs and the development of a proper curriculum in India are still in their nascent stage especially in comparison to the United States and Europe. This quantitative study investigated the current standards of education in India and the source of knowledge and competencies of existing professionals in the Indian industry. Sport industry professionals were randomly selected to complete the COSM survey on Qualtrics and rate their perceived knowledge and professionalism on a Likert scale. Respondents answered questions involving their competencies, experiences, educational backgrounds, years of experience in the sport industry. MANOVA was used to measure the degree to which the various independent variables impact the current knowledge and competencies of India's sport industry professionals. The results support an educational strategy that values informal learning methods by recommending for the inclusion of experiential learning in sport management curriculum. Furthermore, the results also align with work-based learning theories by supporting an experiential learning environment and emphasizing the critical role that real-world experience plays in developing professional competencies. Specifically for the Indian sport industry and

curriculum enhancement, the study recommended inserting experiential learning experiences, internships as a requirement for graduation before entering the sport industry. Additionally, this study also emphasizes on collaborations with local, national, and international sport events and organizations such as the Sports Authority of India, Ministry of Youth Sports Affairs, Indian Premier League, Indian Soccer League, FIBA, BCCI and collaboration with established university curriculums in continents like North America, Australia, and Europe in the form of semester abroad, study abroad, or online classes. This quantitative study may contribute to the limited academic literature available to Indian sports practitioners. Additionally, it may synthesize knowledge from previous work on professionalism and curriculum development providing a springboard for new research that will fill the existing knowledge gaps.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Sport management is now well-established in higher education in some countries and is an increasingly popular discipline in many others, with about 505 sport management bachelor's programs housed in various academic units worldwide (Stokowski et al., 2022; Varmus et al., 2022). Research is being pursued on several critical issues that face the discipline, such as qualified faculty, the increasing number of students interested and enrolling in the sport management discipline, and the constant need for research to build a distinct body of knowledge. Most associated research and literature on sport management education appears to be the product of North American and Australian scholarship with little representation from European colleagues (de Haan, 2011). Six hundred thirty-nine sport management programs are offered worldwide online and offline at various degree levels and through certifications (Degrees in Sports, n.d.). Although the sport management discipline is advanced in countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, with a collective 5.435% of the world's population, countries like India, with 17.7% of the world's population, offer limited higher education programs, especially related to sport.

#### **Current Higher Education Scenario in India**

According to Rayner et al. (2022), there are only seven sport industry-related higher education programs in India, which include:

1. International Institute of Sports Management, affiliated with the University of Mumbai
2. National Association of Sports Management, affiliated with the University of Mumbai
3. Symbiosis School of Sports Management
4. Hindustan Institute of Technology and Science

5. Institute of Social Welfare and Business Management
6. Tamil Nadu Physical Education and Sports University; and
7. AISTS - International Academy of Sport Science and Technology.

Despite the lack of higher education programming, sport in India has experienced significant commercialization in recent years. Qualified sports professionals in the fields of sport management, sports marketing, venue and facility management, sports governance, and activities related to development are in high demand. However, the existing sport management programs do not offer the full range of competencies, especially compared to the United States, Europe, and Australia (Rayner et al., 2022). In addition, these programs do not follow the North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) or the Commission on Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA) guidelines for sport management degree programs. While research examining the growth of the Indian sport industry is increasing with a focus on sports participation, professional sport, sport for development, and international sport, limited research exists examining sport management programs in India. Over the last 15 years, 20 new professional sports leagues have been created since the launch of the first sports league, Indian Premier Cricket League in 2008 (McLeod et al., 2021). These leagues utilize the franchise structure, and many are owned and funded by the private sector (Ernst & Young, 2017).

### **Presence of Sport Products in India**

Sport industry professionals in India plan, manage, and execute sports events but do not have sport management degrees or access to sport management programs as evidenced by only seven programs available in the whole nation. Research by the Gammon et al. (2013) indicates that knowledge of sport industry professionals, available infrastructure, and qualified sport management faculty in higher education determine why some countries perform better at the

Olympics and international competitions. In addition, these aspects are critical factors in a country's ability to bid and win significant and high-profile host events (Rayner & Webb, 2022). India is competing in the Olympics, infrastructure is available, and international competitions are hosted, exhibiting the presence of industry professionals. However, with limited and geographically dispersed sport management higher education programs, it is unclear how Indian industry professionals gain the knowledge and skills to effectively manage sport operations and compete in a global market.

As the field of sport management evolves, it has become increasingly global. The industry has seen the increasing globalization of not only the sport product (Thibault, 2009), but many educators have also internationalized courses and curriculums (Li et al., 2002). The World Association for Sport Management (WASM) was established in 2012, “to facilitate sport management research, teaching, and learning excellence and professional practice worldwide” (WASM, 2022). Curricula should reflect globally recognized issues and disseminate specific intercultural knowledge, skills, and practices (Baker et al., 2016), but regional disparities still exist. For example, India has some of the most ardent sports fans and events in the world, but sports management education programs and the development of a proper curriculum in India are still in nascent stages (Rayner et al., 2022) especially compared to a country like the United States. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the competencies, source of knowledge, and professional skills of Indian sport managers and develop a conceptual framework that addresses any gaps between these disparities across regions.

Research in the sport industry is progressing in every country worldwide (WASM, 2022), and a growing need exists for sports scholars to pursue research in developing countries like India. More than any other industry, sport has the potential to bridge political divides, address

socio-economic disparities, and positively impact regional economies. Because sport is a driver of socio-economic change, industry professionals must be educationally prepared to effectively manage and market the sport product. This also stresses the need for theoretical frameworks and academic instruments to evaluate the current standards of qualified professionals in sport management, sport marketing, venue and facilities management, sport governance, and development-related activities.

A review of the literature indicates limited sport management higher education programs in India. Surprisingly, India has evidence of various sports activities ranging from sport for development programs and professional leagues to hosting international events. Therefore, an examination of the educational and professional skill preparation of its sport industry professionals is warranted. Results from this study disclose the value of experience in the sport industry over traditional higher education in sports management in India. Education stakeholders include governments, sports organizations and their representatives, educational institutions, and accrediting bodies (Baker et al., 2016). As these stakeholders work collaboratively in developed countries and developing countries like India, they simultaneously influence the professionalization (i.e., organizational, systemic, and occupational) of sport management education globally.

In addition, the results of this study provide a benchmark for the current standards of sport management education in India, distinguishing between sport and non-sport degree education while contributing to the limited academic literature available to Indian sports practitioners. It synthesizes knowledge from previous work on professionalism and curriculum development, providing a springboard for new research that will fill the existing knowledge gaps in the Indian sport industry.

## **Research Questions**

While a further empirical investigation is necessary, this study contributes to and highlights India's expanding sport management industry. To evaluate the professional skills, competencies, and education of Indian sport managers, the following research questions guide this study:

1. What are the competencies of sports managers and industry professionals in India?
2. What is the source of their knowledge with limited access and availability of sport management higher education programs?

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

When seeking answers to any research questions, revisiting history is necessary. Sport management became a field of study in the 1980s (Costa, 2005), and scholars have studied its professionalization since this time (Kikulis et al., 1992). Professionalization can be categorized into three broad categories of organizational, systemic, and occupational professionalization (Dowling et al., 2014). However, scant research has integrated the concept of professionalization with institutional theory (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). A comprehensive review of the literature reveals limited research evidence specific to the Indian sport industry and few higher education sport management programs in the country. As a result, this literature review examines general competencies and professional preparation for managers and leaders as well as those specific to sport industry professionals.

#### **Competencies of General Managers and Professionals**

A qualified workforce is becoming the most important and valuable asset due to computerization and automation, and the demand for qualified employees is constantly increasing, especially as COVID-19 becomes endemic. Organizations are willing to spend more resources on recruitment and are making every effort to reach potential employees. Migration and remote work are on the rise, and people of different nationalities, cultures, and points of view create unique workplace cultures. As a result of these shifts, conventional methods of recruitment are no longer sufficient, and organizations are compelled to look for novel approaches to reach those best suited for management and operations.

