

## **Gender Differences in a Growing Industry: A Case of Sport Management Education**

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**ABSTRACT :** *The purpose of this paper is to conduct a critical review of gender treatment in sport management education through applying extant literature sources and personal empiricism. Results indicate that male dominance exists in the professoriate while the academic climate is chili towards female students, female professors, and feministic perspectives. In addition, curricular systems are shown to champion male ethos that suppress divergent lines of thought. Finally, masculine tactics in student support limit proactive efforts to better expose and accommodate students to real-world sport management experiences. As the result of these outcomes, implications include social exclusion, hegemony, unmarketable job skills, and questionable student support structures. Conclusions emphasize the persistent male biases that exist across the spectrum of sport management education. Summative measures for transformation relate to eradicating the masculine underpinning through focusing on potential changes in the professorial, climatic, curricular, and student support areas.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Gender Treatment: Sport Management Education; Male Dominance; Female Students; Masculinity in Management Education*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The sport industry is one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the world (Gillentine & Crow, 2009). Due to growing public interest in athletic competition, Abdollah, Zamani, and Rezazadeh (2011) estimated 37.7 billion dollars is spent annually on sponsorship of global-wide sporting events. In fact, a conservative estimate suggested that the Gross Domestic Sport Product (GDSP) in the US is \$189.338 billion (Milano & Chelladurai, 2011). Due to this acceleration of growth, managerial talents are required to effectively oversee and lead athletic related organizations. Specifically, the educational talents of managers have been shown to influence the functions of sport organizations at all competitive levels (Mašala, Radjo, & Talovic, 2013). Providing sport management professional preparation is of utmost importance in order to best meet the growing demands within the sport industry. This highlights the relevance and salient place that professional preparation has in the exploration of topics relating to sport management education. The first sport management educational program was founded at Ohio University (US) in 1966. Since this inception, management education with a sport emphasis has proliferated across the globe. Jones, Brooks, and Mak (2008) underscored the global progression of sport management preparation programs housed on college campuses. As this sport discipline evolved, the foci of scholars have been on classroom learning (Dane-Staples, 2013; Miller, Gillentine & Podlog, 2013; Weese & Beard, 2012); motives of graduate students for pursuing a master degree in sport management (Lewis & Quarterman, 2006); and job satisfaction of alumnae (Parks & Parra, 1994). While these works have added to the knowledge base, there remains only a paucity of extant literature relating to gender diversity in sport management education. A review of general management education literature indicates that gender inequalities are noticeable (Ball, 2012; Jones, et al., 2008; Moore, Parkhouse & Konrad, 2001; Schellhardt, 1998). For instance, the odds of a female undergraduate student preparing for a managerial career are 40% lower than a male peer enrolled in US business schools (Ball, 2012). In graduate management education programs, there has also been evidence of the gender divide since the 1990s (Schellhardt, 1998). Further, Jones et al. (2008) suggested that similar gender inequalities existed within the management education realm of sport and specifically highlighted the lower representation of women in sport management professoriate. Scholars have also called attention to the gender disparity among female and male managers in the sport industry (Moore et al., 2001). Consequently, the purpose of this chapter is to analyze how gender is treated in sport management education. In carrying forth our review, a number of programmatic characteristics are examined. Implications and recommendations are also discussed.

**Programmatic Characteristics :** This section examines the programmatic properties that influence gender treatment in sport management education. *Professoriate*. Diversity and inclusion efforts in most organizations require the commitment of rank and file (Morrison, 1992). In analyzing gender treatment in sport management education, the professoriate has to be considered as it leads the development and transformation of sport management curricula and other key programmatic mechanisms at their respective institutions. As such, professors are seen as academic leaders whose roles and actions shape the value and belief systems of colleagues, students, and other mentees (Evans, Homer, & Rayner, 2013). Through demonstration and utilization of intellectual capacities, these mentors chart the academic climates and curricula for their respective academic units. In an examination of sport management faculty members within the US, Jones et al. (2008) identified and called attention to the lack of gender diversity among this population. Moreover, women were perceived by students as being less capable members of the sport management professoriate than male peers (Sosa & Sagas, 2008) and the female professoriate were at lower ranks and lower salary levels than male faculty members (Parks & Bartley, 1996). Previous research also revealed gender disparity among newly hired sport management professors as 72 % identified themselves as being male (Pedersen & Schneider, 2003).

