Hearing Students' Voices:

Sport Management Graduate Students' Perceptions of the Selected Programs in Armenia and Korea

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Abstract

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This study examined the sport management selected programs in Armenia and Korea, in particular, focused on students' perceptions of the sport management master's program. It explored the similarities and differences of students' perceptions, for the future implications and improvement of the sport management programs at the master's degree level. Document analysis and in-depth interviews were utilized to collect the data. Ten Armenian and Korean students were selected as research participants.

The findings of the study revealed that Armenian and Korean students expressed perceptions of the selected program based on their

expectations and experiences. Overall, both countries' students were satisfied with educational programs. Furthermore, how students perceive programs in detail, such as their expectations from curriculum construction and experiences from courses, were individualized and based on their interests. However, students mentioned some common aspects where their expectations do not meet reality. Armenian students' reported aspects were the duration of the program, course assignments, course topics, and literacy. Korean students' reported aspects were thesis writing skills, interactions with professors, and practical experience. These outlined several areas for improvement or concern. Lastly, both countries' students mentioned the importance of students' voices and experience sharing in the classroom.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The sports industry was increasingly taking its place in the global economy. The global sports industry is valued at approximately $488.5 billion in 2018, having grown at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.3% since 2014, and is expected to grow at a CAGR of 5.9% to nearly $614.1 billion by 2022 (2019). According to the Zion Market Research report (2018), the global sports betting market was estimated at around USD 104 billion in 2017; furthermore, it is predicted to reach approximately USD 155 billion by 2024. Since sport becomes a massive area of business, sport management is growing as a field of great interest. For leading this large industry, and for its successful development, needs competent sport managers. Sport management is a field that is expanding, in terms of both employment potential and the proliferation of academic preparation programs (Ko, Henry, & Kao, 2011). The sport management industry is experiencing continuous professionalization (Dowling, Edwards, & Washington, 2014). The professional training of sport managers "the future sharks of sports business" is conducted by universities.

Foundation of the Sports Management Program around the world came in 1957, from a letter which Walter O'Malley, the owner of MLB Los

Angeles Dodgers, wrote to Professor James Mason at "The Ohio State University," showing the urgent need of professional workforce in the sport industry (Parks, Quarterman, & Thibault, 2007). However the sport management is a new phenomenon in Armenia, and the country is doing the first steps in this field. Due to the expansion of amateur and professional sports, creating an increased demand for such trained professionals, there was a need for establishing sport management programs in the country. Sport management, as an educational program in Armenian, was established in 2016 (ASIPCS, 2019). Currently, in the Republic of Armenia (RA), sport and physical culture operate, develop, and progress through a variety of sports organizations, and the leaders of organizations are regularly involved in various organizational tasks and having a hard time solving them. In order to effectively manage sports organizations in line with market demands, it is essential to introduce specialists from the sports management field (Gyozalyan, Mehrabyan, & Sargsyan, 2011). So there is an acute need for well-prepared professionals in the field of sport management in Armenia. Consequently, Sports management is relatively young as an academic program in Armenia, and there is no prior research exploring students' perceptions. As Chalip stated, "there are advantages and disadvantages of being young" (2006). The most potent disadvantage is the growing pains,

but the most substantial advantage is that those who study sports management have an opportunity to build the discipline's foundation and shape its future (Chalip, 2006). With the number of the growing necessity of sport management professionals in the country, it is crucial to have a well-developed educational program. Such preparation calls for the integration of theoretical and practical knowledge (Stier, 1986). For this need, the study which explores a sport management program is crucial. In order to understand how a good sport management program is constructed, as the second country of interest was selected the Republic of Korea. Korea is a powerful country that organizes and hosts several mega sport events since 1998 Seoul Summer Olympic games to recent, 2019 FINA World Championships. Without active management skills and the right specialists, it is impossible to organize and hold a mega sport event. This one more time emphasizes the power of Korea in the field of sport management. Therefore, it would be useful to compare the Armenian sport management program with the Korean program. Among the Korean sport management programs was selected top program. The university providing the selected Korean program is one of the best universities in the country and not only, according to the Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings by the sport industry subject (QS, 2018).

Scholars' interest in sport management education is not new; many studies around the world conducted to explore sport management programs. The different scholars mentioned, analysis of sport management programs, mainly focused on theoretical perspective, social perspectives (social and cultural nature), employer perspective (market and career nature), so it included specific curriculum analysis with particular subject and objectives. However, it was not focused on student perspective, yet the NUS (National Union of Students) Student Experience report (2009) found that 88% of students wanted to be involved in shaping the content of their course. Smetherham (1977) stated that publications relating to the program's curriculum innovations are usually directed to teachers, and it is often assumed that the students will be passive recipients of the change process rather than active participants. However, it is essential to listen to the voice of whom the program directed. We share Smetherham believes that the views of students "do affect the classroom practices of teachers, and unless these views are taken into account, unforeseen consequences may result." (1977, p. 3160). The main goal of this special issue is hearing the student's voice and addressing sport management from the students' perspectives. As one stakeholder, students must be included in curricular planning and also

as a final product, their feedback and debriefing must be included in any decision making and future development.

The distinction about students' choices of a higher education institution, and student satisfaction, as well as the link between these aspects and the efforts of higher education institutions to certify high retention rates, have been an important research topic in the last ten years. Generally, the authors conducted studies by using quantitative methods (mentioned in Literature Review), to explore students' perceptions. However, in order to see the real viewing platform, we need to take a look at the "human" side of an issue. Researchers recommended alternative methods; in particular, qualitative approaches to further contribute to the knowledge of best practices in cooperative education in the field of sport management (Stier, 2001; Şerban, 2018; and others). To this end, this study adopted a qualitative approach to explore students' perceptions of the sport management graduate programs selected in Armenia and Korea. To protect the confidentiality of institutions will be used the pseudonyms from now on. Selected Armenian sport management graduate program will be called "Program A," and the Korean sport management graduate program will be called "Program K."

1.2. Research Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine selected sport management programs in Armenia and Korea, in particular, to explore the students' perceptions of the selected programs. Also, to explore similarities and differences for the future implications and improvement of the Armenian and Korean sport management programs at the master's degree level.

The research focused on sport management graduate students' backgrounds, motives, expectations, and experiences in Program A and Program K. Exploring students' backgrounds and motives will provide a greater understanding of what knowledge and basis have the student who chooses a sport management graduate program. Understanding what motivates students to choose the programs, also, by exploring experience, we aim to investigate gaps in students' expectations (desired) and experiences (actual). Lastly, to understand the limitations and challenges, this will highlight gaps in university-student knowledge transfer.

This research defines student views as a reflection of the actual image of the program and the basis for the future development of graduate programs. As the Gregory Letter stated in his study about the program's approval process to accreditation: "Sport Management curriculum has to be

able to change to the growing interests of students" (2007). Specifically, the study presents similarities and differences in the perceptions in two countries and suggests ways for future increase of programs' quality in which sport management programs can achieve students' satisfaction.

Four research questions were formulated to meet the objectives of the study. As following;

RQ1. How are Armenian and Korean selected sport management graduate programs' curriculums constructed?

RQ2. What are the perceptions of Armenian sport management graduate students of the selected Program A?

RQ3. What are the perceptions of Korean sport management graduate students of the selected Program K?

RQ4. What are the similarities and differences of the students' perception of the selected sport management graduate programs in Armenia and Korea?

1.3. Research Objectives

a) To examine Program A and Program K currently taught.

b) To explore Armenian sport management graduate students' perceptions of experiences from Program A.

c) To explore Korean sport management graduate students' perceptions of experiences from Program K.

d) To compare students' perceptions of the selected sport management graduate programs in Korea and Armenia for future implications and improvement.

1.4. Significance

Through this study, the results will provide a picture of student background, as well as an understanding of their interests and motives. A better understanding of students' expectations and information access may aid sport management faculty in the recruitment and retention of students. The study of students' experiences can help sport management faculty strategize more ways to effectively evaluate and implement curricular and curricular activities in their respective programs. Specifically, for the sport management higher education, this research is valuable, as the sport market in Armenia increases every year. The results of the study will highlight gaps in university-student knowledge transfer and have implications for the future development of preparation programs of sport managers. By pinpointing specific areas of concern within sport management master's programs, this research allows current faculty members and future researchers to improve graduate curricula and course content delivery.

Even though limited to a case, the study may be used for the future development of sport management programs in the countries and allows for some generalizations to be drawn. The findings from qualitative data can be extended to programs with characteristics similar to those in the study, gaining a rich and complex understanding of a specific context typically takes precedence over producing data that can be generalized to other geographical areas or populations (Patton, 2003).

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 The Nature of Sport Management

It is crucial to provide an overview of what entails "sport management." Sport management is a term and a field that reflects a multitude of disciplines (Doherty, 2012) encompassing finance, marketing, management, law, ethics, psychology, and sociology. As a distinct discipline, sport management has origins in the 1900s (Pitts, 2001). Some researchers mentioned that paradigmatic discussion and debates would continue to resound as academics try to define sport management as a discipline (Haan & Sherry, 2012). However, to understand the features of sports management and to analyze its components, it is necessary to consider various approaches to its definition. Chelladurai (1985) defines sport management as the management of those organizations whose primary domain of operation is a sport and physical activity (Chelladurai, 2014). Sports organizations, careers in sport management, and the sports industry itself differentially emphasized in the various definitions of sport management, but in all these cases, the focus eventually turns to sports products (Chelladurai, 2014). Mullin defines a sport manager as a person whose job requires planning, staffing, organizing, controlling, and directing

within the context of an organization whose primary or predominant product or service is a sport and sport-related (Mullin, 1980).

Sports management is the process and result of applying the ability to create synergies through integration and reformation of existing ones, as well as the search and discovery of new types of resources necessary for the development, implementation, and monitoring of various tasks related to the sports industry (Selenginsky & Maksimenko, 2015).

2.2 Sport Management in Higher Education

Sport management is a field that is expanding, in terms of both employment potential and the proliferation of academic preparation programs (Ko, Henry, & Kao, 2011). The sport management industry is experiencing continuous professionalization (Dowling, Edwards, & Washington, 2014). The professional training of sport managers "the future sharks of sports business" is conducted by universities.

The foundation of the Sports Management Program came in 1957, from a letter which Walter O'Malley, the owner of MLB Los Angeles Dodgers, wrote to Professor James Mason at "The Ohio State University," showing the urgent need of professional workforce in the sport industry (Parks, Quarterman, & Thibault, 2007). Sport management, as a profession and academic discipline, begun to develop the 1960s (Chelladurai, 2001).

Initial academic attention associated with sport management as an academic field was paid in 1966 when the first master's degree program was established at Ohio University in the United States (Brassie, 1989; Laird, 2005; NASPE-NASSM, 1993; Stier, 2001). According to Costa in the 1980s, "the field defined itself as a discipline signaled by the founding of NASSM (North American Society for Sport Management)" (Costa, 2005). In order to create a standardized curriculum for a new discipline, some criteria have to be created, which the programs have to follow. The North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) and the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) joined together to form a task force that would create and monitor a curriculum for sport management programs (1993).

Notwithstanding of the start date, scholars agree that sport management is a relatively young field in comparison with other academic disciplines (Chalip, 2006; Costa, 2005; Hardy, 1987; Humphreys & Maxcy, 2007; Jones, Brooks, & Mak, 2008). College sports-management programs have grown nearly as exponentially as the sports business itself has (Helyar, 2006). According to Lussier and Kimball (2013), in 1980, there were only 20 sports management programs in North America; by 2011, this number

had increased to 200. Kimball asserts that "the value of sports directly depends on the methods of management and organization."

Over the last 20 years, throughout the United States of America, Sport Management programs have been growing in both popularity and size (Helyar, 2006). In 2007 there were over 200 universities that have a sport management program (undergraduate, master, Ph.D.) in the US (Parks, Quarterman, & Thibault, 2007). According to NASSM, as of 2013, there are 350 universities in the United States offering sport management degree programs at the bachelor, master, and doctorate levels (Chelladurai, 2014). Today, NASSM (2018) lists more than 450 universities and colleges offering degree programs in sport management in the United States alone. This type of spot in the growth of a number of universities offering sport management programs is seen in several countries around the world. As another example of the growth of sport management, many universities and governments in Europe and the European Union have endorsed a program for a European master's degree in sport management (Chelladurai, 2014). Despite the growth in sport management undergraduates and graduate degrees, sport management occupation does not require pre-requisite training in order to be employed as a sport management practitioner. In other words, it is still not a requirement to study at the university level in

order to operate as a sports management (or related) practitioner (Dowling, 2018). However, more and more students want to enroll in these programs, and universities are expanding their programs to accommodate this high demand (Chelladurai, 2014). The sport management programs in the United States have been gaining much attention from students interested in the sporting industry (Anthony, 2013). It is remarkable to speculate as to why sport management continues to remain open in terms of students' interest.

2.2.1 Sport Management Curriculums

Sport management is a field that is expanding in terms of both employment potential and the proliferation of academic preparation programs (Ko, Henry, & Kao, 2011). Sport management curricula vary markedly from one institution to another. To prepare sport management graduates for work, it is essential that sport management curriculum should reflect a global perspective, since graduates may work internationally, in mega sport events such as the Olympics, or a multinational sports agency such as IMG (International Management Group - the global sports, entertainment, and media corporation) (Haan & Sherry, 2012).

Many scholars examined sport management graduate curriculums and discussed the criteria for an effective program. Li, Cobb, and Sawyer (1994) surveyed the perceptions and opinions of the sport management

educators on 17 specific characteristics of graduate program effectiveness. As a result, they described the features of effective sport management graduate programs (Li, Cobb, & Sawyer, 1994). Scholars also examined 302 students satisfaction within sport management master's degree programs and suggested characteristics for the effective sport management graduate program (Popp, Weight, Dwyer, Morse, & Baker, 2015). In terms of the course included in the program curriculum, one of the proposed features for the effective sport management graduate program was that the curriculum is designed correctly to reflect the characteristics of sport management (Popp, Weight, Dwyer, Morse, & Baker, 2015). However, Brassie (1989) introduced the guidelines for programs preparing undergraduate and graduate students for careers in sport management, where he highlighted that advanced courses must also be available in the graduate curriculum for students to select, such as Law, Sport Economics/Finance. According to Ulrich and Parkhouse, one of the criteria for developing sport management graduate curricula is that the sport management student needs to take specialty courses, such as basic courses in law and marketing, and, more importantly, sports law and sport marketing (1981). Some researchers prioritized internship programs in sport management curriculums; Sutton

(1989) explained the role of the internship in sport management curriculum and introduced a Model for Development.

