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A skills development framework for sports tourism: The case of South Africa

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the education and training needs of the sports tourism industry. Multi-method research was conducted with South Africa as case study during 2013. Strategic documents of three national authorities, as well as relevant courses of 14 tertiary institutions were analysed. A sample of 24 participants from across the tourism, sport and sport tourism sectors were also interviewed. The research revealed no dedicated sport tourism management degrees, diplomas or certificates and a subsequent gap in the availability of higher level graduates with a combined understanding of both the sectors. Industry stakeholders identified a range of general and specialisation skills required. The importance of internships was highlighted, as well as that of volunteers which holds several challenges within the South African context. The roles of government, the private sector and sports federations are defined. The findings of the study present aspects important for considerations in the development of national strategy around skills development in the industry.

Keywords: Sports tourism, skills development, training authority, sports tourism stakeholders, South Africa.

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Introduction

It is widely acknowledged that sports tourism is a fast-growing industry (Hinch & Higham, 2011). South Africa has also benefited from this trend and the industry is witnessing a concerted effort to promote sports tourism as a national priority, as is evident from the new National Sports Tourism Bidding and Hosting Strategy (Pillay, 2012), the National Sport Tourism Strategy (Sport and Recreation South Africa, 2012), the National Sport and Recreation Plan (Sport and Recreation South Africa, 2011), and the National Events Strategy (National Department of Tourism, 2011). With a number of international major and mega sports events hosted successfully in the country, latest being the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) Soccer World Cup in 2010, research indicates that the country could feasibly aim for events ranging from the Summer Olympics to the F1 Grand Prix and ATP tennis events (Havas Sports and Entertainment, 2010 cited in Pillay, 2012).

The debate around the need to sustain government's investment in the infrastructure and facilities developed to host international events, especially the 2010 FIFA World Cup, has been growing (Cornelissen, Bob & Swart, 2011; Kaplanidou, Karadakis, Gibson, Thapa, Walker, Geldenhuys & Coetzee, 2013). A key component to ensuring that South Africa is able to be globally competitive as a sports tourism destination is the need for a highly skilled workforce within the sports tourism industry. It is argued that education and training is important to ensure that sporting bodies have the prerequisite business skills to manage successful events and to benefit from the tourism opportunities arising from the hosting of such events. From work conducted by Steyn, Hollander and Roux (2012) there appeared to be a gap in the skillset of practitioners in South Africa around sport event management. Furthermore, a range of accreditation opportunities needs to be developed to enhance professional development opportunities for employees, trainees and volunteers in the sports tourism industry. It is however difficult to prioritise such skills development in the absence of a national skills development strategy aligned to the industry. Current training programmes within the sports and tourism industries are often specific to the needs of each sector individually without a focus on the overlapping industry, sports tourism (CATHSSETA, 2013).

The aim of this exploratory research was to determine the types of education and training opportunities that would adequately address the skills requirements of the sports tourism industry. Studies are increasingly focusing on the scarce skills required by specific sub-sectors for example MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Events) (Hsieh, 2013; Tang, 2014) and professional chefs (Balkaran & Giampiccoli, 2013). With little research on this niche it was necessary to refer to knowledge from the separate fields to understand the requirements of the respective sectors. Furthermore, it would be necessary to consult secondary sources as well as industry and academic experts to provide insights into an overlapping curriculum. The empirical research therefore entailed a review of current qualifications and programmes available in South Africa, as well as consultation with stakeholders within the sports and tourism industries aimed at understanding their skills priorities to grow the industry.

Literature overview

Trends in sports tourism education and training

The term sports tourism relates to both sport and tourism and has been defined in many ways (Hinch & Higham, 2011; Shipway, 2007; Weed, 2009); a sector regarded as more than the sum of its parts, with the interaction between the two as the unique element (Weed, 2009). Three fields of study are involved, including tourism management, sports management and events management (Weed, 2009) (illustrated in Figure 1).

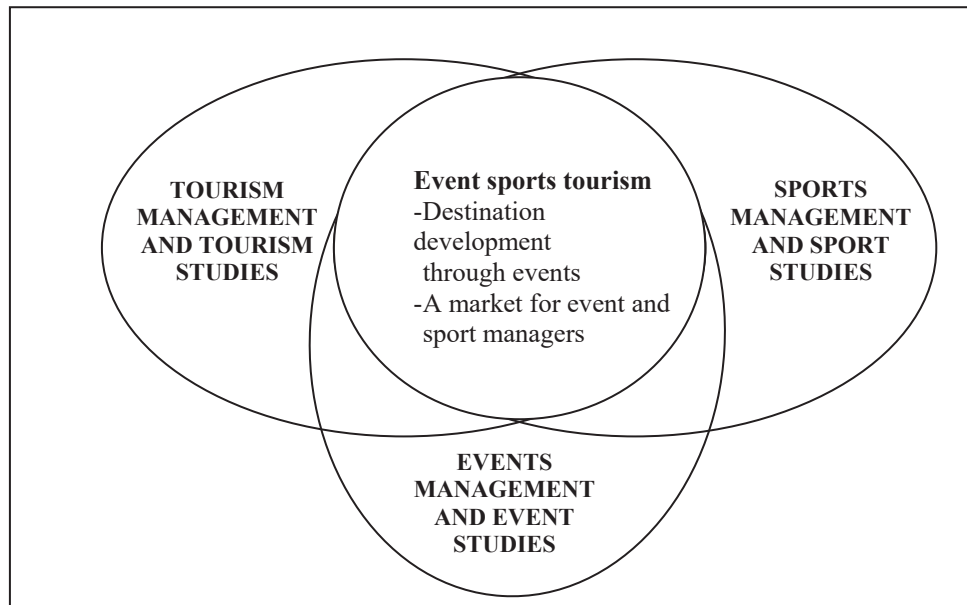


Figure 1: The nexus of tourism, sport and events.
Source: Adapted from Getz (2008:406).

