An Examination of Sport Management Doctoral Programme Research Requirements

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Contextualization

This paper is based on data from some preliminary qualitative research we conducted examining the doctoral programme research requirements within the academic discipline of sport management at institutions of higher education in Canada and the United States. We explored this topic by doing an analysis of relevant documents and websites for each programme, and completing initial interviews with members of the graduate faculty at some of the universities. We concluded with a discussion of some implications our work has for future research related to doctoral training in higher education, and practical implications for doctoral education in sport management and other academic disciplines.

Abstract: *Scholars have conducted research and written about the curriculum standards and issues of accreditation in sport management at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Although this research is certainly important, it is limited in the sense that it has not really focused in any substantial detail on professional preparation for doctoral students (i.e. the research requirements at colleges and universities with sport management doctoral programmes). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to provide a preliminary assessment of the research requirements for sport management programmes in North America that have doctoral degree programmes. The researchers conducted a document analysis of all available doctoral degree plans and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in various sport management programmes. Themes revealed some distinct differences between programmes in Canada and the United States. These findings along with the educational implications and future research directions are discussed.*

Introduction

The doctoral degree has been conceived as the highest academic degree an individual can earn from an institution of higher education in North American society, particularly in the United States (U.S.) (Gardner, 2009).The purpose of a doctoral programme is to prepare "a student to become a scholar: that is, to discover, integrate, and apply knowledge, as well as to communicate and disseminate it" (Gardner, 2009, p. 29).Doctoral degrees can be divided into three major categories. First, professional doctorates prepare students to work in professional fields such as medicine (MD) and law (JD), and the focus is on training through lengthy clinical experiences and internships. Second, the professional research doctorate such as the doctor of education (EdD) includes a research component in its training but is also intended for use in the professional realm (e.g. school superintendent, university athletic director).Finally, the research doctorate (e.g. Doctor of Philosophy or PhD) is awarded for academic research in a given field representing original knowledge, typically culminating in the production of a thesis or dissertation demonstrating this research (Gardner, 2009).

The types of doctoral degrees that are offered and available for students to earn in North American society will depend on the institution of higher education a student attends, and the academic discipline or field of study they purse (Gardner, 2009).According to the North American Society of Sport Management (NASSM) website, in 2010 (when this current study

was conducted) there were twenty-six universities in the United States and Canada that offered a doctoral degree programme with an emphasis in sport management. Typically, students in sport management programmes are able to pursue an EdD or PhD degree, where these degree programmes, particularly the PhD in the U.S., focus on three major components: coursework, examination/assessment of skills gained through coursework, and the production of a thesis or dissertation as original research (see Gardner, 2009).

As a fairly young academic discipline in higher education, sport management has grown into a viable and legitimate area of study for students since the first sport management programme was established at Ohio University in 1966.Since then, scholars have conducted research and written about the curriculum standards and issues of accreditation in sport management at the undergraduate and graduate levels (see Hardy, 1987; Kelley, Beitel, DeSensi, Blanton, 1994; NASPE-NASSM Joint Task Force on Sport Management Curriculum and Accreditation, 1993; Parkhouse, 1987; Schneider & Stier, 2000).Essentially, the emphasis has been on the core areas and competencies that students completing sport management programmes should have after they leave higher education and become sport management practitioners, educators, or scholars/researchers. Most of this research, however, has focused on curriculum issues at the undergraduate and master's levels with very little emphasis on curriculum issues at the doctoral level.

There have been a few studies that have surveyed search committee chairs to gain their perceptions on graduate student preparation for faculty positions (e.g. Mondello, Mahony, Hums, & Moorman, 2002) and doctoral programme faculty's views on whether doctoral programmes are meeting the needs of the faculty job market (e.g. Mahony, Mondello, Hums, & Judd, 2004). Findings from these studies suggest that these programmes were not supplying enough qualified sport management doctoral degree recipients to meet the needs of the job market. Although this literature is certainly important, it is limited in the sense that it has not focused in any substantial detail on arguably the most important aspect of professional preparation for doctoral students (i.e. the research requirements at colleges and universities with sport management doctoral programmes).This is important to consider because the heavy emphasis on research and research course requirements is what distinguishes doctoral programmes from master's and undergraduate level sport management curricula.