The idea of managerial competence has only been around for a short time. In the 1950s, managers' abilities were discussed, but the term "competence" was not used for the first time



until a few years later (Elliot et al., 2002). While every organization can purchase and utilize the most recent technologies, human capital differentiates an organization from its competition and gives it a competitive advantage. Because no two people are the same, it is tough to find a manager with enough experience, knowledge, and skills in a competitive marketplace. As a result, companies must develop managers and cultivate talent through training and education. Every business relies heavily on management, a specific process through which managers carry out functions of an organization, control, management, and coordination to achieve business objectives. Managers must ensure that the organization for which they work benefits from specific outcomes, and they must possess particular abilities to accomplish this. Managerial requirements and competencies are constantly evolving with increased pressures as markets change. Because this process moves quickly, managers must react and adapt in real time. Managerial competencies have proven to be effective in helping any organization grow and adapt to the stresses of the environment and impact to global business and industry. According to Veteska (2013), a competency model “describes a particular combination of skills, knowledge, and other characteristics typically grouped into more uniform units known as competencies” (p. 103).

Exceptional managers and average managers can be distinguished by their competencies, “the sum of the achieved performance, or human work and the brought human potential and competence as a whole suffers when one aspect is lacking” (Plaminek & Fiser, 2005, p. 25). Horch et al. (2005) divides the components of competencies into professional and social competencies. Professional competencies are directly related to job classification, and social competencies are related to the social environment at work and personal life. Nevertheless, there

are certain trends in the competencies that modern managers must possess in any industry globally. The competencies of general managers need additional skills to manage sport industry.

### **Competencies of Sport Managers and Professionals**

The essential question, "Is there anything distinctive about sport management," posed by founding sport management scholar Trevor Slack in 1998, has been articulated in theory and practice for more than 20 years. The uniqueness of the sport industry is a foundational principle for the development of specialized sport management education programs. In its special issue on "The Uniqueness of the Sport Context," *The Journal of Global Sport Management* pushed scholars to recognize and exemplify the uniqueness of the sport context by either proposing or testing a theory specific to sport or showing that an accepted theory in a wide variety of contexts would need reconfiguration in the sports setting (Andrew et al., 2021). Other sport management academicians have also discussed the distinctiveness of the field and/or the environment of sport over the past 20 years (Chadwick, 2011; Chalip, 2006; Foster et al., 2006; Hoye et al., 2008; Matsuoka, 2010; Parks et al., 2011; Smith & Stewart, 2010). For instance, Parks et al. (2011) built on Mullin's (1980) earlier list of distinctive characteristics of the sport industry. Their list emphasized the parallel and unique nature of both production and consumption of sport and the unforeseeable nature of sport outcomes that actually prevent the warranty of customer satisfaction.

Additionally, the sport industry exhibits a distinctive economic structure through which a substantial amount of income is generated from external sources (e.g., broadcasting rights, concession stands, parking, etc.) instead of or in addition to the core business. Careers and professions in the sport industry demand premium skills and knowledge to sustain the power of sport as a social institution. Stewart and Smith identified 10 (1999) and later four (2010)

interrelated features but also noted these unique dimensions constantly change with novel features emerging periodically to withstand increasing corporatization (Andrew et al., 2021). Unique features of the sport product that remain constant are its intangibility, its inconsistency and unpredictability, its perishability, its reliance on product extensions, and the emotional attachment of its consumers.

According to research (Danylchuk & Boucher, 2003; Horch & Schütte, 2003), sport management competitions are widespread and have remained largely steady over time. Today's sport organizations put greater emphasis on communication skills, technological aptitude, and the capacity to interact in a global and multicultural society while also emphasizing sport-industry specific competencies alongside performing traditional tasks like personnel management and planning (Pedersen & Thibault, 2018). In order to stay effective and competitive, sport managers must adjust their personal and management practices to reflect the international aspect of modern sport.

Even though international competitions like the World Cup and Olympic Games have always been a component of modern sport, a number of factors have led to increased variety in sport coverage, competitions, and participants. More choices for fans to enjoy sports entertainment and more revenue streams for organizations than ever before have been made possible by technological advancements. With the rapid growth of capital investment, new stadiums, teams, and marketing opportunities have emerged. In this era, where athletes are seen as entertainment celebrities who go from location to location using their skills and abilities for the general public, the sport industry requires experts with a wide range of managerial skills in finance, law, analytics, human resources, and many other traditional business competencies (MacIntosh et al., 2019). All sport managers must include a focus on the sport industry's diverse

dynamics because of the growing demand for qualified professionals. In addition to these qualities, sport managers must also possess non-specific competencies such as the capacity to work in a group, the ability to communicate in assorted dialects, and the understanding of intercultural norms and practices. Overall, the competencies of general sport managers vary from those of a sports manager, which leads to understanding how these competencies can be instilled into an individual working in the sport industry.

### **Sport Management Education**

Global viewpoints must now be incorporated into the sport management higher education curriculum to cultivate professionals who can operate in this rapidly expanding international industry (de Haan & Sherry, 2011). Thus, sport management education plays a vital role in preparing professionals for entry into the industry and in maintaining the industry's sustained viability. Programs in sport management may elect to receive accreditation from the COSMA. Through specialized accreditation, COSMA seeks to "promote and acknowledge excellence in sport management education worldwide in colleges and universities at the baccalaureate and master's levels" (COSMA, "Welcome to COSMA," para. 1). The founding of COSMA was intended to standardize the field of sport management and guarantee top-notch educational opportunities for both students and business professionals. Only 12% of sport management programs are certified by COSMA, despite the fact that the accreditation procedure and regulations further establish sport management as a recognized subject of study.

While there may be a debate on the most effective method for providing high-quality sport management education, the precise manner in which this practice is provided varies worldwide. National culture, religion, and politics have all had an impact on the opportunities that academics and practitioners can provide, even though educationalists in the field of sport

management share many of the same goals and values regarding the development of students. As a result, it is essential to consider the distinctive global approaches to sport management education to determine whether a country's educational system meets the "new" requirements of the sports industry. It is essential to comprehend how students learn in addition to reflecting on the global implementation of sport management education. The focus ought to be on learning rather than teaching if curricula and learning are to be effective for the industry. This suggests that students accomplish learning rather than teachers do, making it possible for knowledge or behavior to change over time. Industry professionals can hold sport management education responsible for their performance in the field (Weimer, 2002).

Integrating industry experience and opportunities to participate in the numerous aspects of sport management enhances the knowledge-acquisition process (Skinner & Gilbert, 2007). However, developing a strategy for imparting knowledge and establishing consistency across various global cohorts takes much work. Nevertheless, understanding curriculum development in developing countries and how professionals acquire knowledge is pivotal to ensure a sport industry that thrives globally. So, it is essential to consider Vygotsky's (1978) theory that learning is a social process that starts in the social world. This social constructivist approach recommends that understudies do not find information but build information by utilizing ideas, models, and plans, which need constant updates and restoration. Therefore, sport management education must adapt to the changing nature of the sports industry and provide professionals and students with various opportunities to connect theory and practice. However, when a country has limited higher education programs, it becomes little to no theory and pure practice. In this case, how are the sport industry professionals acquiring knowledge? One of the continents with well-established sport management education is Europe. When Europe is taken as an example,

developing countries like India that follow the Federation system of sports practice may evaluate its current practices for comparison.

### **Sport Management Education in Europe**

The landscape of sports education and training in European sport is changing rapidly. Over the past few years, approximately “3.9 million coaches, 3.7 million sports managers, and 1.5 million referees have obtained certification annually in the EU” (European Commission, 2016). The licenses and credentials obtained were provided by various institutions, at various levels and for various occupational purposes. As a result, it should not come as a surprise that the duration, content, performance levels, entrance requirements, educational standards, and scope and level of examinations of individual qualifications vary significantly within and between individual European countries as well as between qualification providers. The European Commission acknowledged this in 2016, stating that the “EU sports education and training panorama is highly fragmented.” This is made more challenging by the fragile recognition and acceptance of degrees between various educational institutions and countries.

According to the European Commission (2016), the mutual recognition of qualifications from various providers within a national qualification framework and at the European level (EQF) has yet to be implemented in all EU nations. This requires additional efforts from all parties involved to guarantee the comparability and recognition of qualifications across national borders. Systematic monitoring for long-term success is also part of this. Europe-wide, three dimensions can be used to systematize the qualification landscape in sports:

1. Various occupations, including sports journalists, coaches, managers, referees, and physiotherapists.

2. Different qualification providers, such as sports organizations, vocational training providers, and universities; and
3. Different occupational levels, such as voluntary work, full-time employment, or part-time employment.