Within this overlap, two separate sub-fields also exist namely event tourism and sports tourism. Event sports tourism at the nexus has specifically “moulded the sport industry into a shape not seen before” (Hums, 2010:2). From a tourism management perspective, focus is on promotion of the destination through the events market segment (events tourism) or through the sports market segment (sports tourism). On the other hand, tourists are a lucrative potential market for both sport and event managers and the tourism industry a vital stakeholder in the success and sustainability of both sport and event related initiatives (adapted from Getz, 2008). When viewing sports tourism as this overlapping area, it is important not to give primacy to either sport or tourism (Weed, 2005).

Though an abundance of literature is available on both tourism and sport related education and training, literature presents a gap in terms of sports tourism specifically. In 2000, Swart published an article on sport tourism curriculum being offered at academic institutions around the world. Twenty-eight respondents participated (including the USA, Belgium, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, and South Korea). The most prevalent types of sport tourism academic offerings included modules within other courses (78%), course offerings (56%) and sport tourism degrees (40%). Just prior to the publication by Swart (2000), Gammon and Robinson (1999) published an article on sports tourism curriculum with specific reference to the first undergraduate degree in the UK dedicated to sports tourism and the University of Luton. Similar to the findings of Swart, sport tourism curriculum in the USA and Canada was firmly

established, offering a range of courses at a wide variety of institutions. In the UK, sports tourism as a recognised qualification had no historical academic precedence. At that stage, the concern was not with broader curricular issues, but rather with defining the term sports tourism in order to establish a common understanding before commencing with further deliberations. It was indicated how the curriculum planning process has a number of frame conditions that play an important part in the constraints of programme design, including institutional/departmental factors (e.g. vocational focus, structural conditions, learning resources) and market factors (students demanding sport tourism courses specifically, and also the industry demanding graduates that understand the consumer from a trained sports perspective and with the ability to manage the needs of the tourist). With these two studies being the only available literature on the topic of sports tourism education and training, it is meaningful to turn to existing knowledge on tourism and sport respectively as the wider related subject areas.

Tourism education and training

As the industry developed, the shape of tourism as field of study also changed and “a variety of research studies have been conducted on graduate skills in the tourism and hospitality industry” (Kokt & Strydom, 2014:121). What started off with a clear vocational shape turned into a subject going well beyond its vocational/business core and with overlap across a range of other subjects (Airey, 2004). To meet the evolving needs of stakeholders, three domains emerged within tourism education, namely (i) generic degrees offering the interdisciplinary skills required for a broad understanding of the tourism industry, (ii) functional degrees offering student the functional expertise in a particular area of tourism, and (iii) market/product-based degrees focused on the nature and development of particular niche products and markets which require specialist knowledge and expertise for their effective delivery (for example heritage/cultural tourism, urban/rural tourism and eco/adventure tourism) (Dale & Robinson, 2001).

Sports tourism would fall within the latter category if taken as a niche product. The content of tourism related education and training is very broad, with various subfield links to other subject areas and with a great dependency on the approach taken by the hosting department (economic, social sciences, vocational etc.). The industry requires candidates from a broad range of skill sets including aspects at a managerial level (with skills related to accounting, marketing, business and strategic planning and project management), supervisory level (with skills such as computer skills, human resource management, hygiene, safety and security in the workplace), semi-skilled level (with skills related to specific jobs), and a set of personal skills sought throughout the industry (such as problem solving, conflict management, cultural relations, service attitude, creative thinking,

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professional ethics, skill and team work, globalisation influences and change management) (Chen & Gursoy, 2008; Tang, 2014; Rodríguez-Antón et al., 2013; Suh et al., 2012; Testa & Sipe, 2012). As a result of this broad set of skills, there is often lack of agreement on the content of tourism syllabi, but also challenges to create co-operative learning opportunities (Cervera-Taulet & Ruiz-Molina, 2008; Zopiatis & Theocharous, 2013).

The industry also experiences inefficient transfer of knowledge due to the informal link between the industry and academic research, as well as the temporal nature of a mobile labour force (Cervera-Taulet & Ruiz-Molina, 2008). Tourism employers often recruit non-tourism graduates (for example, graduates in business studies) who are able to demonstrate the generic skills required for a vocation in tourism (Dale & Robinson, 2001). Once recruited, the employer might have to train the graduate in specialist skills that have not been directly taught in their programme of study and several studies have explored the difference between student competencies and employer expectations (see Walo, 2001; Walo & Dimmock, 2004; Chen & Shen, 2012).