2.2.2 The Theoretical Review of Curriculum

UNESCO (1996) sets out four pillars of education for the twenty-first century: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be. These principles offer a general framework for postmodernist curriculum development. They sound delightful and attractive. However, similar to Tyler's rationale, they suffer from an over-simplistic perspective. They have not justified what knowledge to learn, what skills to acquire, what experiences to undertake, and what personality to develop. Doll (1993) provides a complete view and argues for the construction of a postmodernist curriculum matrix, which contains several elements: He also suggests four criteria to check the quality of a postmodernist curriculum. One of those criteria is the relationship. The relationship is about interactions in two dimensions. One is "cultural relationships," which focuses on the interactions among the curriculum with the local as well as global context. The other is "pedagogical relationships," which emphasizes interactions among the curriculum structure as well as teacher-learner relationships.

In the context of curriculum modernization, scholars have been focused on specific parts of the curriculum, and make much effort to create

a specific curriculum that fulfills national needs or some other specific objective. Many scholars mentioned the importance of different components in sport management (curriculum), such as theory/theoretical knowledge (Doherty, 2013), social and cultural nature (Lau, 2001), even specific professional preparation programs as one of the vital aspect (Ulrich & Parkhouse, 1981). Also, scholars have done a comparative analysis of curriculum and professional experience (Young, 2013).

To sum up, the different scholars mentioned such different components in the curriculum, mainly theoretical perspective, social perspectives (social and cultural nature), employer perspective (market and career nature), so it included specific curriculum analysis with particular subject and objectives. On the other hand, it is not focused on the student perspective. The programs pay more attention to give sport management students the knowledge and skill that they need to have for future career perspectives but forgetting to take into account what students want to have, or what they are able to have and highlight the gups in university-student knowledge transfer. So, these one more time emphasize the importance of students' experience and opinions and their voice in the higher education system.

2.3 Sport Management Student

A sports manager is a specialist who, as a rule, occupies a leading position in sport organizations and is proficient in scientific management. The art of management is characterized by the skills to apply the principles, methods, and technology of management in specific activities.

The students who completed a bachelor's degree in sport management are students of the same fields master's programs. Moreover, former athletes, after completing their professional careers, also choose to study at the university in this particular area. However, sports management is a specialization not only for former athletes or students with academic backgrounds in sport management. Education in the field of sports management is an excellent idea for those who cannot imagine their life without sport and would like to firmly link their future career with this exciting and fascinating field of activity. A career in sports management allows anyone who wants to combine their love of sports with business and marketing strategies, as well as to show their management skills and abilities.

Every professional athlete, sports league, federation, club, the team has its own sports manager. Therefore, the demand for professionals in this field is growing every day. It should be noted that this profession is not new.

Even the Roman gladiators had sports managers, and the Olympic Games originated in ancient Greece and were a significant large-scale event that went beyond a simple sports competition. The modern world of sports also cannot do without professional sports managers. After all, it is representatives of this profession who know how accurately function the sports organizations, how to choose a team, how to make a company's business profitable, and competitive.

The sports industry would require sport managers with international business capabilities (Masteralexis & McDonald, 1997). A modern specialist, the so-called manager of physical culture and sport, is a person who can think outside the box in any situation and professionally solve the tasks set for him in organizational and management activities. The sports manager's professionalism is expressed in the knowledge of theory and technology of personnel, organization management. Also, in the ability to plan and predict the development of the organization, analyze the activities of competitors, in ensuring the reliable operation of various sports buildings and structures, in attracting sponsors and investors, in organizing and conducting competitions of any scale at a decent level.

Careers in sport management can be broadly classified based on specific activities or job types. These activity/job areas include event

management, facility management, ticketing operations, concession operations, legal issues, scheduling of facility/equipment, programming, rental operations, scheduling of games/activities, tournament operations, parking operations, marketing operations, public relations, personnel management, budgeting and accounting (Chelladurai, 2014). A career in sports management allows anyone who wants to combine their love of sports with business and marketing strategies, as well as to show their management skills and abilities.

2.4 Student Voice in Higher Education

Diana Cheng-Man Lau (2001) argues that no matter what context we are in, curriculum development is the manifestation of the supremacy distribution in society. Generally, the curriculum is constructed with the learner as its central focus. However, the voice of the learner is mostly excluded from the curriculum design and implementation process (Parson & Jagersma, 2011).

Campbell, Eland, Rumpus, and Shacklock, in their Hearing the student voice: Involving students in curriculum design and the delivery report stated: "students are co-creators, not consumers, of their education." Authors explored how universities can meaningfully involve students in

shaping the curriculum, and recorded the progress of the hearing the student's voice. Concluded:

> Using the student voice to contribute to curriculum design and development can lead to significant enhancements which benefit staff, students, and the curriculum. There is a benefit in capitalising on the significant interest in the project by developing, supporting, and extending student voice work. Although there have been important changes in recent years in the value put on the student voice and the recognition that hearing it contributes to student engagement, there need to be further changes, particularly at an institutional level, to enable the use of the student voice to become routine. This can probably be best achieved by academic colleagues working at programme level using existing structures and discussions so that this process becomes an embedded part of existing activity and closer to the heart of provision. If enabling student involvement with the design of their learning is to permeate higher education to a significant degree, cultural changes are needed so that this is regarded as an accepted rather than different practice. We hope this project will contribute to

change by providing colleagues with exemplars of practice, practical advice, and by raising the profile of the value of hearing the student voice. (Campbell, Eland, Rumpus, & Shacklock, 2009, p. 29)

Another report done by the National Union of Students (2009) explored the Student Experience and found that 88% of students wanted to be involved in shaping the content of their course. Smetherham (1977) stated that publications relating to curriculum innovations are usually directed at teachers, and it is often assumed that the students will be passive recipients of the change process rather than active participants. However, it is essential to "open the windows" and listen to the voice of whom the program directed. There is a need for all concerned with teacher education, whether at pre-service or in-service levels, to show that not only teachers but also students require support in curriculum change (Deer & Thompson, 1990). We share Smetherham believes that the views of students "do affect the classroom practices of teachers, and unless these views are taken into account, unforeseen consequences may result" (1977, p. 3160).

2.4.1 Student Satisfaction

Student satisfaction in higher education is not a new topic of discourse. Students' choices of a higher education institution, and student

satisfaction as well as the linkage between these aspects and the universities' efforts to certify high retention rates have been an important research topic in the last ten years. Alves and Raposo (2007) found that students' satisfaction bred loyalty. The Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015) provides that "Institutions should confirm that they use relevant information for the effective management of their programs and other activities." The priority issues for student satisfaction are the quality of instruction and its effectiveness, the knowledge of teachers, their rectitude regarding the treatment of individual students, timely and useful feedback concerning the students' progress, the content of the courses, the curricula and its flexibility, the variety of the courses, the overall opportunity of intellectual growth. In the last ten years, though, many other aspects became important as well, such as academic and career advising, financial policies, the campus climate, or various administrative supports (Levitz, 2017).

In the audit of the Australian sport management job market, sport management students reported a lack of guidance (e.g., on how to 'navigate' the industry and how to be successful in career development) during their university studies (Emery, Crabtree, & Kerr, 2012). Student awareness and experience, moving beyond individual reflection, is essential to achieving

the optimal application of SKAs (skills, knowledge, and attitudes) (Feldmann 2016; Howorth, Smith, and Parkinson 2012). Some studies' conducted in order to ensure that those (sport management students) who receive training from the sports management courses will match the needs of the sports industry, the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) and the North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) set verifiable standards for the program (Parks, Quarterman, & Thibault, 2007). Others used quantitative methods to explore student satisfaction (Stier, 2001; Şerban, 2018). The study (2018) of evaluation of a primary issue of student satisfaction, highlights the lake of practical activities. The study determined the university's leadership to lay greater emphasis on practical activities as part of the teaching process (Şerban, 2018). The study was conducted by quantitative research, so why students emphasize the practical part, prefer to outclass activities instead of class activities, is yet to discuss.

Student satisfaction in sport studies and not only is the ideology of the 21st century, and student-centered learning should be a fundamental principle (in other spheres as well as in curriculum planner).

2.4.2 Student Satisfaction in Sport Management Education

In the early stages of the academic field of sport management, curriculum content, and program quality were distinct foci of sport management researchers. Several articles were published in the 1980s and early 1990s centering on topics of career preparation (Brassie, 1989). The data in most of these studies were comprised of curriculum and syllabus; however, they lacked the first-person account of student opinions and attitudes. A few years later, researchers conducted several studies exploring topics indirectly related to student satisfaction and graduate program outcomes using students as research participants. Parks (1991) examined the employment status of sport management undergraduate alumni of one university to determine demographic information, graduate school status, placement strategies, current positions, and salaries. Some scholars examined students' motivation for choosing sport management education (Schwab, Dustin, Legg, Timmerman, Wells, & Banning, 2013).

Cook, Parker, and Pettijohn (2004) examined students' attitudes toward specific elements of the internship program. The authors indicated that internships provide a positive learning experience for the student, as well as positive results for the sponsoring university and business. Over the past century, researchers examined the career trajectory of sport

professionals (Kjeldsen, 1990), job satisfaction (Parks & Parra, 1994), the impact of internship process on students satisfaction (Yoh, 2011), despite the interest in the career satisfaction of sport management students, there remains a clear need for research examining students the satisfaction of the sport management master's degree programs. Nels, Erianne, Brendan, Alan, and Amy (2015) examined satisfaction levels with a 26-item graduate sport management programs in the United States. In particular, it was found that students who earned their undergraduate degree in sport management, sport-related studies, or other major were satisfied with the program; however, the students with undergraduate degrees in business were consistently less satisfied with how well their graduate program taught them various sport management skills.

As literature shows, the student's voice refers to the values, beliefs, opinions, cultural backgrounds of students, and approaches that are based on student choices, interests, passions, and ambitions (The Glossary of Education Reform - student voice, 2013), although were introduced multiple definitions of students voice (Mitra & Gross, 2009). Student voice is a reflection of the actual image of program quality and the perfect basis for future development. As the Gregory Letter stated in his study about the

program's approval process to accreditation: "Sport management curriculum has to be able to change to the growing interests of students" (2007).

2.5 Sport Management in Armenia

Physical culture and sport were on the rise in the First Republic of Armenia (1918-1920), which continued during the Soviet period. Over the past 100 years, the authorized state governing body of Sport and physical culture has been changed 14 times (Ispiryan & Araqelyan, 2009). From 1923 to 2007, the field of physical education and sport in Armenia was governed not by the ministry, but by the various state bodies or Non-governmental organizations. Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of the Republic of Armenia was founded in 2007 as a result of restructuring the State Sport Committee of Physical Culture and Sport. This executive power body develops and implements the Sports and Youth Policy of the Government of the Republic of Armenia (2018).

Sport management is a rapidly growing field in Armenia. Currently, in the Republic of Armenia, sport and physical culture operate, develop, and progress through a variety of sport organizations, such as football, martial arts, fitness, and health centers. The leaders of the mentioned organizations and staff are regularly involved in various organizational tasks, and having a hard time solving them. In order to effectively manage sports organizations

in line with market demands, it is essential to introduce specialists from the sports management field (Gyozalyan, Mehrabyan, & Sargsyan, 2011). In the present economic and market conditions, in order to effectively manage sports organizations, it is crucial to incorporate the theory and practice of sport management and the way to acquirement the basis of the theory is through education.

2.5.1 Sport Management Education in Armenia

There is an acute need for well-prepared professionals in the field of sport management in Armenia. Such preparation calls for the integration of theoretical and practical knowledge (Stier, 1986). In the country, the first Sport Management education program established since 2016. On a 2016-2017 educational year based on the chair of Sport management and social sciences and Magistracy departments, the sport management graduate program was opened, which is preparing future sport managers in the country (2019).

Consequently, Sports management is relatively young as an academic program in Armenia. As Chalip stated, "there are advantages and disadvantages of being young" (2006). The most substantial advantage is that those who study sports management have an opportunity to build the discipline's foundation and shape its future. The most potent disadvantage is

the growing pains (and sometimes the self-doubt) that accompany that effort (Chalip, 2006). The sport management programs as a whole are taking significant steps to improve the programs, and the quality of students, but will be faced with various challenges on the way to improvement (Anthony, 2013).

Nowadays, it is necessary to conduct the study, which will explore the students' satisfaction from the Armenian sport management master program. For this study sport management graduate programs were selected, and to protect the confidentiality of the institutions will be used pseudonyms. Selected Armenian sport management graduate program will be called "Program A." The institute of the Program A realizes higher professional and pedagogical education of physical culture and sport both with Bachelor and Master Degrees. The educational process of the institute is carried out according to the State Higher Educational Standards. All graduates are awarded a diploma, which is a state-authorized document asserting the higher education completion for state agencies.

2.6 Sport Management in Korea

Global sport is a multifaceted phenomenon that is a powerful tool for social and economic development. Scholars, intellectuals, institutions, and administrations have actively leveraged sport to drive significant impact and

development in a variety of social, economic, and political contexts in Korea (Kwak, 2018). The rice and fall of modern sport and its impact in Korea provides unique research opportunities to scholars in various fields of sport. This provides various disciplinary approaches to initiate scholar dialogue among academics from various fields interested in sport in the Korean context (Kwak, 2018), one of those fields of interest in sport management. Currently, Korea, as a country with a developed sports industry, pays more attention to the preparation of future sports administrators (Kim, 1995). Korea is an authoritative house in the sports world. Korea has hosted major mega sports events since the 1998 Seoul Summer Olympics and continued hosting in 2002 Korea-Japan FIFA World Cup, in 2011 IAAF World Championships (Daegu), in 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics, and resent FINA World Championship mega sports event was successfully held in Gwangju (2019). Without active management skills and the right specialists, it is impossible to organize and hold a mega sport events. This one more time emphasizes the power of Korea in the field of sport management.