Sports federations frequently lack formal qualifications, whereas non-formal qualifications have developed over time through various sports organizations, primarily due to formalized requirements' increased recognition and importance and the absence of comparable qualification opportunities in higher education (Walzel et al., 2022). On the other hand, sport managers' minimum qualifications have yet to be established by sports federations. Even though sports organizations are not seen as formal educational institutions, they are crucial to the future of the sport and those who care about it, as well as to employment opportunities in European sports (Walzel et al., 2022). Sports organizations significantly improve sports competitions' quality through this systematic qualification. Additionally, the sports organization's systematic qualification system makes it possible to work part-time or full-time in sports, particularly at higher license levels. For career changers as well as former elite athletes, the qualification system provided by sports organizations offers a valuable and important pathway to employment in the sports sector (Cole & Tibby, 2013; Cumming, 2010; Walzel et al., 2022; Wickramasinghe & Perera, 2010). It would be a significant step toward the long-term, sustainable development of sports organizations if they learned from Europe's sports education system and its efforts toward reducing ethical misconduct. It is a necessity to understand each country's current professional competencies and flaws to fill these gaps in the sports qualification system.

## **Sport Management Education in India**

The Indian higher education landscape "The Right to Education Act" of 2009 is responsible for the exponential growth of India's higher education sector over the past decade. This Parliamentary Act established a fundamental right for all children aged 6 to 14 to receive free and compulsory education (Schofer et al., 2021). As a result, the number of educated adults in India has significantly increased, and a generation has been inspired to consider opportunities for higher education. Consequently, over the past decade, many institutions have been established, and the private education sector now accounts for 60% of all higher education institutions in India (Serneels & Dercon, 2021).

India is now listed as one of the required fields for private and foreign investment because it offers incentives for innovation in non-regulated and regulated markets (Mathews, 2017). This growth has resulted in India being re-recognized as providing the most significant number of higher education institutions worldwide. India has a complex regulatory system for the higher education sector. First, India's governing body for higher education is the University Grants Commission (UGC), established in 1953 and made a statutory organization by the UGC Act in 1956. The UGC, the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) regulates educational standards for technical programs such as engineering, pharmacy, and architecture. In addition, the Medical Council of India and the Bar Council of India are two of the 15 other professional councils established by acts of parliament to oversee various professional programs (Khandekar, 2013). However, the pandemic and expansion of the Indian higher education sector prompted the government to consider establishing a single, centralized entity to oversee this unprecedented expansion (University Grants Commission, n.d.). Nevertheless, the UGC and other associated bodies regulate six distinct university classification categories.



First, a central university established by legislation and governed by the Department of Higher Education (DHE) under the MHRD in addition to the UGC. According to the University Grants Commission (n.d.), India has 54 central universities. Central universities have the authority to award degrees, establish curricula and exams, and set admissions procedures. Like a central university, a state university is run and funded by the local state government. There are 426 state universities in India, spread across 28 states and eight union territories (University Grants Commission, n.d.). The local state government can grant the right to establish a university by enacting a local legislative act. Despite receiving funding from the state rather than the central government, this act grants state universities the same autonomy as central universities.

A "Deemed-to-be" university is the third type of institution. On the advice of the UGC, the DHE grants this title to high-performing institutions that provide courses specifically designed to address skill shortages across India (Kumar, 2021). "Deemed-to-be" institutions, like central and state universities, are free to set their own admissions policies, curricula, and exams. Depending on the advice they receive from the UGC, they may also be granted the authority to award degrees. However, "Deemed-to-be" institutions cannot provide courses via distance learning. As previously mentioned, 60% of all higher education institutions in India are in the private sector. Although private institutions receive approval from the UGC, they do not receive any government funding. As a result, sponsors and student fees make their activities possible, which has inspired a commercial approach to education in this sector. There has been an increase in autonomous colleges and institutes and the rise of private universities (Nigam et al., 2020). Although autonomous colleges are a part of a university, they cannot issue their degrees or diplomas because that is the responsibility of the affiliated university. However, autonomous colleges can conduct their own admissions procedures and exams.

In contrast, an autonomous institution has complete control over the curriculum, admissions procedures, and fee structures; however, they cannot grant degrees but only diplomas. Despite this, a few independent educational establishments are permitted to award degrees but are not referred to as universities. The Indian Institute of Management, the Indian Institute of Technology, and the Indian Institute of Information Technology are examples of these schools (Rather, 2019).

Although the number of higher education institutions in India has increased exponentially in recent years, sports management education has not. Only a few schools offer undergraduate, graduate, professional doctorate, or Ph.D. programs related to sports management. Most institutions, except Tamil Nadu Physical Education and Sports University, are private or autonomous colleges. As a result, the unaided private sector has contributed significantly to India's expansion of sport management education in enrollment and institutions. Private institutions have more academic and administrative autonomy, allowing them to develop sports management education programs equivalent to those in Western countries. However, students still prefer public universities and government-aided institutions in established fields, despite the expansion of specialized programs at institutions like the NEST Academy of Sports Management (NASM) and the International Institute of Sports Management (ISM; Mathews, 2017). According to Sheikh (2017), students prefer publicly funded institutions primarily because of fees, living costs, a liberal campus atmosphere, and campus diversity. However, additional arguments suggest that potential students should also be concerned about the commercial nature of private education providers. While these private institutions are designing their courses to meet the needs of domestic and international markets, they charge higher tuition. They lack a democratically elected board and are prone to exploitation (Tilak, 2020).

With 20 new professional sports leagues in India (McLeod et al., 2021) currently operating and recruiting international athletes, the demand for specialists who fundamentally understand the expanding and changing sports industry is growing. Therefore, when sports management is becoming increasingly global, complex, and demanding, developing and implementing sports management education is essential in establishing the learning journey for future sports practitioners. Global viewpoints must now be incorporated into the sports management higher education curriculum in order to generate professionals who can operate in this rapidly expanding global industry.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

The primary topics of this chapter include the procedural approach and justification for methods design used to address the current study objectives. Two significant sections make up the chapter. First, a summary of the research design, an overview of the research methodology, and a timeline for method implementation are provided. The three steps of the methodology used to address the three research questions are reported. Research methodologies were created to gather and examine data to investigate and respond to research questions. The goal of a study influences the research questions, which in turn influences the procedures and layout of an inquiry. The development of research methods over time has resulted in the formation of two major categories: qualitative and quantitative methodologies. To guarantee that the correct methodology, such as explanatory, exploratory, and descriptive, is adopted, research using qualitative and quantitative methodologies must essentially have a defined aim, and their potential outcomes must be understood. In contrast, an exploratory or descriptive method looks for the answers to “who,” “what,” “where,” and “when,” an explanatory approach aims to explain how and why. All three investigate, strive to resolve issues, and determine the significance of experiences from the participant's viewpoint.

This investigation utilized quantitative methodology. Quantitative research methods rely on numerical data to produce large representative samples, reliably test or refute theoretical hypotheses, and display numerical data in various ways. Quantitative data collection focuses on needs assessment (e.g., large-scale surveys) to understand “what is happening” before trying to explain it and “why something behaves in a certain way.” This gives researchers the confidence to introduce interventions that will change the situation. To investigate or explain the

relationships between events and the characteristics of social occurrence, a combination of exploratory, explanatory, and descriptive methodologies was used. Examples of conventional quantitative techniques include surveys, observational research, and correlational analysis. These methods can identify social change, tangible results, and recommended actions.

### **Participants**

Participants were selected using a stratified random sampling technique. Participants are current sport industry professionals in India working in some capacity as operations, facility, event and human resource managers, entrepreneurs, players, volunteers, interns, league team owners, officials, coaches, or athletic trainers. The contact list of participants for this research was collected from the databases of sports organizations, federations, colleges, clubs, and through social media. All participants were approached to participate in the study via email or direct message, inclusive of informed consent. The invitation email included a link to the survey, and participants denoted consent to complete the survey. The survey was distributed via Qualtrics.