The topic of doctoral education has been discussed in several other fields and academic disciplines such as nursing (e.g. Anderson, 2000; Wood, 2005; Ziemer, Brown, Fitzpatrick, Manfredi, O'leary & Valiga, 1992), criminal justice (e.g. Flanagan, 1990), educational technology (e.g. Clark, 1978), public administration (e.g. Brewer, Douglas, Facer, O'Toole, 1999; Brewer, Facer, O'Toole, & Douglas, 1998; Stallings, 1986), social work (e.g. Fraser, Jenson, & Lewis, 1991), psychology (e.g. Maher, 1999), political science (e.g. Schwartz-Shea, 2003), kinesiology (e.g. Solmon, 2009), education (e.g. Atieno Okech, Astramovich, Johnson, Hoskins, & Rubel, 2006; Page, 2001; Pallas, 2001), and business (e.g. Brush et al, 2003; Danneels & Lilien, 1998; Summer et al., 1990; Tushman & O'Reilly, 2007).This literature has focused on a range of topics within doctoral programmes including the quality and growth of these programmes, support provided for doctoral students, the background and attributes of faculty in these programmes, accreditation and curriculum issues, and the research training and preparation of doctoral students for faculty positions as teachers and scholars.

As it relates to the particular focus of our current study, the "paradigm wars" (see Gage, 1989) and the issue of quantitative and qualitative research course requirements in the curriculums has also emerged as an important consideration in some of the literature in academic disciplines outside of sport management. For example, Page (2001) discussed the many challenges that the faculty in a school of education at a research university faced as they engaged in the process of redesigning the doctoral curriculum to expose students to epistemological diversity related to their methodological preparation. That is, given that the

faculty had historically been dominated by individuals who exclusively embraced a positivist, quantitative approach to doing research, getting the faculty to include (or at least acknowledge) alternative ways of knowing and carrying out research (i.e. qualitative inquiry) and designing the curriculum accordingly, presented several potential road blocks to this epistemological diversity. However, changes in the personnel of the school (particularly the hiring of a new dean from another institution) helped facilitate efforts to bring about change to the doctoral curriculum and research culture in the school.

In particular, the school decided to do several things to bring about this change. First, the school sought out a full-time qualitative methodologist in an attempt to complement the resident quantitative methodologist who had presided over the statistical preparation of students in a sequence of several courses and served on scores of doctoral dissertations. Second, the school assembled a methodology task force to review its course offerings and bring about recommendations. Third, the school created a year-long introductory core course in research methodologies that would be team-taught by a quantitative and qualitative scholar and required of all entering doctoral students, regardless of their programme area in education. Finally, a second core course focusing on educational foundations, small roundtables for first-year students, and a first-year cohort structure were all proposed as a way to help bring about this change to the doctoral programme.

Within the field of political science, Schwartz-Shea (2003) focused on the doctoral requirements and course offerings in methods and methodology of 57 doctoral programmes in the U.S. Results of this study revealed there is a great imbalance when it comes to course offerings related to quantitative and qualitative research methods, with the quantitative approach being the predominant focus in the curriculums of these programmes .In expressing concerns with this emphasis, Schwartz-Shea discussed how “doctoral students interested in qualitative methods of the interpretive epistemological persuasion find very little in the curriculum to satisfy their needs” (2003, p. 383).This author further argued that when doctoral programmes lack a philosophy of science requirement (i.e. a course that exposes students to various paradigms and epistemological perspectives) “these systematic interpretive approaches to research are misunderstood at best and, at worst, denigrated as unscientific, not appropriate for researchers in the discipline of political science” (Schwartz-Shea, 2003, p. 383).Moreover, according to Schwartz-Shea, this has the potential to create the mentality that quantitative methods are more intensive and applicable to political phenomena, and therefore, worthy of the precious curricular hours that have traditionally been devoted to them. In contrast, qualitative methods are seen as tools that can simply be picked up on one’s own time as needed for particular research projects.

