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An Examination of the Competencies Needed by Sport Facility Managers in Taiwan

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Sport industry is big business, and its worldwide growth in the 21st century has been phenomenal. Sport managers are key for the sport industry to succeed. They are responsible for planning, making decisions, organizing, hiring and supervising staff, and leading, motivating, and controlling organizational resources. Logically, competencies should be identified in order to adequately prepare personnel to be competent sport managers, and these areas reflect the competencies that are especially needed in the sport industry.

In recent years, competencies studies in the field of recreational sport management has been a popular research area (Afthison, 1993; Barcelona, 2001; Case & Branch, 2003; Chen, 1993; Cheng, 1993; Ellard, 1984; Hatfield, Wrenn, & Bretting, 1987; Jamieson, 1980, Jennings, 1984, 1987; Judd, 1995; Kim, 1997; Lambrecht, 1987, 1991; Lin, 1998; Nielson, 1990, Parks & Quain, 1986; Quain & Parks, 1986; Quinn, 1994; Skipper, 1990; Toh, 1997). These scholars have not only focused on the importance of competencies for sport managers but also have identified the competencies needed for various positions in this field. The main issue in the field of sport management competency studied is the development of research instruments. For example, such instruments have been developed as Recreational Sport Competency Analysis (RSCA) Instrument (Jamieson, 1980), Competency of Sport Managers Instrument (COSM) (Toh, 1997), and Athletic Club Managers Survey (Lambrecht, 1987). Also, these instruments have been used in several different countries, such as United States, Taiwan, Australia, and Greece.

The purpose of this study was to determine and identify the competencies needed for sport facility managers in Taiwan and to develop a sport management competency model. The research design of this study was a survey design, which used the Competencies Needed of Sport Facility Managers Assessment Survey (SFMAS) for data collection. Participants were 355 sport managers selected from among athletic directors of colleges or universities, chairpersons or directors of physical education departments, chairpersons or directors of sport and recreation management departments, top-level and middle-level managers in sport agencies of the government, secretariats of sport associations, managers of professional sport settings, and sports and recreation club managers.

Three statistical techniques, descriptive statistics, factor analysis, and One-Way ANOVA were used to analyze the data for this study. According to demographic data, the majority sport managers in Taiwan are male, with a bachelor's degree, ranging in age from 41 to 45 years, and having worked between 10 to 15 years. The results of factor analysis identified 8-factors and associated competencies. They are Organization Management, Budgeting, Sport Event Management, Sport Facility Management, Risk Management, Computer Utilization, Communication, and Human Resource Management factors. Each factor, by definition, included several competency statements that had some degree of relationship among them. For example, the Organization Management factor which represents important management skill, consists of developing public relations, evaluating employee satisfaction, and conducting performance appraisals. Therefore, the key is not only to recognize the importance of each factor, but also to realize the relevance of the included competencies for sport managers. In order to determine whether there were significant differences between the seven groups in the perceived important competencies for sport managers, a One-Way AONVA was conducted to analyze the nine factors. The one-way ANOVA and follow-up comparison revealed that the seven management groups differed significantly on several of the 8-factors. The follow-up tests showed significant differences among the seven groups except for the Risk Management Factor. Competency needs should be different for these different managers in order to achieve differentiated requirements for professionals in the seven areas. Athletic directors of colleges or universities placed significantly more emphasis on Sport Facility Management and Human Resource Management. Top-level and middle-level managers in sport agencies of the government placed more emphasis on Organization Management and Sport Event Management. Budgeting and Communication were reported as more important by sports and recreation club managers. Risk Management was not significant among the seven groups, but chairpersons or directors of sport and recreation management departments reported it as more important than the other groups. Chairpersons or directors of physical education departments placed more emphasis on Computer Utilization. The Organization Management factor was reported as more important by secretariats of sport associations. Managers of professional sport settings tended to be more

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moderate in the ratings than members of other groups. Risk management had a high mean score among all seven groups, and there were no differences among the groups. Obviously, risk management is an extremely important competency for all sport managers in Taiwan. The difference in the other 8 factors among the seven groups clearly revealed that the main competency factor is related to the job type. For example, sports and recreation club managers placed more emphasis on the Communication and Budgeting factors. Because both factors are necessary for the operation and management of sport business, their importance is specifically emphasized by sports and recreation club managers.

The eight factors and associated competencies derived in this study constitute a solid basis for the scope of knowledge and performance needed by sport facility managers in Taiwan. They provide a foundation for design of curriculum and the employment and evaluation of personnel. However, they provide only the beginning information for a knowledge base. More studies need to be conducted of specific competencies for specific jobs in sport facility management. Also, research should be conducted on the actual relationship of these factors and competencies to successful job performance. These and similar research studies logically follow from the current research.