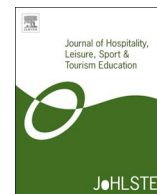


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## Higher education in sport management: A systematic review of research topics and trends

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### ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the literature on Higher Education in sport management published in international journals from 1979 to 2014. A systematic review was carried out, and a total of 98 articles were obtained. The authors, the most cited articles, the publication journals, and the topics and research trends were then identified. Through an inductive content analysis, eight research themes were distinguished: Curriculum and Knowledge; Internship, Experiential Learning, and Service Learning; Employability; Pedagogy; Gender; Technology and e-Learning; Globalization and Internationalization; and Accreditation Process and Quality. The findings suggest that sport management education should be developed to enhance self-employability through new pedagogical approaches that allow the improvement of critical thinking by the inclusion of internship, new technologies, and e-learning. Furthermore, the current social and economic dynamics represents an opportunity to increase the quality of programs and to orient them toward a globalization and internationalization approach.

### 1. Introduction

Sport management programs have significantly increased in many universities, most likely due to the interest of students, academics, and employers (Pitts, 2001; Yiamouyiannis, Bower, Williams, Gentile, & Alderman, 2013). It is argued that this interest derives from an appreciation that sports, in general, has a strong impact on the social and economic life of citizens (Darnell, 2010; Deery & Jago, 2005; Gibson, McIntyre, MacKay, & Riddington, 2005). Regardless of public or private sector and profit or not-for-profit organizations, sport management has gained a professional dimension that must be anchored on higher education. As mentioned by Chalip (2006), sport management should be a distinctive discipline with a sports-focused model, which requires expertise and advanced research in sport management disciplines. Given these new dynamics, the learning outcomes provided in higher education should be structured to develop competencies relevant to the new challenges of the professional market (COSMA, 2013; McQuaid, Green, & Danson, 2005). Consequently, an analysis of the sport management curriculum in this environment is proposed (Choi, Kim, & Park, 2013; Danylchuk, 2011; de Haan & Sherry, 2012). We argue that this area involves general and specific skills/competences that require theoretical knowledge and reflexive thinking (Bower, 2014; Miettinen, 2000), which should be articulated consistently with a perspective of internationalization and globalization. Hence, research about higher education in sport management is important toward helping relevant stakeholders in the process of quality improvement (COSMA, 2013). However, to define a research strategy that will be useful to the entire community involved (universities, accreditation agencies, teachers, students, and employers), it is important to identify the topics that have been studied and the main findings that have been reported in this area.

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Such identification will give sport management experts a more concrete idea about the research gaps and thus provide insights for further studies toward advancing sport management research in a more sustainable way.

Therefore, the overall purpose of this study is to identify and understand the relationship between higher education in sport management and the professional market field, particularly with respect to undergraduate and master's degrees. To accomplish this purpose, the study was structured around two research questions.

**RQ1:** How has the scientific community approached sport management in higher education in the last 35 years (1979–2014)? Specifically, which journals have published this topic, who are the top authors and from which affiliation/country, which articles are most cited, and what are the research lines?

To provide specific suggestions for future investigations in this area, it is important to identify the most recent findings (in last 10 years, from 2004 to 2014) and their recommendations for study continuity. For this reason, a second research question was formulated.

**RQ2:** What are the current research issues and trends in sport management programs in higher education?

The answers to these research questions are important toward understanding the changes that need to be made in an international learning and teaching community (Danylchuk, Doherty, Nicholson, & Stewart, 2008). In an increasingly global and international sports business, sport management education must be responsive to sport innovations and sports marketing needs and demands.

## 2. Method

The methodology adopted in this study is a systematic review of the topic of sport management in higher education through the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches. According to Weed (2005), a systematic review can be done with any type of data, and the application of qualitative and/or quantitative analysis, as well as the epistemological paradigm of positivism or interpretivism, should be strategically selected according to the research purpose. To guarantee the study quality, the protocols recommended in the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses (PRISMA) statement were followed (Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, & Altman, 2009). Fig. 1 shows the PRISMA diagram of the selection strategy.

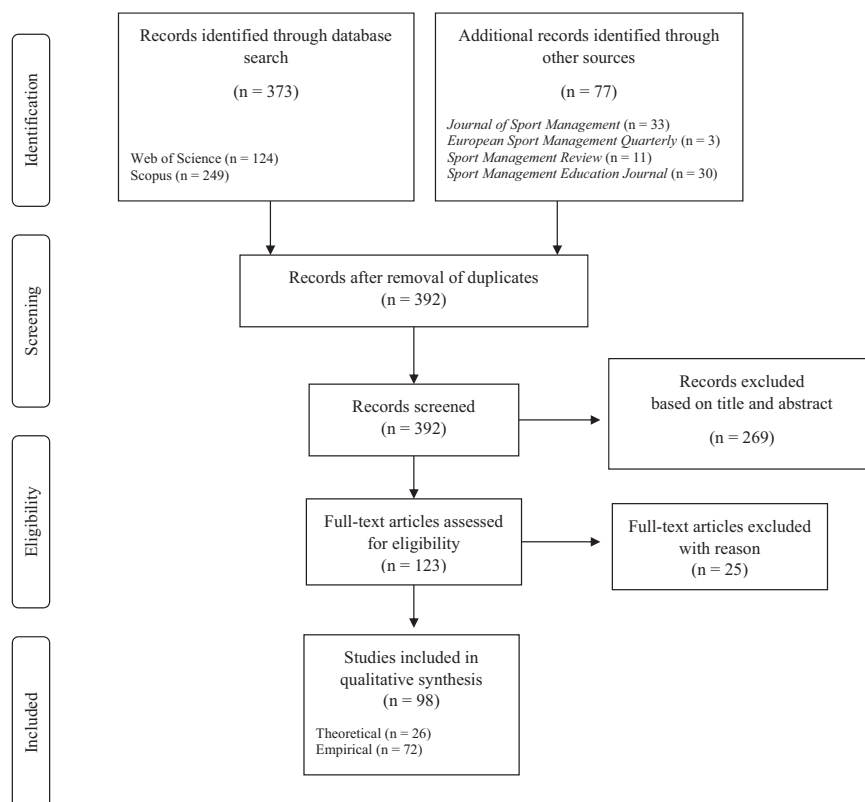


Fig. 1. Flow diagram of the search process and selection strategy.

## 2.1. Data collection

First, bibliometric information was imported electronically from the Thomson Reuters Web of Science database, produced by the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) and recommended for systematic review methodologies (van Leeuwen, 2006), and the Scopus database. In a second stage, to obtain a more extensive sample of articles, four specific journals in the sport management field with peer review were included: *Journal of Sport Management (JSM)*, *European Sport Management Quarterly (ESMQ)*, *Sport Management Review (SMR)*, and *Sport Management Education Journal (SMEJ)*.

Articles were obtained by using the following criteria: published between 1979 and 2014 (35-year period), published in the English language, and classified as an article or review. The chosen keywords were identified through an exploratory analysis of articles on the subject of study published in a specific journal (SMEJ) between 2010 and 2014 (5-year period). The keyword selection was based on recent recommendations to improve the credibility of higher education programs and their accreditation process, suggesting the interconnection between sport management programs and professional skills adjusted to the current market demands (Barnes, 2014; Dane-Staples, 2013; Yiamouyiannis et al., 2013). The research equation was formed by combining the keyword “sport\* management” and the specific keywords used in the higher education context in this field: occupations, students, accreditation, academic programs, internships, education programs, field experience, course design, graduate, undergraduate, employability, professional, competencies, core competencies, practicum experience, best practice, culminating experiences, business skills, work skills, experiential learning, curriculum, and higher education.