2.6.1 Sport Management Education in Korea

In the early 80s, instead of a "Department of Sport Management," several Korean universities and colleges had a "Department of Sport and

Leisure Studies" at the undergraduate level. Increasing the needs of sports specialists was awakening many universities to the need for a department which prepares sport managers (Kim, 1996). The Korean government began to show interest in sport and leisure studies in 1983 after establishing the Ministry of Sports. Before 1983, sport and leisure studies were taught as a subject from a textbook in the Department of Physical Education. Interest in Sport Studies has increased since the 1988 Seoul Summer Olympics. The government changes their attitude toward sport and leisure studies programs after realizing the importance of these programs and the need for well trained and educated individuals in this area. The department of Sport and Leisure Studies was first established as a university undergraduate curriculum in 1985, and now there are 21 universities and nine colleges with a department of Sport and Leisure Studies (Kim, 1996). The purpose of sport and leisure was to develop sport skills and physical strength, keep one's health and beauty, provide recreational activity, and reduce stress. Sport and leisure specialists had several roles to fulfill; one of those was leading sport groups and developing sport leaders/managers (Kim, 1994). However, the Department of Sport and Leisure Studies curriculum was very similar to the formal department of the Physical Education curriculum. Also, each Sport and Leisure Studies curriculum did not have a particular

curriculum for sport management specialists (Kim, 1996). Previously there was a need for establishment sport management programs and design its curriculum, creating an increased demand for such trained professionals (Kim, 1995). In 1996 the number of physical education (PE) related universities in Korea was 146; however, there was only one sport industry related university in the country and no sport industry related graduate school (KESS). In 2010 the number of sport industry related universities became six and seven sport-related graduate schools in the country. In the Republic of Korea, there are six sport industry related universities (Sport White Paper, 2014). From a single sport industry related university (in 1996), according to the 2014 Sports White Paper published by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, there are seven sports industry study programs at the master's degree level.

Among the Korean sport management programs, the top program was selected, and to protect the confidentiality of the institution will be used pseudonyms. Selected Korean sport management graduate program will be called "Program K." The university providing Program K has been the undisputed leader of higher education in the Republic of Korea and has established a global reputation. The university providing Program K is one of the best universities in the country and not only, according to the

Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings by the sport industry subject (QS, 2018). Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings has been recognized as one of the most influential rankings of the top universities around the world. The QS World University Rankings has a complex system of evaluating universities. It has six criteria with different weights. The six criteria are academic reputation (40%), faculty-student ratio (20%), and citations per faculty member (20%), employer reputation (10%), international faculty ratio (5%), and international student ratio (5%). So the main criteria are academic reputation, which is the key to a good program. Therefore this university's sport management graduate program was selected for the study.

Chapter 3. Methodology

This chapter discusses the research design and the other administering procedures for data collection. Considerable factors like the instrument design, ethical issues, selection of the participants, and methods were discussed in the ensuing sections. Many previous studies have been conducted by using quantitative methods (mentioned in the Literature Review) to explore students' perceptions of the graduate program. However, to see the real viewing platform needed to look into the "human" side of an issue. Researchers recommended alternative methods and, in particular, qualitative approaches to further contribute to the knowledge of best practices in cooperative education in the field of sport management (Stier, 2001; Şerban, 2018; et al.). The strength of qualitative research is its ability to provide elaborate textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. As Myers (2000) stated, "Qualitative studies are tools used in understanding and describing the world of human experience." Qualitative methods allow flexibility to probe initial participant responses, for example, the addition, exclusion, or wording of particular interview questions, or by asking why and how (Skinner, Edwards, & Corbett, 2015).

Considering the above-mentioned points, this study adopted a qualitative approach to explore students' views, mainly their motivations,

expectation, and experience, lastly understand limitations and challenges, which will highlight gaps in expectation and reality. Although findings from qualitative data can be extended to programs with characteristics similar to those in the study, gaining a rich and complex understanding of a specific context typically takes precedence over producing data that can be generalized to other geographical areas or populations (Patton, 2003).

3.1. Research Procedure

This study was focusing on exploring sport management graduate students' perceptions of sport management selected programs in Armenia and Korea, in particular, on understanding the similarities and differences of students' perceptions.

The pseudonyms were used to protect the confidentiality of institutions. Selected Armenian sport management graduate program is called "Program A," and the Korean sport management graduate program is called "Program K." Four research questions were developed after reading relevant literature. In this study, qualitative methods were used to reach the objectives. The study was conducted in two methods; document analysis (examine documents and artifacts) and semi-structured in-depth interviews.

Firstly the researcher contacted and collected documents regarding program details and curriculum planners from two educational institutions providing Program A and Program K. In order to make adjustments and to avoid any misunderstanding of the curriculum documents, the researcher contacted and had a dialogue/interview with the selected programs institutions' faculty members. After analyzing the documents/artifact and understanding the structure of each programs' curriculum, the researcher started to conduct interviews with students. Before the primary interviews, pilot interviews were conducted in advance. After the pilot interviews, the researcher reviewed the questions and started the primary research. Face-to-face interviews with Korean sport management graduate students who agreed to participate were collected in this study. VOIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) technologies (such as Skype and FaceTime) were used for conducting interviews with Armenian sport management graduate students. Interviews lasted approximately 45 – 60 minutes, and the conversation been recorded to be written into a transcript for further results and findings. The interview form that was used as a guideline was in English for Korean students and was translated into Armenian for Armenian students. With the collected data, generic steps were applied to analyze the data (Creswell, 2003).

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

3.2.1 Data Source

The data for the study was collected from two sources: (1) documents (examine documents and artifacts) and (2) in-depth interviews. These two methods are among the most commonly utilized in qualitative research and were specially selected to aid this research in obtaining the particular kind of data to meet the objectives.

1) Documents

To reach the aims of the research documents and artifacts of the sports management graduate programs' curriculum in Armenia and Korea was examined. Documents collection, as written evidence, represents the data that is an unobtrusive source of information (Creswell, 2003). The data helped to identify differences and similarities between countries' programs. More specifically, it was needed to obtain the language and words of participants (Creswell, 2003). Therefore the documents collected from Program A at the Armenian educational institute and Program K at the Korean educational institute were taken as a base.

2) In-depth interviews

For a better understanding of the participants, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews. One of the significant advantages of using an

interview, is it probes deeply into the participants' answers to obtain opinions and feelings of the informant (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Face-to-face in-depth interviews are optimal for collecting the data on individuals' perspectives and experiences (Skinner, Edwards, & Corbett, 2015). It is known that the interviews intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants (Creswell, 2003). In exploratory research, open-ended questions and probing allow participants to respond in their own words, rather than driving them to choose, using fixed responses (Skinner, Edwards, & Corbett, 2015). The primary motive behind choosing such an in-depth interview as the research instrument was to elicit students' evaluations on a wide range of issues about the program in detail. For that reason, in the study, the qualitative data were collected through a semi-structured interview form prepared and developed by the researcher. The interview protocol is presented in appendix 1. The interviews organized into seven stages, recommended by Kvale and Brinkmann: thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analyzing, verifying, and reporting (2015). Semi-structured in-depth interview form was thematized and designed. During the development and designing of the interview form, the literature concerning the subject area and recommendations of the subject specialist in educational sciences were taken into account. The interview questions

grouped the thematic areas relabeled in Table 1 to illustrate better those topics.

Pilot interviews were conducted in advance, for an overall understanding of how the interviews will be carried out. After the pilot interviews, the researcher reviewed the questions and started the primary research. The data were notes, audio recordings, and transcripts.

3.2.2 Data Analysis

The study used cross-cultural analysis in order to enable a comparison of two countries' programs and students' perceptions. The cross-cultural study technique includes the following steps:

Step l. Describe each system; Step 2. Juxtapose putting; Step 3. Compare; Step 4. Analyze; Step 5. Critique.

The interviews were audiotaped, transcribed. Transcripts were analyzed through the content analysis technique (Creswell, 2009). The transcripts were coded according to the theoretical framework, and after, were developed themes and categories according to each discussed topic. Quotations from Armenian students were translated into English from Armenian.

Table 1

Interview Questions

Topics	
Background and Motivation	1. How would you describe your background in the Sport field? 2. What made you have an interest in sport management education?
Teaching and Learning	3. How would you describe the ideal teaching? 4. How would you describe the teaching and learning process for sport management graduate students? 5. What do you think about what challenges students in your class are facing in a professor-student relationship? 6. What would you suggest to make the teaching and learning process better?
Curriculum	7. What are your academic interests and expectation from the Sport Management graduate program? 8. If you were a responsible figure for the program, what would you change in the curriculum? 9. How would you describe the content of the curriculum currently taught? 10. What would you suggest to make the program curriculum better?
Practical Skills	11. Why is it important to have practical experience? 12. What kind of practical experience did you have in this program? 13. What would you suggest to make the better practical experience for sport management graduate students?
Overall	14. How do you see the program in general? 15. What suggestion may you have on how the university might enhance the quality of the program?

3.3 Research Participants

Purposive sampling was used in this research. Students (n=5) of Program A and students (n=5) of Program K were selected as research participants. The list of the study participants introduced below:

	Participant	Nationality	Institution	Gender	Semesters
1.	A	Armenian	Program A	female	alumna
2.	B	Korean	Program K	male	1
3.	C	Armenian	Program A	female	alumna
4.	D	Armenian	Program A	male	alumnus
5.	E	Armenian	Program A	male	alumnus
6.	F	Korean	Program K	female	2
7.	G	Korean	Program K	male	4
8.	H	Armenian	Program A	female	alumna
9.	I	Korean	Program K	male	2
10.	J	Korean	Program K	male	2

Face-to-face interviews with Korean sport management graduate students who agreed to participate will be collected in this study. VOIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) technologies (such as Skype and FaceTime) will be used for conducting interviews with Armenian sport management graduate students.

3.2.1 Selection Criteria

The Participants of the study have experience in studying at the program ranging from 1 to 4 semesters (from 1-2 academic years) in full-time systems. Since Program A is only one year (2 semesters) and by the

time of conducting this research, the Armenian students who experienced two semesters of education had already graduated, were named as alumni.

For Korean participants, it was necessary to be fluent in English. This was done consciously to eliminate some other factors (such as language barrier) other than the concern of study, which may affect the valuation of results. For Armenians, both Armenian and English were suitable.

In order to select research participants, were used a snowballing – a type of purposive sampling, also known as chain referral sampling and typically proceeds after a study begins (Creswell, 2012). In this method, participants with whom contact has already been made, use their social networks to refer the researcher to other persons who could be a potential participant or contribute to the study. Because of the language barrier (with Korean students), and distance barrier (with Armenian students) the study employed snowball sampling to include the students to participate by asking the participants to recommend other volunteer students who speak English fluently since it was necessary to be fluent in English for in-depth interviews.

3.4 Rigor of Study

According to Creswell (2003, p. 195), researchers need to convey the steps to check the validity of the findings. In the qualitative literature, the validity expressed with terms such as "trustworthiness," "authenticity," and "credibility" (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Creswell (2003) recommends the use of multiple strategies to enhance the researcher's ability to assess the accuracy of the findings. Therefore in this research, three strategies were conducted for assuring the trustworthiness of the findings.

1) Member check

A member check provides the opportunity to assess the adequacy of data and preliminary results as well as to confirm particular aspects of the data (Creswell & Miller, 2000). To go back with the final descriptions or themes to research participants and determine whether these participants feel that they are accurate.

2) Triangulation

Triangulation involves using multiple and different data sources to provide the validation of the results (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Triangulation allows the researcher through the use of multiple sources, methods, theories, and

investigators, to understand and explore the correct direction of the research and to corroborate the existing findings.

3) Peer review or debriefing

Peer review or debriefing provides an external check of the research process. This strategy involves an interpretation outside the researcher invested in another person, adds validity to the account (Creswell, 2003). It allows a qualified peer researcher to review and assess transcripts and final categories, and the themes or findings of a study, also, may review selected documents and possibly other written work of the researcher.

3.5 Research Ethics

Respect for persons requires a commitment to warranting the autonomy of research participants, and the dignity of all research participants must be respected. This principle guarantees that people will not be used merely as a means to achieve research objectives. In this research, I examined selected sport management graduate programs, and to protect the confidentiality of institutions providing educational programs used the pseudonyms: Program A and program K. Also, in this research, I explored selected programs from the students' perspectives. All interview participants were initially informed about the purpose of the study and how the results of the study will be employed before they participated in it. Informed consent

is one of the essential tools for ensuring respect for persons during the research (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). The participants were assured that all individual opinions were confidential. I explained that they were free to withdraw at any time from the study. Before the process of collecting data, the researcher allocated participants an alphabet (such as A, B, C, D, etcetera) and asked them to say that letter before speaking. Mentioning of the false name instead of the participant's real name ensures the anonymity of the research. Then the interviews with the volunteer students ranged from 60 to 90 minutes.

Chapter 4. Findings

Chapter 4 first explains a summary of the study and after presents the results and findings in relation to the research questions. Each of the four research questions is addressed individually.

The purpose of this study was to examine selected sport management programs in Armenia and Korea, in particular, to explore the students' perceptions of the sport management master's program. Also, to explore similarities and differences for the future implications and improvement of the Armenian and Korean sport management programs at the master's degree level. In order to protect the confidentiality of the institutions, I used pseudonyms. The Armenian selected sport management graduate program was called "Program A," and the Korean selected sport management graduate program was called "Program K."

Four research questions were as follows;

RQ1. How are Armenian and Korean selected sport management graduate programs' curriculums constructed?

RQ2. What are the perceptions of Armenian sport management graduate students of the selected Program A?

RQ3. What are the perceptions of Korean sport management graduate students of the selected Program K?

RQ4. What are the similarities and differences of the students' perception of the selected sport management graduate programs in Armenia and Korea?

Data results and findings were organized in accordance with research questions.

4.1 Construction of the Curriculums

In an address to the first research question, which focused on exploring the selected sport management graduate programs' curriculum construction, the documents and artifact in connection with the issue, from the selected programs were collected and examined. Documents and artifacts, as written evidence, represent the data that is an unobtrusive source of information. The data helped to identify differences and similarities between countries' programs. More specifically, it was needed to obtain the language and words of participants. The documents were collected from Program A and Program K.

In order to make the data more manageable, the data from the curriculums were organized according to a conceptual framework comprised of key components of the sport management curriculum. The use of the framework makes it possible to compare and develop the recommendations

for the improvements. The framework, based on characteristics, was divided into two: general characteristics and structure of the curriculum.

(1) The "General Characteristics" theme describes the main features of the program, such as location, the official name of the degree offered, the title of the program, department providing the program, mission/vision of the program, type of the program, duration, fee and credit hours required for a degree.

(2) The "Structure" theme is more detailed and consists of an explanation of the mandatory and elective courses, credit hours required for each course, general description of the courses in the sport management program at each of the universities: Program A and Program K respectfully.

4.1.1 *Armenian Curriculum*

The program details, study plan, and course catalogs from Program A were examined. Also, in order to make adjustments and to avoid any misunderstanding of the curriculum construction, the researcher contacted and had a dialogue/interview with Program A's faculty members.

In order to make the data more manageable, the data from the curriculum was organized following the framework mentioned above and represented by the (1) General characteristics and (2) Structure.

