

**Transition to Working Life and Benefits of Education as
Experienced by the Graduates of an International Master's
Programme in Sport Management**

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PITKÄNEN, AULI: Transition to Working Life and Benefits of Education as Experienced by the Graduates of an International Master's Programme in Sport Management

ABSTRACT

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University graduates in today's working life need various skills in addition to the subject specific knowledge of the academic discipline. There is need, for instance, for the ability to use, create and produce knowledge, integration of theory into practice and oral and written presentation skills. All of this challenges the contemporary higher education institutions to integrate these elements into the curriculum to meet the above-mentioned demands.

The purpose of this study was to find out, how the graduates an international Master's Programme in Sport Management have moved to working life and how the education meets its needs, as experienced by the graduates. The data was collected with an electronic questionnaire during July-October 2015. Altogether 38 responses were received and the response rate was 49.3 per cent. The respondents were asked about their current working situation and longer career and the skills and competencies they need in their jobs. Furthermore, it was inquired how well the respondents felt they had received the required skills through the educational programme and if they had any suggestions to develop the programme further to better meet the demands of the current working life.

The results showed that the employment situation was very good among the respondents as almost 80 per cent informed of working full-time. The most important tasks in the jobs of the graduates were planning and development tasks, communication and expertise in a special area. All in all, the respondents were rather satisfied with their current working situation. The most satisfied they were with the possibilities to influence the job, challenges the job provided and the flexibility of the working conditions. The least satisfied they were with their salaries.

The respondents evaluated the educational programme as rather important and beneficial for their current jobs. As the most important skills received from the programme they listed communication skills, organisational skills and leadership skills. According to the respondents the international and multicultural group of students together with the multidisciplinary approach are also assets of the programme. On the other hand, in several occasions the respondents requested for more business management content to be added into the curriculum, as they felt that the field of sport management is getting more business-oriented and professional, and thus, skills in this area are needed. Additionally, there were several requests to increase the cooperation between the programme and employers to help the students in creating networks and receiving information on the important skills needed in the working life.

The results of the study can be used to develop the programme further for it to better meet the needs of the working life and to give the current and future students tools to utilise the programme contents to the fullest in relation to finding a suitable job after graduation.

Keywords: sport management, higher education, expertise, working life

1 INTRODUCTION

Many times, students studying in an educational programme not leading to a specific profession, might be very uncertain about their future career and the contents they should include in their studies regarding the needs of the working life. This can be especially relevant when studying in the field of social sciences of sport as the field is so multi-fold and constantly changing. Furthermore, when adding the fact that the educational programme is taught in English, which is not the mother tongue for the majority of the students, and that the student body is very heterogenous in terms of cultural and educational background, the situation becomes even more complex.

According to Reich (1991, 177-179) university graduates many times end up in symbolic-analytic professions where problems are identified and solved by manipulating symbols and transforming information with analytic tools. Thus, many researchers (e.g. Alla, 1996; Atkins, 1995; Eraut, 2002; Young, 2002 as cited in Tynjälä et al. 2006, 76) argue that, in addition, to subject specific knowledge, academic graduates are expected to have also many other skills such as critical and scientific thinking, ability to use, produce and create knowledge, innovativeness, ability to creative and life-long learning, integration of theoretical and practical knowledge, oral and written presentation skills, foreign languages and so on.

It is also of course expected that university graduates should be experts of their own field. According to Tynjälä (2010, 82-83) expertise can be seen as comprising of various elements; theoretical knowledge, practical knowledge, regulative knowledge and sociocultural knowledge. Mäkinen (2005, 59) states that during the studies the goal is to build a ground for such expertise which will take shape in the real working life setting during the career. This creates immense demands for the higher education and the question arises whether the university education of today gives a good premise for learning of appropriate skills for the needs of the working life.

The purpose of this Master's thesis is to find out how the graduates of the Master's Degree Programme in Sport Science and Management, who have graduated between 2007 and 2015, have moved to working life, what kind of skills and knowledge they need in their current jobs and how do they see benefit of the education in the Master's programme for their working career. Gaining this information will help to develop the Master's programme further to better meet the needs of the working life. Thus, this information can also be crucial for the current

students in planning their study path in the programme and their future careers. The career paths of the graduates of the Social Sciences of Sport education taught in Finnish language have been studied earlier, but no previous studies on the student body or graduates of the international programme have been conducted. Furthermore, I had some personal interest and knowledge in the topic through studying in the programme myself and working as the programme coordinator for the programme for several years, so I was able to utilise this know-how when conducting the research.

This study was completed as a survey sent to all graduates and some of the current students of the programme in July-October 2015. The results were analysed with both quantitative (SPSS) and qualitative methods (content analysis). The research is divided into three sections; literature review based on previous research and theories (chapters 2-5), results (chapter 7) and conclusions (chapter 8). The literature review elaborates on the expertise and skills needed in today's working life, the role of higher education in providing these skills and the special characteristics of the field of sport as a profession. Also, the contents of the Master's programme in question are explained and some previous research on the topic presented.

In the results section the research questions and the implementation of the research are presented. This is followed by a detailed presentation of the results of the survey. The results illustrate, for example, in what kind of jobs the graduates are currently working, which skills and knowledge they need in their jobs, how has the professional field changed during the past few years and how do the graduates evaluate the importance of the education in the Master's programme for their working career. At the end, I will give some personal interpretations of the results in the conclusions section, discuss the reliability of the study and make some suggestions for further studies on the topic.

2 EXPERTISE AND SKILLS NEEDED IN TODAY'S WORKING LIFE

In today's complex and rapidly changing working life various kinds of skills and expertise are needed. This is especially the case for the ones graduating from universities with an education not leading to any specific profession. The issues of expertise and skills needed in today's working life and the role of higher education institutions in providing students with these skills are discussed in this chapter.

2.1 Symbolic analytic professions

Students who graduate from various levels of the educational system find their work in different kinds of professions. In the 1990s, Reich (1991, 177-179) stated that university graduates many times end up in symbolic-analytic professions. Reich describes these jobs as such in which problems are identified and solved by manipulating symbols. This is done by transforming information with analytic tools, such as mathematical algorithms, scientific principles, psychological insights, legal arguments and financial tricks. This kind of professions are, for example, engineers, public relations executives, investment bankers, lawyers, system analyst, marketing strategists, writers and editors, designers, publishers, teachers and so on. Essential in this symbolic-analytic work is teamwork, i.e. interaction and discussion with colleagues and clients, as the problems that are encountered are solved in cooperation.