### **Instrumentation**

In the sports industry, Jamieson's (1980) "Recreational Sports Competency Analysis" (RSCA) survey has been the gold standard for evaluating the competencies of sport management professionals. The National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA) Professional Development Committee recognized the RSCA as the primary method for evaluating sport manager competencies (Tavernier & Jamieson 2022). The instrument has been regularly amended and updated, which led to the development of the "Competencies of Sport Managers" (COSM) instrument (Toh & Jamieson, 2000; Tavernier & Jamieson, 2022). It systematically and comprehensively calculates the competencies and capacity of an individual to carry out the tasks

associated with a particular position effectively. The instrument also identifies areas where a manager's skills can be further developed, acquired, or improved. Both instruments, the RSCA (Jamieson, 1980) and the COSM (Toh & Jamieson, 2000), have significant geographic reach. While the most frequent use has been in studies from the United States, these instruments have been utilized to evaluate professional competencies and educational preparation in Greece, Turkey, Taiwan, Canada, Norway, and Syria (Tavernier & Jamieson, 2022). For this study, Toh's (1997) COSM instrument was amended to address the Indian sport industry. The instrument was selected since it was among the few mentioned in the literature that had been created using sound statistical and methodological practices. It is also one of the few instruments that has reported indications of validity and reliability. Furthermore, because the COSM was created primarily to evaluate the skills of managers of recreational sports, its utility was considered appropriate for the objectives of this research.

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of the competency statement on a 5-point Likert scale. The following competency areas' responses were grouped in further analysis of results: (i) Business procedures, (ii) Officiating, (iii) Communications, (iv) Philosophy, (v) Facility/maintenance, (vi) Programming techniques, (vii) Governance, (viii) Research, (ix) Legality, (x) Safety/accident prevention, (xi) Management techniques, and (xii) Science (Jamieson, 1980; Toh & Jamieson, 2000; Tavernier & Jamieson, 2022). The instrument is included in Appendix A, and descriptions of the groupings follow. The factor groups that evaluate the knowledge and competency components include:

1. Governance: This group evaluated the knowledge of sound procedures for postponements, rescheduling, and forfeiture of games. Implementing appropriate sports rules and regulations, a system of procurement and evaluation for officials,

- regulating the conduct of participants and spectators, using sound procedures for settling protests, establishing eligibility guidelines for participants, and handling disciplinary action, accidents, game protests, and eligibility status reports.
2. Sports foundation: This group examined the updated knowledge in recreational sports research to practice, articulating the benefits and values of recreational sports to individuals, demonstrating an understanding of sport's sociological and psychological aspects and human limitations in a sport, applying leadership theories to recreational sports, and demonstrating an understanding of the broad spectrum of recreational sports opportunities. Applying theories of cooperative and competitive play. Demonstrating an understanding of the organizational and operational aspects of different types of sports programming (e.g., informal, instructional, club).
  3. Budgeting: This group assessed the knowledge to identify the sources of revenue and expenditures for a budget and prepares, monitors, and defends a budget proposal.
  4. Risk management: This group gauged the ability to coordinate and train the staff on legal and safety issues (e.g., first aid and training), establish a safety program to prevent injuries and accidents, conduct routine inspections of facilities and equipment, design strategies/policies to prevent misuse of facilities and equipment, and make effective decisions in dealing with accidents.
  5. Computer skills: Utilized computer software for word processing, spreadsheets, and presentations. Knowledge of computer operating systems (e.g., Windows 95 and Mac OS) and computer software programs for scheduling, reservations, and registration purposes.

6. Communication: The ability to promote harmony and motivation among personnel through good verbal and effective communication with staff or volunteers.

### **Data Collection**

Data regarding the participants' interests, search process to pursue sport management education, current employment expectations, job title, job responsibilities, educational qualifications, geographical location, salary range, years of experience, association with the sport as a player and or an industry professional in the field of leisure, recreation, or professional levels, job satisfaction, skill set, professional development training, interests in pursuing sport management degrees, gender, citizenship, and age were collected through the amended and current COSM survey via Qualtrics. Additionally, participants answered open-ended questions regarding their knowledge, experience, or challenges in contributing to Indian sports management research.

### **Statistical Tool**

A jury of experts further evaluated these studies, which were among the numerous ones to use the COSM instrument in the past. In each of these studies, descriptive statistics, analysis of variance (ANOVA), multiple regression, or a combination of these were utilized (Jamieson, 1980; Jennings, 1984; Skipper, 1990; Afthinos, 1993). The profiles and data collected from the participants in previous studies were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, standard deviations, and means. The 12 competency areas were dependent variables for both Jamieson (1980) and Jennings (1984), but the independent variables varied. Jamieson's (1980) independent factors were the setting types and professional levels, whereas Jennings' (1984) independent variables were the chairs of the physical education and leisure departments. Skipper's (1990) choice of the six competency areas as independent factors and the various



setting types and management levels as dependent variables were found to be interesting. The 11 skill categories served as Afthinos' (1993) independent variables, while the three levels of management—national, regional, and local—served as dependent variables.

Jamieson (1980) and Jennings (1984) also used ANOVA in addition to descriptive statistics to determine the importance of 12 skill areas. Afthinos (1993) also did several ANOVAs to look at how people from the three different levels of an organization thought the 11 competency areas were important. Conversely, Skipper (1990) used factor analysis to condense the 18 skill domains into six key variables (competency areas). To examine the connections between the competencies and the organizational contexts and professional levels of the facility managers, stepwise multiple regression analysis was also conducted. The meta-analysis by Jamieson and Toh (2000) discloses that COSM instruments can be modified as necessary, and various statistical tools can be used to analyze the data. Since this study investigated the source of professionalism and knowledge among sports industry professionals in India with limited sports management higher education, Skipper's (1990) analysis served as a primary guide for this study. The six competency areas were the dependent variables, namely: (i) Governance, (ii) Sport Foundation, (iii) Communications, (iv) Computer Skills, (v) Risk Management, (vi) Budgeting. The dependent variables at various levels of the analysis were: (i) Higher education, (ii) Type of degrees (sport or non-sport), (iii) Combination of higher education and years of experience, (iv) Years of experience.

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to measure the degree to which the various independent variables affect the dependent variables among India's sports industry professionals. The instrument and statistical tools contributed to understanding the current competencies of sports managers in India, analysing the data, discussing findings, and making

recommendations. Before the analysis, data screening was conducted to investigate threats to multivariate assumptions, outliers, linearity, normality, multicollinearity, and homogeneity of variance-covariance.

## CHAPTER IV

### DATA ANALYSIS

It is important to acquire adequate knowledge prior to becoming an effective sport administrator or manager. Parkhouse (1980) maintained that sport management professional preparation programs should not restrict the course work to the physical education discipline. Lambrecht (1991) also expressed a need to develop a professional preparation program for sport management and it should be interdisciplinary. He noted that “the curricular preparation needs for the most part are housed outside the physical education department, therefore, sport management curricular programs need to be interdisciplinary, drawing on theories, concepts, and understandings from identified fields of study” (p. 5).

An extensive review of literature on sport management competencies reveals a list of competencies required by the sport managers. Review of literature indicates that knowledge of sport industry professionals, available infrastructure, and qualified sport management faculty in higher education determine why some countries perform better at the Olympics and international competitions. In addition, these aspects are critical factors in a country's ability to bid and win significant and high-profile host events (Rayner & Webb, 2022). India is competing in the Olympics, infrastructure is available, and international competitions are hosted, exhibiting the presence of industry professionals. However, with limited and geographically dispersed sport management higher education programs, it is unclear how Indian industry professionals gain the knowledge and skills to effectively manage sport operations and compete in a global market. Through this quantitative study an investigation to evaluate the competencies of sport managers and industry professionals in India along with the source of their knowledge with limited access to higher education was attempted and discloses the below results.

## **Revision of the Instrument**

In light of the changes within the past 19 years, the COSM instrument was amended specifically to address the Indian sports industry. A total of 96 statements were identified to form the first part of the questionnaire. Part two of the questionnaire was designed to gather such demographic information as membership size, age, gender, working experience, salary, academic achievement, and position title. The participants were instructed to rate each statement on a 5-point Likert scale. In its validation process, all of the 96 statements were grouped into six competency areas. These included:

1. Governance
2. Sport Foundations
3. Budgeting
4. Risk Management
5. Communications
6. Computer Skills

## **Statistical Tool**

Huberty (1989) argued that MANOVA is especially appropriate when the investigator has gathered a system of dependent variables to address a multivariate hypothesis. A variable system is loosely defined as a collection of conceptually interrelated variables that, at least potentially, determines one or more meaningful underlying variates or constructs (Huberty, 1989). Researchers frankly disagree as to whether higher correlations among dependent variables increase or decrease the power of MANOVA to detect mean differences between groups (Cole et al., 1994). In many cases such as these, one would expect the outcome variables to be highly correlated. Indeed, when the variables represent multiple measures of a single underlying

construct, one even hopes for high correlations because they reflect the convergent validity of one's measures. In other cases, however, such outcome variables may not be highly correlated. Tabachnick and Fidell (1989) suggested that researchers consider carefully the degree of correlation between dependent variables: "The best choice is a set of DVs [dependent variables] that are uncorrelated with each other because they each measure a separate aspect of the influence of the IVs [independent variables]." In this study, MANOVA was used as a statistical measure to analyze the data collected.

