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# Diversity programs: influencing female students to sport management?

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## Keywords

Sports, Women, Students, Diversity management

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of diversity programs on female student representation within sport management preparation programs. A questionnaire was sent to 172 undergraduate and graduate sport management preparation programs at the North American Society for Sport Management member institutions and 72 completed surveys were returned. These data were used to test a confirmatory path model at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Results show that diversity programs continue to be developed, and that diversity program leads to increase female student representation within undergraduate and graduate sport management preparation programs. Based on the findings of this study, student diversity programs are assisting to eradicate barriers for women in the sport management profession.

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Diversity management programs are popular, but controversial. Some have argued that organizational activities to increase diversity (progressing towards gender or racial equality) can be effective in improving opportunities for women and people of colour (Konrad and Linnehan, 1995). Furthermore, diversity management efforts have been linked to cost reductions and organizational performance measures (Robinson and DeChant, 1997).

Statistics indicate that women are under-represented in the managerial ranks of professional and collegiate sport organizations (Acosta and Carpenter, 1996; Lapchick, 2003). This under-representation can possibly be alleviated by increasing female student participation in sport management professional preparation programs. Recent research has shown that educational background affects managerial performance (*Management Today*, 1998). By educating more women, sport management professional preparation programs can increase the availability of women qualified to assume managerial positions in sport organizations.

Parkhouse (2001) found that the number of sport management professional preparation programs has escalated during the past 15 years. Given its growth, sport management education has enormous opportunity to increase female representation in the managerial hierarchy of sport organizations by providing women quality training and professional development experiences. However, women's participation in sport management education is not equal to men's. Hums (1994) indicated that in 1992, 25 per cent of the undergraduate students in sport management professional preparation programs were women. At the same time, female students comprised of 37 per cent of the masters' program enrolment in sport management. Women are better represented in business administration and parks, recreation, and leisure studies disciplines than sport management education. According to 1994 enrolment statistics for United States' higher educational institutions (National Centre for Educational Statistics, 1997), 43 per cent of the students in bachelors business administration programs were women, and 37 per cent of master of business administration (MBA) students were women. Additionally, female students comprised 48 and 49 per cent of the 1994 aggregate undergraduate and graduate enrolment, respectively, in parks, recreation, leisure and fitness studies.

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DeSensi (1994) suggested that sport management professional preparation programs should place more emphasis on becoming multicultural organizations. The essence of multiculturalism is to appreciate and accept individual differences through broader awareness of others (Morrison, 1992). Before a professional preparation program can become multicultural, however, it must pass through a sequence of developmental stages. According to a theoretical paradigm developed by Richardson and Skinner (1991), education programs must go through the reactive, strategic, and adaptive stages to become multicultural organizations.

During the reactive stage, emphasis is placed on broadening the program's accessibility to female students through the restructuring of recruitment, financial aid, and outreach activities. The strategic stage consists of retention and sensitivity aspects to help a more representative female student population meet educational expectations oriented toward the majority group (i.e. males). Finally, the adaptive stage structures educational programs with the needs of a pluralistic student population in mind by emphasizing learning, assessment and curricular aspects that value women and other under-represented groups (i.e. ethnic minorities and people with disabilities) (Richardson and Skinner, 1991).

Diversity programs designed to increase female student representation are affected by programmatic factors, such as size, institution type, and number of female faculty (Richardson and Skinner, 1991; Rothstein, 1995). Further, programmatic characteristics have been shown to affect the effectiveness of recruiting and retaining female students (Tidball, 1973). Based on the literature, the impact of programmatic characteristics must be examined when investigating the effectiveness of student diversity programs in augmenting female student representation within sport management education.

## Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine:

- (1) the effect of programmatic characteristics on the development of reactive, strategic, and adaptive student diversity support to promote female student equality; and
- (2) the impact of reactive, strategic, and adaptive student diversity support on female student representation in undergraduate and graduate sport management professional preparation programs.

## Theoretical framework

To test Richardson and Skinner's (1991) paradigm in sport management educational settings, several relationships were hypothesized among programmatic characteristics, diversity stages, and female student representation. The specific hypotheses used to perform this assessment are described in the following sections.

## Programmatic pressures

Rothstein (1995) documents that the presence of female faculty members provides a supportive environment for female students. Female faculty can serve as role models who often stimulate female students to identify, diligently pursue and achieve their educational and professional aspirations. Additionally, female faculty members can assist preparation programs in becoming more inclusive by acquainting students to women's issues and encouraging female students to share their life and athletic experiences within their classes (Cushner *et al.*, 2003; Freysinger and Bedini, 1994). Thus, the investigators posit that sport management professional preparation programs having a high percentage of female faculty members will be more proactive than programs with a small percentage of female faculty members in the development of reactive, strategic and adaptive initiatives to promote female student equality.

*H1.* The percentage of female faculty employed in a sport management professional preparation program is positively associated with the development of reactive, strategic and adaptive initiatives to promote female student equality.