On the other hand, Castells (2000) has more recently characterised four types of workers representing symbolic analytic professionals: commanders being in charge of strategic decision making and planning, researchers whose task is to make innovations in products and process, designers who adapt, package and target innovations and integrators who manage the relationships between the decision, innovation, design and execution.

According to Reich (1991, 229-233), symbolic analysts need to learn how to conceptualize problems and solutions. Thus, the formal education should provide them with the following four skills: abstraction (i.e. discovering patterns and meanings), system thinking (understanding causes, consequences and relationships), experimentation (systematically exploring a range of possibilities and outcomes and noting relevant similarities and differences) and collaboration (working in teams, sharing problems and solutions). Consequently, in working life, all of this

is needed in addition to the domain specific knowledge. Furthermore, students should learn skills in self-reflection, self-regulation, lifelong learning and adaptive expertise, that is, ability to work in changing situations (e.g. Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993; Schön, 1987).

When describing today's society and its current development, we could call it the information society, the knowledge society or the network society as it is by large characterized by the fast development of the information and communication technology and the rapidly increasing amount of knowledge. Typical characters of this development are also the growing production of knowledge, increasing networking between organisations and individuals and changes in occupational structures and contents of work. (Webster, 1994; Castells, 2000; Castells & Himanen, 2002; Tynjälä et al. 2006, 74) Many work organisations have become knowledge intensive innovation centres, which not only use and apply knowledge produced, for instance, in universities, but they also produce, transform and manage knowledge by themselves. (Tynjälä et al. 2006, 74-75)

Consequently, more is expected from the experts nowadays than before. They need to be able to work in varying surroundings and have good social and communicative skills. In addition, they need to be able to critically evaluate information from various perspectives. (Tynjälä et al. 1997; Tynjälä 2003). According to various researchers (e.g. Alla, 1996; Atkins, 1995, Eraut, 2002; Young, 2002 as cited in Tynjälä et al. 2006, 76), in addition to subject specific knowledge, academic graduates are expected to have also many other academic skills. These are, for example, critical and scientific thinking, ability to use, produce and create knowledge, innovativeness, ability for creative and life-long learning, integration of theoretical and practical knowledge, oral and written presentation skills and foreign language skills. As a great deal of the work today is done in teams, it also demands skills for collaborative work and networking. All of this, of course, demands also quite much from higher education. (Tynjälä et al. 2006, 76, Tynjälä 2010, 74-75; 79)

Already in the 1990s Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) stated that innovative knowledge communities require progressive problem solving, that is, trying to go beyond earlier achievements. In this process, the expertise is not owned by only the individual, but the community members need to share their knowledge and experiences while trying to develop new ideas. All this sharing of knowledge, working in networks and communicating with professionals of various fields, requires especially social interaction and interpersonal skills. This is also why professional knowledge encompasses of much more than solely strong domain-specific knowledge (Tynjälä et al. 2006, 75).

According to Taajamo (2005, 102) in the working life of today both professional competence and intercultural knowledge is needed. Stier (2003, 83-86) divides the intercultural competence into substance related skills and processing skills. Substance related skills are connected to cultural awareness concerning, for example, the history, language, values, norms, taboos, habits and traditions of the country. These skills do not secure unproblematic living in a new culture, but the individual needs to take into account also the communicative contexts. In this kind of contexts cognitive (flexibility to change one's perspective, taking a different role, self-reflection, cultural perception and problem solving) and emotional skills (being aware of one's emotions, avoiding judgment and automatic emotionally based reactions) enable the individual to perceive and interpret cultural differences and direct the person towards context related communication. (see also Alfred & Byram 2002.) In addition to the above-mentioned skills, Stier (2003, 84-86) highlights the importance of interpersonal communication skills, which include the sensitivity of communication, communicative competences and situational sensitivity. Hinkelman (2001) emphasizes cultural and intercultural competence and skills especially in the business sector of the globalised world.

2.2 Elements of expertise

According to Tynjälä (2010, 82-83) expertise encompasses various elements. Firstly, it comprises of theoretical or conceptual knowledge, which is general, universal and formal and it can be presented in books and lectures. Secondly, practical or experiential knowledge is needed, and it cannot be learned from books but it is generated by practical experiences and doing things. It is often called know how or tacit knowledge. The third element is regulative or self-regulative knowledge. Regulative knowledge can be seen, for instance, in situations where a person examines something outside of his/her operations reflectively, such as the working community or the entire professional field. Finally, also sociocultural knowledge is needed and it can be related to social and cultural practices and various instruments and equipment. This means, for example, unwritten rules in workplaces that can be learnt only by participating in the activities of the social communities or using their equipment. All of the elements of expertise are tightly interconnected with each other and when an expert tackles a problem, he/she does not need to think which of them to use, but can act flexibly with the help of intuition which has developed through experience. It is important that when developing expertise this merging of the various types of expertise is taken into account and enhanced. (Tynjälä 2010,

82-84) However, this has not been the case in traditional education as there have been separate courses for theory and practice without any connection. Modern pedagogical thinking, on the other hand, empathises combining of theory and practice (see e.g. Guile & Griffiths 2001; Griffiths & Guile 2003; Tynjälä, Välimaa, & Sarja 2003).

When theory and practice are integrated, mediating tools are needed. Here is where the third constituent of expertise, self-regulative knowledge, comes into play. The mediating tools, such as discussions with a tutor, mentor or a small group, learning journals or portfolios and self-assessment tasks, enable students to make tacit knowledge explicit or analyse theoretical knowledge and practical experience. In addition, these activities help students in developing their self-regulatory knowledge, especially if they are in the context of their future profession. (Tynjälä et al. 2006, 85) This model is explained in Figure 1.