Gender diversity in the professoriate is a crucial issue as all higher educational disciplines seek to ramp up in the area of inclusion (Jackson-Weaver, Baker, Gillespie, Ramos Bellido, & Watts, 2010). According to Davis and Geyfman (2012), the lack of female professors in management disciplines is a genuine impediment to the effort to recruit and retain women in the faculty rank as well as in the pursuit to augment the representation of female students. Gender inequalities in the professoriate suggested that masculinity structures in sport management inhibit the progression of women into the discipline. These masculinity structures resulted in the preservation of the status quo that value gender homogeneity within the faculty (Joeckel & Chesnes, 2009). As such, the masculinity orientation of the faculty remains old school where championing the four P's of management-power, prestige, profitability, and patriarchy- is common place. Moreover, the masculinized underpinning of the faculty promotes homosocial reproduction that intensifies female related barriers and stimulates conformity to the good ole boys network while restricting women's access to a gainful career in the sport industry (O'Connor, 2012). Furthermore, sport management students will continue to be inculcated by mentors who will advance pretenses to press forth the worthiness of male ethos to assure that gender has neutrality in the managerial mix of contemporary sport organizations.

Climate. The programmatic climate is an integral influence on student learning as positively perceived academic climates were found to be linked to better academic performance among medical students in the US (Wayne, Fortner, Kitzes, Timm, & Kalishman, 2013). Moreover, professional preparation programmatic climates need to enable students, faculty, and staff to develop and practice professional skills including the sustenance of needed competencies (Rania, Siri, Bagnasco, Aleo, & Sasso, 2013). However, Brus (2006) emphasized that the chillness of an academic climate can result in negative academic performance. Also duly emphasized in the extant literature is evidence showing that academic climates are chiller for women than men (Morris & Daniel, 2008). Consequently, climate is a variable that has relevance to a robust examination of gender treatment.

Climate has been identified as a construct relevant to management education and the treatment of students in the discipline. In studying how the climatic element shaped gender treatment in sport management education, there have been two prominence theoretical viewpoints proposed. Humberstone (2009) declared that a neo-liberal philosophy has been embedded in the climates of contemporary sport management educational programs. In Humberstone's opinion, neoliberalism is fostering climates in the UK that are counterproductive to the achievement of gender balance among students, faculty, and staff. Moreover, Humberstone maintained that the neo-liberalism is producing male hegemonic climates which have restrained sport management education from becoming a fully gender inclusive body. Kelan and Jones (2010) also alluded to the fact management educators have raised their neutrally which implies that gender has been assigned an irrelevant role in the preparation of managers. According to Kelan and Jones, postfeminist values are operating in environments which do not supposedly prioritize the gender element even when masculine biases are evident. Kelan and Jones further suggested that the postfeminist approaches have led to male hegemony causing gender inequalities to be ignored or downplayed as irrelevant to the professional preparation of future managers. While Kelan and Jones investigated general management educational programs, there emerged evidence that these characterizations depict the gender treatment among higher educational institutions that specialize in the training of future sport managers. Gender climates within sport management education have been classified as being reactive in nature with the recruitment of female students being facilitated by efforts to comply with governmental and legal dictums (Moore, Parkhouse, & Konrad, 2004). While these compliance focused structures are common, they can be barriers to both female and male students in obtaining job readiness for the