Earlier research has shown that organization size is a significant predictor of the development of initiatives to increase access to historically disadvantaged groups (Goodstein, 1994; Konrad and Linnehan, 1995). Size affects the development of diversity programs for at least two reasons. First, larger programs are more visible to various constituencies. Those constituencies interested in increasing women's access to sport management education are likely to focus on the larger programs because larger programs affect more students and are likely to be the role models for smaller programs. As such, the large programs comprise more efficient targets for pressure groups desiring change. Second, large programs are more likely to develop all types of formalized activities due to basic economies of scale. Even if a large program has the same level of slack resources that a small one does in percentage terms, the difference in the actual dollar amount makes large programs more capable of starting new activities such as increased

outreach, scholarships, and diversity training. For both these reasons, the investigators expect that larger programs will have more extensive diversity initiatives in place. In this study, program size is measured by the number of students and number of faculty.

*H2.* Program size is a positive predictor of reactive, strategic and adaptive programs to promote equality for female students.

Institution type has also been shown to be a predictor of diversity initiatives and related programs (Dobbin *et al.*, 1994; Edelman, 1992). Public institutions are more visible to government regulatory bodies, and hence, are more accountable for demonstrating their accessibility to historically disadvantaged groups. Information and statistics showing the responsiveness to mandates for equal opportunity are also more readily available for public than for private institutions. As such, constituencies desiring to increase womens' access to sport management programs is more likely to be able to judge the openness of public institutions. Finally, it is philosophically seen as less legitimate for public than for private institutions to restrict access to any particular group. In the USA, public institutions are expected to be accessible to all citizens, whereas in some sectors, private institutions have been able to make the argument that restricted access is necessary to serve a particular mission. For all of these reasons, it is expected that sport management professional preparation programs in public institutions will develop more extensive diversity initiatives than their counterparts in private institutions.

*H3.* Public sector institutions possess more well-developed reactive, strategic and adaptive programs to promote equality for female students.

Theorists argue that organizational age is a significant predictor of administrative structure (Stinchcombe, 1965). The administrative forms seen as legitimate at the time of an organization's founding are likely to be adopted when the organization is first created. Because diversity initiatives are relatively recent innovations, newer institutions may be more likely to incorporate them into their administrative structures. Older institutions may be slower to adopt diversity initiatives because such initiatives require structural changes, which may be resisted by organizational members.

*H4.* Program age is a negative predictor of well-developed reactive, strategic and adaptive programs to promote equality for female students.

### **Student diversity programs and female student representation**

In the search for gender equality, the culture of a sport management professional preparation program must be transformed from monocultural to multicultural (DeSensi, 1995). DeSensi's perspective is congruent with Richardson and Skinner's (1991) theoretical continuum of student diversity stages. Richardson and Skinner stated that educational programs will initially develop recruiting, financial aid, and other reactive activities to comply with governmental and legal activities. However, once an increasing number of female students enter the program, administrators and faculty learn that additional changes are needed to retain a more diverse student body. As a result, they create and implement directives which move their programs toward the strategic stage. The strategic stage offers inclusiveness by retaining female students through sensitivity training for faculty and staff, student advising, and professional development activities. Such activities stimulate development towards the adaptive stage, which incorporates structuring learning, assessment and curricular activities that value the educational preparation of all students. Consequently, the investigators hypothesize that a well structured reactive stage will result in a comprehensive strategic initiative for promoting gender equality within sport management professional preparation programs.

*H5.* Well-developed reactive measures lead to comprehensive strategic and adaptive initiatives for promoting female sport management student equality at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

In the strategic student diversity stage, students are expected to do all the changes. However, when administrators realize that educational programs will have to change as well, they will begin to adopt adaptive diversity programs. Although strategic diversity programs begin to adopt equality, adaptive programs are able to expand access for women seeking to specialize in sport management.

*H6.* Comprehensive strategic diversity programs lead to the development of adaptive initiatives.

Well-defined organizational practices are essential to the success of diversity efforts in increasing participation among historically excluded groups (Morrison, 1992). This especially has been shown among female students in educational institutions where diversity programs have increased participation through developing a collaborative environment rather than collaborative pressures (Cushner *et al.*, 2003).

As educational programs adopt policies that will effectively recruit, retain and value female students, they will become more inclusive entities. Increased female student participation should be the result.

*H7.* Well-developed diversity programs lead to greater representation of female students in sport management professional preparation programs.

## Method

### Survey instrument

Through reviewing literature and having discussions with professionals, a survey instrument was developed. A nine-member expert panel was convened to assess the content validity of the instrument. The experts approved the use of a three-fold survey instrument to examine:

- (1) student diversity practices that promote equality for female students;
- (2) levels of social desirability bias using Crowne and Marlowe's (1964) measure; and
- (3) demographic factors.