Studies have recognised the need for curriculum planning of tourism courses to be flexible and responsive to stakeholder needs (Cooper & Westlake, 1998; Jordan, 2008; Jugmohan, 2010). There has been a resultant drive towards a more coherent approach to the content of tourism education, focusing on the need for the student to learn how to learn and be flexible (Christou, 1999). At the same time, specialisation in tourism education should contribute towards building closer relationships between employers and institutions, enabling network management and communication between tourism stakeholders. Hence - a stronger focus on internships or 'work-integrated learning' (Fleming, Martin, Hughes & Zinn, 2009; Kock & Strydom, 2014). Employers should gain from being able to recruit graduates who have acquired a combination of generic and value-adding specialist skills, thus enhancing the overall tourism experience for consumers (Dale & Robinson, 2001). A problem experienced in the industry in South Africa has been indicated as a skills deficit at managerial level. This problem is not unique to South Africa but globally the industry struggles with talent management, employee retention and persisting negative perceptions about working in the industry as a low skilled worker (discussed in Kock & Strydom, 2014).

Sport education and training

It has been stated that there appear to be more similarities than differences for people who work in the sport and tourism industries (Chen & Gursoy, 2008). Similar to education in tourism, sport programmes had to adapt to provide candidates with a set of skills and competencies. The industry has witnessed a shift away from focusing teaching mostly around physical education and the

fitness industry, to preparing students for a broad range of career opportunities (Fleming et al., 2009) and the professional management of sport (Smith & Westerbeek, 2004). The sports industry has been stated to experience a saturation of undergraduate programs and a lack of doctoral degrees in sport management (Jones & Brooks, 2008), with many sports graduates not gaining employment within the industry (Minten & Forsyth, 2014). Sports literature indicate three desired components of a sports management curriculum, namely (i) the foundational areas of study comprising full courses in business management, marketing, economics, accounting, finance and computer science, (ii) the application areas of study comprised of sport foundations (e.g., sport sociology, sport psychology, sport history/philosophy, women in sports), sport law, sport economics, sport marketing/promotion and sport administration, and (iii) field experiences including practical and internships (Jones & Brooks, 2008).

Similar to tourism and hospitality, practicum and internships from a series of professionally related work experiences form an integral part of sports management curriculum (Fleming et al., 2009; Jones & Brooks, 2008; Minten & Forsyth, 2014). Furthermore, a wide range of competencies are required, from willingness to learn, initiative, personal organisational skills, communication and teamwork to management and business skills, facility management and officiating (Barcelona & Ross, 2004; Chen & Gursoy, 2008; Fleming et al., 2009). Several authors have developed lists and instruments to determine the various competencies across the sports industry (Barcelona & Ross, 2004). Adding to the dynamics is the sports industry's reliance on the recruitment of volunteers as a substantial part of its workforce; with these individuals having varied levels of training, experience and career commitments (Schlesinger, Klenk & Nagel, 2015). Similar to the skills shortage at managerial level, South Africa also experiences a lack of graduate degree candidates focusing on sport event management with very few institutions offering such programs at degree level (Burnett, 2010).

Methodology

The limited findings from the literature relating to sports tourism specifically made it necessary to collect in-depth qualitative data (Decrop, 2004) to provide insights into an overlapping curriculum for sports tourism. It took on the form of a case study research strategy (with South Africa as the case study); with a multi-method research choice to collect and analyse both secondary and primary qualitative data from the case study (Saunders et al., 2007). The study was cross-sectional, as it looked at the case study at a particular point in time and participants were only interviewed once.

Firstly, documentary secondary data was collected on South Africa's sport and tourism sectors' capacity and strategies in place in terms of sports tourism

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related education and training. It included relevant organisational databases, organisational reports, organisational websites, newspapers and printed promotional material from relevant public authorities. In some instances documents were provided by the individuals taking part in the interviews. Secondly, course prospectus information of institutions of higher education in South Africa were analysed to identify dedicated sports tourism event management education and training courses. Institutes included colleges of further training and education, residential universities, universities of technology and distance learning providers. A broad spectrum of level of qualifications was included in the analysis: short courses, national certificates, national diplomas, degree programmes and post graduate degree programmes. Analysis also included the content of modules. Selected elements of course content were verified through follow-up emails to academics in the field.

The aim of the primary data collection was to gather information from sports federations, relevant government departments, industry associations and other relevant stakeholders on their perceptions about skills priorities, institutional arrangements and challenges experienced. A non-random sample of participants was purposively selected based on the individuals' potential to yield the most information about the topic (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005) or based on their unique characteristics, experiences, attitudes or perceptions (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). The aim was to get a final balanced portfolio of information-rich participants from both tourism and sport; from all four of the groups (federations, national offices, provincial offices, municipal offices); from both the public and private sectors; from various levels within organisations/companies (owners/top management/ departmental); and who are regarded as experts in their particular fields or operational areas. A total of 24 participants took part in the interviews. Table 1 presents a profile of the participants^a.