## 2.2. Data analysis and category identification

An analysis of the title and abstract of all articles was done to eliminate those that do not focus on curriculum issues, employability, and experiential learning in the context of undergraduate and master's programs in sport management. In cases in which article selection through an analysis of the abstract was insufficient, the complete document was read. Two experts in sport management higher education (with a career of more than 15 years and several sport management researches published in international journals) simultaneously carried out the process of analysis and selection of the articles. A database was organized to catalog the articles by journal name, year, author, title, abstract, article type (theoretical or empirical), research line, and article citations according to Google Scholar (Moher et al., 2009).

To define the research line of each article, the researchers carried out a qualitative analysis according to a category system construction (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) and individually proposed a classification of categories for all articles. The categories were defined by using an inductive process through abstract analysis or, in case of doubt, a full reading of the article. The category classification was validated by integrating the individual approaches of the researchers, and the results were debated on until a consensus on the criteria for determining each category was reached. To follow the criterion of exclusivity, it was decided that each article could be classified under only one category. In cases in which several issues were covered, the research line of the article was classified according to the dependent variable. Based on these guidelines, eight categories were identified.

The first is Curriculum and Knowledge, which includes articles related to the subjects in the course curricula and the knowledge and skills that students should obtain in sport management education.

The second, Accreditation Process and Quality, focuses on evaluation issues and the accreditation of sport management courses to improve their quality. This category involves an analysis of the competitiveness and sustainability of the courses and the effects of higher education in the professional market and society.

The third category, Pedagogy, covers issues related to teaching and learning methodologies and to critical thinking as a valuable skill for teachers and students. Some articles address this line of research in relation to student participation in the context of organizations, learning in the actual workplace, and service learning. In such cases, the articles were placed under the category of experiential learning, service learning, and internship.

The fourth category is Technology and e-Learning, which focuses on the use of technology to enhance communication and education. Communication and learning by video conference, the integration of websites for group interaction and teamwork, and e-learning systems are analyzed as complements to the traditional classroom.

The fifth, labeled as Internship, Experiential Learning, and Service Learning, highlights the central aspects of learning in the practical and professional contexts in the field of sport management education. This category includes articles that focus on the concepts of internships, practicum experience, experiential learning, professional environment, and field experience. Moreover, it was possible to identify other expressions that are closely related to professional experience, namely, reflective practice, service learning, reflective learning, and mentorship.

The sixth category is Employability, which covers issues about employability, professional skills, the needs and requirements of the professional market and mobility for employment, and subjects related to careers in sport management.

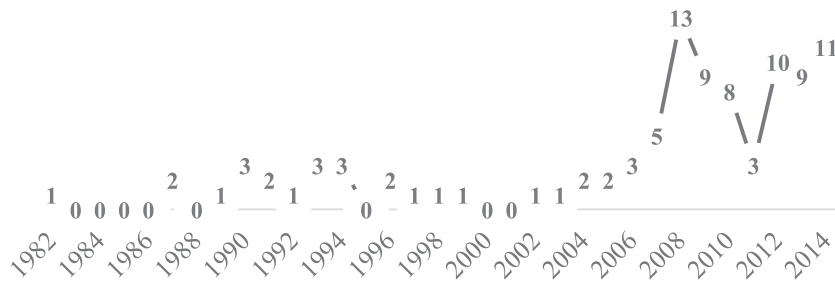
The seventh, Gender, highlights the gender issues in the curricular structure of the courses and their relevance to the employability of women. This research line is closely associated with the social and professional discrimination that exists in the field of sports, particularly in sport management positions.

The last category, termed Globalization and Internationalization, includes articles that focus on the connection between higher education in sport management and the global market. The analysis of the mobility and movement of persons, knowledge, and cultures according to a worldwide market logic predominates in this category.

To analyze these research lines according to the current state and trends, investigations carried out in the last 10 years (2004–2014) were selected, and their main results were synthesized.

**Table 1**  
Evolution of published articles by year and journal.

Journal	1980-1990	1991-2000	2001-2010	2011-2014	Total
<i>Journal of Sport Management (JSM)</i>	6	11	8	3	28
<i>Sport Management Education Journal (SMEJ)</i>			10	15	25
<i>International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing (IJSMM)</i>			9		11
<i>Sport Management Review (SMR)</i>		1	8	1	10
<i>Quest</i>		1	3		4
<i>Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport &amp; Tourism Education</i>			2	2	4
<i>European Sport Management Quarterly</i>			1	1	2
<i>South African Journal for Research in Sport, Physical Education and Recreation</i>			1	1	2
<i>Gender in Management: An International Journal</i>			2		2
<i>Reflective Practice</i>				1	1
<i>Journal of Studies in International Education</i>				1	1
<i>Inzinerine Ekonomika-Engineering Economics</i>				1	1
<i>Annals of Leisure Research</i>				1	1
<i>Education + Training</i>				1	1
<i>Journal of Human Sport and Exercise</i>				1	1
<i>Managing Leisure</i>				1	1
<i>Psychology and Education</i>				1	1
<i>Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport</i>	1				1
<i>Sex Roles</i>		1			1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>98</b>



Individual authors and their respective affiliation/country

Author Name	Affiliation	Country	No.
Cuneen, Jacquelyn	Bowling Green State University	USA	4
Andrew, Damon P.S.	Louisiana State University	USA	3
Edwards, Allan	Griffith University	Australia	3
McDonald, Mark A.	University of Massachusetts-Amherst	USA	3
Parkhouse, Bonnie L.	California State University	USA	3
Parks, Janet B.	Bowling Green State University	USA	3
Pierce, David A.	Ball State University	USA	3
Spence, Kirsty K.	Brock University	Canada	3
Todd, Samuel Y.	Georgia Southern University	USA	3
Two publications (23 authors)			46
One publication (127 authors)			127

### 3. Results and discussion

The application of the analysis criteria resulted in a final sample of 98 articles. The bibliometric analysis covered the period between 1979 and 2014, given that the first study was published in 1982. The results showed that the publication of scientific articles on higher education in sport management presented an atypical evolution that can be divided into three periods (Table 1). In the first 20 years (1982–2002), only 21 articles were published. In the second period (2003–2007), the number increased, with more than half the number of articles in the first period (13) published in just 5 years. Finally, in the last 7 years (2008–2014), despite a decrease between 2008 and 2012 (which still yielded 20 published papers), a total of 63 articles were disseminated to the scientific community. The results also showed that 72 articles were empirical and 26 were theoretical.