Thirteen sport management professional preparation programs participated in the pilot testing. A Cronbach  $\alpha$  assessment of the pilot testing data indicated  $\alpha$ 's of 0.95 and 0.81, respectively, for the student diversity practices and social desirability bias constructs. These  $\alpha$ 's deemed the survey instrument reliable.

### Data collection procedures

A database of 172 North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) member institutions located in the United States were compiled from the Sport Market Place (1994) and the Sport management program list (1991) of the National Association for Sport and Professional Education. Although these sources may be perceived to be somewhat outdated, given the specialization of the subject, these provided the most current lists when this research was conducted.

Introductory letters were mailed to one administrator (i.e. program coordinators and department chairs) for each of the 172 identified higher educational institutions to request his/her participation in this study. Approximately, one week after the introductory letter, survey materials were sent to the administrators in charge of each identified program followed by a reminder mailing three weeks later. These survey procedures resulted in 72 completed survey questionnaires being returned, a response rate of 42 per cent.

### Operationalization of constructs

The term "percentage of female faculty members" refers to the proportion of women represented on the sport management faculty (coded: 1 = 5 per cent; 2 = 10 per cent; 3 = 25 per cent; 4 = 35 per cent; 5 = 45 per cent; 6 = 50 per cent).

The term "size" reflects the number of faculty members and the number of students in sport management professional preparation programs. This measure was ascertained by asking respondents to provide the number of undergraduate and graduate students, and full-time faculty members in their respective programs through open-ended response types.

"Institutional type" refers whether the respective sport management professional preparation program was housed within a public or private sector institution (coded: 0 = private institution; 1 = public institution).

The term "age" reflects how long the sport management major has been offered. This measure was ascertained by asking respondents the total number of years the sport management major has been in existence.

The term "reactive programs" refers to recruitment, admission and financial aid practice designed to increase gender equality in student populations. A summated five-item index was used to assess the reactive orientation of the respective educational organization. Respondents were asked if their respective program:

- (1) possessed a marketing plan to recruit women;
- (2) conducted student recruitment partnerships with a community advocacy group representing women;
- (3) placed advertisements in publications targeted toward women;
- (4) had faculty members recruit prospective female students; and
- (5) established departmental scholarships for female students (refer Appendix for the exact wording of the survey items). Responses were as follows: 1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = occasionally, 4 = frequently, 5 = always ( $\alpha = 0.71$ ).

The term "strategic programs" refers to initiatives designed to help a more representative female student population adapt to expectations oriented toward male students which the sport management preparation program has traditionally served. A seven-item index was constructed to evaluate the extent to which the preparation program developed strategic initiatives to enhance gender equality. The questions assessed:



- (1) whether a department liaison had been appointed to facilitate equality for female students;
- (2) whether priority was given to encouraging professional conference participation by female students;
- (3) the development of internships for women;
- (4) the encouragement of faculty members to initiate research collaborations with female students;
- (5) the development of programs linking prospective employers to female students;
- (6) the establishment of workshops to heighten sensitivity of sport management professionals toward women; and
- (7) the formulation of formal mentor agreements that link sport management professionals to female students (Appendix).

Respondents assessed each of the seven questions on a Likert scale (coded: 1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = occasionally, 4 = frequently, 5 = always) ( $\alpha = 0.79$ ).

The term “adaptive programs” refers to educational activities that are structured to assure equality for female and male students. Adaptive initiatives focus on assessment, learning and curricular activities which are measured on a summated five-item index. A Likert scale (coded: 1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = occasionally, 4 = frequently, 5 = always) ( $\alpha = 0.61$ ) was used to evaluate the four questions pertaining to:

- (1) the degree to which diversity training was provided to sport management faculty and staff;
- (2) the extent to which the program actively sought to hire female faculty members;
- (3) the extent to which coursework incorporated issues of employment discrimination against women; and
- (4) the assessment of the effectiveness of recruitment, retention and placement systems for female students.

Finally, the term “representation of female students” refers to the percentage of women comprising the student populations of the respective undergraduate and graduate programs. Subjects were asked to indicate these data by selecting one of the six responses. Responses were coded as follows: 1 = 5 per cent; 2 = 10 per cent; 3 = 25 per cent; 4 = 35 per cent; 5 = 45 per cent; 6 = 50 per cent.

#### **Data reliability and validity controls**

Earlier research has shown that anonymity increases the rate of response and reduces the potential of having the results contaminated by

the desire to portray a socially acceptable image (Innes and Ahrens, 1990; Makki and McAllister, 1992). Responses to the current survey appeared to provide an accurate reflection of NASSM institutions’ efforts to obtain gender equality within their undergraduate and graduate populations. For instance, respondents’ reports of the representation of women among their student populations were consistent with the earlier published data. Nearly one-half of the respondents indicated that less than 40 per cent of their undergraduate and graduate students were women. Hums (1994) found that female students comprised 25 and 37 per cent of the undergraduate and graduate sport management students, respectively.