increasingly diversified 21st century workplace (Kelan & Jones, 2010). Gallos (1995) suggested that normative approaches to management have short-changed women in their preparation to enter the workforce. In explaining her position, Gallos (1995) specifically called attention to the erroneous assumptions that 'management education is responsive to the learning needs of women' and that 'educators are adequately preparing female students for organizational leadership roles within contemporary organizations'. Climates may not only affect the job readiness of future leaders, they may also be negatively impacting the recruitment and retention of sport management students (Davis & Geyfman, 2012). Over the last decade, there has been a sharp decline in the number of women pursuing managerial related studies. Academic climates may be adding constraints that inhibit the full potential of women aspiring to successful careers as sport managers (Moore, et al. 2004). As such, female students may not be comfortable in a reactionary oriented climate that does not enable them to develop and thrive into well-rounded professionals (Ibeh, Carter, Poff, & Hamill, 2008). *Curricula*. Contemporary curricula in management education have traditionally been designed to inculcate conceptual, human relations, and technical skills. During conceptualization of sport management education, early progenitors such as Parkhouse (1987) and Hardy (1987) called for the integration of business management foundations into existing sport management curricular systems. However, there are growing convictions that learning systems rooted in business management principles are in need of reform to meet the changing needs of prospective employers. According to Chia and Holt, (2008) curricula will need to be designed to be demonstrative, creative, and exhibit of the mannerisms of the management educators. Chia and Holt referred to this pedagogical approach as 'knowledge-by-exemplification'. Besides, Navarro (2008) explained that the current educational offerings for future managers lack the multidisciplinary integration and experiential training that are expected from today's employers. Navarro emphasized also that curricula be focused toward the cultivation of ethical and social responsibility. Particularly worrisome in this regard is the paucity of exposure management that educators have allocated to the treatment of gender in their curricular structures .

Gender has generally been non-relevant in management education curricula even though the concept has been identified as a central element in the study of management (Mills, 1997). Smith (2000) argued that management education curricula have been draped in masculine ethos despite a prevalent mindset of gender neutrality among educators. Accordingly, masculine attitudes have deluged curricular system of sport management education. In these biased conditions, lessons expressing feministic perspectives are inconsequentially viewed and frequently have their relevance to the business of sport. The injection of masculinity in sport management curricula instils a flawed view of sport as a domain of opportunity for all while largely promulgating and worshipping the masculine sport enterprise on a global scale. Furthermore, approaches of masculinity context gender as a nominal educational issue, rather than a salience construct in the managing of diversity. Finally, the gender myopic persisting in sport management education has given an insignificant status to gender equality. Perceptibility, sport management curricula are in the similar state of general management systems as that they are providing preparation that is pragmatically questionable. These limitations are especially noticeable by the curricular short-sightedness assigned to treatments of gender inequality and diversity issues, as well as the lack of experiential learning to adequately examine and debate current affairs.

*Support Services*. In alluding to management student support, Cavico and Mujtaba (2010) demarcated the relevance of adopting customer service initiatives. These offerings are frequently packaged through student engagement directives that are intended to supplement formal learning acquired in class settings. Bey, Young, and Walker (2011) indicated that engagement among sport management students can be effectively achieved through extracurricular services. Moreover, Professor Bey and his colleagues recognized the value of extramural activities to student services. Relevant to this discourse is the idea that support services can be instrumental in the cultivation of the student for the workplace. However, traditional paradigms of management education, including those of the sport variations, have traditionally carried forward learning through masculine-based directives. Knowledge dispersion in this mode has been predicated on managerialism and its prioritization of power, accountability, and efficiency with limited attention delegated to student support. In such masculine schemes, students do not generally have an opportunity to receive services that will enable an industrial exploration as well as opportunity to apply classroom learning to actual job situations in the sport industry. As such, professional development is dominated by the failure to recognize it as needed service. Consequently, valuable resources are being expended for services of nominal value in sport management education which is being distributed through patriarchal based trappings that are rooted in authoritative practices as student advising and instructive services instead of constructivist related student services.

**Implications :** In the preceding sections, a critical analysis of gender treatment in sport management education was performed. The examination focused on the professoriate, climate, curricula, and student support. The results of the analyses highlighted many repercussions that are theoretically interesting and presumably informative as gender diversification of the management profession continues to not be optimally achieved. The professoriate sets examples for students and other campus community members. Diversity is expected to be reaffirmed through the hiring in the professoriate (Chen & Yang, 2013). Consequently, the lack of gender diversity among faculty in the sport management field results in a decrease in the occurrence of quality female role models for students looking to enter the industry. Female students, particularly, will not be afforded the opportunity to observe other women succeeding in sport, or female instructors who can exhibit the managerial mannerisms that can result in career mobility. Moreover, sport management students of both genders will likely encounter insufficient mentoring in their pursuit to grow and develop into successful practitioners. As a result, students may not receive adequate counseling or be permitted to challenge the status quo of instances within a male dominant industry. Students, as raw talent, aspire to experience the industry, many for the first time, to see if their ideas can be placed into action to make a difference. Although mentorships can establish excellent collaborations to challenge gender dominant practices, the male dominant faculty may not have a desire or knowledge base to dispute measures that they undoubtedly helped champion in the past. Additionally, the patriarchal nature of the professoriate suggests that social exclusion is an accepted practice among educators. This could be nightmarish from a public relations standpoint for the sport management discipline at a time when it is on a growth trajectory in popularity on college campuses. Thus, the women-less faculty could signal the wrong message to practitioners that ‘good ole boys’ networks’ are standard practices. Finally, the masculine presence in the faculty will be difficult to redress in the manner that will prove to be in the best interest of the students. As such, the lack of gender diversity in the sport management professoriate, if not quickly resolved, could result in declining quality across student-faculty relations and overall student experiences.