1) General Characteristics

The general characteristics of the selected program, such as location, the official name of the degree offered, the title of the program, department providing the program, mission/vision of the program, type of the program, duration, fee and credit hours required for a degree in Program A are presented in Table 2.

Program A is provided by the Department of Sport Management and Social Science and is named "Sport Management" master's program. The university, provided Program A, is located in Yerevan, the capital city of Armenia. The degree offers a "Master of Sport Management" qualification. The duration of the program is one year (2 semesters) in the full-time system, with a total of 60 credits required (Table 2). The total number of credits for the mandatory and elective courses is 30 (Table 3). The other 30 credits are distributed accordingly: 20 credits for scientific research and master's thesis preparation (reading and research), four credits for the master's thesis defense, and six credits for practice (scientific practice in the sports organization - a mandatory component included in the official curriculum).

Table 2

General Characteristics of Program A

Location	Yerevan
Title/name	Sport Management (SM)
Degree/qualification	Master of Management
Duration	One year (2 semesters)
Type of study	Full-time
Credit (hours)	60*
Department	Sport Management and Social Science
Mission/vision	The aim of the educational program is to prepare high-quality specialists in sport management specialization. The educational process is directed to scientific research and practical activity in the physical culture and sport organization, management, and realization. It emphasized physical culture and sport management system and analysis of methods and methodology of applying economic theory in the sport market with uncertain and risky conditions. Also, the prediction of managing the development of the field on national and global levels.
Fee	450.000 *AMD***

Note. 1 semester = 16/14 weeks of study hours and 4 weeks of exam hours.

∗ 30 credits for courses, 20 credit for reading and research, 4 credit for the defense, and 6 credit for practica.

∗∗ 480AMD =1$.

The mission of the program is to prepare high-quality specialists on sport management specialization, as mentioned in the official documents. As the primary aspect, the program focuses on scientific research, as expected, since it is a master's level program, and followed by the practica, which is the mandatory practical experience in the sport organizations. Also in the mission was mentioned management, specified in sport, and application of the economic theory into the field, with skills and knowledge of the uncertainty and risky conditions. Mission concludes with an emphasis on the two levels, global and national.

2) Structure

The "Structure" of the selected curriculum explains more details, such as the mandatory and elective courses, credit hours required for each course (Table 3). For examining the structure of the curriculum was explored Program A's study plan. The study plan connects the student with all the mandatory components, modules, the sequence of the entire course, and the period of practica. The main section of the educational cycle (study plan) presents the modules and courses in accordance with the requirements of higher education institutions of the Republic of Armenia for preparation of the Sport Management educational program.

Table 3

Curriculum Structure of Program A

Course name	Credit	Type of knowledge
Republican Component (General)	**14**	
Psychology and Pedagogy of Higher Education	2	Psychology
English	6	language
Principals and Methods of Research Activities	4	Research methods
Problems of Assurance of Physical Workability in the Field of Physical Culture and Sport	2	Physiology
University Component (Major requirements)	**14**	
The Features of Managing Modern Scientific Issues in Sport Management	4	Sport industry
The Control as a Function of Sport Management	4	Organizational Management
Managing the Time and Staff of Sport Organizations	2	HRM
Jurisprudence	2	Law
The Internal and External Management of Financial Audit of Sport Organizations	2	Finance
Elective Courses	**2**	
Marketing of Physical Culture and Sport Management		Marketing
	2	
Modern Media Education and Media Industry		Media
Scientific Practica	**6**	
Practica (2 weeks)	6	Practical experience
Scientific Research Work	**24**	
Scientific Research and Thesis Preparation	20	Reading and research
Master's Thesis Completing and Defense	4	Defense
Total	60*	

Note. 1 *hours/week* =1 credit; 1class hour = 45′

The core curriculum includes mandatory general, mandatory for the profession, and optional (elective) courses. The rules of these courses are approved by the Educational and Methodological Council of the University. Students' academic workload does not exceed 45 academic hours per week, covering all forms of classroom work, lectures, and extracurricular activities. The curriculum consists of "Republican Components," "University Components," "Elective Course," "Scientific Practica," and "Scientific Research Work" (Table 3).

Republican Components have in total 14 credits and include 4 general courses for all graduate students (Table 3).

1. Psychology and Pedagogy of Higher Education; mainly discuss psychology in a sports field. Furthermore, it introduces the general knowledge about human psychology, and also sport and educational psychology.

2. English; includes the teaching of the translation techniques, based on the Basic English skills.

3. Principals and Methods of Research Activities; this course is the methodology of organizing scientific research. It includes and covers four themes (topics): Scientific Research Methods, Fundamentals of Medical and Biological Research Methodology, Fundamentals of

Psychological Research Methodology, Statistical Research methodology (Table 4).

4. Problems of Assurance of Physical Workability in the Field of Physical Culture and Sport; the purpose of the course is to strengthen and expand knowledge of physical workability. These will help future kinesiology specialists with a better understanding of the role of physical fitness. The main topics are: 1) the factors that provide physical workability, 2) aerobic and anaerobic muscular energy systems, 3) the role of the motor system in providing physical workability, 4) the relationship between the functional state and functionality of the body's physiological systems, 5) nervous, cardiovascular, respiratory, respiratory, respiratory, 6) the role of the nervous, cardiovascular, respiratory systems in providing physical workability.

Table 4

Topics of Principals and Methods of Research Activities Course in Program A

Topics	Duration
Scientific Research Methods	4 weeks
Fundamentals of Medical and Biological Research Methodology	4 weeks
Fundamentals of Psychological Research Methodology	4 weeks
Statistical Research methodology	4 weeks

University Components (major requirements) have, in total, 14 credits and include five mandatory courses for sport management specialists (Table 3).

1. The Features of Managing Modern Scientific Issues in Sport Management; the purpose of this course is to introduce students to the origin of the general idea and development of the management as a field of economic science. Particular attention is paid to the development of economic thinking.

2. The Control as a Function of Sport Management; the goal of this course is to expand and develop knowledge about the control system of physical education and sports. Formulate the abilities to analyze the further development, changes, and social content of physical education and the sport management process in Armenia in current market relations. Develop skills to implement and invest the acquired knowledge.

3. Managing the Time and Staff of Sport Organizations; the purpose of the course is to teach staff management (human resource management) strategy. Particular attention is paid to the development of different areas that determine the objectives of the

course, such as staff structure and management stages, features of the evaluation of job performance, training for staff, and etcetera.

4. Jurisprudence; the purpose of the course is to introduce students to the characteristics of law and the state system and state law. Introduce students to their fundamental rights by the Constitution and also by other laws.

5. The Internal and External Management of Financial Audit of Sport Organizations; the main goal is to provide the basic theoretical knowledge of auditing, organizing, controlling, and formulating of documentation.

The program has an **Elective Course** with two credits. The Elective Course includes two options for selection: Marketing of Physical Culture and Sport Management; and Modern Media Education and Media Industry (Table 3).

The program also has mandatory **Scientific Practica** with six credits (Table 3). In accordance with the requirements of the educational programs of the higher educational institution, the field of sport management includes practica, which is a form of training, directly focused on professional preparedness. The practica reinforce the knowledge and skills that the trainees have acquired through the courses, and for strengthening the

theoretical knowledge, put it into practice. The deadline for the practica and the internship is according to the university schedule and program plan (usually 2-3 weeks). In order to conduct the practica/internship, the university signs contracts with relevant organizations. Lastly, in order to graduate from the program, students need to conduct **Scientific Research Work**, which includes Master's Thesis preparation, completing, and defend (Table 3).

4.1.2 *Korean Curriculum*

The program details, curriculum planner, and course catalog from Program K were analyzed. Also, in order to make adjustments and to avoid any misunderstanding of the curriculum construction, the researcher contacted and had a dialogue/interview with Program K's faculty members.

In order to make the data more manageable, the data from the curriculum was organized in accordance with the framework mentioned above and represented by the (1) General characteristics and (2) Structure.

1) General Characteristics

The general characteristics of the selected program, such as location, the official name of the degree offered, the title of the program, department providing the program, mission/vision of the program, type of the program,

duration, fee and credit hours required for a degree in Program K are presented in Table 5.

The program is provided by the Department of Physical Education and is named the Global Sport Management master's program. The university, provided Program K, is located in Seoul, the capital city of Korea. The degree offers the Master of Sport Management qualification. The duration of the program is two years (4 semesters), in the full-time and part-time system, with a total of 36 credits required (Table 5). The total number of credits for the mandatory and elective courses is 30 (Table 6). The other six credits are for scientific research and reading for the thesis. For those students who do not have a bachelor's degree in sport-related studies, they are required to take six credits from Physical education department courses; hence, the total number of credits for those students is 42.

Table 5

General Characteristics of Program K

Location	Seoul
Title/name	Global Sport Management (GSM)
Degree/qualification	Master of Sport Management
Duration	2 years (4 semesters)
Type	Full time / Part-time
Credit (hours)	36 (42*)
department	Department of Physical Education
Mission/vision	The mission of the GSM at Soul National University is focusing on domestic Korean students who want to become the next generation leaders in the sport management field, targeting both not profit and profit sport-related organizations. So the first mission is to find out the next generation talents and educate them, and the second mission is to create original knowledge that can be used to solve the problem in the sport management field. The vision of the program is to become the powerhouse of sport management training not only in Korea but also in the global world too.
fee	$3,829,000 \times 4 \ KRW^{**}$

Note. 1 semester = 15 weeks of study hour.

∗ For those who do not have a bachelor's degree in sport-related studies.

∗∗$1200 KRW = 1\$$.

The mission of Program K is focusing on domestic Korean students who want to become the next generation leaders in the sport management field, targeting both not profit and profit sport-related organizations. Sport-related organizations include not only sport producing company or spot federations, legs and teams, but also corporations with sport sponsorship divisions, sport media, and sporting goods manufacturing companies, so all sport derivative market is the main job market of Program K graduates. So the mission of Program K is to create new knowledge and educate the talented sport managers (Table 5.) The vision of Program K, as the faculty member, stated: "The vision… since the university is the top university in Korea, so it is natural to state that we want to become the "powerhouse" of sport management training not only in Korea but also in the global world too." (Personal communication, November 6, 2019).

2) Structure

The Structure of the selected curriculum explains more details, such as the mandatory and elective courses, credit hours required for each course (Table 6).

Table 6

Curriculum Structure of Program K

Course name	Credit	Type of knowledge
Physical Education Department Requirements	**6**	
Introduction of Kinesiology	3	Fundamental
Experimental Design in Physical Education	3	Quantitative Research methodology
GSM Major requirements (4 out of 5 are required)	**12**	
Principles of Strategic Sport Planning	3	Strategic Planning
Studies in Sport Industry	3	Industry
Studies in Sport Marketing	3	Marketing
Studies in Sport Media	3	Media
Studies in Sport Development	3	Development
GSM Major Elective Courses	**6**	
Course from GSM major elective Course list	3	
Course from GSM major elective Course list	3	
Related Studies Requirements (Elective)	**6**	
Course from PE Department (other than GSM)	3	
Course from PE Department (may be replaced by GSM)	3	
Reading and Research for Thesis	**6**	Research and thesis
Thesis Qualification exam		
Thesis Proposal Presentation		
Thesis Final Defense		
Thesis Final Evaluation		
Total	**36**	30 courses, 6 thesis

Note. 1hours/week =1 credit; 1class hour = 60'

For examining the structure of the curriculum, the coursework and the journal of all graduate courses at Program K were explored. The coursework explains the curriculum for students, in particular, the number of the required courses and credits. The journal is presented on the university official website as a guideline for students and represents the course names and numbers and briefly states the purpose of each course provided by the school. The structure presents the main courses, according to the requirements of Program K.

The core curriculum includes Physical Education Department Requirements (general), GSM Major requirements (major requirements), GSM Major Elective Courses (elective), and Related Studies Requirements (Elective) (Table 6). The rules of these courses are approved by the Educational and Methodological Council of the University.

The total credit number required for all courses is 30 (Table5). However, for those who do not have a bachelor's degree in sport-related studies, there is a "requested subject": the requirement to take two courses from the Physical education department (it is not subject to those who majored in sport-related studies). So for those do not have a bachelor's degree in sport-related studies required credit number from courses is 36, and the total credit number for graduation is 42 (extra 6 credits for those

who do not have a bachelor's degree in sport-related studies, they are required to take 6 credits from Physical education department courses).

The mandatory courses for the program are **Physical Education Department Requirements:** Introduction of Kinesiology, and Experimental Design in Physical Education (Table 6).

The Introduction of Kinesiology course gives a fundamental understanding of the different research areas. This course's purpose is comprehensively to understand the newly developed academic field of Kinesiology. Follow the academic history of its development, and understand its main sub-disciplinary areas such as sport philosophy, sport pedagogy, and exercise physiology. It identifies the common thread running under the various phenomena in sport, exercise, dance, and physical education. It includes and covers 15 topics, as revealed in Table 7, and it includes 3 class hours (one week) for each topic.

Experimental Design in Physical Education course is mainly focused on the introduction of research methods. The course topics include the identification of a research problem, research design, and quantitative/qualitative research methods. This course introduces research methods used in the field of kinesiology. Students are expected to understand the diverse methods. Also, they should deepen their knowledge of specific research

methods for specialization in their sub-areas. The course topics include the identification of a research problem, research design, and quantitative/qualitative research methods.

Table 7

Topics of Introduction to Kinesiology Course in Program K

Topics	Duration
1. Orientation / Sport Physiology	1 week (3 class hours)
2. Sports Management	1 week (3 class hours)
3. Motor Learning & Development	1 week (3 class hours)
4. Sport Medicine	1 week (3 class hours)
5. Sport History & Philosophy	1 week (3 class hours)
6. Adapted Physical Education	1 week (3 class hours)
7. Sport Marketing	1 week (3 class hours)
8. Sport Media	1 week (3 class hours)
9. Biomechanics and Robotic Assistance	1 week (3 class hours)
10. Sport Pedagogy	1 week (3 class hours)
11. Sport Biomechanics	1 week (3 class hours)
12. Sport Industry	1 week (3 class hours)
13. Sport Sociology	1 week (3 class hours)
14. Sport Physiology / Sport Development	1 week (3 class hours)
15. Sport Psychology	1 week (3 class hours)

The next mandatory courses for the GSM major are **GSM Major Requirements**. In total, five courses but required four, so students need to choose 4 out of 5 courses (Table 6).

1) Principles of Strategic Sport Planning; this course provides both the theoretical study and hands-on practice of sport managing strategy. Students will learn the most advanced management theories and various, new, practical knowledge in the sport industry. Students will also learn how to apply these theories.