The results consistently indicated four journals as the main sources of research papers on this topic (*JSM*, 28 articles; *SMEJ*, 25 articles; *IJSMM*, 11 articles; and *SMR*, 10 articles). However, it is important to highlight that *JSM* was the first scientific journal that

**Table 2**  
Articles most cited.

Article title	Author(s) (Year)	Journal	Citations
Toward a distinctive sport management discipline	Chalip (2006)	JSM	168
Sport management curricular evaluation and needs assessment: A multifaceted approach	DeSensi et al. (1990)	JSM	81
Can gender equity be more equitable? Promoting an alternative frame for sport management research, education, and practice	Shaw and Frisby (2006)	JSM	70
	≥ 50 citations		
Sport management perspectives sport management curricula: Current status and design implications for future development	Parkhouse (1987)	JSM	46
Research and reviews guidelines for programs preparing undergraduate and graduate students for careers in sport management	Brassie (1989)	JSM	37
Sport management: Past, present, future	Zeigler (1987)	JSM	30
Women in sport management: advancing the representation through HRM structures	Moore, Parkhouse, and Konrad (2010)	GMIJ	30
	≥ 30 citations		
Examining sport management programs in the United States	Jones, Brooks, and Mak (2008)	SMR	29
Reflective practice in sport management	Edwards (1999)	SMR	28
An alumni oriented approach to sport management curriculum design using performance ratings and a regression model	Ulrich and Parkhouse (1982)	RQES	28
Anticipated career satisfaction, affective occupational commitment, and intentions to enter the sport management profession	Cunningham, Sagas, Dixon, Kent, and Turner (2005)	JSM	27
“Experiencing” sport management: The use of personal narrative in sport management studies	Rinehart (2005)	JSM	25
Graduate-level professional preparation for athletic directors	Cuneen (1992)	JSM	24
Job satisfaction of sport management alumnae/i	Parks et al. (1994)	JSM	23
Undergraduate and graduate sport management curricular models: A perspective	Kelley, Beitel, Desens, and Blanton (1994)	JSM	22
Managing program excellence during our transition from potential to merit	Cuneen (2004)	JSM	22
Some insights on meaningful internships in sport management: A cooperative education approach	Chouinard (1993)	JSM	20
Critical and ethical thinking in sport management: Philosophical rationales and examples of methods	Zakus, Malloy, and Edwards (2007)	SMR	20
	≥ 20 citations		
Defining quality: Should educators in sport management programs be concerned about accreditation?	Fielding, Pitts, and Miller (1991)	JSM	18
A strong man is direct and a direct woman is a bitch: Analyzing discourses of masculinity and femininity and their impact on employment roles in sport organizations	Shaw and Hoeber (2003)	JSM	18
The conscience and commerce of sport management: One teacher's perspective	Hums (2010)	JSM	18
Contemporary developments in sport pedagogy and their implications for sport management education	Light and Dixon (2007)	SMR	18
No one can whistle a symphony: Working together for sport management's future	Mahony (2008)	JSM	17
An integral approach to sport management internships	Jowdy, McDonald, and Spence (2004)	ESMQ	17
Employment status of alumni of an undergraduate sport management program	Parks (1991)	JSM	16
Web-based instruction in sport management	Bennett (2002)	SMR	15
Sport management careers: A descriptive analysis	Kjeldsen (1990)	JSM	14
Enhancing sport management education with international dimensions including language and cultural training	Masteralexis and McDonald (1997)	JSM	14
The role of sport economics in the sport management curriculum	Humphreys and Maxcy (2007)	SMR	13
Professional sport league assessment of sport management curriculum	Petersen and Pierce (2009)	SMEJ	12
Teaching sport sponsorship sales through experiential learning	McKelvey and Southall (2008)	IJSMM	11
	≥ 10 citations		

ESMQ, European Sport Management Quarterly; GMIJ, Gender in Management: An International Journal; IJSMM, International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing; JSM, Journal of Sport Management; RQES, Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport; SMEJ, Sport Management Education Journal; SMR, Sport Management Review.

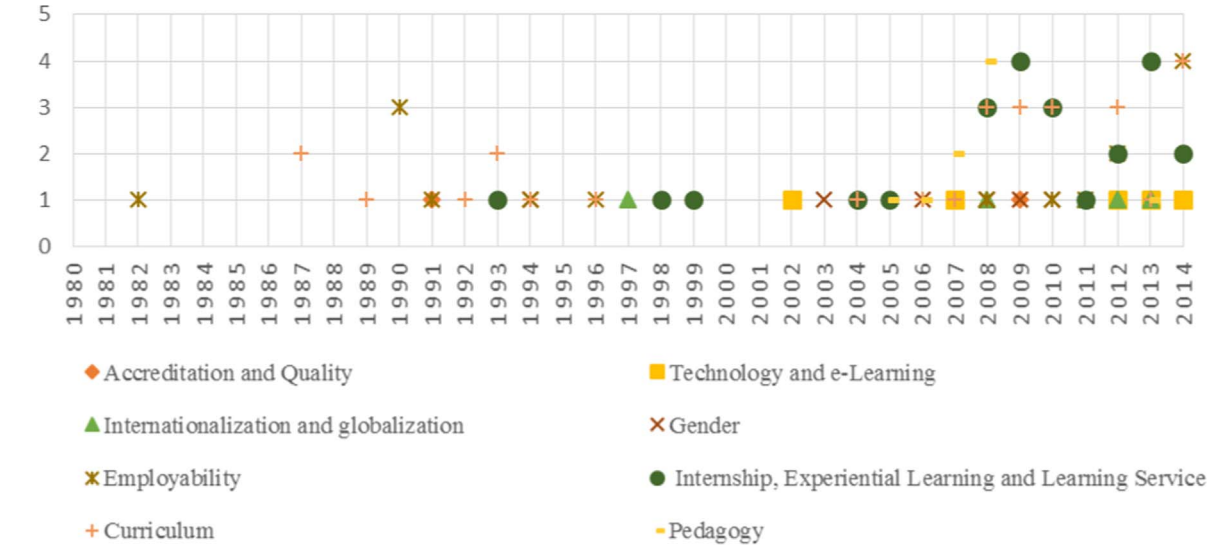
focused specifically on the sport management field and, according to the results, was a big propulsor of such publications in the 1980s. Also noteworthy is that the newest journal to focus specifically on sport management education (*SMEJ*) was founded in 2007, underlining the importance of further research on this topic.

Table 1 shows the research outputs of individual authors and their respective affiliation and country. Of the total of 182 authors who had done research on this topic, 9 were involved in three or more articles, and they were mainly from the United States. Another important result was the identification of the most cited articles (Table 2), which allows determining the relevance of sport management as an autonomous discipline (Chalip, 2006). Furthermore, the evaluation of sport management programs and their quality was also recognized as a central aspect, stimulating research studies regarding the accreditation process (DeSensi, Kelley, Blanton, & Beitel, 1990). The emergence of these research trends is the result of the proliferation of sport management courses in higher education. Finally, the role of women in the management of sports and its link to higher education and employability was another prominent theme in the most cited group of articles (≥ 50 citations), emphasizing that the gender issue is a relevant topic to the scientific community (Shaw & Frisby, 2006).