## **Independent Variables**

### **Education Level**

Participants' education level was categorized into two groups: those with undergraduate degrees and those with graduate degrees. This classification aimed to assess whether the level of formal education had any significant impact on participants' sport competencies.

### **Type of Education**

Additionally, participants were categorized based on whether they possessed a degree in a sport-related field or a non-sport related field. This distinction allowed for an examination of the influence of specialized education in sports management on participants' competencies compared to other academic backgrounds.

### **Years of Experience**

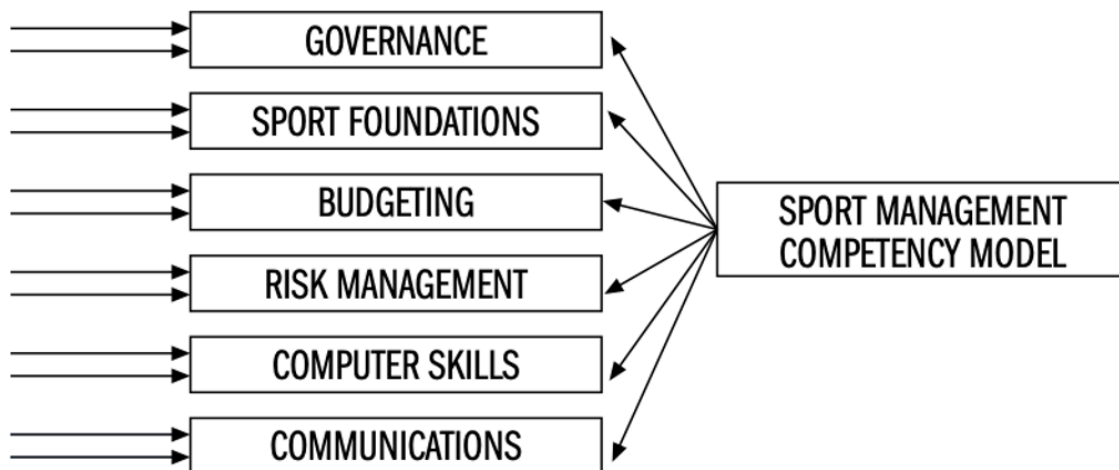
The number of years participants had worked in the sport industry served as another independent variable. This variable aimed to capture the influence of practical experience and tenure within the industry on participants' levels of competency in various aspects of sport management.

## Dependent Variables

The study examined six key dependent variables related to sport competencies, including governance, sports foundations, budgeting, risk management, communications, and computer skills. These variables were chosen based on their significance in the field of sport management and their relevance to the participants' roles within the sports industry in India. Figure 1 shows the dependent variables building into sport management competencies.

**Figure 1**

*Sport Management Competency Model*



### Governance

It encompasses the implementation of sound procedures for various aspects of sports management, including:

- Postponements, Rescheduling, and Forfeiture of Games: Developing and implementing protocols for handling game schedule changes and forfeiture situations.

- **Disciplinary Actions and Accident Management:** Addressing disciplinary issues and accidents that occur during sporting events, including handling game protests and eligibility status reports.
- **Enforcement of Sport Rules and Regulations:** Ensuring adherence to established sport rules and regulations by all participants and stakeholders.
- **Procurement and Evaluation of Officials:** Establishing processes for recruiting, selecting, and evaluating officials involved in sporting events.
- **Regulation of Participant and Spectator Conduct:** Enforcing procedures to maintain appropriate conduct among both participants and spectators during sports activities.
- **Protest Resolution:** Implementing effective procedures for addressing and resolving protests related to sports events.
- **Establishment of Eligibility Guidelines:** Developing and enforcing guidelines to determine the eligibility of participants in sports competitions.

### **Sports Foundations**

It encompasses a range of competencies related to recreational sport research, sociological and psychological aspects of sports, leadership theories, and organizational aspects of sport programming. The subcomponents include:

- **Application of Recreational Sport Research:** Applying updated knowledge and research findings in recreational sport to inform and enhance practical applications.
- **Advocacy of Recreational Sport Benefits:** Communicating the benefits and values of recreational sport to individuals, communities, and society as a whole.

- Understanding of Sociological and Psychological Aspects: Demonstrating comprehension of the sociological and psychological factors influencing sports participation and engagement.
- Awareness of Human Limitations in Sport: Recognizing and understanding the physical and psychological limitations that individuals may encounter in sports activities.
- Application of Leadership Theories: Applying theories of leadership within the context of recreational sports to effectively guide and motivate participants and teams.
- Understanding of Recreational Sport Opportunities: Demonstrating knowledge of the diverse range of recreational sport opportunities available and their respective benefits.
- Utilization of Cooperative and Competitive Play Theories: Applying theories of cooperative and competitive play to design and implement engaging and inclusive sports activities.
- Understanding of Organizational and Operational Aspects: Understanding the organizational and operational elements of various types of sport programming, including informal, instructional, and club-based initiatives.

## **Budgeting**

It is a competency that involves the effective management of financial resources within the sports industry. The components of this variable include:

- Identification of Revenue and Expenditure Sources: Recognizing and identifying sources of revenue and expenditures relevant to sports organizations and activities.
- Budget Proposal Preparation: Skillfully preparing budget proposals that outline financial plans, resource allocations, and funding requirements.



- Budget Proposal Defense: Articulating and defending budget proposals to stakeholders, demonstrating the rationale behind financial decisions and resource allocations.
- Budget Monitoring: Vigilantly monitoring and tracking budget performance to ensure adherence to financial plans, identify variances, and address potential budgetary issues in a timely manner.

## **Risk Management**

This proficiency involves the implementation of strategies to identify, assess, and mitigate potential risks within the sports industry. The components of this variable include:

- Staff Training Coordination: Coordinating and organizing training sessions for staff members on legal and safety issues, such as first aid and CPR training, to ensure a safe and secure environment for participants.
- Safety Program Establishment: Developing and implementing safety programs aimed at preventing injuries and accidents among athletes, staff, and spectators.
- Facility and Equipment Inspections: Conducting regular inspections of facilities and equipment to identify hazards, ensure compliance with safety regulations, and maintain optimal conditions for sports activities.
- Misuse Prevention Strategies: Designing and implementing policies and strategies to prevent the misuse of facilities and equipment, minimizing the risk of accidents and injuries.
- Effective Decision Making: Demonstrating effective decision-making skills in handling accidents and emergencies, taking prompt and appropriate actions to mitigate risks and ensure the safety of individuals involved.

## **Computer Skills**

In the context of sport management, the ability to effectively utilize various software applications and operating systems to streamline administrative tasks and enhance productivity.

The components of this variable include:

- **Software Proficiency:** Demonstrating proficiency in using computer software for word processing, spreadsheet management, presentations, and other relevant applications to create documents, analyze data, and deliver presentations efficiently.
- **Operating System Familiarity:** Demonstrating familiarity with computer operating systems such as Windows, Mac OS, and Linux, enabling effective navigation and utilization of computer resources.
- **Specialized Software Utilization:** Utilizing specialized computer software programs tailored to sport management tasks, such as scheduling, reservations, registration, and database management, to optimize operational processes and facilitate organizational tasks.

## **Communication Skills**

These skills are essential in sport management for fostering collaboration, resolving conflicts, and maintaining productive relationships within the organization. The components of this variable include:

- **Promotion of Harmony:** Demonstrating the ability to promote harmony among personnel by fostering a positive work environment, encouraging teamwork, and cultivating mutual respect among team members.

- **Verbal Communication Skills:** Utilizing effective verbal communication skills to convey information clearly, express ideas succinctly, and facilitate meaningful interactions with colleagues, staff, and stakeholders.
- **Maintaining Effective Communication:** Ensuring ongoing and transparent communication with staff members to convey organizational goals, provide feedback, address concerns, and maintain alignment with objectives.
- **Staff Motivation:** Employing motivational techniques to inspire and empower staff or volunteers, recognizing their contributions, providing support, and fostering a sense of purpose and engagement within the team.