The findings from the above-mentioned studies of doctoral programme requirements in these other fields raise important questions for sport management educators and scholars as well as educators and scholars in other disciplines to ponder, particularly those who are in positions of academic leadership (e.g. deans, division chairs, department heads) and members of graduate faculty charged with the responsibility of training and educating doctoral students. More specifically, it is our belief that there is a need for research geared toward exploring the similarities and differences between doctoral programme research requirements in the U.S. and Canada, as well as across various programmes within each of these countries in North America. Therefore, the purpose of our study was to provide a preliminary assessment of the research requirements for sport management programmes in North America that have doctoral degree programmes. This research is important because it provides the NASSM membership and other interested parties with some insight into what research paradigms, approaches, designs, and methods are being promoted and transmitted to current doctoral students in the sport management academic discipline. This certainly could have important implications for faculty and professionals in various fields and academic disciplines in general, and the future and direction of the sport management discipline and professoriate in particular.

Methodology

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection methods for this study of the research training and requirements of sport management doctoral programmes consisted of two primary methods: a document analysis approach and individual interviews .First, we compiled the26 available doctoral degree plans (all of which were PhD programmes) from the websites of schools in North America listed on the NASSM website as having doctoral level degrees in sport management. Similar to the process outlined by Fink and Kensicki (2002), we separately analyzed and coded the content of each of the individual degree plans in order to identify the course requirements of doctoral students at each university. However, through the process of evaluating these degree plans, it became evident that an additional research method would be needed in order to achieve a better understanding of the manner in which sport management doctoral students are being trained in these programmes. Many of these degree plans offered limited insight into the actual instruction and preparation of doctoral students. The course requirements are frequently presented vaguely or in wording that is not easily understood by someone unfamiliar with the "context- dependent knowledge" of each programme (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

In efforts to gain additional insight into the content of these degree plans, we identified a purposive sample of possible interview participants (Patton, 1990), which consisted of graduate faculty members from various sport management programmes in North America. Email messages were sent inviting at least one faculty member from each programme to participate in the study. In total, we were able to secure interviews from 10 faculty members from universities in the United States and 4 interviews from faculty members at Canadian schools for a total of 14 participants (see Table 1 below).We gained approval from the institutional review board (IRB) on human subjects at our university before contacting and interviewing our participants.

Table 1. Participant information including position, university location and faculty size.

Participant	Position	University	Location	No. of graduate faculty
1	Full Prof.	Large Southern	U.S.	5
2	Assoc.Prof.	Large Southern	U.S.	6
3	Assoc.Prof.	Northeastern	U.S.	4
4	Assoc.Prof.	Northeastern	U.S.	7
5	Assoc.Prof.	Southern	U.S.	2
6	Assoc.Prof.	Western	U.S.	1
7	Assoc.Prof.	Northern	U.S.	12
8	Assoc.Prof.	Midwestern	U.S.	3
9	Assoc.Prof.	Midwestern	U.S.	4
10	Assistant Prof.	Northern	U.S.	3
11	Assoc.Prof.	Eastern	Canada	5
12	Assoc.Prof.	Central	Canada	4
13	Assoc.Prof.	Eastern	Canada	11
14	Full Prof.	Western	Canada	1

The primary data for this study were obtained through semi-structured interviews with the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).The interview questions were structured in a manner which allowed us to obtain information from the participants regarding their specific doctoral training and their perspective on the manner in which the doctoral students in their respective programmes were being instructed. Through these interviews we were able to also get a sense of the overall perceptions and attitudes towards the general research processes that are undertaken in academia. Interviews were conducted via telephone, and in one case, in person. Each individual interview lasted anywhere from twenty minutes to an hour in length.

During these interviews, detailed notes were recorded and then transcribed in order to create full-length interview transcripts. To ensure credibility and reliability of the content of these transcriptions, throughout the interview the lead researcher continually used member checking techniques to ensure the content accuracy of the notes (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).At the conclusion of each interview the researcher then reviewed the entire content of the notes with the participant to once again ensure the accuracy of the notes and interpretations. The participants were afforded the opportunity to expand upon the interpretations of what they had said during the interview, or they could clarify some of the areas that were vague or unclear.