According to the content analysis, the research lines developed during the period under review can be grouped into eight

**Table 3**  
Number of articles published by research line (1982–2014).

Research line	Authors	N	%
Curriculum and Knowledge	(Barnes, 2014; Brassie, 1989; Chalip, 2006; Cuneen, 1992, 2004; de Wilde, Seifried, & Adelman, 2010; Eagelman & McNary, 2010; Gouws, 1993; Hancock & Greenwell, 2013; Humberstone, 2009; Humphreys & Maxcy, 2007; Hums, 2010; D. F. Jones et al., 2008; P. Jones & Jones, 2014; Kelley et al., 1994; Li & Cotten, 1996; Mahony, 2008; NASPE-NASSM, 1993; Newman, 2014; Parkhouse, 1987; Patel, 2008; Petersen & Pierce, 2009; Pflieger & Seifried, 2012; Sartore-Baldwin & Quatman-Yates, 2012; Shapiro & Pitts, 2014; Weese & Beard, 2012; Won & Bravo, 2009; Zeigler, 1987)	28	28.57
Internship, Experiential Learning, and Service Learning	(Barnes, 2009; Bower, 2014; Bravo, Won, & Ferreira, 2009; Bruening, Madsen, Evanovich, & Fuller, 2010; Chouinard, 1993; Cunningham et al., 2005; Dees & Hall, 2012; Edwards, 1999; Hardin, Bemiller, & Pate, 2013; Jackowski & Gullion, 1998; Johnson, Judge, & Wanless, 2013; Jowdy et al., 2004; Lawson-Williams, 2013; McKelvey & Southall, 2008; Odio, Sagas, & Kerwin, 2014; Pauline, 2013; Pegoraro, Seguin, O'Reilly, & Harrington, 2008; Pierce & Petersen, 2010; Sherry & de Haan, 2012; Sotiriadou, 2011; Spence, 2008; Spence, Hess, McDonald, & Sheehan, 2009; Surujlal & Singh, 2010; Todd & Andrew, 2008; Williams & Colles, 2009a)	24	24.49
Employability	(Brown, 1990; DeSensi et al., 1990; Dowling, Edwards, & Washington, 2014; Emery, Crabtree, & Kerr, 2012; Fang & Kim, 2014; Geurin-Eagleman & McNary, 2014; Kjeldsen, 1990; Ko, Henry, & Kao, 2011; Mathner & Martin, 2012; Janet B. Parks, 1991; Janet B. Parks & Bartley, 1996; Janet B Parks & Parra, 1994; Todd, Andrew, & Lawrence, 2010; Todd, Magnusen, Andrew, & Lachowitz, 2014; Ulrich & Parkhouse, 1982)	16	16.33
Pedagogy	(Dane-Staples, 2013; Dixon, 2008; Findlay & Bloemhof, 2008; Fink, Laura, & Bruening, 2008; Light & Dixon, 2007; Pierce & Middendorf, 2008; Rinehart, 2005; Veri et al., 2006; Zakus et al., 2007)	9	9.18
Gender	(Cuneen & Sidwell, 1994, 2009; Moore et al., 2010; Moore, 2008; Shaw & Frisby, 2006; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003)	6	6.12
Technology and e-Learning	(Bennett, 2002; Carkanji & Bozo, 2012; Edwards & Finger, 2007; O'Boyle, 2014; Redondo, Villalba, & Jimenez, 2013)	5	5.10
Globalization and Internationalization	(Choi et al., 2013; Danylchuk et al., 2008; Danylchuk, 2011; de Haan & Sherry, 2012; Masteralexis & McDonald, 1997)	5	5.10
Accreditation Process and Quality	(Fielding et al., 1991; Mikalauskas, Jasinskis, & Svagzdiene, 2012; Skinner & Gilbert, 2007; Williams & Colles, 2009b; Yiamouyiannis et al., 2013)	5	5.10
<b>Total</b>		<b>98</b>	<b>100.00</b>



categories. Table 3 shows the number of articles published by research line and the evolution of these articles throughout the period of analysis. Considering the total number of articles, the most investigated research lines were found to be Curriculum and Knowledge (28.57%) and Internship, Experiential Learning, and Service Learning (24.49%). Employability issues also had a relatively high percentage (16.33%).



An analysis of the eight research lines in the last 10 years (2004–2014) and a discussion of future research opportunities are given in the next section.

### 3.1. Curriculum and knowledge

The undergraduate guidelines prescribed by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) and the North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) standards (NASPE-NASSM, 1993) address three components of a sport management curriculum: (a) the foundational areas of study, which comprise full courses in business management, marketing, economics, accounting, finance, and computer science; (b) the application areas (e.g., sports sociology, sports law, sports economics, sports marketing, and sports administration); and (c) field experiences, including practicums and internships (Brassie, 1989). However, the links between these three components must be adjusted according to the current social and economic environment, thus challenging scholars and researchers in the sport management field to a deeper deliberation about the appropriate curriculum design for the new dynamics of the sports market.

Despite the competitiveness in the global sports industry, the sports manager needs to be a good citizen, practice ethical behavior, and be able to find a balance between consciousness and market demand (Hums, 2010; Newman, 2014). However, these values should be formally included in the curriculum programs so that the teaching of these contents does not become dependent on the pedagogical approach of some teachers. The curriculum structure should involve the students in the learning process to encourage them to be responsible and critical citizens (Barnes, 2014; Humberstone, 2009; Weese & Beard, 2012; Zakus et al., 2007) and to use their creative energy to propose new sports solutions for people and organizations (Daloz-Parks, 2005; Patel, 2008; Pflieger & Seifried, 2012; Shapiro & Pitts, 2014).

To consolidate the learning process and develop more efficiently the above-mentioned skills and learning outcomes, the curricula of some sports programs started to include contact and practical involvement with different sports contexts through the designated experiential learning, service learning, and internship (Eagleman & McNary, 2010; Hancock & Greenwell, 2013; Petersen & Pierce, 2009; Won & Bravo, 2009). It should be noted that, in the 1990s, internships were already part of approximately 15% of the total curriculum (Kelley et al., 1994). Of the total of 137 higher education institutions in the United States that offer an undergraduate sport management program, 86% include internships in their curriculum (Cobb & Li, 1997; D. F. Jones et al., 2008). Further, Pitney, Ilsley, and Rintala (2002) argued that learning the culture of the organization is an important aspect in the transition of students to the labor market. This includes understanding the relevance of values, ethics, cultural forms, language, practices, and symbols in the organizational functioning.

The inclusion of field experience also has the significant advantage of allowing a closer dialogue with practitioners toward adjusting the curriculum models, taking into consideration the perspective of these stakeholders (Cuneen & Parks, 2001; Petersen & Pierce, 2009). Therefore, an in-depth understanding of the approach of several stakeholders to the evaluation of a sport management curriculum is crucial to the design of future courses.

Moreover, further research is needed to understand the relevance, contents, and pedagogical approaches of the courses regarding communication skills, marketing, sales, and economic perspectives, which are included in sport management curricula (Eagleman & McNary, 2010; Humphreys & Maxcy, 2007; Petersen & Pierce, 2009). Additionally, it is important to carry out more research on the evaluation of sport management courses to improve the quality and credibility of this field and build up sport management as an academic discipline in its own right (Chalip, 2006; Mahony, 2008). This is crucial to point out to the decision-makers of higher education schools that sport management is not a simple context of application, used by other disciplinary areas, but need an autonomous faculty with its own identity of teaching and research.

### 3.2. Accreditation process and quality

Given the proliferation of higher education courses in sport management since the 1980s, accreditation has also become a subject of interest in the scientific community (Mikalauskas et al., 2012; Skinner & Gilbert, 2007; Williams & Colles, 2009b; Yiamouyiannis et al., 2013). The accreditation process in sport management education is necessary to ensure the quality of academic programs through external accountability as a system of self-regulation for colleges, universities, and programs that agree on the principles or standards by which they assess themselves and by which they are assessed by their peers. This is intended to be a voluntary and collegial process toward providing and improving the quality of education and guaranteeing the public accountability of the programs (CHEA, 2010).