### **Steps in Data Analysis**

The analysis commenced with an exploration of the relationship between education level and sport competencies. Utilizing a multivariate general linear model, the study found no significant differences between participants with undergraduate and graduate degrees in terms of their overall sport competencies (Pillai's Trace = 0.072,  $F = 1.319$ ,  $p = 0.255$ ). Similarly, the comparison between participants with sport-related and non-sport related degrees yielded non-significant results (Pillai's Trace = 0.066,  $F = 1.036$ ,  $p = 0.408$ ). Furthermore, a combination of participants' years of experience and the type of education (sport-related and non-sport related degree) the participants received was investigated and the study found no significant interaction between these two variables (Pillai's Trace = 0.226,  $F = 0.978$ ,  $p = 0.486$ ). In light of the non-significant findings in the initial analyses, further evaluations were undertaken to evaluate the impact of participants' years of experience on sport competencies. Although the multivariate test did not reach statistical significance (Pillai's Trace = 0.320,  $F = 0.843$ ,  $p = 0.255$ ), subsequent univariate tests revealed significant differences across various dimensions of sport competencies.

Specifically, participants with longer industry experience exhibited higher levels of competency in governance ( $F(2, 95) = 5.322, p = 0.006$ ), sports foundation ( $F(2, 95) = 4.284, p = 0.016$ ), budgeting ( $F(2, 95) = 3.767, p = 0.026$ ), and risk management ( $F(2, 95) = 4.702, p = 0.011$ ). The order of the analysis follows:

1. Higher education as the source of knowledge and professionalism on the sport management competencies of professionals in the Indian sport industry.
2. Type of education: sport management degree and non-sport management degree as the source of knowledge and professionalism on the sport management competencies of professionals in the Indian sport industry.
3. Combination of both type of education and years of experience in the sport industry as the source of knowledge and professionalism on the sport management competencies of professionals in the Indian sport industry.
4. Years of experience as the source of knowledge and professionalism on the sport management competencies of professionals in the Indian sport industry.

### **Higher Education as the Source**

This study aimed to explore how higher education in the sports industry affects individual abilities for sport management. The first analysis compared the skills of individuals with varying degrees of higher education, namely graduate and undergraduate. The findings showed that there was not a significant distinction in the competencies related to sport management between those who held graduate degrees and undergraduate degrees (Wilks' Lambda = 0.928,  $F(4, 94) = 1.319, p = 0.255$ ). These results offer important new information about the connection between higher education and sport management competencies, even in the absence of statistical significance. The lack of statistical value in the relationship between higher education and sport management

capabilities indicates that having a graduate degree does not guarantee superior knowledge or abilities related to the field of sport management. Higher education might give people the theoretical information and theoretical foundations they need, but it might not give them the practical skills necessary for efficient sport management. These results highlight the significance of taking into account other elements, such as real-world experience, while forming people's skills in the field of sport management.

It's crucial to remember that the non-significant findings have no impact on the importance of college education to the sports industry. To give people a thorough understanding of sport management theories, best practices, and principles, higher education programs are essential. The results, however, raise the possibility that a college degree by itself may not be adequate for developing the real-world skills and competencies necessary for success in the sport management industry. Therefore, to improve people's sport management competencies, future research should examine additional aspects such as professional development programs and experiential learning opportunities. The need for a comprehensive approach to developing talent is shown by the non-significant impact on sport management qualifications, even if higher education is still a crucial part of professional development in sports management. Through a combination of real-world exposure, expert instruction, and ongoing educational chances, individuals may strengthen their capacity to successfully navigate the complexities of the sport management industry and improve the success of sports organizations and ventures.

### **Type of Education**

The study looked at the gaps between participants with and without sport management degrees in an ongoing attempt to explore the impact of education on sport management competences. The purpose of the research was to determine if those who had received

specialized training in sport management showed higher levels of competence than those who had obtained degrees in other fields. Upon conducting multivariate tests, the results indicated that there was no significant difference in sport management competencies between participants with sport management degrees and those with non-sport management degrees (Wilks' Lambda = 0.947,  $F(4, 94) = 0.66$ ,  $p = 0.635$ ). Despite the lack of statistical significance, further deep analysis of the data provided additional insights into the relationship between education specialization and sport management competencies.

Participants with sport management degrees demonstrated competencies comparable to those with non-sport management degrees across various dimensions of sport management. While it might be expected that individuals with specialized education in sport management would possess a distinct advantage in sport-related competencies, the findings suggest otherwise. This highlights the importance of considering alternative factors, such as practical experience and professional development initiatives, in shaping individuals' competencies within the sport management domain. The non-significant differences between the individuals who had degrees in sport management and those who did not highlight the multidisciplinary character of sport management. A solid grasp of the industry may be acquired through specialized education in sport management, but this does not guarantee that the individual will be more competent than someone with a more varied educational background. To promote creativity and success in the sport management industry, businesses, and academic institutions may need to take a comprehensive approach to talent development, incorporating a variety of viewpoints and skill sets.

Overall, while education specialization remains an important factor in shaping individuals' competencies in sport management, the non-significant findings emphasize the need

for a comprehensive approach to talent development. By leveraging a combination of education, practical experience, and ongoing professional development initiatives, individuals can enhance their ability to thrive in the dynamic and competitive landscape of sport management.

### **Combination of Sport Management Education and Years of Experience**

The research broadened its focus to explore the joint impact of college education and years of experience in the sports industry on the competencies of sport management. The purpose of this inquiry was to determine whether people with higher education and more industrial experience were more competent than people with lower education and experience. The results showed no statistically significant association (Wilks' Lambda = 0.885,  $F(8, 184) = 1.959$ ,  $p = 0.057$ ) between years of experience and higher education in determining sport management competences. Even with this non-significant interaction, more research on the main impacts revealed important information about the distinct contributions that years of experience and higher education make to sport management competencies. Participants with graduate degrees did not exhibit significantly higher sport management competencies compared to those with undergraduate degrees. Similarly, the interaction of years of experience and sport or non-sport degrees had no impact on sport management competencies.

While it might be expected that individuals with more extensive industry experience would demonstrate superior competencies, the findings suggest that practical experience alone may not be sufficient to differentiate individuals' competencies in sport management. The non-significant interaction between higher education and years of experience indicates that the combined influence of these factors on sport management competencies is not greater than the sum of their individual effects. While higher education and years of experience are important contributors to individuals' competencies in sport management, their impact may vary

independently based on other factors not examined in this study. These results highlight the complex relationships that shape people's competencies in sport management, including higher education, work experience, and other factors. A comprehensive approach to talent development should be taken by organizations and educational institutions, taking into account a variety of elements such as real-world experience, specialized training, and ongoing professional development programs. Stakeholders may better support persons in navigating the constantly changing terrain of sport management and succeeding in their professions by acknowledging the diverse nature of competency development.

### **Years of Experience in the Indian Sport Industry**

The analysis was refined to focus solely on the impact of years of experience in the sport management industry on sport management competencies, excluding the variable related to sports degrees. This method sought to clarify the degree to which real-world experience impacted people's competencies without taking formal schooling into account. Upon reevaluation, the results indicated significant differences in sport management competencies based on the number of years of experience in the industry. Across various dimensions, including governance, sports foundation, budgeting, and risk management, participants with different levels of industry experience exhibited distinct competencies.

Specifically, participants with more than eight years of experience demonstrated significantly higher competencies during the univariate analysis in governance ( $F(1, 96) = 9.348, p = 0.003$ ), sports foundation ( $F(1, 96) = 7.521, p = 0.007$ ), budgeting ( $F(1, 96) = 6.985, p = 0.010$ ), and risk management ( $F(1, 96) = 8.543, p = 0.004$ ) compared to those with less than eight years of experience.