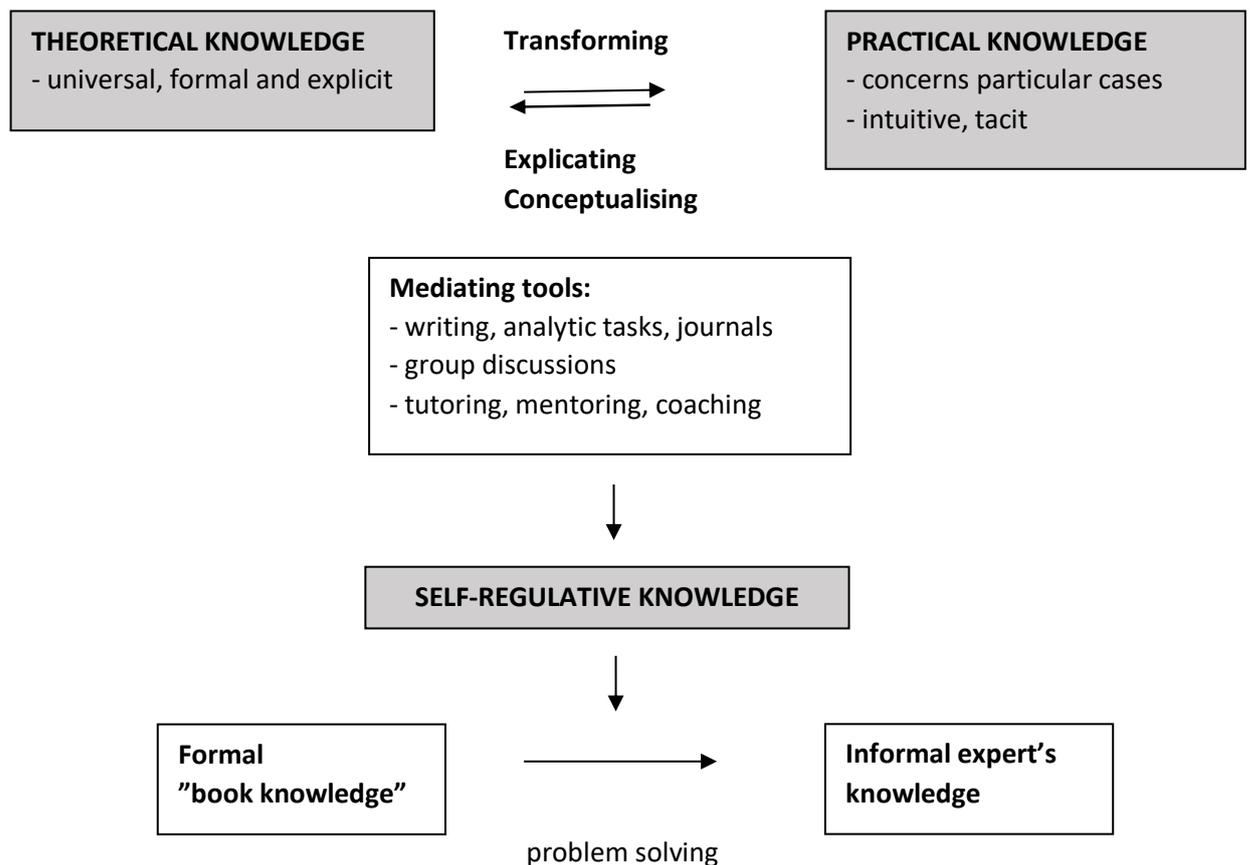


FIGURE 1. Integrative components of the development of expertise in university education (Tynjälä et al. 2006, 85)

As the world is changing, also the view of expertise is changing. Expertise nowadays is not just a terminal state gained through education and work experience, but modern working environments require lifelong learning, adaptive expertise and progressive problem solving. Additionally, expertise has also become something shared by a team or organisation, and not something owned by the individual as experts work in teams and share their knowledge with others either in their domain or in multiprofessional networks (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993; Engeström, 2004; Tynjälä et al. 2003, 158; Tynjälä 2010, 84-85) Furthermore, an expert needs to expand his/her knowledge base constantly to keep up with the development and production of knowledge. However, no one can be expert in everything, so one has to specialize on some area. (Saariluoma 1997, 231)

3 HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Higher education institutions do not operate in a vacuum but they are part of the surrounding society which means they need to take into consideration the expectations of the society to a certain extent in their activities. This chapter deals with the changes that have taken place in the universities in recent decades especially in relation to working life and how that has affected the requirements for the teaching methods used in higher education. Additionally, the recent trend of internationalisation of higher education will be discussed.

3.1 The changing role of universities

Higher education institutions have varying identities and, therefore, also varying relationships within the society (Tynjälä et al. 2003, 159). The massification of higher education systems has, during the last two-three decades, changed the relationship between higher education institutions and their environment in many ways. The word massification, in this context, means not only the expansion of students, faculty and higher education institutions, but also in the cultural sense as a series of multiple modernizations (Scott 1995). This has also led to institutional diversity, organizational complexity and academic heterogeneity (Bargh et al. 1996).

The old Humboldtian ideals of the autonomous university are disappearing, as the universities need to concentrate more on the relationship with the society and business enterprises. This pragmatic university, as Jussi Välimaa (Tynjälä et al. 2003, 148) has called it, therefore needs to redefine the aims, goals and ethics of research and teaching, with regard to these relationships. Orientation that is more practical is requested from the universities and they should be productive and efficient with high social accountability and quality of education.

According to Välimaa (2006, 39) the one of the main purposes of Finnish universities in the past has been the building and construction of the society by training civil servants to serve the society and to develop the region where the institution is located. Therefore, in Finland the higher education has traditionally prepared workers for the public sector; all in all, about two thirds of graduates from higher education has found work in this sector (Rinne 1998, 21–22). A change in this happened in the 1990s during the economic recession, after which the public sector has been diminished and the aim is that only a third of higher education graduates would be employed in the public services (Raivola 1993, 63).

In recent decades, the student population in universities has been getting bigger and more heterogeneous. This means also that more graduates are entering the job market and, additionally, more diverse types of graduates are educated for more diverse occupational specialties. (Clark 1995 as cited in Tynjälä et al. 2003, 148) As the transition to working life is becoming even more complex, students are also more demanding and the universities are positioned in a very competitive environment. Higher education institutions are challenged by multinational, national and local business enterprises to change their traditional orientation. Furthermore, also the cultural globalization and the globalization of education markets challenge the institutions to develop the contents and structures of the curricula. The national universities are no longer training solely national professionals for national labour markets. (Välimaa 2001).