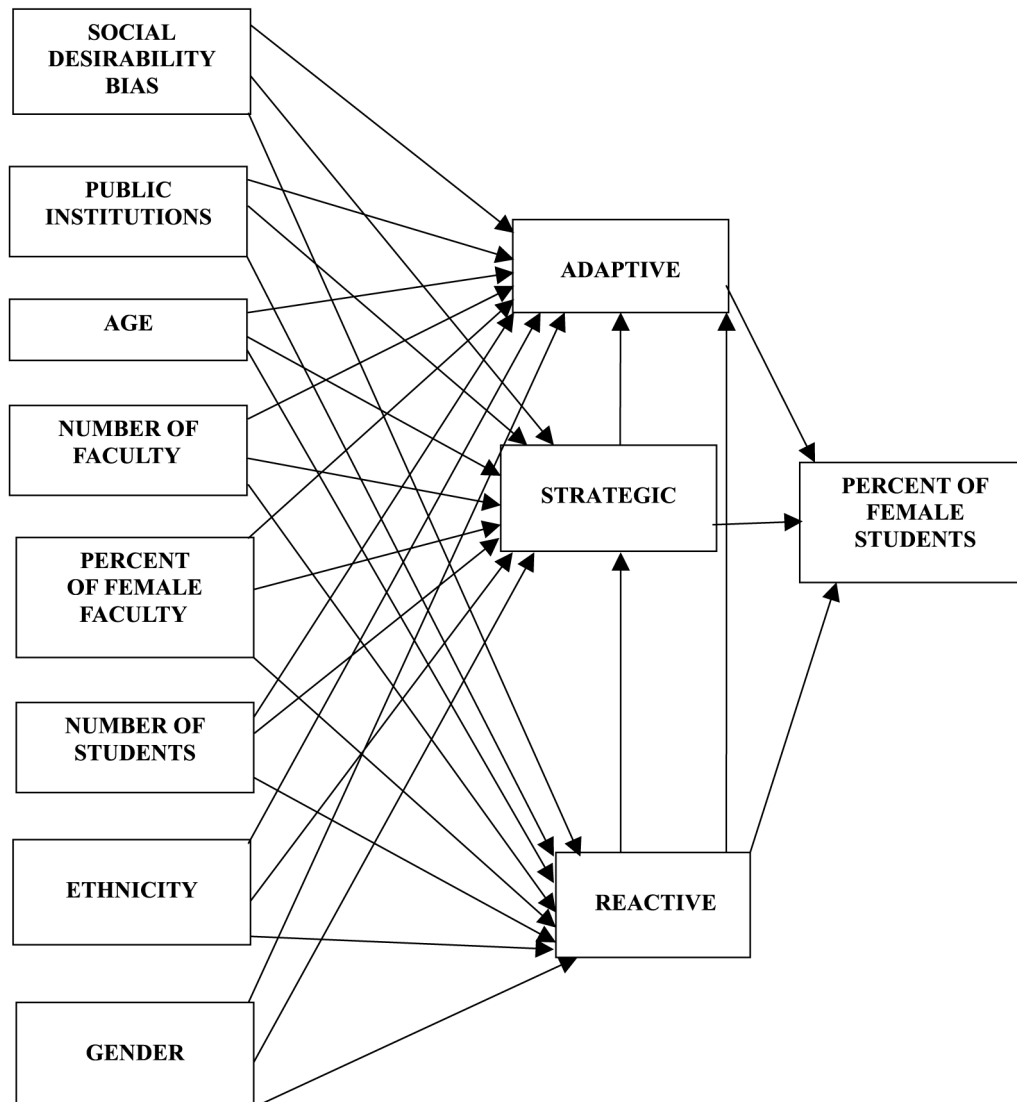
Additionally, the validity of the measure of sport management diversity programs was supported in confirmatory factor analyses showing that student diversity initiatives were successfully classified into reactive, strategic and adaptive programs.

Finally, controlling for social desirability bias in the hypothesis testing analysis enhanced the validity of the results. A summated 12-item index developed by Crowne and Marlowe (1964) was utilized to assess the propensity of respondents to provide social desirable responses to questions concerning gender equality in sport management education. Respondents assessed each of the 12 questions on a Likert scale (coded: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = moderately disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = slightly agree, 5 = moderately agree, and 6 = strongly agree). The hypothesis testing analysis further controlled the influence of personal variables. Specifically, gender (Kern, 1994; Tougas and Beaton, 1993) and race (Bobo and Kluegel, 1993; Smith and Witt, 1990) can affect perceptions of the degree of gender equality in organizations.