2) Studies in Sport Industry; this course aims to provide a basic understanding of the sport and leisure industry. Students are expected to know the main segments that consist of the sport and leisure industry and to learn the unique aspects of sport and leisure management.

3) Studies in Sport Marketing; this course will provide students with an overview of the research process of planning, conducting, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting research results, as well as specific knowledge of individual research techniques including observations, surveys, experiments, focus groups, and other research methods. The ultimate objective in this regard is to help students make sound sport management decisions in their future careers.

4) Studies in Sport Media; this course is designed to help students more critically view the role of sport media in Korean society. It will begin with a historical overview of the sport and media industries, and an introduction to some of the key themes and concepts that will be explored.

5) Studies in Sport Development; this course focuses on developing the knowledge, skills, and aptitudes of students intending to make a career in the expanding field of sports development.

GSM Major Elective Courses includes six credits (Table 6), and students need to select two courses from Program K's GSM Major Elective Course list which includes the following options (courses) for selection: Understanding Sport Sponsorship; Principles of Sport Consumer Behavior; Principles of Sport Economics; Principles of Sport Finance; Understanding Sport Organization and Governance; Studies in Sport Human Resource Management; Studies in International Sport; Principles of Sport Event Management; Principles of Sport Facility Management; Studies in Sport Communication; Studies in Sport Ethics; Survey of Sport and Technology; Studies in Sport and Legal Issues; Principles of Sport Risk Management; Internship in Sport Industry; Sport Market Research;

Studies in Sport Policy; Sport Negotiation; Topics in Sport Organizations; Topics in Sport Communication and Media; Topics in Sport Marketing; Topics in Sport Policy.

The program also has elective Related Studies Requirements courses (Table 6), which includes two courses from the Physical Education Department, specifically, the one course should be other than GSM courses; however, the second one may be replaced by any of the GSM Major Elective Courses.

Lastly, in order to graduate from the program, students need to do the **Reading and Research**, which includes writing the Master's Thesis, Thesis Qualification exam (3 questions from 3 different GSM courses), Thesis Proposal Presentation, Thesis Final Defense, Thesis Final Evaluation (Table 6).

Also, for graduation, the other requirements are Grade Point Average of 3.00 and English Proficiency Test Score (TEPS 298 or higher; or TOEFL IBT 79 or higher).

4.2 Perceptions of Armenian Students

In an address to the second research question, which focused on exploring students' perceptions of selected sport management graduate program in Armenia (Program A), the researcher conducted in-depth interviews. The primary motive behind choosing such an in-depth interview as the research instrument was to elicit students' evaluations on a wide range of issues about the program in detail.

The research focused on sport management graduate students' perception; in particular, we aim to understand students' backgrounds, motives, expectations, and experiences from the program. Exploring students' backgrounds and motives will provide a greater understanding of what basis and knowledge the student has who chooses a sport management graduate program. Hearing students' voices and understanding students by exploring their experiences will be as a basis and help for the future development of the program.

For this reason, four topics were pre-determined, and interview data were collected around those topics as follows: (1) Background and Motivation; (2) Teaching and Learning; (3) Curriculum; (4) Practical skills.

The transcribed material was 156 pages long and included 43,168 words.

1) Background and Motivation

Armenian students' responses about their "background and motivation" for studying sport management, researcher listed based on three themes: field background, academic background, and motivation for education in sport management, and formed categories according to students' answers (Table 8).

After exploring backgrounds, the findings indicated that all students had a "story" in sport; some students were professional athletes, others, employees in the sport (coach, teacher). Overall, all students found that being in sport is helpful for the educational process.

> When you are in the field, it is easier to imagine and understand the process and how to do the sequence, so easier to learn [courses]. (Armenian student D)
>
> Of course, if you are 'far' from the sport, it will be harder to study (in the program). (Armenian student A)

More specifically, having a sports background develops a better understanding. One of the students, as an example, stated:

> I did archery at a professional level, and in my opinion, for better understanding the athletes, [sport manager] needs to

have some 'connection' with sport … also, it helps to understand the risks of the sport event. (Armenian student C)

Nay, I cannot imagine… how can you study sport without being in a sport before? (Armenian student A)

As the results stated, the students believed that being in the sport and having experience in the sports field is very important for sport management education.

Table 8

Findings from Armenian Students' Perceptions of Background and Motivation

Topic	Themes	Categories
	Field background	Understanding of the field
		Being part of a sport
		Easier to learn
Background & Motivation	Academic background	Helpful influence
		Informative knowledge
	Motivation	New field
		Rising phenomena
		Future career
		Specialized knowledge
		Passion for the field

When it comes to students' academic background, four participants out of five had an undergraduate education in the same university's different departments, as student E stated: "Eighty percent of the students are undergraduates from our institute and those who wish to continue a career in their loved field."

Additionally, student C and A indicated:

> Well, my undergraduate degree was just informative … I was introduced to various types of sports, and it helped me to understand the theories of many sports. (Armenian student C)

> We had sport-related classes in our bachelor's program, so of course, it does [help the education]. (Armenian student A)

Moreover, for one of the students, their "passion" at the undergraduate education predisposed their decision on the choice of education at the master's level.

> During undergraduate education, I fall in love with the Sport Management course. In my bachelorette, I took the subject (sport management); first of all, that was the reason, and also, the lecturer was very good, and the subject I liked very much. (Armenian student E)

Most of the students explained students' motivation for studying by calling Sport Management education a "new" field. "When I heard that the department opened a new major, I decided that it will be a good choice to study … New makes me to be interested in it (Sport Management)" (Armenian student A).

Also, they are describing sport management as a "rising phenomenon."

> I was interested to know and explore what Sport Management represents. (Armenian student A)
>
> It is interesting to explore from the inside to understand how processes are organized in sport … it (sport management) is an interesting profession. (Armenian student D)
>
> I think students like this program (sport management) and chose it because the new profession allows using of creativity. (Armenian student H)

On the other hand, students mentioned gaining "specialized knowledge" as motivation. "Have professional education and better possess the information, so I would have more accurate skills" (Armenian student C). Alternatively, their personal interest motivates them to choose a major: "I had an interest in Management from a young age … I feel better in the sports field, rather than in other areas" (Armenian student C).

The majority of the students seemed to find the need for a master's degree in education for their future career opportunities inside the country and not only.

I knew there were many gaps in the country, so I wanted to study sports management. The key factor is that the market (Sport) is open. (Armenian student E)

It (sport management) is a new profession; hence, not much applied [in Armenia]. I think it (sport management) is an interesting profession for the future in Armenia and not only in Armenia. (Armenian student D)

It (sport management masters) is the best major in this university or one of the top three … And the most promising one. (Armenian student E)

To sum up, students with different backgrounds expressed the implication of their experiences with their graduate education. Also, they talked about believes and motivations. In this respect, from the responses, were formed categories for Topic 1 and presented in Table 8. Overall, Armenian students expressed their motives for working in the sports field with their specialization after graduation.

2) Teaching and Learning

Armenian students' responses about the "teaching and learning" process were listed based on two themes: what students are expecting, what students are experiencing, and formed categories according to students' answers (Table 9).

Table 9

Findings from Armenian Students' Perceptions of Teaching and Learning

Topic	Themes	Categories
		Visualization of the study material
	Experience	Lack of mother-tongue literacy
Teaching		Barrier-free relationship
and		
Learning		Group project from courses
	Expectation	Sharing knowledge among students
		Students' voices in the classroom

During describing the teaching and learning process, all students mentioned feedback and an adequate grading system. Notably, students stated a student-professor relationship as "easy" and "barrier-free" by explaining it as a characteristic of the institute (Program A's university).

> Our classes went smoothly, the answers to our questions we were getting from the professor … It was not hard to get an answer when anyone had a question, was directly asking a professor, without feeling any pressure or barricade. (Armenian student A)

> There are no barriers in our institute (Program A's university), as compared to other universities; Student-lecturer relationship at the institute (Program A's university) are on another level (pause), in a good sense, so for that reason (Student-lecturer relationship) I think, mostly there are no challenges here (Program A's university). (Armenian student D)

The student-professor relationship was emphasized by stating: "Professors are leaders for me; I love them (professors/lecturers) a lot! They are vital people for me! But when I read the book (Armenian literacy of sport management) and study materials for the [sport management] course, I do not understand the meaning" (Armenian student E).

Students stated no issue in the student-professor relationship; however, they find a lack of comprehensibility of the knowledge in Armenian literacy.

> When I took the Armenian book in my specialization (sport management), I thought I am 'stupid' because I did not understand anything, but after I read a similar book in Russian literacy, I recognize that NO! Just the problem was that Armenian books (sport management literature) are not comprehensible. (Armenian student E)

Besides, the students pointing the difficulty of understanding Armenian literature, they also find the lake of the Armenian literature as a big problem, "only one or two books" presence in the sport management specialization. "In Armenia, there are very a few works of [sport management] literature" (Armenian student D).

So because of the lake of Armenian literature, students studied with foreign literacy, on the other hand, the new challenge appears for some student, as they pointed:

> Because of the lack of Armenian literature, the biggest challenge for most of the students (in Program A's university) is the language (English and Russian). That is the biggest barrier for them (Armenian students) for searching and reading

the literature in our field (sport management). (Armenian student D)

In terms of the teaching and learning process during the classes, students reported: "Our lessons were very interesting, the lecturers used the slides (PowerPoint Presentation), and it greatly facilitated the visual perception of the material" (Armenian student A).

As shown in the table (refer to Table 9), the initial expectation for most of the students from the courses was "Group project. "

Mainly classes gave an individual (work/assignment), but the group (work/project) was more effective because sharing each-others ideas, we created a new idea, everyone was very interested during that (group work) classes, but it was not during our profession courses (sport management major requirements courses). (Armenian student H)

Additionally, Students are suggesting:

To do an imitation game (during the class), for example, the technical staff of a sports facility (the role played by students) and event managers (the role played by students) having a meeting for a sports event; and they have to sit together and discuss, made a plan ... or to do a practical session, to divide

them (students) into groups and give a task of creating a time management model. (Armenian student E)

Lastly, most of the students indicated the importance of discussions during the class. Students specified "hearing other students" and "sharing knowledge" during the learning process.

Because in our class there are many students with different backgrounds, it would be great if the professor will make a group from the students with various experiences, and give a task to do some project on one of the team members field, for example, if the group member were a football player, the task would be 'create some project in football' … conduct research and present in class, this (group work) would be beneficial, firstly, students learning the different perspectives, and secondly, learning how to do research. (Armenian student E)

It would be beneficial to involve some activities in the lesson, not just reading or talking (formal lectures), but also including students into a discussion so that they can express their thoughts. That will make them think! (Armenian student H)

Students described the discussion-based class as an "ideal" class and explained all the benefits of hearing the other students.

> The ideal lecture should not be the lecturers coming and talking for a long time, but discussions and debates, where students will share their points of view and explain their own experiences, so it will be easier to understand the material … students can see different perceptions … the 'golden mean' (perfect balance) of the formal lecture and the dialogue. (Armenian student D)

> During the discussion, we can hear others (students), and we will find the right direction and clarify the learning process. (Armenian student A)

> I think the formal lectures cannot teach anything to students; at least at this point, I think it should be more focused on the practical knowledge and experiences, that if other students had experiences or knowledge, they could share during the class. (Armenian student C)

Student H believes: "The 'ideal' lecture is to give a student a chance to create and share the creativity."

Armenian students generally expressed satisfaction from the teaching and learning process in Program A. They explain their experience during the learning process; besides, they mentioned some expectations they wish to meet. In this respect, the categories were drawn for Topic 2 and presented in Table 9.

3) Curriculum

The findings of the curriculum expectations and experiences of Armenian students are introduced in Table 10.

Table 10

Findings from Armenian Students' Perceptions of Curriculum

Topic	Themes	Categories
Curriculum	Experience	Individualized interest in courses
		Lack of field specification
		Shortness of program duration
	Expectation	Contemporary topics with real-life cases
		Worldwide experiences

Students experience from courses was individualized and diverse. All students assess the importance of courses included in the curriculum of sport management master's program (Program A) based on their field of interest. However, most of the students indicated the course topics are vast, and there is a lack of field specification, the knowledge pointedly for the sports field.

> All mandatory courses are beneficial; however, [we] didn't have specific facts characteristic for the sport industry; all were general topics. (Armenian student A)
>
> We were studying global marketing, A 'general marketing,' not so closely related to the sports field … 'Economics' was about the theory of general economics; if the program is one year, it would be better to eliminate those general topics, and to present what it is to do with sports management. (Armenian student E)
>
> During the law class, we studied only Armenian law. For example, we did not learn how to design a contract with teams or athletes, or about sports law, arbitration. (Armenian student D)

Students also shared their concerns about the program duration. "It is good to learn different content, like sociology, not directly related to sport management, but since the program is running only one year, it would be good if we can concentrate on management more" (Armenian student A). All Armenian students mentioned the "shortness of the program duration." As an example, students mentioned:

> One year is not enough … to acquire 'serious' knowledge. If it were two years, it would be ideal, but it is one year, unfortunately. (Armenian student D)

> Two years I think it is reasonable, at least one and a half. but one year is too short. I would have gone for a semester more.. with great pleasure (laugh). (Armenian student H)

> Make it (sport management program) two years, do you know why? Because if a student comes from a non-sports-related study, What do you think? What will he learn? … Nothing! (Armenian student E)

Furthermore, most of the students indicated that there is a need for contemporary topics and including real-life cases and worldwide experiences in course topics.

Students explained:

> For example, lecturers should take the real-life cases in sport, and try to explain what did happen, why did it happen, what consequences did it bring and how world solve it and what results did they achieve. So for us, it would be easier to imagine and understand the theories underlying the case. (Armenian student D)

> What is the sports school, and how is it organized, that was, perfectly, introduced to us, but it is not contemporary, for instance, what is modern professional sport club, was not introduced. If you ask the student who studied sport management, what is the sport club? He would say: 'hm.. the place where there are swimming pools and a gym'. (Armenian student E)

Additionally, students suggested:

> It would be great if professors make the classes more interesting by explaining with the international examples. (Armenian student C)

> Give me an example, such as 'there are like this, like that model in the world.' For instance, about some sport-related

companies, their experiences: how did it develop? Based on what? These are what they (professors) should give us. (Armenian student E)

I am more interested in understanding what practical skills and knowledge are needed for the work in the modern field (sports field) and gaining that knowledge from the courses. (Armenian student A)

4) Practical skills

Students were asked to talk about the practical skills that they experienced during the program and explain their opinion about students' expectations from the program in terms of practical education (Table 11).