3.2 Teaching and learning skills for working life

The educational practices have remained quite unchanged during the past hundreds, even thousands of years: the teacher delivers the knowledge to the students who try to acquire it. This way of learning is not the best way in relation to the requirements of the modern working life. Students learn to repeat information from books and lectures, when they should be able to apply the knowledge and develop new kinds of ideas. The current teaching methods also teach individual working skills, when the working life requires group working skills and abilities to work between various professional fields. (Tynjälä 2010, 79) Also Lehtinen and Palonen (1998, 114) have argued that traditionally higher education has not been successful in producing expertise which would be practical and applicable when considering the needs of working life, but there has been a gap between learning conceptual knowledge and applying it in practice.

During the past few decades, new vocational higher education institutions have been established in many European countries. These institutions are built in response to the needs of the working life and especially the regional and local needs and they should develop vocational know-how and regional competitiveness. New teaching methods, practical training, diploma work and cooperation with the industry are in the core of these institutions. Additionally, many of the graduates, although coming from different kinds of institutions, compete for the same jobs in the job market. (Rinne 1998, 15) All of this is further challenging the traditional universities to develop also their curricula and to re-define their identity in relation to working life and the society. (Tynjälä et al. 2003, 149; Vuorinen & Valkonen 2007, 14). According to Voorhees and

Harvey (2005, 7) these new contents and methods for enhancing the employability of the graduates have been more quickly adapted by the new universities than the older traditional ones, but this kind of a change has been taking place all over the Europe.

According to Välimaa (2006, 43-44), practical training, which in his opinion should be included in the curriculum of each student, has been adopted as part of university education nowadays, which can be called as the vocational drift of universities. Universities have also started to use in their education, for instance, projects related to working life and also otherwise make closer cooperation with the working life. This is due to the fact that more is demanded from universities as they should at the same time educate researchers and give abilities for doctoral studies but also educate experts to the working life. (Parikka 1999, 97)

Higher education curricula can differ a great deal in relationship to working life. Some institutions and programmes can prepare students more for research and the creation of knowledge or the reproduction of knowledge whereas others prepare students for certain occupations. Some curricula can also focus on a single discipline and others combine various disciplines. (Tynjälä et al. 2003, 156) Thus, there are big differences between disciplines and fields of study concerning the need to shape their curriculum to the needs of the working life. The need is bigger in fields such as IT, business or social work that cooperate with the society as natural part of their operations. However, in fields that are more loosely connected to working life, such as the humanities or some purely theoretical fields, the more important thing is to concentrate on the academic quality of degrees. This also means that in some fields there is not a clear understanding of the needs of the working life and how the education should be developed to meet the needs. There can also be lack of gathering of feedback from the working life concerning the needs. (Rajala and Rouhelo, 1998, 126; Välimaa et al. 2005; Välimaa 2006, 47-48)

Both school learning and situation specific learning are needed as they support each other. Formal education produces general skills that can be applied and transferred to various situations. To become an expert, one needs also situation specific competence that can be learnt in authentic situations. However, situation specific skills might not be easily transferred to another type of situation, which makes them limited. (Tynjälä et al. 2003, 151) Therefore, there is a need for both of them. Mäkinen (2005, 59) states that during the studies the goal is to build a ground for such expertise which will take shape in the real working life setting during the career.

Another development in today's working life is that it is not possible anymore to be employed solely with a degree, especially when the number of graduates from higher education has risen and the higher education degree is nowadays considered as the basic degree in the job market. Degree from higher education does not guarantee employment anymore. (Tynjälä, Välimaa & Murtonen 2004, 6–7.)

According to a study (Tynjälä et al. 2006, 81) conducted among 2712 university alumni from free different universities in Finland, it seems that many graduates are not satisfied with the formal education giving them enough abilities for the working life. Altogether 64 per cent of the respondents of this particular study felt that the most important skills were learnt only at work. Thus, according to the researchers this should guide the relationship between education and working life. The research and teaching at higher education institutions should be able to integrate theory and practice and, on the other hand, workplaces should be developed as environments for lifelong learning.

The students' requirement for more vocational aspects for university level studies has been recorded in various occasions. In Ylijoki's (1994, 9, 21) research students saw theoretical aspects in their education as negative and something that diminishes the attractiveness of the study programme. Some students wanted something concrete with which they could promote themselves in the job market. According to Suutari (2003, 29) sometimes unrealistic expectations concerning the labour market in the field of study and the jobs available create a misconception that the own job is at a lower level than the education received, although this is actually not the case. It can be difficult for a person to have a clear picture of the correspondence of education and the demands of a job. This can be because nowadays people are employed to various duties with very varying educational backgrounds. Higher education graduates can get a job in new fields where the degree is not a requirement, but in which the skills from a higher education degree can be utilized. (Elias, McKnight, Pitcher, Purcell & Simm 1999, 16–17; Suutari 2003, 12.)

3.3 Internatiolisation of higher education

According to Achterberg (2002, 19-20) the main topic of discussion in the 20th century on higher education was the meaning of higher education. In the 21st century, the discussion has turned to the meaning of higher education in the era of globalization. The future generations

need to understand themselves, people around them, the surroundings, working life and the development of these from the global perspective. Intercultural knowledge and education are the only means to international security and peace. This changing environment and globalization and the need to educate people with versatile competencies for the multidimensional and complex world is challenging universities to become more international (Sallinen 2003, 5-7; Teichler 2003, 42).

National higher education institutions are faced with increasing challenges of internationality and globalisation. The internationalization of higher education can be seen as a process in which the institutions systematically integrate international dimensions and influences to the teaching, research and other activities. This can create versatile challenges such as need for creating better systems for comparing degrees and study attainments or facilitating study abroad possibilities for students. (Van Damme 2001, 415–417) Additionally higher education institutions need to pay more attention to the quality of teaching as it has become a major factor in attracting foreign students (Taajamo 2005, 103).

Sallinen (2003, 9; 13-14) argues that internationalisation needs to be integrated more into all of the activities within a university, as until now the international activities have remained unconnected and multiculturalism has not been utilised enough on our campuses. The next big step is to increase the number of international degree seeking students, as the growth in the numbers of short-term exchange students has not been that effective in terms of internationalising the higher education. From the point of view of the society, it would be crucial to get the most skilled professionals to integrate with the working life in Finland. In her article Sallinen (2003, 16) wrote that in the future the student exchange will take place in the Bachelor level studies and in the Master level, there will be a bigger amount of international degree seeking students. This builds a demand for English medium Master's programmes which will enhance the international visibility of Finnish universities and for which it is possible to recruit international students and give opportunities of internationalisation for Finnish students.