#### **Data analysis**

Structural equation modelling was used to test the hypotheses formulated in this study. Data were analysed separately for undergraduate and graduate programs. The model shown in Figure 1 posits that reactive, strategic and adaptive student diversity programs are influenced by percentage of female faculty members, institutional type (private and public affiliation), years of existence, number of students and number of full-time faculty members. The model allows reactive, strategic and adaptive student diversity programs to be influenced by the control variables of respondent’s gender, race and social desirability bias. In addition, the model posits that adaptive student diversity programs are influenced by reactive and strategic programs, and strategic programs are influenced

**Figure 1** Schematically describes the percentage of female students in undergraduate and graduate sport management sport professional preparation programs is the function of reactive, strategic and adaptive student diversity initiatives, programmatic characteristics and personal variables



by reactive initiatives. Finally, the model implies that the representation of female students is affected by reactive, strategic and adaptive student diversity programs.

## Results

In Tables I and II, descriptive statistics for the undergraduate and graduate samples are shown, respectively. Tables III and IV show the coefficients for each causal path in Figure 1 for the respective samples. The model fit the data well for both undergraduate and graduate programs. For undergraduate programs, the chi-square fit statistic was non-significant (chi-square = 14.12,

$df = 8$ , ns), indicating that the data did not depart significantly from the model. The goodness-of-fit index of 0.958, the Bentler-Bonnet normal-fit index of 0.962 and Bolten index of 0.962 were all in the acceptable range. For graduate programs, the chi-square fit statistic was also non-significant (chi-square = 10.32,  $df = 8$ , ns) and the goodness-of-fit index (GFI = 0.943) was acceptable. Further, the Bentler-Bonnet normal-fit index of 0.937 and Bolten index of 0.985 were acceptable (Hair *et al.*, 1995).

The control variables had some significant effects. Graduate programs under the leadership of people of colour were more oriented towards adaptive programs to increase gender equality than those headed by Caucasians. This finding implies

Table I Correlations, standard deviations, and means (undergraduate level)

	(Sample moments)											
	Male	Caucasian	Under-Grad students	Percentage of female faculty	Full-time faculty	Age of program	Institutional type	Social desirability bias	Reactive	Strategic	Adaptive	Percentage of female students
Male	1.00											
Caucasian	-0.19	1.00										
Students	0.08	0.04	1.00									
Percentage of female faculty	-0.38	0.43**	0.16	1.00								
Full-time faculty	-0.29	0.02	-0.04	0.29	1.00							
Age of program	0.10	0.08	0.14	0.30	0.32	1.00						
Institutional type	0.04	-0.22	-0.08	-0.20	0.17	0.07	1.00					
Social desirability bias	0.16	-0.14	0.13	-0.06	-0.03	0.06	-0.24	1.00				
Reactive stage	0.17	-0.05	0.11	0.03	-0.17	0.09	0.28	0.31	1.00			
Strategic stage	0.05	0.09	0.09	0.20	0.10	0.38	0.08	0.38*	0.54**	1.00		
Adaptive stage	0.01	0.07	0.28	0.23	-0.04	0.50**	0.24	0.03	0.50**	0.50**	1.00	
Percentage of female students	-0.15	0.14	-0.26	0.29	-0.26	0.14	0.13	-0.03	0.14	0.44**	0.23	1.00
Standard deviations	0.48	0.36	325.48	19.89	3.36	5.19	0.49	8.67	4.73	6.62	3.94	14.54
Means	0.65	0.85	127.15	27.33	3.96	9.39	0.62	55.12	11.77	17.60	12.38	31.14

Notes: \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Table II Correlations, standard deviations, and means (graduate level)

	(Sample moments)											
	Male	Caucasian	Students	Percentage of female faculty	Full-time faculty	Age of program	Institutional type	Social desirability bias	Reactive	Strategic	Adaptive	Percentage of female students
Male	1.00											
Caucasian	-0.16	1.00										
Students	0.21	0.18	1.00									
Percentage of female faculty	-0.31	0.34	0.01	1.00								
Full-time faculty	-0.22	0.05	0.08	0.51*	1.00							
Age of program	0.22	0.28	0.28	0.60**	0.64**	1.00						
Institutional type	0.09	0.09	-0.05	-0.02	-0.01	-0.03	1.00					
Social desirability bias	0.24	0.14	-0.00	-0.19	-0.17	0.00	-0.42	1.00				
Reactive stage	0.16	0.06	-0.05	0.05	-0.04	0.02	0.07	0.44*	1.00			
Strategic stage	0.26	0.06	0.22	-0.02	0.02	0.21	0.14	0.39	0.79**	1.00		
Adaptive stage	-0.18	0.22	0.26	0.46*	0.31	0.38	0.14	-0.01	0.42*	0.39	1.00	
Percentage of female students	0.06	-0.08	0.19	0.14	0.06	0.15	0.43	0.13	0.62**	0.63**	0.23	1.00
Standard deviations	0.50	0.39	23.46	20.33	2.47	5.80	0.38	8.99	4.22	6.64	3.50	11.88
Means	0.59	0.83	39.48	25.43	4.21	11.64	0.83	54.68	12.92	18.48	13.83	35.24