Results and Discussion

Overview of key strategic documents

At the time of the study, CATHSSETA^b consisted of various sub-sectors and according to the division of the sub-sectors, sports events are clearly placed

a To protect anonymity, participants are not identified in person.

b Since the study was conducted it was announced that CATHSSETA would be dissolved as authority overseeing training of the sector. During 2016 the National Department of Tourism commenced with a skills audit toward the development of a new Tourism Human Resource Strategy Development for the period 2016-2026; the results of which not yet known at the time of development of this paper. The future structure of the industry's human resource development component from a national level will arguably have a significant influence on curriculum content and program structures.

Table 1: Interview participant profile

Organisation type	No. of participants
Sports sector	
National government	1
National sports federation	4
Provincial sports council	2
Sports marketing company	1
Tertiary institution	1
TOTAL	9
Sports tourism sector	
Sports tour operators (private sector)	2
Sports event venue	1
TOTAL	3
Tourism sector	
National government	1
National association	3
Provincial tourism authority	3
Local tourism authority	3
Event venue	2
TOTAL	12

within the domain of sport, recreation and fitness, with the promotion and management of sports events assigned to this sub-sector. The travel and tourism services sub-sector includes event and conference management, with events viewed in a broader context and not necessarily referring to sports events. The hospitality sub-sector was the largest sub-sector in South Africa with a predominance of casual, part-time, seasonal and temporary employment. The education profile of employees showed a definite gap in higher level education qualifications; with the bulk of the employees found to have qualifications at a much lower skills level with interventions needed to assist employees to follow career paths into management positions. Various memorandums of understanding were in place with key employer organisations to establish work integrated learning and learnerships. A said oversupply of students called for an urgent curriculum review process. Sports Management was highlighted as a qualification where supply of graduate students far exceeded the demand; especially when considering the voluntary nature of sports in South Africa. Because volunteers are not remunerated and the National Federations they belong to are exempted from paying the skills levy, the skills needs of these volunteers were not captured. A skills audit in 2010 by the South African Sports Confederation and Olympics Committee (SASCOC) indicated an urgent need for volunteer training for especially coaches, umpires and sports officials (CATHSSETA, 2013).

VISION 2030 is the sport sector's contribution to the National Development Plan and three of the core elements of the vision relate directly to skills development within sports tourism, namely (i) making South Africa a choice destination for major events and sports tourism, (ii) career paths in sport and recreation, and (iii) skilled and qualified sports practitioners. The plan consists of three core pillars of implementation with skills development and volunteers forming part of the 'enabling environment' of the strategy. Various sub-programmes are also in place, with the Education and Training sub-programme targeting generic training manuals being coordinated and facilitators supported. The Major Events sub-programme aims to assist to promote South Africa as a desirable sports tourism destination and aims to host major sports events in the country. The plan includes a focus on the development of volunteers, including establishing a database, integrating and capitalising on 2010 volunteer initiatives (retaining event knowledge), and developing and maintaining accredited volunteer training programs. Strategic objective nr 28 refers to using sport as a medium to attract tourists to South Africa. Focus is not only on mega-events, but also on smaller-scale sports events (SRSA, 2011). The Tourism Sector Strategy is focused on the issues of wealth, jobs, ownership, community beneficiation, rural tourism development, stimulating domestic tourism, accelerated job creation and creating a better society where all have an equal chance of success.

One of the strategy's key priorities relate to events, but is stated as developing business and events tourism, not sports events specifically. Another key priority is the development of niche products of which sports tourism could be one, but specific reference is made to cultural and heritage tourism. The urgent need for skills development in the tourism industry in South Africa was illustrated by the skills audit of the tourism and sports industries carried out in 2007. Subsequently, a human resources development strategy was developed which was yet to be implemented by 2012. Despite tourism's significance, local governments have few dedicated or part-time tourism personnel; experience and knowledge of tourism are extremely limited, and, with rare exceptions, no budget is allocated for tourism planning and development activities (NDT, 2012). As indicated in this sector, both sport and tourism in South Africa have their own national strategies, with both strategies including skills development as a major contributing factor for future growth. The sport strategy places emphasis on sports events, while the tourism strategy focuses mainly on business events. At the same time, the sport strategy does not make direct reference to the tourism industry as a partner (despite the focus on sports events). Notably, the tourism strategy does not make specific mention of sports tourism as a niche market or of sports events as a priority within product development. The skills development focus in tourism strategy appears to relate to service delivery, where sport is focused on many of the technical areas such as coaching.

Sports tourism qualifications in South Africa

This section presents the findings of the South African context in terms of sport qualifications with sports tourism or sports event components (refer to Table 2) and tourism qualifications with sports tourism or sports event components (refer to Table 3). In each instance, the institution, qualification title and program content is presented, along with an indication whether sport and tourism are clearly linked in the program.