The benefits of studying in international groups are many. Studying in small and coherent groups with various nationalities can enhance the thinking processes of students, which is beneficial both to the foreign and local students. As the students of different nationalities have different kinds of cultural practices and customs, the sharing of their learning process will enrich the communication in the group. (Hakkarainen 2000, 92; Lave & Wenger 1991) An

international group can be also a relatively safe and successful platform for exchanging ideas and thinking comparatively, to reflect one's own frameworks and develop perspectives that are more complex. (Teichler 2003, 42-43)

Instead of studying abroad, Taajamo (2005, 53) rather wants to talk about learning abroad as during an international period new skills, such as, ICT skills, understanding the global perspective, communication skills in relation to different kinds of ethnic, cultural and national groups of people and the abilities to work together in diverse teams are learnt. In the future, there will be a need for both professionally competent people but also cultural understanding and, thus, it is important that students can gain these skills during their education. (Taajamo 2005, 102) Hinkelman (2001) emphasizes the cultural and intercultural skills especially in the trade of the globalised world. Studying abroad can also help in building various identities and a new future as it can give potential preparedness for the future career (Taajamo 2005, 88).

International higher education in Finland

In 2014, there were altogether around 10,000 international students studying for a degree in Finnish universities, which is around 6,5 per cent of the whole student population. In addition, another 10,000 foreign students studied for a degree in the Universities of Applied Sciences. The number of international students in Finland has risen during the first decade of the 21st century and especially after the year 2005. However, during the past few years the growth has slowed down. (Garam 2015, 1) The biggest groups of students in the universities in Finland come from China, Russia and India. (Garam 2015, 6)

The number of foreign students has increased also in other European countries during the last decades. According to the OECD Education at a Glance -report from 2014 approximately eight per cent of higher education students in the OECD countries are international, that is, they have completed their previous education in some other country or are of different nationality. (Garam 2015, 3) However, according to a European study, the Finnish higher education institutions offer proportionally bigger number of English medium degree programmes than other European countries. According to the Higher Education Evaluation Committee report from 2013 the 14 universities and 24 Universities of Applied Sciences offer altogether 400 English-medium degree programmes in Finland. The most of the programmes are in the fields of technology and commerce. About one fourth of the students in these programmes are Finns. (Garam 2015, 7)

Foreign students are interested in staying in Finland after graduation and, according to a study, (Niemelä 2008) 20 per cent of them believe they will definitely stay in Finland and 45 per cent would like to stay in Finland after graduation. In 2012, around 45 per cent of graduated foreign students were still working in Finland after one year of graduation. The graduates find lack of Finnish language ability, lack of contacts and working experience together with the small job market and discrimination as the biggest reasons for not finding employment in Finland. (Garam 2015, 9)

According to surveys completed among English-medium degree programmes in Finland, majority of them do not emphasize the graduates' abilities to move to the Finnish working life. The connection between the English medium degree programmes and working life have proved to be quite problematic. Especially difficult has been the transition to working life and even finding a proper internship placement in Finland. Many times, the universities consider as their main task to prepare the Master degree students for doctoral studies and not that much for the needs of the working life and many of the programmes also recruit students with this goal in mind. (SAMOK 2008; Niemelä 2008)

An internship placement included in the degree is a way to cooperate with working life and help the students in the transition process, but according to Garam (2009, 61) at the universities in Finland, this is the case in only 25 per cent of the programmes. However, it is of course possible to integrate the students to working life in other ways and most of the programmes seem to support, for instance, completing the thesis at a company or cooperating in various projects with organisations or inviting guest lecturers from working life.

Overall, there seems to be a big paradox in the relation between international degree programmes and working life in Finland. Although working life wants educational programmes to be more international and the educational institutions want to fulfil this wish by offering more international programmes, it seems that the working life in the end does not appreciate the know-how of foreigners and is not able to utilise the graduates coming from the international programmes. However, especially at the universities there can be found sometimes an indifferent attitude towards working life, as the programmes want to educate the students mainly for a research career at the universities or they feel that the students are employed anyway because of the good employment situation in the field (Garam 2009, 62-63).

4 SPORT MANAGEMENT AS A PROFESSION

Around the world, millions of people earn their living from sport, most of us play and watch sports and sport has broadened from pastime to industry. Sport has also become more professional, which has affected the consumption, production and management of sport at various levels. (Hoye et al. 2015, 3) For example, in many European countries, the number of jobs classified under sporting activities has tripled between 1980 and 2006 and it seems that this trend still continues. According to Camy (2006, 85) this is due to three reasons. First, larger variety of population groups participate in sports as new activities are developed to meet the demands of the various groups. Second, as the standard of living is rising, people have more time and resources to devote to leisure and health. Thirdly, sport is becoming increasingly professional and, thus the non-profit sector is hiring a growing number of professionals. All in all, during the last few decades, sport has become an important field of work (Schlesinger et al. 2016, 115).

Also in Finland, sport and physical activity provide work for many people nowadays as around 25,000 people earn their living from sport and physical activity and in addition, thousands of people are employed indirectly in the field through the industry in sport equipment, clothing and other sport related products. The private businesses offering sport services, such as health clubs, have grown a great deal during the last 15 years. (Vehmas 2015, 186) According to Mäenpää and Korkatti (2012, 9) the number of full-time employed within sport and physical activity has grown in Finland in recent years. Sport instruction and coaching together with sport facility management employs altogether around 17,000 people. Around 6,000 people work in the private sector, 5,000 in the public sector and 3,500 in the third sector within sport. In schools and other educational institutions, there are around 2,000 PE teachers. The national sport organisations employ around 600 full-time workers in Finland. The number of full-time workers in Finnish sport clubs is estimated to grow around 5-10 per cent per year. (Mäenpää & Korkatti 2012, 9)

4.1 Three sectors of sport

Sport can be seen as comprising of three sectors, that is, the state or public sector, the non-profit or voluntary sector and the professional or private sector. The public sector includes national, state/provincial, regional and local governments and specialist agencies that develop sport

policy, provide funding to other sectors and support specialist roles such as elite athlete development or drug control. The non-profit or voluntary sector (often called also the third sector) is comprised of local clubs, governing associations and international sport organisations that offer competitions and opportunities to participate, regulate and manage sporting codes and organize major events. The private professional sport organisations such as professional leagues and their member teams together with for example, sport equipment manufacturers, media companies and persons or organisations offering sport activities for profit, make up the private sector. (Hoye et al. 2015, 7; Ilmanen 2015, 19-20; Koivisto 2010, 2)