Consequently, and because the number of programs in sport management has increased significantly, the creation of a specialized accreditation body in this area became necessary (Pitts & Danylchuk, 2007). Consequently, the NASSM and the NASPE proposed the creation of a specialized accreditation body called the Commission on Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA, 2010). This organization aims to promote and recognize excellence in sport management education in colleges and universities at undergraduate and graduate levels through specialized accreditation. Although the Commission on Sport Management Accreditation accreditation principles and self-study preparation document are still under review, overall, the accreditation process includes an extensive self-study of the following eight principles: outcomes assessment, strategic planning, curriculum, faculty, scholarly and professional activities, resources, internal and external relationships, and educational innovation. The Commission on Sport Management Accreditation has highlighted the involvement of sports business professionals, the development of a flexible mission-driven model, and leadership in the quality management of courses as important factors in the creation of a credible accreditation model. Moreover, to achieve excellent quality, it is important to form and strengthen a home unit for sport management programs through the promotion

of positive relationships between departments (Chalip, 2006; Fielding et al., 1991) and the widespread involvement of experts or external reviewers in the field of sport management (Mahony, 2008).

Because the market is dynamic, the formative standards should be continuously adjusted. For this reason, the present accreditation agencies should emphasize different attributes, skills, and learning outcomes from those highlighted decades ago. Currently, the accreditation process emphasizes learning outcomes related to work experiences acquired during the educational program. Examples of direct learning outcome assessments that have been used by sport management educators include capstone courses (courses designed to provide a cumulative experience; e.g., field experience, seminars, class projects, and case studies), tests and examinations, portfolio assessment, and internships (Bower, 2009; COSMA, 2013; Yiamouyiannis et al., 2013).

To operationalize all these new approaches, accreditation agencies should analyze the pedagogical processes used by higher education institutions because, as reported by Skinner and Gilbert (2007), the quality of sport management education depends on the social practice construction (Light and Dixon's theory of social constructivism), which involves critical thinking and relevant experience in sport management.

Thus, the quality of sport management academic programs and their accreditation process are two relevant points in increasing the credibility of the sport management field in the educational and teaching systems (Williams & Colles, 2009b), and further investigations are needed to assess the impact of accreditation on this credibility. Furthermore, as suggested in the curriculum topic, future research should seek to understand how the accreditation standards can be applied not only from a national perspective of the quality of higher education but also according to the international mobility of sports managers.

### 3.3. Pedagogy

The current social dynamics, characterized as continuously changing, stimulates people to become lifelong learners to deal with the complexity of issues and tasks, solve problems autonomously, and propose creative and innovative solutions (Dane-Staples, 2013; Findlay & Bloemhof, 2008; Light & Dixon, 2007; Veri et al., 2006). Although the curriculum design of sport management courses is a very important aspect in responding to the challenges of globalization, it must be optimized by pedagogical strategies that are appropriate to the emerging markets of the sports industry. Despite the convergence of the scientific community regarding the inefficiency of the traditional model of teaching, it should be noted that the present study found only nine researches in the last 10 years (Dane-Staples, 2013; Dixon, 2008; Findlay & Bloemhof, 2008; Fink et al., 2008; Light & Dixon, 2007; Pierce & Middendorf, 2008; Rinehart, 2005; Veri et al., 2006; Zakus et al., 2007), which is a significant decrease given the proliferation of sport management courses worldwide.

The reports in the literature indicate an agreement regarding the application of constructivist theories in the development and justification of new pedagogical strategies (Dane-Staples, 2013; Light & Dixon, 2007). In general, the constructivist approach suggests a learning process with several layers of complexity, in which the students improve their critical thinking in different contexts. According to Dane-Staples (2013), the constructivist principles can be classified into six important types: developing situations of learning, organizing groupings, building bridges, asking questions, arranging exhibits, and inviting reflections.

Another aspect that researchers agree on is the need to provide a variety of experiences to students to stimulate better engagement in the classroom, breaking the traditional method of memorization (Dane-Staples, 2013; Pierce & Middendorf, 2008). Several techniques can be used to develop this learning approach, including role-playing (Pierce & Middendorf, 2008), case method (Dixon, 2008), personal experience narratives (Rinehart, 2005; Veri et al., 2006), service learning, and internships (Light & Dixon, 2007). All these techniques, or a combination of some of them, should be used by teachers to ensure a diversity of experience, supported by a permanent intervention in the critical thinking of the students (Zakus et al., 2007).

An analysis of the literature casts light on the importance of the students' motivation to optimize their engagement. This suggests that students should work on complex, challenging, and realistic projects as a good pedagogical strategy (Dixon, 2008; Findlay & Bloemhof, 2008; Pierce & Middendorf, 2008). Defining real-life situations in the sports industry and giving students the responsibility to be active agents in problem resolution seem to be necessary to improve the learning outcomes. Furthermore, the relevance of placing students in situations that require them to collaborate with others (Findlay & Bloemhof, 2008), promoting a respectful discussion of perspectives, and developing communication and leadership skills is also a consensual opinion.

Another important trend is the inclusion of service/experimental learning and internships, which are already part of the official curriculum of some sport management courses (Light & Dixon, 2007). These pedagogical methodologies give students the opportunity to interact with several stakeholders involved in sports organizations, make a concrete application of theoretical concepts to real situations, and improve skills that can hardly be enhanced in the classroom.

Independent of the pedagogical strategy, stimulating students to write about what is happening in each stage of the project, work, or internship is recommended (Dixon, 2008; Rinehart, 2005; Veri et al., 2006). This type of formalization challenges students to improve their knowledge because it requires them to formally express what they consider relevant through an elaboration of a concept map, thus stimulating reflection, articulation, and the application of theoretical concepts (Findlay & Bloemhof, 2008; Pierce & Middendorf, 2008). Such writing task also allows students the possibility to consult their reports to help them perceive the evolution of their learning more objectively.

However, this dynamic is dependent on the university and sport management department policies. Although several theories of learning are not new, the fact remains that many universities are still guided by an educational process that emphasizes memorization (Dane-Staples, 2013). Further research in sport management pedagogy is needed to achieve learning outcomes that are appropriate to the contemporary needs of the society. This learning approach could require a change in the mentality of many stakeholders (e.g., universities, teachers, students, families, and companies) and, arguably, that teachers become mentors (Pierce & Middendorf, 2008)



of students with different learning styles, capabilities, and professional motivations.

### 3.4. Technology and e-learning

Despite the consensual idea that rapid changes in technology have caused major modifications in contemporary society, interestingly, the process of updating the learning system in the context of higher education institutions has been slow (Carkanji & Bozo, 2012; O'Boyle, 2014). In fact, although many universities have included new platforms (such as Moodle, Blackboard, and Stream), such initiative is not enough.

It is necessary to distinguish the use of technology to improve the administrative processes from its application as a tool to improve the learning process. The differentiation of these two valences is important, and a combination of them is crucial to address the current profile of students and the dynamics of the labor market. In the past, people usually took only one higher education course, which was enough for them to remain in a particular work/profession for life. However, the concept of lifelong study has now emerged, which entails the continuous formation of students in several complementary areas of knowledge. In addition to master's and doctoral students, many undergraduate students today are also student workers, thus requiring formation with a structure that is more flexible (Redondo et al., 2013). In the sport management context, this phenomenon needs to be better understood given the sporadic research in the last decade (Carkanji & Bozo, 2012; Edwards & Finger, 2007; O'Boyle, 2014; Redondo et al., 2013). Based on studies focused on this research line, two distinguishing approaches to this phenomenon were observed: (1) technology as a tool to improve the teaching-learning process and (2) e-learning as a new paradigm of education and/or an institutional strategy to capture students, including at the international level. However, the integration of technology in the classroom is not consensually understood as a benefit to the teaching-learning process despite its fundamental advantages in administrative management, resource access, and communication streamlining between teachers and students (Smith, Higgins, Wall, & Miller, 2005; Zisow, 2000). One of the disadvantages cited is the decrease in face-to-face interaction, which is promoted in the classroom context (Bennett, 2002). However, technology, if applied for a pedagogical purpose, is very useful in adjusting the teaching-learning process to the individual differences of students, such as in providing diverse communication options, including audio/video technology, various software, and interactive multimedia resources (Edwards & Finger, 2007).