**Table 1***Mean of Participants' Years of Experience*

Competencies	Below 8 years of work experience in sport management	8 or more years of work experience in sport management
Governance*	4.0	4.3
Sport Foundation*	4.0	4.4
Risk Management*	4.1	4.4
Budgeting*	4.0	4.4
Computer Skills	4.0	4.3
Communications	4.1	4.3

*Note.* \* $p < .05$

These findings suggest that years of experience in the sport management industry play a critical role in shaping individuals' competencies across various domains. The significant differences observed highlight the importance of practical exposure and on-the-job learning in developing proficiency in key areas of sport management. Furthermore, the results underscore the limited influence of formal education alone on sport management competencies. While educational credentials may provide a foundational understanding of theoretical concepts, it is the hands-on experience gained through working in the industry that appears to have a more substantial impact on individuals' ability to effectively manage sports organizations and programs. Therefore, the results suggest that curriculum and instructional methods may need to be reevaluated by universities and other educational institutions that provide sport management degrees. Prioritizing hands-on learning experiences like internships and experiential learning

could improve students' overall competency levels and better prepare them for the needs of the sport management industry.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The detailed interpretation of the analysis underscores the critical role that practical experience plays in shaping individuals' competencies within the sport management industry. The significant differences observed in sport management competencies based on the number of years of experience highlight the profound impact of hands-on learning and on-the-job exposure in developing proficiency across various domains of sport management. Firstly, the findings suggest that individuals with more than eight years of experience demonstrate significantly higher competencies in governance, sports foundation, budgeting, and risk management compared to those with less than eight years of experience. This suggests that individuals with extended exposure to the challenges of the sport management industry develop a greater understanding and proficiency of the essential skills needed for efficient management and leadership positions. Moreover, the observed differences underscore the somewhat limited influence of formal education alone on sport management competencies. While educational qualifications may provide a theoretical foundation, they appear to be insufficient in equipping individuals with the practical skills and insights necessary to navigate the complexities of the sport management landscape. Instead, it is the experiential knowledge gained through real-world scenarios and day-to-day operations within the industry that significantly contributes to individuals' competency levels.

The interpretation further emphasizes the need for educational institutions offering sport management programs to reevaluate their curriculum and teaching approaches. Integrating experiential learning opportunities, such as internships, practicums, and industry collaborations, can provide students with invaluable hands-on experience and bridge the gap between theory and

practice. By immersing students in real-world settings and exposing them to diverse challenges and scenarios, educational institutions can better prepare future sport managers for the demands of the profession.

Furthermore, the analysis emphasizes the significance of the results for stakeholders in academia and business. The emphasis on experiential learning for educational institutions highlights the value of developing relationships with sports organizations and providing chances for students to interact with professionals in the field. Academic institutions may guarantee that their programs are up-to-date, adaptable to industry demands, and capable of generating graduates who are well-suited to succeed in the sport management sector by cultivating a mutually beneficial relationship between academia and industry.

In conclusion, the detailed interpretation of the analysis reinforces the significance of practical experience in shaping individuals' competencies within the sport management industry. By recognizing the pivotal role of industry experience and integrating experiential learning opportunities into educational programs, stakeholders can empower aspiring sport managers to thrive in a dynamic and competitive industry landscape, ultimately enhancing the overall professionalism and effectiveness of the sport management profession. Additionally, knowing the details of how experts in the field of sport management improve their skills tells an intriguing narrative about the importance of informal and/or work-based learning. This story is consistent with a larger educational discourse that frequently struggles to define and distinguish between formal and informal learning. The core of this conversation in the context of sport management highlights a fundamental change in the way that experience is valued more highly than traditional classroom instruction.

## **Informal Learning Theory**

Diverse sources across various domains have explored the concept of informal learning, leading to a range of definitions. Research into informal learning spans several disciplines, including specific studies on informal learning itself (inquiries by Colley et al. in 2003; Misko in 2008; Schugurensky in 2000), the realm of adult and continuing education (contributions by Livingstone in 1999a; Merriam et al. in 2006), and the sphere of workplace education (examinations by Eraut in 2007 and 2009; Le Clus in 2011; along with research conducted by Manuti et al. in 2015, and Noe et al. in 2014). These studies present varied perspectives on what constitutes informal learning, either looking at it through the lens of the individual learner or from an organizational viewpoint. This overview aims to acknowledge the range of insights provided by existing research, discussing their core ideas and offering a viewpoint on how to understand these concepts.

Reviewers have observed a general lack of agreement among these areas over what constitutes informal learning and how it differs from formal learning. Colley et al. (2003), for example, noted the unclear lines between formal and alternative learning modes and highlighted discussions surrounding the whole learning spectrum in their analysis for the British government. Misko (2008) brought attention to the fact that formal and informal learning shares borders with cross in a study written for the Australian government. Manuti and colleagues (2015) noted the lack of a common definition of informal learning in the context of workplace learning, blaming this ambiguity on the many goals of workplace learning for individuals and organizations as well as the variety of academic disciplines involved. Other researchers have also observed that formal and informal learning frequently overlap in practice, making it more difficult to make a clear distinction between the two (Eshach, 2007; Marsick, 2009).

A range of learning activities, including curriculum-driven and experience-based learning, are included in organized informal learning. These activities are distinguished by their varied experiential approaches. Outside of the credit system, education usually follows a curriculum. Work-based learning and service learning are notable in the learning spectrum because they place a strong focus on experiential learning, or "learning by doing." Whether these learning experiences take place in community settings, businesses, or educational institutions, they are purposefully organized within predetermined frameworks. Furthermore, involvement in professional groups and mentoring primarily support relationship learning in the workplace.

### **Informal Learning and Sport Management**

Research in the sport management field shows how important practical experience is in acquiring the skills required for success in the workplace. One important subject in the literature on informal learning is the relationship between experience learning and skill development. Researchers like Schugurensky (2000), Misko (2008), and Colley et al. (2003) have all examined this relationship. Their study explores the subtle aspects of informal learning from both the perspectives of the individual and the organization, offering a sophisticated framework for analyzing these results.

The aspects of informal learning described in the academic literature are consistent with observations of skill differences in sport management, especially across individuals with different levels of experience. The study highlights the significance of informal learning, as demonstrated by the higher levels of competence in risk management, budgeting, athletic foundation, and governance among professionals who have worked in the area for more than eight years. The "learning by doing" philosophy that permeates work-based and service learning,

which is frequently distinguished by its hands-on, unstructured style, is in line with this type of education (Eraut, 2007; 2009).

Additionally, as experts like Marsick (2009) and Eshach (2007) have emphasized, the interaction between theoretical knowledge and practical application in sport management shows the junction of formal and informal learning. Formal education provides the groundwork for theoretical knowledge in sport administration; however, deeper competency in certain skill sets can be developed by experiential learning obtained from active participation in the field. The results support an educational strategy that values informal learning methods by recommending for the inclusion of experiential learning in sport management curriculum. Through the recognition of the value of informal learning, which is characterized by practice, active engagement in professional networks, and mentoring, sport management education can advance to better prepare students for the intricacies of the field. By bridging the theoretical and practical breakdown, this integration promotes a larger educational movement that supports the advantages of informal learning approaches.

### **Work-Based Learning Theory**

Work-based learning refers to the structured, on-the-job educational experiences, overseen by educational institutions, where workplaces serve as the primary setting for learning (Bragg et al., 1995). This type of learning is inherently informal and comprehensive, focusing on more than just job-specific skills by incorporating holistic learning experiences where students gain knowledge through practical work (Brodie & Irving, 2007). It's tailored to meet the needs of both the learner and the employing organization (Chisholm et al., 2009), promoting a learning style that is both situational and self-guided (Raelin, 2008). Learning here is often spontaneous, based on real-life experiences and driven by the need to solve problems or complete projects

(Onstenk & Blokhuis, 2007), necessitating reflection as a part of the learning process (Ryan et al., 1996). The work environment's culture, values, and structure significantly shape this learning, with a focus on tackling real-world issues (Alfeld et al., 2013) and often involves mentorship within professional communities (Sheehan et al., 2012).

The main goal of work-based learning is to equip individuals with foundational job skills before employment (Lerman et al., 2009), fostering stronger connections between educational institutions and businesses, which in turn, benefits the nation's economy (Bragg & Hamm, 1996). Beyond the acquisition of technical and academic knowledge, this form of learning helps in the development of self-regulatory skills and supports emotional and career growth (Alfeld et al., 2013), by bridging theoretical knowledge with practical application and enabling learners to explore their career interests (Ryan et al., 1996).

### **Work-Based Learning and Sport Management**

The sport management research's findings show a strong link between the development of industry-specific skills and work-based learning. Studies show that sports managers with more than eight years of experience have much higher competences in risk management, budgeting, sports foundation, and governance than do those with less experience. This pattern emphasizes how important it is to have real-world experience and on-the-job training to develop the abilities required for competent management and leadership in the sports industry (Bragg et al., 1995; Brodie & Irving, 2007).