The three different sectors do not work isolated from each other but they are greatly interdependent and overlap in many ways. For example, the state provides funding and facilities for the non-profit sector, i.e. the sport clubs, which in return offers sporting opportunities for the general community. Additionally, the state supports commercial sports by, for example, building major stadia or other sporting venues. The non-profit sector provides athletes for the leagues, as well as develops coaches, officials and administrators to facilitate competitions. A sport league can also consist of teams, which are non-profit entities, and in return, the professional sector markets sport for spectators and participants and can give funds from broadcasting rights. Additionally, the private sector sponsors competitive sports. (Hoye et al. 2015, 7-8; Ilmanen 2015, 20)

Due to the current developments in the modern society, the importance and roles of the three sectors have changed during the last few decades and the division of work between them has become even less clear. Currently, the public sector is decreasing its role in offering extensive sport and wellbeing services for the citizens. As the need for the services keeps growing, the private and third sector need take on these services to keep up the level of wellbeing. The private sport businesses have a very central role in developing and offering these services and facilities and, thus employing more people in the future. (Koivisto 2010, 2) According to Seippel (2010, 207) as the field of sport becomes more professional, it usually also means more paid work and that will make the actor employing the expert and the ones funding it, for example the state or sponsors, even more dependent on each other.

The systems how sport has been organized in different countries vary considerably in terms of, for instance, organisations, structures and government involvement in sport (Hallman & Petry 2013, 344-345; Nicholson, Hoye & Houlihan 2011, 294-295). Therefore, although there are obviously similarities, it is not possible to give a comprehensive overview of the systems that would explain the situation worldwide, and, thus, mainly the structure of the Finnish system is

illustrated in the following chapters and especially from the point of view of employment opportunities and special characteristics in relation to employment.

4.1.1 Public sector

Sport is seen by the state as a sphere of life that delivers a multitude of individual and social benefits. Therefore, nearly all modern states invest in sport and provide sport experiences to people to ensure the maximum welfare of the whole community. Nowadays in a number of countries, the state provides many of the sport facilities and subsidise sport activity providers. For example, many of the sport stadiums around the world have been funded by government funds and are under the subject to government legislation and policy guidelines. Thus, governments have a crucial role in supporting both elite sport and sport for all (Hoye et al 2015, 15-26).

In different countries, sport can be steered by different ministries. Additionally, in some countries, government responsibility on sport is organized at national level and in others, the responsibility lies on state or provincial governments. (Hallmann & Petry 2013, 345; Nicholson, et al. 2011, 294-295) In Finland, the role of the national-level governance of sport is to steer the municipal and civic sectors through, for instance, the Sports Act, which aligns the sport policy of municipalities, third sector actors, vocational education and other units that receive state subsidy. Additionally, the state subsidizes national-level activities and creates conditions for sport and physical activity. The task of the Ministry of Education and Culture is to lead, develop and coordinate sport policy and to finance sport activities in all levels. The Ministry's Department for Cultural, Sports and Youth Policy and its Sports Division together with the National Sport Council lead, develop and coordinate sport policy in Finland. (Vehmas & Ilmanen 2013, 50-52)

Municipalities, on the other hand, allocate subsidies to local sport clubs or support them by offering inexpensive sport facilities and their support is mainly directed at children and youth sport. Additionally, municipalities provide affordable sport facilities to all citizens. (Vehmas & Ilmanen 2013, 50-51)

In Finland, as in many other countries, the public sector grew until the end of the 1980s due to the economic growth and it was able to offer a great deal of activities and facilities to the citizens which also meant an increase in the number of sport office-holders in municipalities. However, the economic recession in the 1990s changed this radically as the state and municipalities had

to cut down their budgets and this affected especially the public sport services. Less people were employed in the municipal sport services and their working fields became expanded also in other areas, such as culture, health and leisure in general. According to the neoliberal thinking the public services should be reduced and give more room for the private actors. At the same time, the state gave the municipalities more freedom in organising sport activities, which lead to the growth of private sector in offering activities. (Ilmanen 2015, 34, Itkonen & Salmikangas 2015, 549-552) According to Camy (2006, 90) the public sport sector is declining almost everywhere in the world, although it still employs a great number of people in many countries.

4.1.2 Private sector

According to Hoye et al (2015, 58) professional sport organisations can be defined by two features. Firstly, they have similar scale of operations and they work at the top of the industry, and secondly, the players or athletes do their sport professionally, i.e. they are paid to train and play full-time. As professional sport usually attracts money, visibility in media and spectators, it together with the industry surrounding it, dominates world sport. One part of this are big professional sport leagues, such as the National Football League (NFL). Another important part of professional sport consists of big professional sport events, such as the Football World Cup, which is played every four years. Nowadays professional sport is big business as many of the current teams in the professional leagues are significant corporate entities. (Hoye et al 2015, 56-58)

In professional sport, it is increasingly difficult to separate the sport, media and sponsors from each other, but they are very interdependent. Media organisations have become important partners for both professional and non-profit sport as the media has the capacity to influence big audiences and the sport organisations nowadays heavily rely on the sale of broadcasting rights. (Hoye et al 2015, 60; 63) Another important part of the professional sport is sponsorship. The sponsorship revenue within professional sport has grown exponentially in recent decades due to mainly the large media coverage professional sport is able to receive (Hoye et al 2015, 65-67; Vehmas & Ilmanen 2013, 52) Because sport is becoming more professional and receives more money from broadcasting rights and sponsorship deals, the salaries of athletes have also become higher. This means that there is a need for people to work with the athletes on, for example, negotiating complex contracts and helping them to utilise the off field commercial

opportunities. Thus, an industry of player and athlete management has emerged and nowadays there are a great number of companies working on this field. (Hoye et al 2015, 65-67)

According to Camy (2006, 89) the volume and form of the sport-related activities or sport industry in Europe is difficult to assess. He defines the sport industry in three groups. First group is enterprises specialised in the construction of sports facilities, which is rather a small group, but important as almost all sport forms require some type of built premises. The second group includes the manufacturers of sport equipment and goods and the distribution firms associated with them. This market is extremely competitive and international. This industry sector is declining in Europe, but growing, for example, in Asia. The third group, which is expanding rapidly, is the sport media. In addition, there is the health sector with its enterprises specialised in sports, such as hospitals, sports medical services, physiotherapy practices and rehabilitation centres etc. (Camy 2006, 89-90)