The issue of technology must be increasingly understood, especially in terms of the e-learning approach, which addresses the limitations of time and space (considering the above-mentioned new configuration of students). However, a good pedagogical structure is needed to guarantee the learning quality. This approach clearly challenges researchers to develop new theoretical and practical methodologies to propose an efficient e-learning model that is adaptable to the different educational realities around the world. A constructivist approach has been used to conceptually support this new educational method (Herrington, Oliver, & Reeves, 2003). Against this background, Edwards and Finger (2007) suggested the need for a hyperpedagogy based on hypertexts and hypermedia while also ensuring face-to-face interaction. This hybrid format allows students to learn not only in an online setting or in a university campus but also according to the nature of each subject (personal and/or professional) by defining the best tool to promote autonomous learning and ensuring that the formation program includes individual activities and collective work to develop teacher-student and student-student interactions (Redondo et al., 2013).

The use of technology in the classroom and the encouragement of e-learning should not be a personal choice of teachers but rather an institutional strategy. The inclusion of technology in the teaching-learning process should not depend only on the individual initiative of teachers because the existence of technology illiteracy can itself become an obstacle to implementing this hyperpedagogy. Furthermore, the formative offer must be adjusted to the social and economic dynamics; for this reason, the logic of taking a course in only one institution may not make sense (Edwards & Finger, 2007). Acquiring a combination of knowledge, competences, and skills from multiple universities worldwide without having to move around is a good step toward globalization and internationalization.

Moreover, the support of institutions extends beyond the provision of computer hardware, adequate network speed, and e-teaching and e-learning facilities. The big change should take place in the mentality of the different stakeholders, who may be skeptical about this new dynamics. For this reason, further research is crucial, and both quantitative and qualitative methodologies should be applied to analyze the benefits of these technological tools in the educational process. Undeniably, this is an area that requires more studies in the sport management context to better understand: (a) the implications of technology in curricula and all stakeholders' behavior; (b) the interventions in teaching practices in several platforms and mechanisms, such as Second Life, Facebook, and Twitter; and (c) how these educational alternatives can reduce inequalities and improve the democratic process in access to higher education.

### 3.5. Internship, experiential learning, and service learning

Contemporary pedagogical trends indicate a consensus on the advantage of providing students with educational experience that allows their involvement in the labor market with university supervisors (Barnes, 2009; Bower, 2014; Bruening et al., 2010; Dees & Hall, 2012; Jowdy et al., 2004; Spence et al., 2009). In the last decade, one of the most studied topics in sport management in higher education is precisely how to understand and optimize the link between academics and practitioners.

The literature highlights some theories, models, and programs, such as Dewey's experiential learning theory (Bower, 2014), the Sport Management Experiential Learning Process - SMELP (Pauline, 2013), Wilber's All Quadrants, All Levels (AQAL) model (Jowdy et al., 2004; Spence, 2008), the inclusion of field trips in sports administration programs (Pegoraro et al., 2008). This background has been applied in three dominant approaches integrated into the formal programs of higher education institutions: experiential

learning, service learning, and internship. The integration of these three complementary approaches into the curriculum of sport management courses is crucial. Experiential learning and service learning can be applied during the early formative years in the undergraduate degree. However, internship, which requires full-time commitment and provides an opportunity to practice professional skills, is usually integrated in the final year of the course.

The advantages attributed to the above-mentioned three methods are consensual and essentially highlight the need to engage students in real situations in the sports industry and to improve their cognitive and moral development (Dees & Hall, 2012; Hardin et al., 2013). In particular, experiential learning and service learning are tools that allow a good interface between the classroom and the community sports context through real and useful projects that benefit several stakeholders (Bower, 2014; Bruening et al., 2010; Dees & Hall, 2012; McKelvey & Southall, 2008; Pauline, 2013). Given their simplicity, these tools are very effective because they provide a significant impact in the personal development of students, the consolidation of knowledge (because they entail an understanding of concepts/theories and their articulation in practical cases), and the acquisition of training skills that are useful in professional sport management careers (Hardin et al., 2013; Surujlal & Singh, 2010). These projects involve several competences, such as planning, organizing, coordinating, and implementing an idea (Bower, 2014). Moreover, aided by new technologies, this type of experience can be extended on any geographic scale (Johnson et al., 2013; Sherry & de Haan, 2012), and the sharing of reflections, questions, and proposals among different cultures seems to be a good strategy for preparing students and teachers for the issues of globalization and internationalization in sport management.

Thereby, the creation of a panel with diverse and realistic experiences, which allows students to know about and participate in projects in several sports markets, is essential to opening horizons regarding their career expectations (Odio et al., 2014; Pierce & Petersen, 2010). In fact, experiential learning and service learning can help students to be more conscious in their selection of the type of internship that they would like to do (Sotiriadou, 2011). Thus, to improve the relationship between experiential learning, service learning, and internship, the selection of cases (projects or events) should not be done randomly, and the teachers responsible for all disciplines need to define a strategy that is convergent with the goals of the university and the sport management course. In most cases, however, this strategy is very dependent on the characteristics of the sports market that operates near the university.

Consequently, universities and accreditation agencies need to work together to improve the quality of sport management courses, ensuring that all stakeholders involved (e.g., teachers, students, and organizations) contribute to optimizing these learning tools despite the time and effort required in this pedagogical strategy. Ensuring high-quality education can be a competitive advantage strategy for universities because their selection by students may depend on their reputation for employability (Bravo et al., 2009; Dees & Hall, 2012). This approach reinforces the added value of experiential learning, service learning, and internships not only from the perspective of the students' training but also as a way to improve the perception of employers on contracting new graduates (Pegoraro et al., 2008; Pierce & Petersen, 2010).

It should also be mentioned that, given the globalization and internationalization approaches, universities are challenged to prepare their students to become world citizens, making important the definition of guidelines for this type of pedagogical experience. It is important to establish universal standards (Sotiriadou, 2011) and at the same time preserve the individuality of the institutions, considering that the sports industry in different parts of the world has distinct cultural characteristics that should be respected.

Future research should investigate and validate the impact of experiential learning, service learning, and internship in the quality of sport management courses, as well as their influence in students' career selection.

### 3.6. Employability

Because of the current market demands and the growth of the sports industry, the sport management job market has become much more competitive. This market dynamism has increased the importance of training for employability and challenges sport management programs to be more connected to the professional market (COSMA, 2010; McQuaid et al., 2005).