In order to analyze the interview data, a full content analysis of the transcribed field notes was conducted (Berg, 2001).By conducting a content analysis of the data we were able to identify some broad patterns and themes. Initially, both researchers read through the transcripts independently to form preliminary patterns and themes in the data. Then, we corroborated and discussed our individual interpretations until consensus was reached on the major themes discussed below.

Findings

This study was a preliminary assessment of the research requirements for Sport Management doctoral degree programmes in North America. From the examination of the degree plans and interview data, a few major themes emerged. First, In line with Wood's (2005) comparison of doctoral programmes in the U.S., Canada, and the United Kingdom, we found Canadian programmes were typically less structured in terms of course requirements, and emphasized qualitative research training for graduate students. U.S. programmes were much more structured, with several course requirements, and the focus was strongly on traditional, quantitative training for graduate students (see also Capraro & Thompson, 2008). In addition, faculty in both Canadian and U.S. programmes indicated the need for researchers in the field to allow research questions and problems to guide and dictate research approaches. We will further expound upon these themes below.

Canadian Programmes

Canadian sport management programmes and the course requirements in these programmes tend to be less structured than programmes in the U.S. Students from the Canadian universities represented in this study were only required to enrol in between one and four required courses. However, some of the programmes had no actual required courses for their students. For instance, participant 12 commented: "Our PhD programme is rather decentralized when it comes to the courses that the students take. By this I mean that we have no required PhD courses." Participant 14 echoed this by stating: "There are no required courses for our PhD programme." This was supported by information that was presented on the degree plans obtained from these participants' universities. For example, the wording of one particular degree plan from a Canadian programme stated: "No course requirements. Courses decided by supervisor and student in preparation for conducting independent research in an area which will create new knowledge."As was the case with the other Canadian participants, the rest of the students' courses in this programme were negotiated between the students and their advisors based on the background and goals of the students. As confirmed by one participant: "The courses that the students take are negotiated between them and their advisors."Similarly, Participant 13 commented: "The programme is based on the needs and wants of the students." These common sentiments from the participants in this study are also confirmed by the wording in a degree plan from another Canadian university: "The programme for each student will be tailored to that student."Additionally, "The type and amount of coursework depends on the student's background and chosen field of study." In sum, though students from the Canadian programmes are advised to take certain courses by their advisors and advisory committees, there are few if any courses that are mandated by their universities.

With regard to research, Canadian programmes tend to have a more qualitative tradition than those from the U.S. Participant 12 described: "We have such a strong qualitative push from the university." Participant 10 who received her degree from a Canadian university also confirmed this sentiment: "I was actually trained to do more qualitative research." This qualitative push from these Canadian universities has also led to some advisors intentionally pushing their students to try to "think quantitatively."In particular, Participant 12 explicitly stated: "With my advisees I am really trying to push them to think quantitatively about their research." However, most of the participants interviewed from Canadian universities indicated that their preferred methods of research are qualitative. Participant 14 emphasized: "I use strictly qualitative research methods in my research."Similarly Participant 11 expressed: "I primarily conduct qualitative research because of the lack of theory in my area of interest."When comparing his particular research to his colleagues Participant 12 explained: "My research is not necessarily the norm here at our university. The other faculty members are geared more toward doing qualitative research."These data suggest that Canadian sport management programmes are more influenced by the qualitative tradition.