As previously indicated, climate can have a key role in the determination of the student experience (Humberstone, 2009; Ibeh, Carter, Poff, & Hammill, 2008; Moore, Parkhouse, & Konrad, 2004). The post-feministic tendencies of current sport management climates, have therefore, created real impediment for students who have a proclivity to explore the role of social justice or social inclusion as alternative or supplement to gaining the intricacies of building a winning organization or obtaining of how to systematically lead a sport organization. The post-feministic climate could be difficult on students who have intent to cultivate impersonal skills for public relations or other pertinent careers but who had those ambitions subjugated by a proclivity within the discipline to inculcate masculine principles such as conventions on organizational effectiveness and efficiencies. As sport management educational climates are supposedly transformed from feministic thinking, female students must confront the masculine hegemony that remains intact. Students may find themselves in an unenviable predicament of either confirming to the climate and its value system, or isolating themselves from full climatic navigation. In either case, the professional potential of sport management students may be jeopardized thus endangering the discipline’s appeal to future students. Hence, the post-feministic climate along with its engendered impediments could make sport management education a hard sell as intensified competition from other disciplines increases for qualified students.

Educators’ strategies for professional preparation are initiated throughout the curricula. In this context, these devices connote the philosophies, primacies, and values of the discipline. Assessment of sport management educational programs clearly indicates a patriarchal course system where masculinity concepts have been inculcated under the inaccurate wrappings of organizational and social synchronization. Hence, the underpinnings of these curricular initiatives emphasize fulfilling consumer and human resource needs in disintegrated structures that fail to consider the relevance to inclusion, social justice, and gender diversity. In this regard, the learnedness of current sport management students are prepared through a broad program of studies that are myopia to industrial realities. For instance, the patriarchal acclimatization of sports seemingly views women’s sports as weaker depictions of athletic competencies rather than opportunities that are still developing in the marketplace. Additionally, present course content is remised in not adequately exploring the discriminative nature of the sport enterprise. Instead, course offerings tend to be rooted in the role of leadership, marketing, and financial systems in sustaining and improving operational efficacious. From this perspective, students are not supplied precise intelligence to comprehend the reality of masculinity dominance that pervades the sport industry and its problematic effects on the efforts to inculcate students on the needs and utilities served by matters of inclusion. Accordingly, sport management educators have not fully prepared students to adroitly carry forth the technical, conceptual, and human relation requisites as a practicing sport management professional.

Hence, the masculine biases in the curricular could signal deflated relevance as a central industrial leader. Sport management educational programs have experienced substantial student demand due to the popularity, visibility, and glamor of the sport institution. However, student retention in this domain has been performed through ineffectual and generally out of date practices that have included student advising and interaction with faculty members regarding lecture content and class projects. Student services have failed in offering a constructivist approach that relates to the professional growth and development of students by linking their ambitions to real-world opportunities through the practitioner. These disappointments can be attributed to the muscularity proclivities of the sport management discipline which prioritize knowledge through classroom and lecturing activities. Moreover, the lack of feministic elements has led to support services that really do not comprehend the importance in the extracurricular collaborations with the practitioners. In addition, the male dominance could inhibit or delay some students from identifying the optimal services to permit them to explore and gain a real-world understanding of the sport industry. The founding of optimal support could be genuine travails for female sport management students who frequently have had to overcome formidable career obstructions in a masculine bastion where opportunities for effective mentorship and professional exchanges can be nebulous to aspiring sport managers. Given its masculine approach to student support, sport management education could have difficulty retaining students without salient discipline transformation, thus prompting forthcoming sustainability issues for the discipline to contemplate.