Especially in Finland, it is difficult to define the professional sector in sport strictly, as businesses in the field of sport are not a uniform and clearly defined industry, but very multidimensional and scattered. (Koivisto 2010, 8; Kosonen & Tiikkaja 2008, 7) Furthermore, the private sport market is moderately small in Finland: less than three per cent of the clubs have professional athletes and altogether there are about 1,000 athletes who earn their living through sports. Additionally, around 1,200 coaches earn at least half of their income from coaching. (Vehmas & Ilmanen 2013, 52)

Most of the companies in the field of sport in Finland are small with less than three employees. Their main focus areas are sport and physical activity and health and well-being. Additionally, there are large international companies in the sport field and the research and development is internationally of high level and utilises the latest technology. (Koivisto 2010, 44) The private sector in sport physical activities has grown significantly in Finland in the recent decades. During the first decade of the 21st century, the amount of money spent by an adult in sport activities grew by 74 per cent (SLU 2010). Consequently, the sport industry is the biggest growing field in Finland and it currently is worth around 5,5 billion euros. People are nowadays accustomed to consuming sport services which means that the private sector is expected to grow also in the future. The main areas of growth can be found in health and wellbeing, sport tourism and events and sports related communication and entertainment technologies and services. Common to all of these segments, which are growing rapidly, is the fact that they are related to technologies and innovations. (Itkonen & Salmikangas 2015, 553; TEM raportteja 2014, 4) The complexity of the field of sport business is further illustrated in Figure 2.

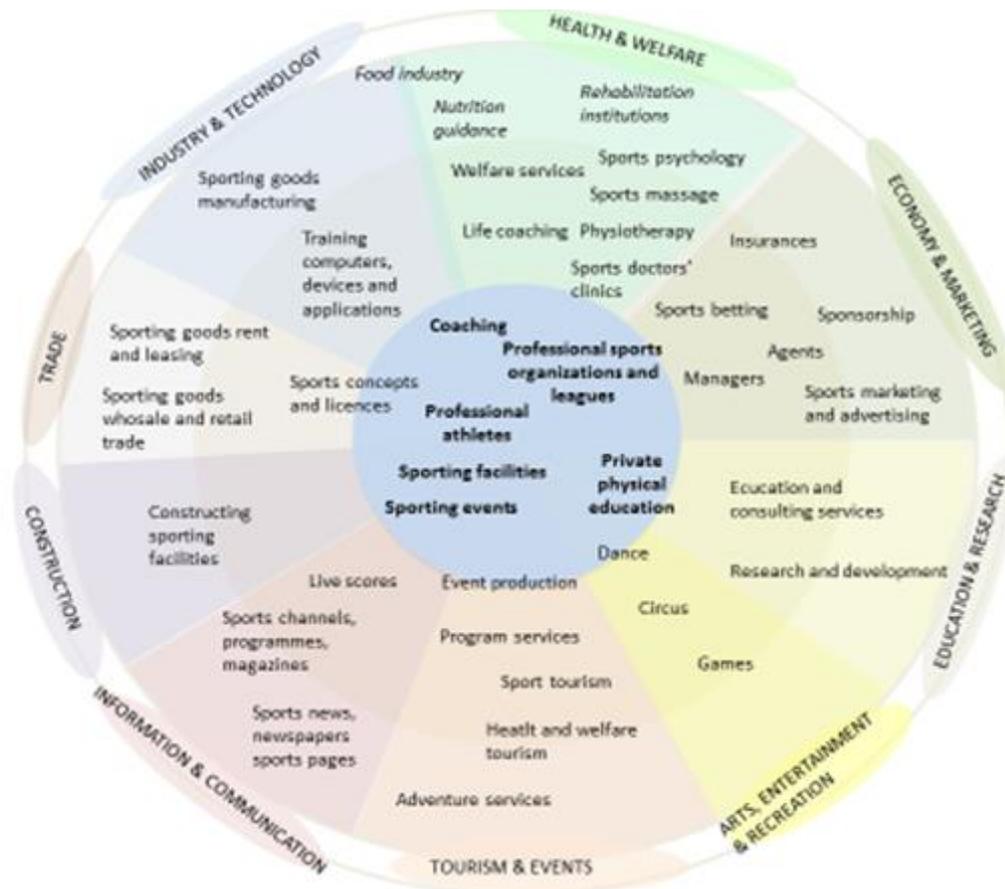


FIGURE 2. Fields of sport business (Koivisto 2010, 9)

4.1.3 Non-profit sector

The non-profit sector can be called with many terms, such as, voluntary, not for profit, non-government, community, club based, associations, co-operatives, friendly societies, civil society, and the third sector. This sector comprises of organisations that are institutionally separate from the state, do not return profits to owners, are mainly run by volunteers, with the occasional support of paid staff, and are formally registered as associations. The main purpose of non-profit organisations is to develop communities and meet the needs of a certain group of people in the community, in addition to, work for the benefit of public good. With their activities, they fill gaps that the state or market sector have left in welfare services. (Hoye et al. 2015, 33-34)

The type and size of non-profit organisations in sport vary from small local sport clubs to major international actors. In countries with club based sporting systems, non-profit sport

organisations are the ones organising almost all sport teams and competitions. (Lyons 2001 as cited in Hoye et al. 2015, 34). These organisations can be small local clubs with only a few teams, regional associations coordinating competitions between clubs and national organisations that in addition to facilitating competitions also manage for example coach development, talent identification, volunteer training, marketing and sponsorship. National sporting organisations normally also regulate the rules of competition in a country, coordinate national championships, manage elite athlete programmes, employ development officers and undertake many other tasks to enhance participation in sport. Finally, the international sport federations coordinate the development of a sport across the world, for example FIFA in football or the International Olympic Committee (IOC) supervising the organisation of the Olympic Games. (Hoye et al. 2015, 37-38)

Most of the sport clubs are governed, administered and managed by volunteers around the world. Their input in coaching, officiating and general assistance with training, competition and fundraising is crucial to the activities. (Hoye et al. 2015, 40) Also in Finland voluntary based sport clubs have been and still today are a major force in the Finnish organised sporting culture. There are approximately 9000 sport clubs in Finland with around 500,000 volunteers. However, in recent decades many clubs have started to employ people and offer services that start to resemble industrial and commercial activity. (Itkonen 2015, 39; Koivisto 2010, 2)