Armenian students shared their practical experiences, which is the two weeks of Practica (part-time work), mandatory in Program A's curriculum. The Practicum is usually processed in three different organizations, as students indicted: "[For graduation], we need to experience the Practica in three different institutions, at least two institutions, over two weeks" (Armenian student E).

Table 11

Findings from Armenian Students' Perceptions of Practical Skills

Topic	Themes	Categories
Practical skills	Experience	Vital Practicum (internship)
		Putting theory into real work
	Expectation	Contemporary skills in SM
		English proficiency

Students found "Practica" very vital.

> If I was a responsible (for the program design), I would do much Practicum because that is the most important thing … during the Practica, when you use the professor's lectures, it is even more memorable. (Armenian student C)
>
> That (Practica) is the most important thing because as you study, you go to classes, and your knowledge is not applied, or you do not see it applied in the real work, understanding the theory is fifty-fifty. However, when you see that specific knowledge in practice, your brain starts to work … Getting knowledge and seeing how it is applied are different

things. Practica is very important for this, and learning based

on practice is very easy. (Armenian student D)

Additionally, students indicated the Practica as a chance to "put theory into real-work" situations.

They (students) were explaining in reality how the work

should be done … by following the work of a specialist in the

field [during the practica], the students would see the work and

will gain 'real' knowledge. (Armenian student A)

We have organized an event on the committee (NOC), and we

got a great practical knowledge … When you see the

theoretical knowledge implemented into real practice, then it

becomes 'true' knowledge. (Armenian student D)

Some of them consider the Practica as: "The best experience I have had in the [education] process was Practicum" (Armenian student A). Students also believed that the program should give the 'necessary' practical skills to all students, regardless of students' backgrounds, and it should be contemporary practical skills:

You may not be an athlete, but after studying [sport

management] should be able to manage the sports organization,

which means you have to study the specifics of the sport in-

depth to be able to understand the specificity of the sport. (Armenian student E)

I want to learn what I will exactly need for work in the future and have all practical skills, and it (skills) should be contemporary. (Armenian student A)

Lastly, the students reported English proficiency as one of the essential practical skills.

To me, knowledge of English is essential, as it is essential for a manager to speak [English], even primary, for example, even if the work is limited to Armenia, language skills are essential for organizing international events in the country (Armenia), also for communicating with international organizations or federations. (Armenian student D)

To sum up the findings from the Armenian students overall perception, we can say that generally, students were satisfied with Program A's quality, fees, and faculty. However, students seemed to find the need for practitioners and suggested: "To invite professors who could share with experiences" (Armenian student C), and "To include practical (practitioners) lecturers" (Armenian student E).

4.3 Perceptions of Korean Students

In an address to the third research question, which focused on exploring students' perceptions of selected sport management graduate program in Korea (Program K), the researcher conducted in-depth interviews. The primary motive behind choosing such an in-depth interview as the research instrument was to elicit students' evaluations on a wide range of issues about the program in detail.

The research focused on sport management graduate students' perception; in particular, we aim to understand students' backgrounds, motives, expectations, and experiences from the program. Exploring students' backgrounds and motives will provide a greater understanding of what basis and knowledge the student has who chooses a sport management graduate program. Hearing students' voices and understanding students by exploring their experiences will be as a basis and help for the future development of the program.

For this reason, four topics were pre-determined, and interview data were collected around those topics as follows: (1) Background and Motivation; (2) Teaching and Learning; (3) Curriculum; (4) Practical skills. The transcribed material was 219 pages long and included 54,816 words.

1) Background and Motivation

Korean students' responses about their background and motivation for studying sport management were listed based on three themes: field background, academic background, and motivation, and were formed categories according to students' answers (Table 12).

Table 12

Findings from Korean Students' Perceptions of Background and Motivation

Topic	Themes	Categories
		Athlete's point of view
	Field background	Generate interest in the field
		Advantages and disadvantages
Background & Motivation	Academic background	Smooth transition
		Normal pathway
		Relatively new field
		Valuable education
	Motivation	Continues academic career
		Multinational field
		Passion for the field

Overall, students indicated their interest in sport; for instance, the participant stated: "I guess most of the students included me are interested in the sport. Some students watch sport, some do fitness, for me doing sport was a team sport … It (doing sport) helped me to jump in into the program (Program K)" (Korean student G).

The results also showed that students who were athletes or had experience in sports find it helpful for their educational process. Students experience the athlete's point of view.

> Because I was an athlete, I can, kind of, put myself in the shoes of an athlete. (Korean student F)
>
> While playing a sport, I learned not only skills on how to play sport but also all the content related to sport, how it works, from the very small things to big things. Those kinds of background helped me to learn course content easily. (Korean student G)
>
> It (background) gives me an advantage because we are studying about sport and I think we must have background knowledge about the sport, and how it goes, I think it helped me to understand the whole process of the sport, how the sports teams are organized because I had experience in that

environment … The knowledge gave an advantage for education! (Korean student I)

However, some students find being in the sport and having experience as a professional athlete gives not only advantages but also disadvantages.

Just being an athlete helped me to understand the viewing point of athletes, and people who enjoy the sport in general, the motives and values such as teamwork. As a graduate student, it (being an athlete) has advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are that I can speak from the athletes' point of view, but also as a graduate student you kind of look at the points of view of spectators. In that case, it was kind of hard for me. (Korean student F)

After added:

In things like polices or ethic rights, I can put myself on shoes on those athletes, in that term it was helpful, but like increase sales, things like that, yes it helped me, being athlete, but just my interest in the sport was more of the factor rather than me being an athlete. (Korean student F)

In terms of academic background, about the benefits of having a bachelor's degree in sport at Program K, the student F reported:

> I think it was helpful because a lot of professors also in graduate school are also teaching in undergraduate, so teaching, classes, and methods are quite similar, so I think that link from undergraduate and graduate is a very smooth transition. (Korean student F)

Besides the benefit of academic sports background for the "smooth transition," some students seemed to find the need to have sport-related undergraduate education for a graduate program. Likewise, one of the students calls the way from sport-related undergraduate education to graduate education as a "normal pathway": "Mine is, kind of, different from a normal pathway to the sport management, because I did not major in sport-related majors … So my interest, kind of, began in a different way" (Korean student B).

On the other hand, even if there is no sport-related academic background, passion for sport may benefit in the educational process: "I love to watch sports, and I was wondering about marketing, and I research marketing systems before even I join this program … and now it is easy to understand course (marketing) content" (Korean student J).

Also, passion for sport claimed to be the motivator and generates interest in sport management education.

> While I was working with the staff (employee during the sports event), I kind of thought about the whole process and it kind of got my attention, the whole process, really big; and so many international athletes and other persons, so I thought this could be another future for me, … So that, kind of, got my interest in the sports industry (Korean student B)
>
> My internal interest in sport is the most significant factor; I really love sport all my life. I always dreamed of having work or job related to sport, but I found that I cannot be professional level, elite athlete, then I tried to find what is the way for me to be in sport field, so, fortunately, my undergraduate degree in management, and I found many of my colleges here, their background is engineering or other areas. (Korean student G)
>
> I am not interested in earning more money … I am more interested in how emotions are felt! (Korean student B)

These answers may lead us to think that emotional reasons motivate students; in this particular case, the communication of the people in sport, feelings, and sport being multinational played a significant role in students'

choice. Other motives students pointed out were sport management as a "valuable education."

> Korean sport market is one of the biggest systems that Korea has right now, so that is why people become interested in this kind of program … Also, there would be more jobs, and research will be conducted in this area. (Korean student J)

> It is closer to real-life cases, and I feel like it is more applicable to actual institutions sporting organizations … "institution name" is the top university in Asia. (Korean student F)

Student F Also added about the academic career: "the biggest part of me thinking of becoming a professor." Additionally, students indicate sport management as a "New field" and find it challenging because:

> Sport management is applied science like sport management is sport plus management, and my degree (business administration) helped me, but at the same time, it is different, so I had a slightly hard time to be adjusted to it. Sport management itself is not established; it is a relatively new discipline. I think our discipline in terms of theory or

discipline much work to do; I think that kind of premature
situation I had to adapt myself. (Korean student G)

2) Teaching and Learning

Korean students' responses about the teaching and learning process
were listed based on two themes: what students are expecting, what students
are experiencing, and formed categories according to students' answers
(Table 13).

Table 13

Findings from the Korean Students' Perceptions of Teaching and Learning

Topic	Themes	Categories
	Experience	Stronger motivation from professors
		Group project from courses
		Lack of conversation with professors
Teaching And Learning		
		'Actual' group projects from courses
		Professors having office hours
	Expectation	Sharing knowledge among students
		Students' voices in the classroom

During describing the teaching and learning process, students mentioned their excitement about professors' knowledge and about their motivation to study. "I have a professor who lightens me … I was really surprised [by] how intelligent the professor was. I think that course motivated me to study; that was the best experience and making me be motivated" (Korean student B).

However, with all respect to their professors, students seemed to find difficulties in professor-student relationships, particularly lack of conversations with professors and feedback.

> Unfortunately, nowadays, there is not much feedback from the professor. There is almost no feedback from professors; that is why students can't evaluate themselves, where we are how we did it. (Korean student J)
>
> To be honest, there is not much feedback, there are too many students, this course was designed 10-15 students, but there are 30 students. So I understand within the small group they can give feedback and do a good session. The biggest reason is that there are many students. (Korean student G)
>
> From my point of view, there should be more conversations going on between students and professors. (Korean student I)

They also indicated the challenges that students are facing.

> It is hard to meet professors, and that is the only problem
> students are struggling with. There is no office hour for
> professors in Korea, so we do not know at what time they
> (professors) are available, and it is very hard to contact them
> (professors) and get a response from them (professors). I think
> arranging a meeting is the biggest problem that students are
> facing. (Korean student J)

In order to solve those challenges in the student-professor relationship, most
of the students are suggesting professors' office hours:

> I think it would be really good to have certain office hours; I
> know the professors are super busy, but I think at the same
> time, I came here to get those inside from the professors, so I
> really hope that I will have more opportunities to get those talk
> … If I have those office hours I would have chance to have the
> professor guiding me, so in those interactions, I would be
> guided in more right directions and at the same time get the
> opportunity go deep inside in my interest, I do not want to
> finish my master's degree by getting lost. It (office hours)
> would be a more effective system. (Korean student B)

Students find the office hours as a chance to have a "barrier-free" relationship with professors in the teaching and learning process.

> It is kind of difficult to speak openly with the professor; I know professors are trying to be more friendly, but the reality is different. So I think office hours should be helpful. (Korean student B)

> To set up office hours, and it does not have to be very long, so students can come freely and have a meeting. (Korean student J)

Moreover, as a Student, I mentioned: "The relationships with professors and mainly other students this kind of stuff really affects your study life … Having that friendly relationship will help easier to ask feedback from the professor." In terms of the teaching and learning process during the classes, students reported:

> It is not a professor teaching us; it is us, actually, using that data, using the information and putting it into presentation or project, and trying to adopt and apply in everyday cases and case studies. (Korean student F)

> Most of the graduate courses are mainly students summarize and present the given paper, and we can just lead the

discussion and debate, that is it. So no more like a lecture from professor or teacher, sometimes we do it, but that is rare … The best experience is reading a paper to present in front of the class; that makes you study a lot about that topic, and the process of presenting about the paper makes me study really-really hard. (Korean student G)

The students described the teaching and learning process and mentioned some suggestions that can be made for future improvement.

I feel like the classes run where we are giving a paper, and we spread into groups and ask us to read that paper, analyze and present to the class …, all our classes are run on that kind of process. But I feel it could be beneficial for us if we spear on the groups but giving us an 'actual' task where we can employ those theories or find relevant cases that are happening in the 'actual' world, and we can make our own strategies, for example, create a project or intervention that increase of participation of women in sport. Obviously, there are a lot of organizations or campaigns that are already doing that, but it is a new innovative way that we can do it. It would be interested in that kind of class. (Korean student F)

We just read the theory and explain it to the class; I think it will be better to go one step further apply it in 'real world' situations. (Korean student J)

Because many people have new ideas, and they have different backgrounds, so it would be interesting to see people with different background apply to the business field, a project-based class would be beneficial. (Korean student F)

As the results stated, the students believed that real situation tasks and "actual" projects would be beneficial for sport management education. It will help to put the theoretical knowledge that they have learned into real cases and think about solutions by making a group project.

Lastly, most of the students indicated the importance of in-class discussions; furthermore, students specified "hearing other students" as a key for better learning:

Currently, most of the courses' professors just gave us many reading materials, which is good, but I think that is not enough. Reading materials and learn is pretty good, but we have to share our opinion, we have to listen to others, what kind of perspective they have, there is no wrong or right answers in this field, but since we are sharing those kinds of perspectives

and knowledge we learn more about it, and probably the other classmates will learn more about it too. (Korean student J)

Just hearing them (other students), discussing with them would broaden my perspective. (Korean student B)

Teachers do not listen to students that much, but sharing each other's knowledge in class would be helpful. (Korean student J)

They also indicated the importance of experience sharing:

Because I was not a student who was really related to the sport, but many of the students here are professional athletes, and some have experience in working in the sport industry, so utilizing that diverse perspective is really important … Using not just academic ideas but bring out the actual experience of students who actually work in the sport industry would be a great opportunity for the students, like me (with non-sport related bachelor's degree). (Korean student B)

After reading, you have to put theory into your thesis, and in order to understand the theories, there should be a lot of discussion going on. Because talking about theories and motors help you to understand. (Korean student I)

A lot of students work in the field, as part-time in NOC, organizations, and I think it is also a good thing to take classes with those people, and it is exciting to hear their opinion and viewpoint from where the actual thing is happening. (Korean student F)

It is better to share knowledge, not just learn from the class. (Korean student J)

Korean students explain their experience and knowledge during the learning process; besides, they mentioned some expectations they wish to meet. In this respect, categories based on the students' answers, are presented in Table 13.

3) Curriculum

The findings of the curriculum expectations and experiences of Korean students are presented in Table 14.

During describing the curriculum, majority of students mentioned all courses included in the curriculum of Program K are: "rational requirements and good for students to learn" (Korean student I) and have their "own role, purposes" and "are very beneficial" (Korean student B). When it comes to the duration of the sport management master's program, students believed: "Duration is rational, not too short not too long" (Korean student J).