Table 2: Sports qualifications with a sports tourism (or sports events) component

Institution	Qualification	Program content	Linking sport with tourism
University 1	B(Sport Sciences)	- Seven-week undergraduate module on Sports Tourism. It explores the phenomenon of tourism on an introductory level.	Yes
University 1	BA(Human Movement Sciences)	- Seven-week undergraduate module Recreation and Tourism. It focuses on the symbiosis between recreation and tourism activities.	Yes
University 1	BA(Human Movement Sciences) Honours; Option: Sport and Recreation Management	- 6 month module on Sports Tourism Management. It explores sport tourism models, typologies and relationships between the sport and tourism industries.	Yes
University of Technology	B(Sport Management)	- 6 month module on Sport Tourism. General aspects of sport tourism are explored.	Yes
College 1	Advanced Diploma in Sport Events Management	- Duration: 22 – 26 Months. Modules include Tourism and Events; and Sports Events Management.	Yes
College 1	National Diploma: Sport Management	- Duration: 24 months. Module deals with the issue of Sports Tourism and the ability to market, promote and create sport events are spotlighted.	Yes
College 1	Certificate: Sport Management	- Duration: 12 months. Modules include Sports Event Management and Sports Tourism.	Yes
College 2	Diploma: Sport Management	- Duration: 3 years. Modules include Sports Tourism.	Yes
University 2	Not currently included in any qualifications	- Module named Sports Tourism and Event Management.	Yes
University 2	BA Recreation and Tourism	- Includes a module on Event Management in the Tourism Management subject grouping	No
University 3	Postgraduate Diploma in Sports Management	- Duration: 12 months. Modules include Event Management.	No
University 4	Diploma: Sport Management	- Duration: 3 years. No modules on Sport Events or Sports Tourism included.	No
Academy	Certificate: Sport Management	- Duration: 8 – 12 months. Modules include Managing a Sports Tournament.	No
University 5	BCom Sports Management	- No modules on Sports Events or Sports Tourism included.	No
College 2	Short course in Sports Management	- Duration: 20 days. Modules include Event Management	No

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College 3	Sport Management Sport administration	- Requirement: National certificate or equivalent certificate - Modules include Event Management	No
College 4	Diploma in Sport Development and Management	- Modules include Sports Event Organisation - Modules include Sports Event Management	No
College 5	Diploma in Sport Event Management	- 12 weeks to 1 year (distance learning) - Extensive module with topics ranging from the role of the event manager, event planning, sports events bidding processes and event sponsorship, to broadcasting and communication, impact and legacy issues as well as risk management.	No

Table 3: Tourism qualifications with sports tourism or sport event components

Institution	Qualification	Program content	Linking tourism with sport
University 1	BCom Tourism Management	- 3 week undergraduate modules in Sports Tourism, Attractions and Events Management.	Yes
University 1	BCom Tourism Management (Honours)	- 6 month module on Sports Tourism Management. The module explores Sports Tourism models, typologies and relationships between the sport and tourism industries.	Yes
University 6	BCom (Hons) Tourism Management	- Duration: 1 year. Modules include Sport/Special Interest Tourism.	Yes
University 2	BCom Tourism Management / BCom Tourism Management and Recreational Studies / BCom Marketing and Tourism Management	- Introduction to Event Management and Applied Event Management.	No
College 5	BCom Hospitality Management	- Module in Event Management.	No
College 6	BCom Tourism Management	- Module in Festival and Event Management.	No

In practice sports events in South Africa are mostly secured and organised under the leadership of sports managers or event managers and not necessarily tourism managers. It was postulated and anticipated that no dedicated sports tourism event management education/training courses will be found in the higher education landscape of South Africa. As was anticipated, the first line of enquiry yielded no dedicated sports tourism management degrees, diplomas or certificates. The second line of analysis identified isolated examples of “sport

tourism” related content of modules. From the analysis it became clear that neither “sports tourism” nor “sports tourism event management” is studied as a separate field of study in a dedicated degree. What did, however, emerge from the content analysis of relevant degree, diploma, certificate and short courses is that sports event management and its related and contributing skill sets such as group dynamics; organisation and administration of sports activities and events; risk management, sports facility management, destination marketing, public relations, financial management, marketing management are the focus of various modules and/or short courses. These courses with outcomes related to organising sport events primarily reside in the broad academic field of Sports Management. This corroborates the earlier statement that “sports event management” is the primary field of expertise which is not necessarily connected to sport tourism.

A similar situation exists from a tourism perspective. Event management and its related and contributing skills sets such as organisation and administration of events; project management; bidding; risk management, financial management, marketing management are the focus of numerous modules and/or short courses. Sports and leisure events are a recognised component of the international event management environment and the prospects for career entry and curriculum development in event management are vast and cross into many educational disciplines including tourism, sports and leisure (Silvers et al., 2006). Yet most of the event management qualifications cover generic aspects of event management and do not specifically focus on sports events. A few examples could be found of sports event training, but mostly not in the event management field (rather in the sports management field). The skills sets required to organise, host and manage sports events are addressed in numerous academic modules from different academic fields of study in South African higher education, for example, Sports Management, Tourism Management, Event Management, Marketing Management, and Human Resource Management. Students interested in sports tourism have to complete various modules from different programs to attain all the relevant background knowledge.

Stakeholder views

Table 4 indicates the categories of issues discussed, in a descending order based on the total number of mentions. It further makes a distinction between the different respondent groups (Sport, Tourism and Municipal). Differences can be seen in terms of the relative importance of, for example, ‘nice-to-have’ skills and ‘the role of federations’ for participants coming from a sports background, while ‘event specific interventions’ are important to those from tourism.