In this sense, employability needs to be understood as a dynamic social process that involves the dual contribution of academics and employers to improve basic social skills and develop transferable reasoning skills. The relationship between academics and employers is not a new issue (Cunningham & Sagas, 2004; Hillage & Pollard, 1998; Perrigo & Gaut, 1994); however, the relationships among these stakeholders need to be considered to improve the development of teaching and learning approaches. Also, Fang and Kim (2014) found that academicians and recruiters are in agreement regarding new skills and abilities for sports business professionals. These skills and abilities, which include the ability to communicate, getting along with people, effective listening, teamwork capability, and creativity, are crucial to helping students adapt and integrate into the dynamics of sports business markets.

Regarding business education and career development training, sport management faculties should define strategies to help students to have accurate and realistic interpretations of the various careers within the sports industry (Todd et al., 2010). Kristof-Brown and Guay (2011) suggested a process called person-environment fit, which aims to improve the compatibility between the individual characteristics of students and the demands of the work environment. Therefore, the sport management faculty should discuss career interests with their students to understand why the latter target particular jobs in specific industry segments. If the students' expectations are unrealistic, the faculty could provide actual information on the jobs available in the students' area of interest. In providing such guidelines, Eagleman and McNary (2010) noted that the majority of sport management programs (82.8%) require an introductory sport management course. This course presents the realities of the sports industry to the students and challenges them to do research in this field (Mathner & Martin, 2012).

Another important aspect in optimizing employability is the formal inclusion of experiential learning, service learning, and

internship in the sport management curriculum. This education strategy allows the sharing of approaches between the academic field and the sports marketplace considering that better relationships between learners, teachers, and employers can improve employability (Lanning, Martin, & Villeneuve-Smith, 2008).

Furthermore, it is necessary to understand the importance of improving the relationship between higher education and employer demands without compromising the essence of higher education for the sake of commercialization. Researchers should explore whether the expectations of students are realistic, as well as determine the influence of media exposure on job attraction, particularly in professional sports that have more exposure (Todd & Andrew, 2008). Additionally, the effects of experiential learning, service learning, and internship on students' perceptions of real market demands and on the adequacy of their personal characteristics for a sport management career should be investigated.

Also crucial is the development of longitudinal and comparative studies on several sports careers to analyze their profiles and behaviors in different world markets. The results of such research are fundamental to the redesign of sport management curricula and course accreditation processes, increasingly directing them toward globalization and internationalization.

### 3.7. Gender

The employment of women in managerial positions in the sports industry remains uncommon, as reflected in the work structure of organizations that promote male leadership, in which females have lower salaries and smaller chances of occupying top management positions compared with males (Cuneen & Sidwell, 2009; Moore, 2008). Incredibly, even in the 21st century, the idea that women do not have the skills to carry out executive tasks still persists because it is considered that they have no leadership profiles, lack the ability to manage conflicts, and are not ambitious and rational (Balgui, 2013; Fink, 2008; Koca & Öztürk, 2015; Mihalčová, Pružinský, & Gontkovičová, 2015; Pfister & Radtke, 2006). Although the government puts pressure on public and private organizations toward solving gender equality issues, the efforts do not seem to be enough (Abdullah, Ismail, & Nachum, 2016; Konrad & Linnehan, 1995; Lucas-Pérez, Mínguez-Vera, Baixauli-Soler, Martín-Ugedo, & Sánchez-Marín, 2014). As a complement to the legal process, the educational system, as part of its formative and research objectives, should help balance this gender inequality. In particular, the higher education sector may contribute to the design of the curricula, the development of pedagogical strategies, and the establishment of links between the academic environment and the marketplace. Despite the importance of this issue, the scientific literature in the context of sport management remains insufficient. It should be noted that, based on the criteria applied in the present work, only four references were found to have been published in the last 10 years (Cuneen & Sidwell, 2009; Moore et al., 2010; Moore, 2008; Shaw & Frisby, 2006). The literature analysis points to three core areas in which interconnected intervention is needed: education, the labor context, and future research.

A primary aspect in which some change is necessary is the low number of women involved in undergraduate and master's programs in sport management (Moore, 2008). One reason for this is the fact that women are not encouraged to pursue higher education in programs related to business (Levsen, Goettel, Chong, & Farris, 2001) because the society, in general, regards women as lacking the capability to carry out leadership tasks competently (Cook & Glass, 2014; Karelaia & Guillén, 2014; Peachey & Burton, 2011). Therefore, it is essential to analyze these two issues: the attraction of women to higher education in sport management and how to prevent the dropout of women in this area of professionalization (Moore, 2008). Thereby, the formal curriculum should include gender issues but not in an isolated way (Shaw & Frisby, 2006), and new pedagogical strategies should be applied in a more explicit and intentional way. DeSensi (1995) noted that it is necessary for educational programs to adopt a multicultural approach and break the trend of focusing on monocultures. The intervention of educators in such cultural change is crucial; however, it implies that the educators believe in these values and coherently apply them in their classes. Given the above discussion, the following question arises: How far have educators themselves (a) used texts, workshops, training sessions, or other techniques to identify and, if necessary, adjust their students' values regarding these issues; (b) promoted multicultural networks as a practice in the classroom; (c) proposed case studies of organizations to analyze this issue and return feedback to the managers on the reflection produced by the students; (d) assessed their students' viewpoints on the management or leadership positions of several sports organizations, questioning them if a task will be affected by whether it is done by men or women; (e) used those viewpoints to promote a debate, developing a strategy of spiral learning in which different layers of knowledge are added gradually and respecting the learning times and cultural roots that influence gender inequality issues; and (f) developed internships as a good catalyst for cultural change, given that they establish a link between classroom learning and the marketplace and provide an interface among crucial stakeholders (e.g., educators, students, and employers).

Thus, it is not enough to adjust the educational context if the labor culture does not follow this trend. Although the sporadic studies about the sports marketplace have shown positive results on gender parity (Cuneen & Sidwell, 2009; Moore et al., 2010), further research is still necessary to better understand the current status of this issue and to develop studies that will consider different organizational realities and explain the results to employers (Shaw & Frisby, 2006). Legal action is an important instrument of interference in the labor system. However, mere fulfillment of the statistics required by law concerning the inclusion of women in organizations is not enough (Abdullah et al., 2016; Edelman, 1992; Lucas-Pérez et al., 2014); rather, it is crucial to consider gender integration as a philosophy that is part of the organizational culture (Crampton & Mishra, 1999; Moore et al., 2010).

### 3.8. Globalization and internationalization

The development of technology, specifically the spread of Internet access, has completely changed the way we look at education in a world without borders. In 2017, we argue that students interact within global economic, political, technological, and

environmental systems and have the opportunity to participate in societies that are not defined by national and geographic borders (Osler & Starkey, 2003). This dynamics provides new opportunities and requires new ways of learning to address the challenges arising from globalization and internationalization (Danylchuk, 2011; Merryfield, Lo, Po, & Kasai, 2008).

According to Danylchuk (2011), the globalization phenomenon initiated the establishment of networks among several cultures, societies, and economies through a new dynamics of communication and trade that is implemented on a global scale. This global environment has stimulated the internationalization approach, and higher education institutions cannot be indifferent to this environment. The relevance of an institutional commitment to internationalization depends on a strong leadership that should include this approach in its purpose to organize an efficient intervention adjusted to the contemporaneous challenges (Danylchuk, 2011; Knight, 2004). The university and college environments require structural changes to address this challenge, particularly the development of a new curriculum with a global and international approach.