U.S. Programmes

When compared to Canadian sport management programmes, the programmes in the U.S. are much more structured in regards to course requirements for the students. Evaluation of the degree plans from programmes in the U.S. revealed that these programmes have explicit core course requirements that must be met by their students (only one programme was not highly structured). For instance, when comparing her programme to Canadian programmes, Participant 10 stated: "Our students are expected to take something like 70 hours worth of courses. Our programme is housed in the Kinesiology programme so our courses are based on the requirements of the Kinesiology people." Most of the participants indicated that their course requirements were indeed highly structured and predetermined; yet, the actual course requirements of each individual university were varied. There was an array of different hourly requirements at each of these universities. However, most of the participants from the U.S. indicated that their students were required to take a certain amount of research methods courses. Participant 3 conveyed this common sentiment: "Our students have to take at least three research design courses." This typically meant that their students were required to take multiple statistic courses along with methods courses designed for statistical analysis as was demonstrated by the following quotations: Participant 9,"They must take at least three statistics classes."; Participant 5,"Our students must take fifteen core research hours. These contain required statistics courses and advanced research methods and statistics courses."; Participant 8,"The students must take fifteen hours of statistics courses."

As evident from the degree plan documents gathered from sport management programmes in the U.S. along with the interview data collected from faculty members in these programmes, the course requirements from sport management programmes in the U.S. are highly structured when compared to Canadian programmes.

The highly structured nature of sport management programmes in the U.S. indicates somewhat of a quantitative bias in the training of sport management doctoral students. Participant 3 lamented this potential quantitative bias by offering what she believes are the beliefs of many in academic sport management: "[Qualitative research] is not scientific enough…is not rigorous enough… [and] at the top levels of sport management, qualitative research is not okay."Participant 2 indicated that in the programme at his university, the faculty members were guiding their students to take at least twelve more advanced statistics hours because they see the field of sport management moving toward more advanced research methods. Considering that the majority of this particular interview revolved around quantitative methods, it could be interpreted that according to this participant, advanced statistics were deemed to be advanced research methods, which further perpetuates a quantitative bias.

It is also important to note that this view is not shared by all of the participants in this study. In particular, Participant 1 firmly stated, “The paradigm wars are dead. Only a few people are holding on to those arguments.”Some participants expressed that they have noticed a shift in recent years where more and more qualitative research is being accepted by sport management scholars. Many of the participants indicated that faculty members and students in their departments are embracing more of a mixed method approach to research. Participant 3 commented: “Most of our students are moving toward looking at mixed methods in their research.” Though there are conflicting views about a perceived quantitative research bias in the field of sport management, when examining the transcripts from U.S. participants, one could surmise that many of the participants still held the belief that quantitative research is the more acceptable standard of research in sport management.

As previously discussed, most U.S. programmes require completion of a certain number of course hours that pertain to statistics and quantitative methods. Yet, some of the participants also indicated that their students were encouraged to enrol in qualitative courses. For instance, this can be observed in the following quotations from participants currently affiliated with programmes in the U.S.: Participant 8, “They can take qualitative courses but are not required to.”; Participant 9, “Qualitative research classes are optional.”

However, these courses were indicated as being *optional* with only very few of the programmes *requiring* qualitative research courses. Participant 7 indicated: “Our students are not required to take qualitative research courses.” Only Participant 1 from a U.S. programme specified that students in his programme were *required* to complete a “good qualitative course.”With the majority of programmes only having optional qualitative research courses, it can be viewed that this furthers some of the participants’ beliefs that a quantitative bias still exists in these sport management programmes.

Common Perceptions of Research

Finally, there are some common perceptions of research that were expressed by participants from Canadian and U.S. programmes alike. Notably, all of the participants spoke to the belief that the methods used in a study should be driven by the research questions of the study. This can be observed from the following quotations from the interview transcripts: Participant 1, “Research is about answering questions: using multiple tools to get robust findings.”; Participant 6, “The research methods that I use for my studies now are adapted to the needs for the study.”; Participant 7, “The methods are based on the question.”; Participant 4, “The methods that are used should not drive the research. We want our students to be steered by the content that they want to study, not the methods.”; Participant 11, “The methods that our students are using are based on the questions they are asking.”; Participant 13, “The methods that should be used should be the ones that offer the strongest way to engage the problem that you are looking at in your research. The question should drive the method.”

The general consensus from the participants is that the methods used in a study should be the most appropriate methods for answering the research questions presented in a particular study. Generally, the participants suggested that their desire was for their students to be “topic-driven” as opposed to “method-driven” in their research endeavours. It was a general consensus that people limit themselves when they are tied to a particular method.