Table 4: Categories of issues mentioned participant groups

Category	Sport	Tourism	Municipal	Totals
General skill requirements	94	143	11	248
Volunteer challenges	38	50	16	104
Sport and tourism link	42	51	6	99
Continued education	27	50	5	82
Senior level/special skills	18	50	3	71
Volunteer skills	20	43	8	71
Volunteer database	25	37	7	69
Internships	22	23	1	46
Government responsibility	14	24	3	41
Nice-to-have skills	26	14	0	40
Pre-study introduction	15	24	1	40
Private sector responsibilities	12	24	1	37
Sports federations	20	16	1	37
Event specific interventions	2	32	2	36
Volunteer training	11	17	5	33
Scarce skill requirements	13	18	1	32
Current gaps	13	15	2	30
Current employees	3	18	3	24
Cathseta	9	13	1	23
Challenges	3	11	2	16
Graduates (current skills)	7	6	1	14
Facilities in South Africa	5	8	0	13
Learnerships/trainee	1	8	0	9
Tourism focus	0	5	0	5
Totals ^c	440	700	80	1220

The discussion of the data will start off with the sports and tourism link, followed by aspects related to the current situation (employee skills, gaps), future skills requirements (at different levels of employment, general skills, internships, volunteers), different stakeholder roles, and lastly the challenges that may arise in the implementation of a sports tourism skills development strategy.

The sport and tourism link

The view was expressed that sports tourism demand would be increasing in South Africa, leading to greater student numbers. Some of the respondents indicated that there is a natural fit between sport and tourism, with this opinion more strongly expressed by the tourism stakeholders. Other stakeholders expressed opposing views of whether sport and tourism could be linked, indicating that not both parties could benefit from this relationship. A number of stakeholders commented on the need for more collaboration to bring sport and tourism together on a formal platform, including a centralised sport and bidding institution. Benefits mentioned included coordinated bidding; standardisation of

^c These totals provide an indication of the contribution of each group toward the discussion. The differences evident are as a result of participant numbers and do not indicate any differences in importance/awareness of the various categories for each group. These differences should be read per row.

management; and more effective human resource management. One respondent indicated that it should be a specialist unit within CATHSSETA. Some participants argued that it should come from a national level, as they felt that local level stakeholders were already much more aware of this link. At the same time it was indicated that the link should filter through to a local level where local sports clubs should realise their impact on tourism. A number of stakeholders indicated that sports federations were currently not involved in any real efforts to grow sports tourism. Lack of resources was indicated as a major factor.

Current skills levels

Participants indicated that many current employees have informal qualifications and that they will usually start training a person once they are employed. This informal qualification base leads to employees that do not always understand the ‘bigger picture’. One suggestion linking to this strategic level of thinking is the statement by a number of participants to establish a professional association for sports event organisers; a suggestion that could be supported by the work of Steyn et al. (2012) on the lack of event management skills among professional sports practitioners.

Participants commented that the sports federations do not make use of the existing training opportunities available to develop staff. Several participants from both the sport and tourism side referred to their own in-house training provision. The benefits include easy adaption to new training needs and being able to customise the training to the organisation’s specific needs. While participants from the sport sector indicated that the use of sports facilities (being of a high standard) for training was too expensive, participants from tourism indicated that the existing training facilities were not being utilised enough^d.

There is an apparent gap in the availability of higher level graduates in sport and tourism, with a combined understanding of both the sectors. It was also indicated that there should be greater input from Government’s side into the curriculum content of tertiary institutions in an effort to address the needs of industry. One aspect of current curricula that was highlighted was the need to give students more practical exposure to industry interaction and to relevant industry case studies. This need for practical exposure is well documented and established in both sport and tourism literature (Chen & Shen, 2012; Fleming et al., 2009). The importance of mentorship came through as a way of introducing graduates into the industry. There appears to be a lack of effective mentoring within the sports environment where they can come to understand and comprehend what the

^d This ‘training’ may refer to training of athletes as opposed to employees; though iconic / title winning athletes were indicated by a number of participants as an important feature to grow the popularity of the country as a place for sports tourism.

industry is expecting of them. The problem of funding of these placements remains similar to that in other countries (addressed in Biscomb, Wiscombe & Mallen, 2012).

Several participants indicated that they perceive graduates to have ‘wrong’ or unrealistic expectations, such a salary expectation being too high. Participants also indicated a lack of passion and commitment amongst graduates / new employees without any real interest in the industry. This resonates with existing research in the field on graduate expectations often lacking a long-term career focus (Kokt & Strydom, 2014; Minten & Forsyth, 2014).

While some participants argued that graduates need to have a broader skills set, the majority stated that graduates do not have enough specialised knowledge and that existing courses were too generic. Specific skills areas that were mentioned as currently lacking include event management, sports event management, the link between marketing and event management, specialised skills such as stadium management, destination marketing, and sponsorship, as well as a limited focus on a few specific sporting codes (with an oversupply of graduates entering the popular codes e.g. rugby, soccer, cricket). The identified skills are similar to those found by Steyn et al. (2012).