Notes: \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$



Table III Path coefficients (undergraduate level)

Path	Unstandardized coefficient (SE)	Standardized coefficient	t-value
Percentage of female faculty members > reactive	0.06 (0.04)	0.25	1.56
Caucasian > reactive	0.21 (1.80)	0.02	0.11
Males > reactive	0.85 (1.40)	0.09	0.61
Number of students > reactive	0.00 (0.00)	0.03	0.25
Institutional type > reactive	4.62 (1.29)	0.48	3.59*
Age > reactive	0.03 (0.12)	0.03	0.28
Number of faculty members > reactive	−0.42 (0.20)	−0.30	2.12*
Social desirability bias > reactive	0.23 (0.07)	0.41	3.21*
Age > strategic	0.36 (0.16)	0.28	2.28*
Number of faculty members > strategic	0.15 (0.26)	0.08	0.58
Caucasian > strategic	2.12 (2.24)	0.12	0.95
Males > strategic	−0.43 (1.74)	−0.03	0.25
Percentage of female faculty members > strategic	0.02 (0.05)	0.05	0.36
Institutional type > strategic	0.21 (1.81)	0.02	0.11
Number of students > strategic	−0.00 (1.00)	−0.02	−0.25
Reactive > strategic	0.64 (0.18)	0.46	3.49*
Social desirability bias > strategic	0.20 (0.10)	0.26	2.01*
Strategic > adaptive	0.14 (0.08)	0.23	1.79
Institutional type > adaptive	0.81 (0.93)	0.10	0.87
Age > adaptive	0.33 (0.09)	0.44	3.94*
Number of faculty members > adaptive	−0.26 (0.13)	−0.22	−1.99
Percentage of female faculty members > adaptive	0.00 (0.02)	0.03	0.22
Caucasian > adaptive	−0.07 (−1.16)	−0.00	−0.07
Females > adaptive	−1.20 (0.90)	−0.15	−1.35
Number of students > adaptive	0.00 (0.02)	0.19	0.02*
Reactive > adaptive	0.30 (0.11)	0.35	2.78*
Social desirability bias > adaptive	−0.10 (0.05)	−0.23	−1.98
Reactive > percentage of female students	0.44 (0.51)	0.14	−0.87
Strategic > percentage of female students	10.07 (0.36)	0.49	2.97*
Adaptive > percentage of female students	0.22 (0.59)	0.06	0.37

Notes:  $N = 72$  and  $*p < 0.05$

that sport management faculty and administrators who were people of colour were more likely to implement student diversity and gender equality programs than their Caucasian counterparts. Social desirability bias was positively associated with reports of reactive and strategic student diversity programs in undergraduate education, and the degree to which strategic student diversity initiatives were reported in graduate education. Hence, controlling for social desirability bias was important for protecting the internal validity of the study's findings.

*H1* stated that the percentage of female faculty members is positively associated with the development of reactive, strategic and adaptive programs to promote equality for female students. The paths linking percentage of female faculty members to the development of reactive, strategic and adaptive programs were not significant, indicating no support for the hypothesis.

*H2* stated that program size is positively associated with the development of reactive,

strategic and adaptive programs to promote equality for female students. Results showed some support for this hypothesis. Number of students had a significant positive impact on adaptive initiatives across undergraduate and graduate programs. Number of faculty negatively affected the development of reactive initiatives at the undergraduate level, however, refuting the hypothesis.

*H3*'s prediction that public sector institutions possess more well-developed reactive, strategic and adaptive initiatives to promote equality for female students was partially supported. There was a significant positive path between institutional type and the development of reactive initiatives at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

*H4* predicted that program age is negatively associated with well-developed reactive strategic and adaptive programs to promote equality. Results did not support the hypothesis. A significant path was found between age and strategic student diversity programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels, but

Table IV Path coefficient (graduate level)