The next theme drawn from the interview data suggested that students should know how to properly conduct both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Again, the participants of this study conveyed their beliefs that scholars limit the scope of questions they can ask and answer if they only know how to use one specific type of research method. Participant 1 used the analogy of building a house: “If you are going to build a house, it makes no sense to not have a hammer. You need to have all the tools that are needed to be able to effectively answer your research questions.” This same participant echoed a common sentiment among the participants of this study in suggesting that it is not beneficial for scholars or students to

only be capable of conducting research with one type of methodology. Other participants conveyed this sentiment by stating: "We feel that our students should not be bound by a particular method; [they] should have all the methodological tools." and "I think that they need to be able to do both types of research so that they do not limit themselves in the types of questions that they ask in their research."

Across Canadian and U.S. programmes alike, the participants generally affirmed the notion that sport management students and scholars should be able to properly execute both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Now we will discuss the possible implications of these findings.

Discussion

From these findings, interesting conclusions can be drawn. To begin, one of the themes that emerged from the data is the general belief among the participants that the research questions in any given study should drive the research methods of that study. The participants spoke to this by further stating that scholars should know how to conduct both qualitative and quantitative research. However, it is our observation that these beliefs are not addressed in the sport management programmes represented in this study. This is first noticeable in the course requirements at the programmes in this study. Sport management programmes at universities in the U.S. all require training in quantitative research methods yet most do not *require* training in qualitative research. This is consistent with findings from other fields in that doctoral students in the U.S. tend to have heavy requirements of statistical/quantitative courses, but not necessarily qualitative methods (Capraro & Thompson, 2008; Schwartz-Shea, 2003). Indeed, it is important for sport management doctoral students to be able to properly implement and interpret statistical measures; however, how can these students properly implement qualitative methods into studies without proper training? As suggested from the findings of this study, qualitative research methods courses are only optional in most U.S. sport management programmes. Perhaps this speaks to the view of some of the participants that a quantitative bias still exists in the field of sport management. It might also be indicative of a mindset (be it conscious or subconscious) among many sport management faculty that it is not necessary for curricular hours to be devoted to teaching and training doctoral students in qualitative inquiry (see Schwartz-Shea, 2003).

Second, faculty members from the Canadian sport management programmes represented in this study indicated that their programmes were tailored to the wants and needs of the students. This is consistent with other fields of study (e.g. nursing) at Canadian universities (see Wood, 2005). Most of the participants from these programmes indicated that they themselves, along with the other faculty members, conduct more qualitative research. Thus, their students are more apt to study qualitative research methods. Though this is the opposite end of the spectrum from U.S. programmes, there is still an imbalance between the belief that the research questions should drive the research methods and the overall exposure and training to multiple research methods. Indeed, although Canadian programmes are less stringent in their course requirements, it could be argued that students should still have proper exposure to both qualitative and quantitative research methods. One participant from a Canadian programme expressed a similar view point. He commented that currently he is steering his advisees to think more quantitatively about their research because of the heavy qualitative push from the rest of the programme.

Research methods courses are not the only venues where students learn to conduct research; students also learn from their advisors. As some of the secondary findings from the interview data suggested, most of the students are admitted into their respective programmes based on the congruency of their research interests with their advisors' research interests. As many of the participants indicated, it is logical to assume that advisors and students would have similar interests so that the advisor could guide the student in the

process of learning to research in that area. Thus, the research methods used by the students are also likely guided by the advisors' preferred research methods. If, indeed, the research questions for a study should drive the research methods as the data from this study have suggested, advisors would do well to expose their students to multiple research methods courses in order to provide their students with the proper tools needed to address a multitude of research questions, and choose which type of research questions they might desire to address in the present and future.