If you really want to study about your major (sport management) or what you are interested in, I think it should be more than two years at least two years, but if you want just to have a 'title' than one year might be even longer for them. (Korean student I)

Table 14

Findings from Korean Students' Perceptions of Curriculum

Topic	Themes	Categories
	Experience	Positive judgment toward courses
		Confusion in course taking order
Curricu lum		Rational duration of the program
	Expectation	Thesis workshop
		Individualized interest in courses

With all these statements about beneficial courses, there is one report that a student is experiencing confusion on deciding which course is beneficial to take on the first semester and which one, on the second, third, fourth. Even though this was the only case, however, considering the limited number of this research participants and report from the student that stated: "many students are facing similar issues with a selection of the right course firstly," the case was also included in findings.

> The current courses are good, but it would be good if some courses are designated for the first or second semester. I am taking the research methodology class, that kind of knowledge are hard for me as a first-semester student, because I do not have a specific interest right now, and other students are recommending to take that course on the later semester. I am kind of regretting not taking that course in the second semester. It would be better to set the specific semesters to certain courses, mandatory courses. So it would make students not to confuse when to take the specific course because many students do not have enough knowledge to choose when to take which class … It would be good if they (faculty) suggest which year is better to take which course. (Korean student B)

All Korean students also mentioned the challenges that students are facing is the difficulty in thesis writing. For example, students stated: "The biggest challenge for most of the students; is writing a thesis!" (Korean student F). Others students stated:

I found that many people including myself, who have experience in the field, have a hard time writing a thesis, we think that experience itself talks a lot but as a thesis, the literature you have to talk and think in that stream, so it is kind of different stream. (Korean student G)

Research Methodology class more focused on experimental design or research methods … I think the biggest one (challenge) is deriving their thesis or research topic because we, as a sports enthusiast, most of us have our interested domains … so starting from real-world problems, we can think of research topics, but most of us realize writing thesis; we need to conceptualize and design. That is the most common difficulties we have. (Korean student J)

Based on this issue with thesis writing students are suggesting to include thesis workshop in the curriculum:

> If there is a class of writing a thesis, but be more specific, not only learning statistics … we have the course where we learn mainly statistics, but I feel like with the only that class, it is hard to get that concept. (Korean student F)

> We are graduate students, and I totally agree that we have to do it by ourselves, but they (professors/advisors) have to show what a thesis is and how to write a thesis. (Korean student G)

When it comes to students' expected courses from the curriculum, most of the answers based on personal interests. As an example, one of the students reported: "The most useful class I would say are sport marketing and class about consumer behavior because I am interested in this topic, but others might be interested in other topics" (Korean student I).

4) Practical skills

Students were asked to talk about the practical skills that they experienced during the program and explain their opinion about students' expectations from the program in terms of practical education (Table 15).

Table 15

Findings from Korean Students' Perceptions of Practical Skills

Topic	Themes	Categories
Practical skills	Experience	Communication skills
		Presentation skills
		Conducting research skills
	Expectation	Knowledge of realistic work
		Internship

Korean students shared their practical experiences, most of them indicated "read and analyze the paper, conducting research" and presenting in class and communicating after presentations as practical skills experienced from the program.

I think for a master's course, you got to take these theories that you learned from classes, and you have to adopt these theories and motors into your focus … Presentation skills, I think we present a lot in front of the class, so that helps us. (Korean student I)

Students seemed to find the internship valuable for future sport management field specialists:

> I think it would be better to divide in a specific area of interest, in the second year of master's degree, than the school can link to those students to their area of interest for an internship. I think that would be very nice. (Korean student B)

> I think it (Internship) may be very useful. Also, being a part of other teams, it is kind of a good practical tool for the future. (Korean student F)

> Most of the jobs require us to have practical experience, so it is very important to learn practical experience. (Korean student J)

In addition, Student F explained her undergraduate practical experience as a memorable, useful, and impactful.

> Like in my undergraduate we had to go to school as practical experience and teaching was not my part of interest, I thought it is a waste of time, and I am not kind of a fan of kids, but actually going there and doing it, it was the most memorable and useful, impactful period of my undergraduate school. (Korean student F)

Most of the students also indicated the internship as a chance to understand the "working reality," some of them stated:

> Ideal and reality are always different, so people have expectations about the workplace, and after working, they feel disappointed sometimes, so it is good to see and feel the emotions while working in the industry (sport management) and see if it much with expectations. (Korean student B)

> For me, I think it (internship) is good; it would help students to get how realistic is like. If you do not have this course and you do not have practical sessions, you will not know how the reality is. So that you can study a lot and present stuff, but then you cannot put these theories into practice, so I think it would help you be more realistic, and get a job afterward. (Korean student I)

> The internship would be great, that would be very great for students to have an internship in a sports field, learning something about reading and listen to professors are also good but, experiencing on those kinds of skills in the field, is the easiest way to understand and get the practical skill. (Korean student J)

Only one of the students stated that he does not want to have an internship, and he explained:

> It depends on the individual's goal like if any individual wants to work after graduation, any internship or practical experience would be helpful; it is priceless! But for me, I want to study Ph.D., and I have quite enough work experience, so that is why I do not think I need it, but if I come right after undergraduate education, if that is the case giving the internship chance would be nice. (Korean student G)

On the other hand, one student stated that practical experience would be:

> Useful, even for Ph.D. students, you can do research and write a thesis and stuff, but then you have to put that thesis into reality, and if you do not have knowledge about how the reality is you cannot actually put into reality. (Korean student I)

Also, one student stated: "This program (Program K) is more focused on the academic area. So they (faculty) do not really provide practical academic skills" (Korean student J). To sum up the findings from the Korean students perception, we can say that overall, students were satisfied with Program K's fees, infrastructure, and faculty.

In terms of the program quality, the student indicated Program K as "the best program in the sport field in Korea!" However, students seemed to find the need for "balance" in theory and practice.

> The most important thing is balance, the balance of Theory and Practice. Do we want to be academic, literature school, I think here is more focused on the literature, but some people want to develop career and work experience, so I think balance is the key. (Korean student G)

Lastly, the primary point that all Korean students mentioned was the importance of sharing opinions (student vice). Student B suggested: "To have a platform to share opinions and discuss with people with different backgrounds, as well as students from other countries."

4.4 Comparison of the Students' Perceptions

This section will present results and findings addressed to the fourth research question, which is focused on understanding the similarities and differences of the student's perception of the selected sport management graduate program in Armenia and Korea (Program A and program K).

The comparison of the Armenian and Korean Students' perceptions is presented in accordance with four topics: Background and Motivation, Teaching and Learning, Curriculum, and Practical Skills.

1) Background and Motivation

Armenian and Korean students had similarities in terms of background; both countries' students have a story in sport, some of them was an athlete, others sport field employees, but all students seem to have a connection with the sports field. Both countries' students mentioned that having experience in the sports field is helpful for the sport management educational process (please refer to Tables 8 and 12). However, Korean students believed that being an athlete has advantages also disadvantages to the educational process. They explained the difference of points of view as an athlete and as a sports manager.

Furthermore, there are also some differences between the two countries students' academic backgrounds (please refer to Tables 8 and 12). Most of the Armenian interviewees had a bachelor's degree at Program A university's sport-related majors, and as one of the students indicated, most of the students in his department had a bachelor's degree at Program A university. As for Korean interviewees, it was stated that they have classmates who came from undergraduate diverse educational fields.

On the question of motivation for choosing a sport management major, both countries' students indicated a passion for the field and the fact that sport management is a new academic field. Armenian students see sport

management as rising phenomena (please refer to Heading 4.2), but Korean students found sport management as a valuable education since nowadays, the sports field is one of the biggest fields in South Korea (please refer to Heading 4.3). Armenian students are mostly interested in having specialized knowledge in sport management for their future careers in the industry as a sport manager. In the case of Korean students, they are mostly are interested in continuing their academic career and entering the Ph.D. program.

2) Teaching and Learning

In the teaching and learning process, Korean students indicated stronger motivation from professors; however, they reported the lack of conversation with professors (please refer to Table 13). Contrariwise to Korean students' experience, Armenian students reported that they are experiencing barrier-free professor-student relationships (please refer to Table 9). In the matter of course assignments, Armenian students stated their expectations to have a group project from courses. At the same time, Korean students are already experiencing group projects from courses.

Both countries' interviewees produced similar responses to the question about the ideal teaching and learning process (please refer to Headings 4.2 and 4.3). They believed in the importance of sharing knowledge among students and highly valued other students' voices in the

classroom. Both Armenian and Korean students indicated that students' opinions and discussions within the class would benefit the teaching and learning process.

3) Curriculum

Regarding the program curriculum, Armenian and Korean students' experience and expectations are individualized and diverse (please refer to Tables 10 and 14). All students assess the importance of courses included in the curriculum of both programs (Program A and Program K) based on their field of interest. Additionally, Armenian students indicated the lack of specification in courses and contemporary real-life topics (please refer to Heading 4.2). As for Korean students, they are facing difficulties in the thesis writing process (please refer to Heading 4.3). On the one hand, Korean students' are experiencing confusion in course taking order. On the other hand, Armenian students do not have such difficulties, as the Armenian program's (Program A), all courses are constant and assigned for a specific semester.

In terms of the duration of the program, Armenian students are experiencing a one-year program, while Korean students are attending two years program. Moreover, Armenian students criticized the shortness of Program A (please refer to Heading 4.2), and Korean students share similar

opinions about the program's duration by indicating two years as a "rational duration" (please refer to Heading 4.3).

4) Practical Skills

Armenian and Korean students are experiencing different practical skills. In the case of Korean students, during the courses, they are experiencing group projects and gaining skills such as conducting research skills, and also while presenting the group project, students are learning presentation skills and communication skills. In the case of Armenian students, they are experiencing practicum (part-time internship), and during the practicum, they were learning how to put theory into real work. Practical experience (practicum) is a reality for Armenian students (presented in Table 11); however, it is the desire for Korean students (presented in Table 15). Korean students who did not have working experience in sport management, want to experience the "working reality" and they believe that internship would be beneficial for their education as well as a working career (please refer to Heading 4.3).

Armenian interviewees reported the lack of Armenian literacy as an issue and expressed that when taking foreign literacy for education, most of the students are facing with the language barrier (please refer to Heading 4.2). Armenian interviewees indicated the need for English proficiency as one of the urgent practical skills for sport management students in Armenia.

Chapter 5 Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine selected sport management graduate programs in Armenia and Korea, in particular, to explore the students' perceptions of the sport management master's program. Also, exploring the similarities and differences in top and new programs will allow future implications and improvement of the Armenian and Korean sport management programs at the master's degree level. In order to protect the confidentiality of the institutions, I used pseudonyms. The Armenian selected sport management graduate program was called "Program A," and the Korean selected sport management graduate program was called "Program K."

In this part of the study, the findings are discussed in detail. The discussion of the selected programs' curriculums construction is based on the findings, which is presented by six tables in the findings section (please refer to Heading 4.1). In terms of exploring Armenian and Korean students' perceptions of Program A and Program K accordingly, eight tables presented in the findings sections (please refer to Headings 4.2 and 4.3) made it possible to analyze students' perceptions towards the program in detail and understand the similarities and differences between two countries students perceptions.

In terms of Armenian and Korean students' overall opinion of Program A and Program K, in a general question about the program, most of the students seemed to have a positive judgment towards the sport management programs; however, in the questions based on different discussion topics, students tend to express their opinions more detailed. This can be explained by the fact that Program K's university is the top university in the world ranking for sport industry education (QS, 2018), and Program A is a relatively new program. So I assume that the overall favorable judgment towards the programs may be connected with those factors, and the criticism towards the detail discussed topics (Table 1) did not affect students overall opinion. It is not surprising that both countries students' mentioned the connection with sport and passion as one of the biggest motivations for studying sport management. Within this perspective, the present study explores similar results to those of others who indicate that sport management students' primary motivation was their love for the sport (Schwab, Dustin, Legg, Timmerman, Wells, & Banning, 2013)

As a result of the analysis of curriculums of Program A and Program K, it was founded that the Armenian program duration is one year and only provides a full-time education platform (please refer to Table 2). As for Program K, it provides two years of education in full-time, as well as part-

time education platforms (please refer to Table 5). This difference may be connected with the faculty-course ratio and education system differences in the countries. However, in both countries' programs, the total number of credits for the mandatory and elective courses is 30 (please refer to Tables 3 and 6). Both countries are providing the same credit hours for courses, but with different program's duration, which means that the programs have different study loads. Considering the fact that Armenian students find the lack of program duration, at the same time Korean students who are experiencing education in the two years program, find two years as a rational duration, and they share Armenian students opinion, that one year or less than two years program is not enough, we can assume that it would be beneficial for Armenian university to take into consideration the duration of the program.

In terms of curriculum construction, both countries' programs have similar components, courses for general requirements, courses for major requirements, and elective courses (please refer to Tables 3 and 6). More specifically, the standard courses in two programs' General Requirements are the courses that provide knowledge about research methods and fundamental knowledge about research fields. This is the standard course for sport management programs. In Program A, fundamental knowledge and

research methods are represented within one course, but in Program K, there are two different courses. We can see that the fundamental knowledge course in Program A includes topics in 3 areas, with a week duration for each topic (please refer to Table 4), while Program K includes topics in 15 areas (please refer to Table 7). However, some Korean students indicated the shortness of discussion of each area (1 class for each topic) in that particular course as a negative point; yet, some students stated that small touch from each area helped them to determine their field of interest. This is a peculiar finding and in order to make a conclusion on which way will be more efficient (topics in a few areas with a long term, or topics in many areas within one class for each), needed to conduct further study and evaluate the output of both courses.

Both programs' curriculums consist of similar components (general, major requirements, electives); however, Program K includes more variety of courses and is more flexible in terms of course selection. Elective courses Program A includes 2 credits and only two optional courses, while Program K includes 6 credits and more than 20 major elective courses for students to choose from. Furthermore, Program K includes a requirement to take an additional six credits from Physical education department courses for those students who do not have a bachelor's degree in sport-related studies. So

students with none sport-related education will have a chance to gain a basic knowledge of the sports field. However, Program A does not have such a regulation, and a possible explanation may be the fact that most of the students in Program A are undergraduates from the same university (physical education and sport). But still, as the Li, Cobb, and Sawyer (1994) reported, the effective sport management graduate program should provide the students who come from different undergraduate backgrounds with a variety of opportunities to be directly exposed to sport management preparation. Hence even for that small number of students with none sport-related undergraduate education will be beneficial to adopt similar to Program K, a system of additional credits and courses. Thus it will lead the university to accept graduate students from a wide variety of backgrounds.