Path	Unstandardized coefficient (SE)	Standardized coefficient	t-value
Percentage of female faculty members > reactive	0.08 (0.06)	0.37	1.30
Caucasian > reactive	0.57 (2.12)	0.05	0.27
Males > reactive	1.60 (2.10)	0.19	0.77
Number of students > reactive	0.00 (0.00)	–0.00	–0.00
Institutional type > reactive	3.47 (2.14)	0.31	1.63
Age > reactive	–0.25 (0.25)	–0.35	–1.03
Number of faculty members > reactive	0.26 (0.44)	0.15	0.58
Social desirability bias > reactive	0.30 (0.10)	0.63	3.12*
Age > strategic	0.50 (0.23)	0.44	2.17*
Number of faculty members > strategic	–0.31 (0.41)	–0.12	–0.76
Caucasian > strategic	–0.30 (–1.92)	–0.02	–0.16
Males > strategic	–1.90 (1.93)	–0.14	–0.99
Percentage of female faculty members > strategic	–0.10 (0.06)	–0.31	1.80
Institutional type > strategic	2.21 (2.05)	0.13	1.08
Number of students > strategic	0.05 (0.03)	0.19	1.79
Reactive > strategic	1.28 (0.19)	0.82	6.77*
Social desirability bias > strategic	0.03 (0.10)	0.04	0.24
Strategic > adaptive	–0.10 (0.11)	–0.19	–0.89
Institutional type > adaptive	1.63 (1.12)	0.18	–1.45
Age > adaptive	0.26 (0.14)	0.44	1.94
Number of faculty members > adaptive	–0.28 (0.22)	–0.20	–1.27
Percentage of female faculty members > adaptive	–0.06 (0.03)	0.35	–1.90
Caucasian > adaptive	–5.03 (–1.03)	–0.56	–4.89*
Females > adaptive	–1.70 (1.05)	–0.24	–1.61
Number of students > adaptive	0.06 (0.02)	0.39	3.36*
Reactive > adaptive	0.56 (0.18)	0.68	3.30*
Social desirability bias > adaptive	–0.06 (0.06)	–0.15	–1.04
Reactive > percentage of female students	0.70 (0.68)	0.25	1.03
Strategic > percentage of female students	0.54 (0.43)	0.30	1.26
Adaptive > percentage of female students	1.15 (0.54)	0.34	2.15*

Notes:  $N = 72$  and  $*p < 0.05$

the direction of the effect was positive rather than negative. There was also a significant positive path between age and adaptive initiatives at the undergraduate level.

At both undergraduate and graduate levels, there were significant paths between the reactive and strategic initiatives and between the reactive and adaptive initiatives. Thus, *H5*'s prediction that the development of reactive diversity programs lead to the development of strategic and adaptive programs was supported. However, results indicated no support for *H6*, which stated that strategic student diversity programs lead to the development of adaptive initiatives. The paths linking strategic and adaptive initiatives at the undergraduate and graduate levels were not significant.

Finally, *H7* stated that well-developed diversity programs lead to greater representation of female students in undergraduate and graduate sport management professional preparation programs. This hypothesis received some support. At the undergraduate level, the presence of strategic

diversity programs positively predicted the percentage of female students. At the graduate level, adaptive programs were a positive predictor of the percentage of female students.

## Discussion

According to Richardson and Skinner (1991), an educational organization can change from an exclusive to an inclusive entity by progressing from a reactive to an adaptive student diversity orientation. At the undergraduate and graduate levels, findings show that well-formulated reactive initiatives leads to the development of comprehensive strategic and adaptive programs for promoting gender equality. Accordingly, these findings provide validity for Richardson and Skinner's idea that an educational program must progress from a reactive to an adaptive state in order to become an inclusive entity. Also, results indicated that well-developed strategic initiatives

lead to a greater percentage of female students at the undergraduate level, and adaptive programs significantly influenced female student representation at the graduate level. These findings offered support for the claim made by Morrison (1992) that well-developed organizational policies are essential to the success of diversity efforts.

Although this study's findings linking student diversity programs and percentage of female students provide important information to educators, further research is needed to ascertain the programs that are most effective in augmenting the percentage of women and other under-represented groups in sport management professional preparation programs. By educating the professionals and administrators on the effectiveness of various methods for increasing student diversity, sport management educational programs may be able to create a multicultural climate that can benefit the educational need of all their students.

In addition to results linking student diversity programs to the percentage of female students, this study shows that programmatic factors affected the composition of student diversity programs at the undergraduate and graduate tiers. One factor that influenced the development of student diversity programs was organizational size. Outcomes of this study suggested that when the number of students is large, sport management preparation programs have more propensity to develop multicultural initiatives to benefit all students (adaptive). However, when the number of students is small, student diversity programs are formulated to react to governmental pressures rather than to achieve full multiculturalism. These patterns are shown by significantly positive paths between the number of students and adaptive student diversity initiatives at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Thus, these results supported the findings of Goodstein (1994) and Konrad and Linnehan (1995) which indicated that organization size is a significant predictor of the development of initiatives to increase access to historically disadvantaged groups.

In this study, another variable of influence was program age. Significant positive paths were shown between program age and strategic diversity programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. These findings suggested that sport management professional preparation programs that have been in existence for a longer period of time were more effective in creating diversity programs to augment female student representation than newer programs. Therefore, these data offered support for Richardson and Skinner's (1991) idea that it takes a significant

period of time for academic organizations to develop and implement the values that encourage the accomplishments of all students. Based on the period of time it takes to create multicultural approaches to educating students, further research must be conducted to ascertain ways student diversity initiatives can be effectively and efficiently formulated and implemented while preparation programs are in their embryonic stage.

In addition, we attempted to be prudent in controlling respondents' personal characteristics for hypothesis testing since these factors can influence perceptions of student diversity programs. This was performed by including demographic variables (i.e. gender and race) in the structural model as independent variables. Particularly, the respondents' race affected the perceptions of adaptive initiatives at the graduate level. Such results indicated that respondents of colour were more inclined to classify their program's diversity initiatives as having an adaptive orientation with respect to female students.