In thinking about the role of sport management faculty in determining the types of research methods doctoral students utilize and are exposed to (i.e. quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods) as well as the research questions they seek to address, it is important to reconsider the idea of the paradigm wars. Although one of the participants in our study suggested the paradigm wars are dead (i.e. the debate concerning the appropriateness and legitimacy of quantitative versus qualitative approaches to research is no longer necessary), it is our contention that as long as the historically dominant paradigm (i.e. quantitative, statistical approaches to research) continues to permeate the doctoral education in our field (particularly in the U.S.) as it has in other disciplines (e.g. political science, see Schwartz-Shea, 2003; education, see Page, 2001; management, see Gephart, 2004), an engagement with the discourse surrounding the paradigmatic hegemony of quantitative research methods, the divergent paradigm of qualitative research methods, and their respective epistemological foundations is warranted. Moreover, the pervasiveness of the qualitative paradigm in sport management doctoral education within the Canadian context lends further credence to the notion that we should continue (or begin) discussions - instead of muting them - about the impact of paradigmatic assumptions on the doctoral curriculum and education in our field.

As with any relatively young academic field, scholars and students alike have begun to critically examine the training that is being provided to them by their programmes. Naturally, scholars are looking for ways to find understandings that go beyond narrow approaches to knowledge discovery. As the field of sport management continues in its maturation and we attempt to manage programme excellence during our continued transition from potential to merit as Jacquelyn Cuneen (2004) discussed in her 2003 Zeigler lecture, we encourage doctoral students and their advisors to heed the challenges set forth by Amis and Silk (2005) to examine and possibly embrace a variety of epistemological and methodological paradigms. Scholars in other fields have discussed the importance of preparing doctoral students for epistemological diversity (see Baxter-Magolda, 1996; Pallas, 2001).For doctoral students this begins with exposure, likely through different academic courses, to different ways of thinking about and conducting research as they progress through their doctoral programmes. As more sport management programmes are being established and/or upgraded, perhaps those in charge of curriculum decisions should strongly consider making it a requirement for doctoral students to take both qualitative and quantitative research methods courses and seminars.

This is something that occurred within the sport management doctoral programme at the university where the second author is a faculty member. That is, when this faculty member was hired to a tenure-track position in the Sport Management programme he was given the support of the academic leadership to create a doctoral seminar (that is now a requirement for all students in the programme) that focuses on qualitative inquiry and exposes the students to some of the ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological foundations of the qualitative research tradition. The goal of this change to the curriculum was not only to expose students to a research tradition that has historically been marginalized in the academy in general, and sport management programmes in particular, but also encourage critical reflection and dialogue among doctoral students and faculty alike; this certainly could help current and future sport management faculty move beyond the

dominant paradigms and ways of knowing that have prevailed throughout sport management's short time in the academy.

Limitations and Future Directions

As a preliminary investigation of sport management doctoral degree programmes in North America, this study has some notable limitations. First, this study was limited because not every sport management programme in North America with a doctoral degree was represented in the interview sample. Though the researchers made multiple attempts to solicit participation, complete representation for every programme in North America was not achieved. Second, this study only examined doctoral degree plans and did not take into account the entirety of the graduate education (i.e. Master's level). It is likely that some graduate students (particularly those with intentions of pursuing doctoral degrees) receive a portion of their research training during their Master's degree programme. Finally, prolonged engagement in the field would have provided us with more time to glean greater insight into how doctoral students in these programmes are being trained. Despite these limitations, we do believe this study provides a preliminary assessment and foundation for future research on doctoral training in sport management.

In light of the limitations and benefits of this study, there are some notable future directions for research related to this topic. First, similar to the work by Page (2001) that was discussed earlier, in-depth qualitative case studies of various sport management academic programmes should be conducted. This type of research would address the concerns of Brenda Pitts (2001), who stated in her Zeigler address, "doctoral education in sport management is in need of examination" (p. 7).Indeed, case studies would allow for researchers to thoroughly examine doctoral education by including the voices and perspectives of current and former doctoral students, and tenure track faculty who work with doctoral students. This certainly would provide a more complete picture of the training that occurs in these programmes, and perhaps, what needs to be done to improve things. Second, it might also be beneficial to survey members of various academic associations (e.g. NASSM) to further assess a large group of educational stakeholders' perceptions of what doctoral education is and should be. An understanding of doctoral education in sport management will ultimately allow us to improve the research being produced in this growing and evolving field of study.

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