Over the years, universities have increasingly diversified their student bodies and provided students with an international perspective in an increasingly globalized world, making them more socially and globally aware not only as individuals but as global citizens with significant economic impacts (Danylchuk, 2011). The education of international students is considered as a major export industry and has a significant benefit to the economy. For example, international students in Canada spent an estimated \$6.5 billion on education in 2008, and 83,000 jobs were created from international student activities (Stewart, 2010).

Hence, with the growth of the sports industry worldwide, which is linked with Internet opportunities, it is crucial for sport management training courses to adopt an international approach. International business and management as a field of study predicts the potential to define "international sport" as a new subdiscipline within sport management (Fay, Velez, & Thibault, 2014). Universities with sport management programs must ensure that the teaching and research are supported by a global perspective, including internationally specific contents and issues (Danylchuk, 2011). Recent investigations have confirmed that the learning experience of students in international courses in sport management promoted the internationalization of the curriculum, particularly regarding international sports issues and business (Choi et al., 2013; Danylchuk, 2011; de Haan & Sherry, 2012; Li, Kanters, & Ammon, 2002). Furthermore, the use of online platforms facilitates the participation of students from different countries, stimulating best practices and innovation through simulation cases in sport management, such as the organization of an international sports event (Danylchuk et al., 2008).

However, the internationalization of sport management in higher education is just beginning, and there is much that needs to be defined and controlled by the evaluation commissions of higher education courses. Moreover, international associations of education and sport management research should establish a line of cooperation to ensure the accreditation and exploitation of international sport management courses to encourage intercommunication partnerships and the interchange of students and teachers.

Although the globalization of sports business and marketing has increased the relevance of higher education in this area, the participation of sport management students abroad remains a tenuous reality. According to Choi et al. (2013), among the 300 sport management programs available in North America, less than 5% corresponds to programs abroad. To increase this percentage, sport management degrees at the international level should also provide students with a service learning community, learning experiences, and internships in international sports organizations. Such environment is vital for sport management academicians and students to become global citizens through the internationalization of curricula.

Another way to enhance the internationalization of higher education in sport management in the long term is to encourage doctoral students to design curriculum modules in a foreign university. The same should be done in the development stage of the investigation that will be part of their doctoral thesis. The improvement of the internationalization of sport management obviously implies the dissemination of more publications in international sports business areas, which can result from the creation and/or strengthening of networks between researchers and academics involved in international sport management programs.

#### 4. Conclusion and recommendations

The systematic review of the scientific literature on higher education in sport management published in the past 35 years showed the importance of *JSM* as a scientific disseminator, particularly between 1982 and 2000. Also noteworthy was the creation in 2007 of the subject-specific *SMEJ*, which attests to the relevance of this topic in sport management development. Another interesting finding was that the authors who have had more publications on this subject are mostly from the United States, probably because of the existence of the NASSM dynamics, which highlights the importance of synergy among stakeholders from the academic, scientific, and professional environments.

Another important result was the identification of the goal of making sport management an autonomous discipline as the topic most cited by the scientific community (Chalip, 2006). The quality of sport management programs and courses (DeSensi et al., 1990), as well as gender issues in higher education and employability (Shaw & Frisby, 2006), also emerged with great emphasis. Over the last 35 years, eight research lines encouraged experts to produce theoretical and empirical studies: Curriculum and Knowledge; Internship, Experiential Learning, and Service Learning; Employability; Pedagogy; Gender; Technology and e-Learning; Globalization and Internationalization; and Accreditation Process and Quality.

The analysis of these research lines indicated that universities have been encouraged and pressured to enhance the self-employability and employability options within their degree programs to increase the rate of positive results regarding entry into the professional market and to improve their acceptance by students and employers. These dynamics imply that sport management programs are oriented toward globalization and internationalization, taking advantage of new technologies to break down geographic barriers and to increase the offerings of new e-learning systems. However, other structural changes need to be done, such as the contextualization of the curricula in sport management and the redefinition of objectives and learning outcomes to ensure their

compatibility with the needs of the contemporary society.

The formative experience of the students should be adjusted, and the application of pedagogical approaches needs to be consistent with this new contemporary dynamics. The literature has pointed precisely to the application of constructivist theories as a possible approach to the development of new pedagogical strategies, such as role-playing, personal experience narratives, and service learning and internships, which put students in situations that require them to collaborate with others, debate perspectives, and understand several sociocultural dimensions of real organizations. Critical thinking and civic engagement, combined with field experience, can help students strengthen their competencies and skills toward making better decisions in sports contexts, as well as prepare them for employability and adaptability in the competitive market. Experiential learning, service learning, and internship have been previously studied, and their influence on the quality of sport management education programs has been confirmed. There is an agreement that these curricular activities provide students with formative experience that enables their involvement in the real labor market with university supervisors, as well as stimulate the development of personal skills and attributes, such as critical reflection, leadership, communication, cooperation, respect, and confidence.

Furthermore, ethical issues, social responsibility, and gender equality are critical subjects that should be further addressed in sport management education and research. Evidence of gender discrimination is still mentioned significantly in the literature, particularly in the occupation of women in managerial positions. Analyzing these phenomena is crucial because human values may be compromised in several sports contexts, and higher education institutions have an extremely relevant role in promoting cultural change that breaks down some stereotypes and unethical behaviors. These issues should be explicitly incorporated in the sports programs, and their impact on the behaviors of students while they are in the training process, when they enter the labor market, and even when they are in their employers' charge should be investigated.

To accomplish this framework, and for sport management academicians and students to become global citizens, it is vital to optimize the curriculum tool by adopting a global and international approach and by formally including internationally specific contents and issues. The accreditation and accountability process in sport management education needs to ensure the quality of academic programs according to this global and international approach. Toward this end, accreditation agencies should encourage higher education institutions to involve international experts in sport management as course advisers. Furthermore, the quality of organizations that receive students for experiential learning, service learning, and internship should be supervised to guarantee that the students' orientation is properly adjusted. This accreditation process is crucial in evaluating the students' learning outcomes and the results of experiential learning in terms of the positive partnerships formed between universities and companies (local, national, or international).

More than ever, the definition of a strategy among international stakeholders (e.g., universities, accreditation agencies, sport management associations, and investigation centers) is fundamental to making sport management an autonomous discipline toward ensuring sustainable education in this field.

## 5. Limitations and further research

From the methodological point of view, it is important to mention that the research equation adopted may present a limitation in this type of studies. Although it has defined a very extensive research equation, this is a crucial methodological decision which determines the number of articles obtained. Two databases and four journals have been included to make the research as comprehensive as possible; however, there is still a possibility that other studies may have been left out. Similarly, the criterion to include only articles and reviews in English is another methodological element that may have affected the results; in the future, the study may be extended through the inclusion of books and chapters of books published in other languages. Furthermore, the present work considered investigations developed in undergraduate and graduate (master's) degrees without specifying the differences between them. In the future, such analysis may be carried out, including the doctoral level, to interconnect the study cycles efficiently. Another limitation is the criterion used to select the trends in each research line considering the reports published during a period of 10 years (2004–2014). This criterion may have resulted in the inclusion of a limited number of articles in some research areas with four or five references. Future studies should analyze the evolutionary process of each line of research over the 35-year period.

Globally, more empirical studies in sport management education are needed to validate the theoretical developments that have already been presented to the scientific community through the triangulation of the various stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers, employers, and accreditations agencies). Furthermore, the application of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, as well as their replication with a longitudinal perspective, is also recommended. A comparison across several countries is also important to understand the evolution of sport management in different contexts.

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