This connection aligns with the work-based learning principles, which assert that practical, on-the-job training is essential to a comprehensive education. The method of work-based learning, which combines knowledge particular to the job with more general experiential learning, is similar to the growth seen in seasoned professionals in sport management. In addition



to formal training, job difficulties, problem-solving, and mentoring have significantly influenced their skills (Chisholm et al., 2009; Raelin, 2008). The study further explains the minor effect of a formal education alone on improving one's competency in sport management. This lends validity to the idea that formal education provides a theoretical foundation, but that work-based learning's hands-on, experiencing component is essential for managing the intricacies of the sports management scene (Sheehan et al., 2012; Lerman et al., 2009). As a result, it is obvious that educational institutions must provide chances for experiential learning in their curricula. By bridging the knowledge gap between theory and practice, this would better prepare aspiring sport managers to handle the demands of their careers. In line with this, work-based learning provides significant educational and financial advantages, strengthening the connection between educational institutions and the labor force for the benefit of both students and the business (Alfeld et al., 2013).

The significance of these findings for academia and the commercial sector cannot be overstressed. By endorsing work-based learning policies, academic institutions can ensure their sport management programs remain relevant and flexible, capable of yielding graduates who are informed, skilled, and prepared to thrive in the dynamic sport industry (Bragg & Hamm, 1996; Rogers-Chapman & Darling-Hammond, 2013).

Furthermore, these sport management research results align with work-based learning theories by supporting an experiential learning environment and emphasizing the critical role that real-world experience plays in developing professional competencies. This knowledge improves understanding of the field and facilitates the incorporation of work-based learning into academic curricula, resulting in professionals prepared for the problems faced by the sport management industry.

## **Integrating Learning Strategy Into Sport Management Curriculum**

Historically, experiential learning has played a significant role in the education of sport managers. Professionals receiving practical training in the sports industry was mentioned early on in the development of sport management programs in higher education, with internships being viewed as essential to this training (Parkhouse, 1987). The sport management curriculum still views internships as a vital component (Sattler & Achen, 2020), but there has also been a shift toward other kinds of practical learning opportunities. Short-term, high-profile (i.e., championship) volunteer opportunities at major athletic events are one example of such an opportunity (Ledford et al., 2018; Pate & Shonk, 2015). Over the past 10 years, there has been significant discussion of these kinds of experiences in the scholarly literature. Experience-based learning has been a fundamental component of innovative curricula since the beginning of sport management education in North America. However, work-integrated learning, cooperative education has shown itself to be an effective strategy for training students for the workforce, and instill necessary competencies alongside their existing skill sets.

Practical experiences, classroom learning and experiential learning is considered crucial for students' professional growth and field success in the subject of sport management education (DeLuca & Braunstein-Minkove, 2016; Moorman, 2004; Schneider & Stier, 2006; Stier, 2002; Young & Baker, 2004). The principal accrediting authority for sport management programs, the COSMA, concurs, highlighting the value of internships and practical experience (COSMA, 2022; Schoepfer & Dodds, 2010). To meet accreditation standards and prepare students effectively, sport management programs must integrate practical learning experiences into their curricula (Practice Makes Perfect: Practical Experiential Learning in Sport Management). These experiences not only help students develop industry-relevant skills and expand their professional

networks but also provide valuable real-world insights into the workings of the sports industry. Moreover, educators must align their teaching with the evolving demands of the industry (Phelps et al., 2023). While traditional competencies like communication skills remain important, there's a growing need to incorporate technological proficiency and adaptability to online environments. This necessitates a reevaluation of the competencies emphasized in sport management education to ensure they reflect contemporary industry standards and expectations.

Another area of research worth exploring involves comparing students' self-perceived competency levels with evaluations provided by instructors and industry professionals. By including students in self-assessments alongside evaluations from professionals, researchers can gain insights into discrepancies between perceived and actual competency levels, thus aiding in bridging any gaps in students' understanding of their abilities. Additionally, while formal internships are typically reserved for upperclassmen as a culmination of their academic journey, there is a need to focus on the underclassman experience to enhance competency development, networking opportunities, and career exploration (Phelps et al., 2023). Conducting studies that examine the experiences of underclassmen in these aspects can provide valuable insights into how to better prepare students for their future careers in sport management.

## CHAPTER VI

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis conducted in this study, it is evident that the source of knowledge about sport management competencies among professionals in the Indian sport industry is influenced more by their practical experience than by their level of higher education. The preliminary investigation aimed to assess whether individuals' levels of higher education (bachelor's, master's, or doctoral) had any significant effect on their competency in various areas of sport management. However, the results revealed that higher education alone did not significantly impact the participants' competencies, as evidenced by a non-significant MANOVA with a  $p$ -value of 0.255 and an  $F$ -value of 1.319. Further examination was undertaken to explore the influence of participants' majors of study on their sport management competencies. Regardless of whether the participants held degrees in sport management or non-sport management fields, the analysis showed non-significant results in both MANOVA and subsequent univariate tests ( $p$ -value of 0.408 and an  $F$ -value of 1.036). This indicates that the subjects gained knowledge in general management areas but did not significantly acquire competencies specific to sport management through their academic pursuits.

The research focus then turned to examining how the years of experience that participants had in the sport management industry affected their competencies. Based on the years of experience of the participants, the research showed substantial variations across several variables of sport competence. More specifically, those with more experience in the industry demonstrated higher levels of competence in risk management, budgeting, sports foundation, and governance. These results highlight how crucial real-world experience and on-the-job training are in determining an individual's competence in critical areas of sport management. The results

suggest that universities and educational institutions in India may need to reconsider their approach to sport management education. While formal education undoubtedly provides a foundational understanding of management principles, it appears that in India practical experience plays a more significant role in developing competencies specific to the sports industry. Therefore, there may be a need to enhance internship programs or provide more experiential learning opportunities to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills in sport management education.

### **Limitations**

Moreover, the following recommendations are made for further research in the area of sport management competency:

1. The COSM instrument used in this study, while widely recognized, may have limitations in capturing the full spectrum of sport management competencies. Alternative measurement tools or modifications to existing instruments could provide additional insights into the complexities of sport management knowledge and skills.
2. The study's sample primarily consisted of professionals from the Indian sport industry. While efforts were made to ensure diversity within the sample, the findings may not fully generalize to other regions or countries with different socio-cultural contexts and sports management practices.
3. The study did not explore potential cross-cultural differences in sport management competencies. Future research could investigate whether the competencies identified in this study hold true across different cultural contexts or if there are variations based on cultural norms, values, and organizational structures.

4. While the findings offer valuable insights into the relationship between education, experience, and sport management competencies in India, caution should be exercised when generalizing these findings to other settings or populations. Variations in educational systems, industry practices, and professional contexts may influence the transferability of results.
5. The study did not differentiate between sport managers based on their hierarchical positions within organizations (e.g., entry-level, mid-level, or senior-level managers). Future research could explore whether the relationship between education, experience, and competencies varies across different management levels, providing a more nuanced understanding of skill development and career progression in the field.
6. The study's findings are limited to the specific context and time period in which the data were collected. Changes in the sports industry landscape, advancements in education and training programs, and evolving professional standards may impact the relevance and applicability of the study's findings over time.
7. The study did not thoroughly investigate the specific nature or quality of participants' educational experiences, such as curriculum content, teaching methodologies, or internship opportunities. These factors could significantly impact the acquisition of sport management competencies but were not extensively examined in this study. Future research could explore these aspects further to better understand the mechanisms underlying the relationship between education, experience, and sport management competencies.

## **Recommendations**

This study highlights the critical role of practical experience in shaping individuals' competencies in the sport management field. While higher education undoubtedly has its value, particularly in providing a broad understanding of management principles, the findings suggest that real-world experience is paramount in developing proficiency in sport-specific competencies. Moving forward, educational institutions need to adapt their curriculum to provide a balance between theoretical knowledge and practical experience to better prepare students for successful careers in the dynamic and competitive field of sport management. Experiential learning has played an integral role in curricular innovation since the inception of North American sport management education. Internationally, work-integrated learning, and specifically experiential learning, have proven to be robust methods for preparing students for the workforce with necessary competencies worldwide. Specifically for the Indian sport industry and curriculum enhancement, it is recommended to insert experiential learning opportunities, mandatory internships for graduates entering the sport industry. Additionally, collaborations with local, national, and international sport events and organizations such as the Sports Authority of India, Ministry of Youth Sports Affairs, Indian Premier League, Indian Soccer League, FIBA, BCCI, and the national sports federations in India is highly recommended. Furthermore, collaboration with an established university curriculum in continents like North America, Australia, Europe in the form of semester abroad, study abroad, or online classes may also enhance the curriculum of existing sport management programs in India.

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