**Conclusion and Summative Measurements for Change :** In conclusion, sport management is a relatively young discipline that has not successfully established gender inclusion among students and faculty. Particularly, troublesome is the male dominance within this specialization which has consequential implications for the professoriate, academic climate, curricula, and student support. In an effort to allay the current gender disparity facing the management education in the sport realm, the following summative measures have been highlighted for review and implementation consideration. Although concentrated on sport, the outlined propositions have applicability to other segments of management education possessing similar gender equality chasms.

Through its ability to shape an academic environment, course offerings, inculcated subject matters, and student assessment, the professoriate control the direction and development of each academic unit. According to comments enunciated by Jones et al. (2008) the low representation of women in the professoriate is alarming when viewed by those stakeholders desiring improved gender equality in the sport management discipline. Consequently, we advocate for aggressive recruiting actions to increase the proportion of women holding tenure and tenure-track faculty positions in higher education. Such actions include encouraging qualified instructors from other specializations to pursue opportunities within the sport management professoriate when keen interest and a sincere appreciation of the uniqueness of sport can be demonstrated. Furthermore, we are cognizant that gender balancing within the professoriate can be somewhat of a daunting directive. As such, sport management educators will need to collaborate with leaders in various specializations to promulgate professorships as women-friendly careers.

As previously indicated, the sport management educational climates have been quite chilly for female aspirants at the student and professorial ranks. Gender-neutral climates are becoming more normative thus heightening incidences of masculine hegemony and increasing the contentment with gender disparities. However, it is our position that the broadening of the female professoriate will enable the programmatic climate to become warmer to those women aspiring to teach or to receive professional preparation. Additionally, we are advocating that climates become adaptive and integrative to feministic concepts, philosophies, concepts, and values. This transformation can be progressed through a blend of diversity and sensitive training, discussion groups, and teaching and research partnerships between female and male professors.

The sport management curriculum is another core area in need of adjustment. Presently, course structures are not adequately preparing students for the ever-changing sport industry. Curricula are still shaped by the masculine roots of power, profit, and organizational parsimoniousness while inadequate attention is ascribed to gender and diversity issues. We believe gender based and management by diversity courses must be adopted into the sport management curricula. Moreover, these course revisions should be approved and recognized by the Commission on Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA) as accreditation standards. Finally student support is an area not to be underestimated in the exploration of student treatment. The devices of student support are prominent determinants of whether successful student retention can be instituted. Previous analysis suggests that support services have not been targeted to career readiness for sport management majors thus failing to established sufficient connectedness between students and professional resources in the field.

This remissness in not aligning with the practitioners has impeded the professional development of female and male students. Consequently, efforts should be directed to creating alliances between aspiring sport managers and practicing sport management professionals. Such exchanges can be fostered through regularly inviting practitioners on campus to meet and discuss pressing industrial issues. It is imperative that these events involve female leaders of sport and allied industries to serve as role models to students. Advisory boards that consist of industrial leaders are necessary to review and transform student support. The leaders, in particular, can remove the masculine disconnect from services which can broaden opportunities to explore and become involved with contemporary management issues. Moreover, as patriarchal biases and weaknesses are removed, female leaders will likely have expanded prospects to create rich student mentoring arrangements. In crafting revised support systems, broadening student involvement in professional associations could relieve the restrained learning environment emanating from the presence of a masculine climate thus ramping up student retention in sport management education. Ideally the professional affiliations can serve as platforms where students can discuss problematic situations that may be occurring in their studies while receiving encouragement and advice as to how these situations can be resolved. Such support could be instrumental in maintaining students on their career paths when unjust impediments stemming from male dominance become overwhelming.

In summary, this section outlined the systemic structure for constructively reforming gender treatment in sport management education. Although this proposed protocol includes an amalgamation of climatic, curricular, and supportive ingredients, the fundamental additive is the augmentation of women representation in the professoriate. Diversity within sport management faculty is a key foundational piece of the student educational experience.

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