Perceptions about internships

A number of participants opened the conversation by referring to internships as a system allowing for the abuse of people in the workplace (‘slave trade’ and ‘the most abused people’). Participants from the sport industry indicated that internships are “not intentional enough” and that the programs are not planned effectively. Several participants indicated that they see internships as a precursor to permanent employment. Internships are often added to a database of the hosting company and, should they in future require volunteers for example, they will also refer to past interns. This minimises costs of recruitment and training. Some of the problems experienced with interns include: low confidence levels; drop-outs (individuals that do not complete the full period); not always getting responsible individuals that you can trust to work independently; too little time given for an internship (majority of cases is 4 months, which is not enough to really harness the individual’s full potential); not having opportunities to place them, and then the interns go on to find employment and you as the organisation loses the ‘investment’ that you made in training the person during an internship.

The issue of effective placement was mentioned by several participants, with the major issue being that individuals are not placed within positions where they are actually skilled or have some experience. Aspects of the internship process presenting problems include: (i) the contractual obligation: creating the right expectations for both parties; (ii) induction program: that will prepare the

company and the intern to effectively use the time given; (iii) assessment period: before the official commencement of the internship where the company gets an opportunity to ‘assess the individual risk-free’; (iv) alignment: the things learned during the internship should be aligned with responsibilities within the workplace; and (v) self-assessment: an opportunity for interns to evaluate their own performance and make decisions about their own interests.

Challenges experienced around volunteers

A major issue in terms of volunteers, as a very big part of especially the sports industry, is the need to redefine the meaning of a volunteer in the South African context. Problem areas include the huge number of unemployed people that volunteer for the sake of an expected reward (as opposed to true volunteering that carries no monetary rewards); the discrepancies between the remuneration given to volunteers (creating expectations for all events); and feeling obligated to offer more permanent employment to volunteers.

The most prevalent other topics that received attention during the discussions included (i) the fact that skills identification place during events; (ii) the logistical help provided by volunteers; (iii) volunteers should be allocated according to a system; (iv) the high volunteer turnover; (v) the need for a volunteer database; and (vi) the need to have volunteers that are passionate about the host city.

Participants indicated that volunteers posed several practical challenges. Among the specific challenges mentioned, the following were mentioned most frequently: (i) having to use unqualified volunteers (just unemployed looking for work and not graduates looking for experience; (ii) working with people with minimal skills; (iii) communication problems; (iv) volunteers not pitching up on the day of the event; and (v) commitment issues / passion / attitude.

Some participants suggested a certification programme whereby volunteers can get recognition for their contribution as this seems to be motivating volunteers. It was also mentioned that volunteers should receive annual refresher courses / on-going training in between major events to keep the knowledge fresh in their minds. Many of these challenges around volunteers can be addressed by developing appropriate selection mechanisms (discussed in Schlesinger et al., 2015).

The need to create a database of volunteers was raised by several participants. Opinions on the level at which the database should be created, differed as some felt that it should be done at a national level, while others saw it as a more localised / sports code specific resource. Opinions on who should manage such a database also varied, with some stating it to be the event organiser’s

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responsibility, or that of a private specialist company, government or the regional tourism bodies.

Only a few participants thought that CATHSSETA or the sports federations should take responsibility. Specific skills requirements lacking among volunteers included customer service / minimum service levels, location specific training, visitor orientation, training of crisis management, business English and time management. One respondent mentioned their initiative to give a basic level of training to promote service excellence.

Future skills requirements

Some respondents spoke about the need to create awareness of the industry and related career opportunities from a young age among learners. Career guidance at school level should already promote careers in the industry, but should also focus on creating realistic expectations among prospective students. Practical suggestions included employees having greater interaction with learners; providing learners with opportunities to volunteer as sports events; and industry members assisting learners with study selection. FET colleges were pointed out as being very important to the industry and therefore required appropriate curriculum development to suit the needs of the industry.

Majority of the respondents felt that a diploma would be sufficient, while some indicated a preference for degrees. None of the participants clearly indicated certificate level qualifications as being sufficient for their needs even though a few of the tourism stakeholders stated that many parts of the industry require very basic levels of training. A few participants stated that people with too low a level of qualification would not be employable beyond the initial training or internship stage. This not only creates problems for the organisation (higher recruitment costs and loss of money/skills invested), but also for the individual who may have had an expectation of further employment.

Throughout the interviews a wide variety of skills were mentioned as skills required of graduates. Table 5 lists the top 10 (most mentioned) in a descending order based on the number of mentions and also indicate the participant groups.

Table 5: Overall skills requirements^e

Skills requirement	Sport	Tourism	Municipal	Total
Practical experience	17	23	0	40
Project management	15	20	0	35
Communication skills	8	15	1	24
Financial skills	9	11	3	23
Teamwork	4	14	0	18
Managerial skills	9	7	1	17
Marketing	8	6	1	15
Legal frameworks / contracts	4	4	2	10
HR management (senior levels)	3	7	0	10
Acquire and manage sponsorships	7	2	0	9
Written communication skills	6	3	0	9

Some of the specialist skills involved have already been included in Table 5, but are distinguished here. Where some respondents may have included them as ‘must haves’ for any graduate, they were also specifically identified as areas that often require the services of experts (even from outside the sport and tourism industries). The most relevant specialist skills mentioned include: Event management; Financial management; Human resource management; Project management; Marketing expertise (sport, tourism, destination marketing, social media, sponsorships); Legal issues/frameworks; Specialisation in sport sector (e.g. athlete management, coaching, nutrition); and Specialisation in tourism sector (e.g. hospitality). These skills are also in line with the findings by Steyn et al. (2014).