Findings of the students perceptions indicate that Program A includes courses and topics in general economics, law courses, and not specifically in the sports context. However, indeed, advanced courses must also be available in the graduate curriculum for students to select, such as Law, Sport Economics/Finance (Brassie, 1989). However, one of the suggested characteristics for the effective sport management graduate program is that the curriculum is designed correctly to reflect the characteristics of sport management (Popp, Weight, Dwyer, Morse, & Baker,

2015). One of the criteria suggested for developing sport management graduate curricula was that the sport management student needs to take specialty courses, such as basic courses in law and marketing, and, more importantly, sports law and sport marketing (Ulrich & Parkhouse, 1981). So based on the arguments mentioned above, we can say that general knowledge is useful; however, if the program is only one year, it is preferable to focus on the sport context. Additionally, in the mission of Program A was mentioned specialization in management, specified in sport. So it is important to specify topics for the sport field and develop practical skills.

Findings indicate that Armenian students want to have worldwide examples and more real-life cases included in the course topics. On the one hand, we can assume that it is connected with sport management being a new phenomenon in Armenia, and the Armenian sport industry is not big enough to experience all cases from theories and provide real-life cases for scholars to discuss during the lectures. On the other hand, the study which examined students' satisfaction from the 26 sport management graduate programs in the United States found similar to Armenian students' opinion results (Popp, Weight, Dwyer, Morse, & Baker, 2015). So for being an "effective program" needs to update (Li, Cobb, & Sawyer, 1994) and

include real-life cases from worldwide experiences concerning sport management, regardless of the geographical location of the program. Moreover, as literature stated, in order to consider a valid sport management program, programs' curriculum must include 20% sport management classes that are developed by the faculty who were or currently in the sports industry (NASPE-NASSM, 1993). Also, taking into account the fact that the sports industry was increasingly taking its place in the global economy (2019), and it is essential that the sport management curriculum should reflect a global perspective, since graduates may work internationally (Haan & Sherry, 2012), professors need to try to intertwine international practices and current events into their lessons to keep up with the growth of sport globally. So we can assume that universities need to consider giving opportunities to faculty members to develop their knowledge worldwide and get knowledge about contemporary trends and cases from other countries.

For reading and research and conducting the thesis, Program A requires 24 credits, but in Program A, 6 credits, this may be because of the credit/hours counting systems differences in two countries. Additionally, Program A includes 6 more credits for practical experience as called Practica, Armenian students find the practical experience gives the sense of real work and is beneficial for their education and future career. Similar to

this study, results were the study where the most crucial factor that students took from the internship was workplace reality, not just the theory learned in the class (Cook, Parker, & Pettijohn, 2004). Contrarily to Program A, Program K does not include practical experience in the curriculum. This difference can be explained by the nature of the universities. Korean university is more scholastic oriented, and the faculty consists of the top scholars among the county, so students motivation is more likely to follow professors' scholastic path. However, at the same time, most of the Korean students mentioned that it would be vital to have practical experience and gain knowledge of realistic work. Korean Students find the internship program can be useful for their working as well as academic career. This opinion can be confirmed by Sutton (1989), who explained the role of the internship in sport management as a bridge to connect academic theory to professional practice. Moreover, the study which examined 302 students satisfaction within sport management master's degree programs found that internship and practical experience is the most beneficial degree element (Popp, Weight, Dwyer, Morse, & Baker, 2015).

Furthermore, according to the literature, the most common element of the sport management programs curriculum was the internship requirement; also, many studies indicated the field experiences as one of the

essentials for the graduate sport management program's curriculum (NASPE-NASSM, 1993; Li, Cobb, and Sawyer, 1994; Brassie, 1989).

Considering the students' perceptions and relaying on the literature mentioned above, that indicated the importance of the internship and practical experiences in sport management curriculums, and we can say that the implication of some field experiences would be beneficial for Program K. Moreover, the study conducted by Kim (1996) proposed "A Model Curriculum for sport management at universities in the Republic of Korea," where indicates the internship (3 credit/hours) as a part of the core curriculum. Taking into account the argument, that a student can experience success in the internship if the needs and desires of the student matched with those of the prospective employing organizations (Sutton, 1989), we can say that universities should give students various options for an internship, so the students can choose those which they are most interested in.

Hearing the students' perception lead me to think about the cultural differences between the two countries, and it is mostly highlighted in the students' answers concerning the teaching and learning process. Korean students are expecting a lack of communication with the professors and are expected more chances to interact with them, but Armenian students are experiencing a faculty-student "barrier-free" relationship. On the one hand,

the results from Table 13 indicate that Korean students as a solution suggested office hours for professors. On the other hand, Armenian students have already been experiencing barrier-free relationships; however, there are no mandatory office hours for professors at the Armenian university. So it can be expected that with only office hours, the professor-student relationship will not become barrier-free. After all, in the "effective program," the faculty members can give students obvious advising benefits beyond the courses they offer (Li, Cobb, & Sawyer, 1994). Moreover, the study which examined 302 students satisfaction within sport management master's degree programs found that relationships built with network/faculty were the second most beneficial degree element (Popp, Weight, Dwyer, Morse, & Baker, 2015). Therefore, the university needs to consider reconstructing the nature of the student-faculty relationship.

Another cultural aspect appears in a discussion of the curriculum (Topic 3). Korean students are feeling confused about the order of selecting the courses. An inappropriate selection of the courses negatively affected students' educational process. So it may be interpreted intuitively that guideline which provides the students with information about which course is beneficial to take in which semester could be the right solution. However, I interviewed Program K alumni to discuss this issue. The discussion

showed, because of the cultural aspect, if the Korean university suggests the order of courses or anything, it will become mandatory, and students will follow that without any questioning (personal communication November 12, 2019).

Armenian interviewees reported the lack of Armenian literacy as an issue and expressed that when taking foreign literacy for education, most of the students are facing with the language barrier (please refer to Heading 4.2). Hence Armenian interviewees indicated the need for English proficiency as one of the vital practical skills for sport management students in Armenia. In the case of Korean students, we do not see such issues since Program K includes an English Proficiency test mandatory for graduation (please refer to Heading 4.1.2), so we can assume that Korean students have sufficient English language skills. However, in the Armenian students case having an English course (Table 3), or even implement English Proficiency test (similar to Korean program) will not be the best solution, because, if students enter to the program with not enough language skills to use foreign literacy, a mandatory test for graduation can not be an efficient solution. On the one hand, the solution can be that the Armenian university considers having an English Proficiency test as admissions criteria. On the other hand, the program is designed to educate practitioners not only for working

internationally but also in the Armenian market. However, we still can not ignore the fact that there is a lack of mother-tongue literacy, because it is a master's level education where students have to conduct a research, so in order to be able to review the literature, students need to know at least one of the foreign languages (Russian, English). So, as a solution for developing language proficiency, the university may include students in various multinational events, student exchange programs. This will benefit Armenian students future careers since the sport industry would require sport managers with international business capabilities (Masteralexis & McDonald, 1997). In terms of mother-tongue literacy, if there are not many textbooks, which means the number of scholars lacks interest in the field. So there is much room to develop sport management in the Armenian context and need to pay more attention to the field of sport management to accumulate knowledge.

In both countries, how the students perceive the program in detail, such as their expectations from curriculum construction and experiences from courses, were individualized based on their interests. However, all students mentioned the importance of students' voices and experience sharing in the classroom.

It is not surprising in itself that students with different backgrounds want to have many discussions between them. Such as student-athlete would like to discuss with the sport-fan students, non-sport background, students with field-work experiences, and share experiences. This will give all of them a chance to see the issue from different (athletes, employees, sponsors, spectators) perspectives. The discussion and experience sharing is one of the most beneficial elements of sport management graduate education (Popp, Weight, Dwyer, Morse, & Baker, 2015). Based on the findings from the students' perception and the literature, we can say that for all of the various background students would be helpful to create a platform for discussion where they can share experiences and hear students' voices with different perspectives.

This research defines student views as a reflection of the actual image of the program and the basis for the future development of graduate programs. As the Gregory Letter stated in his study about the program's approval process to accreditation, "sport management curriculum has to be able to change to the growing interests of students" (2007). Specifically, the study presents essential areas based on students' perceptions in two countries and suggests ways for future increase in programs' quality.

5.1 Conclusions

Five conclusions where drown from the study findings:

1. Armenian and Korean selected programs both require a total of 30 credit hours from the courses. Both programs' curriculums consist of similar components (general, major requirements, electives); however, Program K is more flexible in terms of course selection and course topics. It includes more than 20 options for elective courses, while Program A includes 2 optional courses.

2. The difference in curriculums' components is the mandatory practical experience in Program A, and the requirement for additional credits for none sport-related bachelor's degree students in Program K. This emphasizes a difference in the nature and direction of the universities.

3. Armenian and Korean students expressed the perception of sport management master's program based on their expectations and experiences. Overall, both countries' students were satisfied with educational programs. However, students mentioned some aspects where their expectations do not meet reality. Armenian students' reported aspects are the duration of the program, course assignments, course topics, worldwide experiences, and literacy. Korean students'

reported aspects are thesis writing skills, interactions with professors, practical experience, which outline several areas for improvement or concern.

4. In some areas, expectations of Korean students have already been experienced by Armenian students. In contrast, in other areas, Armenian students' expectations from the program were corresponding with the Korean students' experiences.

5. In both countries, how the students perceive Program A and Program K in detail were individualized. Such as their expectations from curriculum construction and experiences from courses, were based on their interests. However, all students mentioned the importance of students' voices and experience sharing in the classroom.

5.2 Implications of the Study

Based on the findings, the following can be suggested for developing sport management programs in the universities in Armenia and Korea.

1. To create a platform where students will share their experiences and points of view.

2. To provide extracurricular activities, such as volunteering opportunities for students to gain real-life experiences.

3. To give more chances to the students to be creative and do unique projects, and provide them an opportunity to be in the role of a leader for the group projects.

4. To enhance sport management education with international dimensions by including language and cultural training.

Suggestions addressed to the Armenian university.

5. To pay more attention to the field of sport management as an academic discipline to accumulate knowledge.

6. To extend the duration of the program considering the university's rules and regulations.

7. To consider rewriting courses' titles by focusing more on sport context, also to add more sports-oriented specialized courses and topics in the program curriculum.

8. Provide an opportunity for basic sports knowledge, such as additional courses, lectures, seminars for the students with none sport-related backgrounds, considering the university's rules and regulations.

9. To consider the implementation of worldwide experiences and real-life cases into course topics, and provide more options for the elective courses.

10. It is preferable to pay more attention to students' foreign language skills. Also, give students more opportunities to experience a sports management field in a global context by engaging in student exchange or study abroad programs.

11. Provide training for the faculty members and more opportunities for them to attend international conferences, equip themselves with innovations and contemporary knowledge, and share with the students, future specialists.

Suggestions addressed to the Korean university.

12. To provide a practicum within the curriculum and give credits, alternatively, to provide optional internship opportunities (extracurricular) for students where they can choose from the organizations' list, considering the university's rules and regulations.

13. To consider changing the nature of the faculty-student relationship and make faculty more open from the Korean students' points of view.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

There are some limitations of this study in terms of the number of programs examined and participants. Further studies need to be made with larger sample groups in Program A and Program K, implementing both quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments. The target for this particular study was a master's level degree education, but future work is needed to explore undergraduate sport management education as well. Additionally, future studies should examine the sport management programs through the perspective of the other program stakeholders, such as faculty members, field employers.

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Appendix

Interview Protocol

Students' Interview protocol

Student's perception of the Sport Management Graduate education program

in Armenia and Korea

Introduction

My name is Kristine Aleksanyan; I am a master student. You have been selected to speak with us today because you have been identified as someone who has a great deal to share about the experience from the sport management master program. Our research project as a whole focuses on the improvement of the program, with a particular interest in understanding how students perceive the program, whether we can begin to share what we know about making a difference in sport management graduate education. Our study tries to learn more about the students' perception of the program, and hopefully, that helps to improve the quality of the program.

Introductory Protocol

To facilitate our note-taking, we would like to audiotape our conversations today. For your information, only researchers will be privy to the tapes, which will eventually be destroyed after they are transcribed. In addition, all information will be held confidential, your participation is

voluntary, and you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable. Thank you for agreeing to participate. We have planned this interview to last no longer than one hour. During this time, we have several questions that we would like to cover.

If there are no further questions, let us get started.

Interviewee: Gender: male / female

Institution: Semester: 1st / 2nd / 3rd / 4rd

Nationality: Any other information:

RQ1. & RQ2. What are the perceptions of Armenian and Korean sport management graduate students of the selected programs?

Background and Motivation

1. How would you describe your background in the Sport field?

How was it helpful for your academic career?

Probe 1: What academic background do you have?

How was it helpful for your academic career?

Probe 2: Tell about your experience in sport management.

How was it helpful for your academic career?

2. What made you have an interest in sport management education?

   Probe 1: What made you select this program?

   Probe 2: In your opinion, why are students interested in having a sport management master's degree?

   Probe 3: What is your career goal after completing sport management studies?

Teaching and learning

1. How would you describe the ideal teaching?

   Probe: If you have a chance to be a lecturer, what would it be like?

2. How would you describe the teaching and learning process for sport management graduate students?

   Probe 1: What was the best experience with a lecturer during the learning?

   Probe 2: There are students having difficulties in the teaching and learning process. What do you think about it?

3. What do you think about what challenges students in your class are facing in a professor-student relationship?

   Probe: how do they overcome the challenges?

4. What would you suggest to make the teaching and learning process better?

Probe: Is there any further information you would like to provide about the teaching and learning process?

Curriculum

1. What are your academic interests and expectation from the Sport Management graduate program?

2. If you were a responsible figure for the program, what would you change in the curriculum?

3. How would you describe the content of the curriculum currently taught?

Probe 1: In your opinion, for most of the students (in your class), what are the most useful courses?

Probe 2: In your opinion, for most of the students (in your class), what are the least useful courses?

4. What would you suggest to make the program curriculum better?

Probe: Is there any further information you would like to provide about the curriculum?

Practical Skills

1. Why is it important to have practical experience?

    Probe: How would you describe the key practical skills for success in sport management?

2. What kind of practical experience did you have in this program?

    Probe 1: What was the best skill you will take away from practical experience?

    Why is it the best skill?

    Probe 2: What was the most important skill that was missed in the practical experience?

    Why is it the most important skill?

3. What would you suggest to make the better practical experience for sport management graduate students?

    Probe: Is there any further information you would like to provide about the   practical experience?

Overall

1. How do you see the program in general?

     Probe: Quality, faculty, duration, cost, etcetera

2. What suggestion may you have on how the university might enhance the

   quality of the program?

   Probe: Is there any further information you would like to provide about

   the Sport   Management master program?

Post Interview Comments and/or Observations:

Final statement

 I would like to thank you for being willing to participate in the interview

aspect of the study. Thank you once again for your time and efforts.