Finally, results showed that social desirability bias as measured by Crowne and Marlowe (1964) influenced the reporting of the reactive and strategic programs at the undergraduate level and reactive programs at the graduate level. Given that personal characteristics influenced student diversity programs, we believe that this study implies that data are needed to convince educators on the importance of developing programs to increase female student representation in undergraduate and graduate sport management preparation programs. By educating faculty and administrators on the importance of student diversity initiatives, higher educational institutions may be able to garner support for achieving gender equality in their respective sport management professional preparation programs. However, to inculcate educators properly on student diversity programs, studies on attitudes of the sport management professorate are needed with respect to diversity and gender equality issues.

### **Limitations and future research**

Although this study presents valuable evidence about the factors supporting gender equality in sport management education, it is not without limitations. One such limitation is the inability to determine causal relations from cross-sectional data. Questions of causality are often most effectively addressed by research using longitudinal designs. Unfortunately, it is difficult to collect sensitive data longitudinally because matching responses over time precludes the use of an anonymous data collection technique. Hence,

researchers must make choices among maximizing response rate, minimizing social desirability bias, and determining causality. Future research using a longitudinal design would complement the strengths and weaknesses of this study.

A second limitation is that questionnaire responses were provided by a single respondent per replying organization, raising the possibility of response bias. One possibility is that respondents with strong feelings about gender equality were more likely to respond. While this concern is legitimate, the investigators believe that a number of factors guard against the occurrence of response bias. No significant relationship between social desirability bias and reported percentage of female students was observed. Further, the reported data were consistent with the data from the earlier findings of Hums (1994), which were used to show low female student representation in undergraduate and graduate sport management preparation programs.

A third limitation is the response rate to the survey. Although the study's 42 per cent response rate may be perceived as being somewhat low, it is comparable to other studies examining similar phenomena (Konrad and Linnehan, 1995). By soliciting responses from more than one educator in an organization, future investigations could increase the percentage of sampled organizations responding to the study. Also, where multiple responses are obtained from the same organization, researchers could examine the level of agreement. This information would provide an indication of response validity. Alternatively, a face-to-face interview format could be used, and respondents could be asked to document their answers to objective questions regarding student diversity practices and enrolment statistics.

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## Appendix. Survey Items

### Reactive programs

(Response code: 1 = never; 2 = seldom; 3 = occasionally; 4 = frequently; 5 = always).

- A marketing plan has been formulated to recruit women.
- Student recruitment partnerships have been formulated with community/advocacy organizations representing women.
- Advertising has been placed in publications targeting women.
- Faculty members are involved in a recruiting prospective for women.
- Departmental scholarships have been established for female students.

### Strategic programs

(Response code: 1 = never; 2 = seldom; 3 = occasionally; 4 = frequently; 5 = always).

- A departmental liaison has been appointed to facilitate equality for female students.
- Priority is given to encouraging professional conference participation by female students.
- Faculty members are encouraged to initiate research collaborations with female students.
- Internships/cooperative employment opportunities have been organized for female students.
- Workshops have been established to heighten awareness and sensitivity of sport management professionals toward women.
- Formal mentor agreements have been formulated that link sport management professionals to female students.

### Adaptive programs

(Response code: 1 = never; 2 = seldom; 3 = occasionally; 4 = frequently; 5 = always).

- Diversity training is provided to heighten the awareness of the sport management faculty and staff toward women.
- Our programs has been actively seeking to fill faculty positions with qualified women.
- Issues have been incorporated in sport management courses that relates to employment discrimination toward women.
- The relationship between the recruitment, retention and job placement components is being periodically assessed for female students.

### Demographics

- What is your gender? (Response code: 0 = female; 1 = male)
- What is your ethnic background? (Response code: 0 = people of colour; 1 = white).
- What is the total number of students comprising your: undergraduate program \_\_\_\_\_ graduate program \_\_\_\_\_ ?
- What is the percentage of the full-time sport management faculty is represented by women? (Response code: 1 = 5 per cent; 2 = 10 per cent; 3 = 25 per cent; 4 = 35 per cent; 5 = 45 per cent; 6 = 50 per cent).
- What is the total number of full-time sport management faculty members?
- How many years has the sport management major been in existence at your institution?
- Is your institution a private or public entity? (Response code: 0 = private; 1 = public).
- What percentage of the total undergraduate sport management population is comprised of women? (Response code: 1 = 5 per cent; 2 = 10 per cent; 3 = 25 per cent; 4 = 35 per cent; 5 = 45 per cent; 6 = 50 per cent).
- What percentage of the total graduate sport management population is comprised of women? (Response code: 1 = 5 per cent; 2 = 10 per cent; 3 = 25 per cent; 4 = 35 per cent; 5 = 45 per cent; 6 = 50 per cent).