Stakeholder roles

When asked whether participants are aware of the Sector Skills Plan developed by CATHSSETA, there were varied reactions ranging from full recognition to complete unawareness. Only seven respondents indicated that they were aware of the plan (which does not necessarily mean being familiar with the content). The functions that the various stakeholders should fulfil are summarised in Table 6.

Challenges for implementation of a sports tourism skills development strategy

One of the major themes under challenges of implementation of a skills development strategy was indicated as getting the industry involved. These stakeholders have to be educated on the benefits of such a strategy to the industry and have to highlight mutual benefits.

^e The next section will highlight those skills regarded as senior level or ‘specialist’ skills

Table 6: Stakeholder roles toward a skills development framework

CATHSSETA	
General functions:	Sports tourism specific functions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assist athletes in developing post-sport abilities. - Developing codes of ethics for the industry. - Focusing more on research. - Conduct a skills audit of the industry in cooperation with industry. - Establishing a system to grade volunteers. - More effective placements of internships. - More formal interaction with the industry. - Facilitate integrated planning with all stakeholders. - Manage standards. <p>Government</p> <p>Three main tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting international / larger bids - Enabling opportunities - Setting industry standards. <p>Other aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating awareness of sport - Determining market needs - Developing industry specific legislation - Providing infrastructural support - Providing funding - Being involved in training <p>Private sector</p> <p>Main responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In-house skills development - Playing a mentoring role to new entrants <p>Skills development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on skills development and provision - Providing bursaries to learners - Providing in-company study support - Giving input into curriculum content <p>Sports federations</p> <p>Main responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitate learnerships - Ensure professionalism of the industry - Facilitate community development through sport - Create awareness of sport. <p>Skills development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Insist on qualifications for players - Develop training programmes - Link with tertiary institutions to provide input into curriculum development^f 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Form a specialisation unit for sports tourism - Assist in establishing a coordinated bidding platform - Assist in managing standards for the industry - Coordinate with a 'sports tourism board/platform' to develop a volunteer database - Establish training quotas for volunteers - Collaborate with training institution for continued education of employees - Train school educators (and relook aspects of the curriculum)

It was stated that existing industry efforts are not being acknowledged enough and this should be addressed in future to get the industry on board. Furthermore it was stated that industry efforts need to be quantified in terms of how much is

^f There is an apparent gap in textbooks written within the South African context

expected of them and how much it will cost. Another area of challenge was identified as the professional sport federations who do not have time and capacity to train volunteers, and that may not perceive the benefits of such an exercise. It is better to start with one or two specific sporting codes and undertake a comprehensive skills development plan, as opposed to running a superficial 'one-for-all' approach across all the different codes. Developing appropriate industry specific skills would be another challenge, along with industry specific training at companies. The role of tertiary institutions was highlighted as an area of challenge. These institutions have to develop (or be encouraged to develop) industry specific content, while at the same time, it is perceived as 'risky' by many institutions to only focus on industry specific training (remaining relevant in a broader context).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings from the interviews resonate with literature, indicating a broad range of skills requirements for workers in the sports tourism industry as the nexus between sports and tourism. The skills shortages, training needs and related problems such as lack of collaboration between the industry and educational institutions, funding of internship opportunities, management of volunteers and lack of skills at a strategic management level are not unique to the South African scenario. Importantly, the research indicates clear links between the two industries and also highlights areas where similar skills and competencies are required. At the same time, the two industries rely on varied expertise and effectively planned training and education programmes could facilitate a symbiotic relationship. A unique challenge identified by employers in the tourism and sports sectors in South Africa is the definition of volunteers. One view expressed is that due to the socio-economic conditions and the high unemployment problem volunteerism is seen as a means to earn an income creating expectations of job creation. Another view is that volunteers should be skilled, employed people who can add value to the industry without any expectations of remuneration.

A number of skills development recommendations emanate from the research. Firstly, a certification program to recognise volunteers and a system to capture the skills and experience of volunteers should be developed. Secondly, sports tourism qualifications at different levels (Certificate, Diploma, Bachelors, Honours, Masters and Doctoral) needs to be introduced focused on a number of key modules including understanding of the sports and tourism industries; project management; communication skills; financial skills; teamwork; managerial skills; marketing; legal frameworks and contracts; and HR management. The practical component of the training must feature prominently giving the student a good understanding of the conditions and expectations required if pursuing a career in sports tourism. In this regard, the private sector

needs to play a more proactive role in supporting initiatives to improve the skills of current and future employees of the industry.

There needs to be a closer working relationship between sports federations and educational institutions. There is a need to further develop the skills capacity of sports administrators managing federations and since many of the officials serve on a voluntary basis funding should be made available to capacitate these federations. Several stakeholders supported the notion of a professional association representing the interests of the sports tourism industry.

Future research can explore the content of existing training programs and modules with that of international case studies where dedicated sport tourism qualifications exist; testing the relevance thereof in a local context. The skills needs of different regions could also be explored to determine whether training institutions should adapt a more localised approach to curriculum development. Lastly, the need for a national coordinating body became evident and the most appropriate format of such a structure can be explored, especially in light of the planned restructuring of tourism resource development within the country.

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