Around the world, there are signs that voluntary commitment in sport may be decreasing, especially in officiating and administration of sport, and thus, there is a need for improving the management of volunteers in order to keep the people involved in running the activities. (Hoye et al. 2015, 42; 45) This also requires employing skilful professionals and, thus, the number of paid workers in sport clubs has been increasing in recent years in various countries. (Koski 2012, 8; Seippel 2010, 200) Also when starting to develop services, sport clubs need more professional attitude and more people in charge of the operations. However, clubs can struggle in finding funding for employing people, so even though they might have the willingness to develop their activities and start new services, they are not able to do so, because of insufficient funding. (Koivisto 2010, 46; Koski 2012, 5-6)

According to Mäenpää and Korkatti (2012, 23, 31) and Koski (2012, 4) since 2009 sport clubs in Finland have received substantial funding from the state for employing new full-time work force and many clubs have also received support from the European Social Fund. In 2012, there were approximately 1,000 sport clubs in Finland that had paid work force. The largest clubs nowadays, employ several people which enables allocation of work and various kinds of know-

how. The number of full time workers has then risen steadily, but in most of the clubs, having someone to work full-time is still a fairly new thing. The role of sport clubs as the employer of professionals in the field of sport has grown, but it has not yet had a big effect in the content of the education in the field of sport. (Mäenpää & Korkatti 2012, 23; 28) It seems that the state funding is moving away from the national sporting organisations towards supporting local sport clubs directly in employing professionals to develop efficient activities.

4.2 Special characteristics of sport as a profession

Sport is a special and discrete field of industry that requires the application of specific management techniques not applicable to many other fields of business or industry (Hoye et al. 2015, 4; Wilson et al. 2016, 167). People have, for example, irrational passions for sport teams, competitions and athletes and sport managers need to learn to harness these passions so that people will, for example, buy tickets for events or become members of a club or want to work voluntarily for an association. In sport, also success is measured in other ways than only profits, as winning or meeting community service obligations can be as important as making profit. Another special feature is the competitive balance, which means that sport teams need other teams to remain in business as well in order to keep the sport interesting for the audience. (Hoye et al. 2015, 4)

Another special characteristic of the field is that employment in sport sector is more part-time than in other fields. According to Camy (2006, 94-99) this is because of the structural characteristics of the job supply (meaning small structures with limited activity or concentrated over certain hours of the day) and the job-seekers which are usually specialists with narrow skills. Additionally, the sport sector especially in Europe is characterized by the fact that there is large number of unpaid workers in the field. However, it is very difficult to measure their amount and their contribution to assess the potential number of jobs it represents. (Camy 2006, 98-99)

Within the field of sport, there are a great deal of different kinds of professions such as professional sportspersons, sports officials, sports activity leaders, sports instructors and sports coaches. In addition to these, there are also so-called sport-related professions, for example, professional managers of sports or sport-related organisations, sport doctors, physical education and sport teachers, sport journalists, physiotherapists specialised in sports, agents and

promoters of events or professional sportspersons, sellers of sports goods, caretakers of sports facilities and other receptions staff and sports facilities maintenance workers. (Camy 2006, 91)

4.3 Skills needed in the sport management profession

As the graduates of this study have been educated for working in the field of sport management, although some of the graduates might currently be working in some other field, some of the skills and characteristics needed in the field of sport management are discussed further in the following.

As discussed already in the previous section, the management of sport organisations has become more professional since the 1980s. The global sport industry has grown massively, sport events have become more commercialised, more paid staff have been employed to the voluntary sport clubs and associations and a large number of people nowadays make their living from managing sport organisations or playing sports. All this has created a need for more professionalised sport management and, therefore, a need for new university level sport management programmes and the development of the existing curricula to meet these demands. (Hoye et al. 2015, 6; Seippel 2010, 205)

Currently, there is no generally accepted concept of competencies required from sport science graduates (Schlesinger et al. 2016, 116). However, Hoye et al (2015, 4) explain that sport managers nowadays need to work with various complex topics such as strategic planning, human resources, broadcasting contracts, welfare of athletes, global sport federations, national sport organisations, government agencies, media, sponsorship and local community organisations. Wilson et al (2016,184) add that as the field is rapidly changing, the future sport managers need to be able to provide innovative and cost-effective solutions in complex economic environments, use new technologies and understand older ones so that products and services can be provided effectively. Additionally, they must be culturally sensitive and find new ways to introduce sport to new markets.

Therefore, students aspiring a career in the field of sport management need to have understanding of the special field of sport and its allied industries, the environment in which sport organisations operate and the different types of organisations in the public, non-profit and professional sectors of sport. Thus, according to Hoye et al (2015, 108) professionals working in the field of sport management need skills in preparation, research and analysis, imagination,

decision-making and critical thinking as they are the requirements for strategic management. Furthermore, sport manager needs to be able to manage an organisational structure where there are both paid staff and volunteers working alongside each other and the challenge is to ensure that the work tasks, decision-making procedures, their collaboration, levels of responsibility and reporting mechanisms work properly. Working with volunteers also requires specific human resource management skills, especially as many of the sport organisations are so small that they do not have any dedicated HR personnel working for them. (Hoye et al 2015, 117; 129; 146)

In addition to management skills, Hoye et al (2015, 171) claim that the ability to lead is an important characteristic of a sport manager. P. Kotter (as cited in Hoye et al 2015, 180) says that effective management is about the ability to plan and budget, organise staff, and control and solve problems. Leadership, on the other hand, derives from establishing a direction, aligning people, and motivating and inspiring them. Kotter continues that ‘leaders achieve change whilst managers succeed in maintaining the status quo’ (as cited in Hoye et al 2015, 180). Therefore, leaders need to be goal oriented, able to influence and empower others to achieve good results, remain focussed on the big picture and have a strong character. Leaders’ tasks are to create a vision, set out a strategy, set objectives for activities and measure their outcomes, influence and motivate people and to facilitate change and nurture organisational culture. (Hoye et al 2015, 183) Furthermore, Wilson et al (2016, 184) emphasize the need for ethical management and leadership as the issues of corporate social responsibility and the skills to communicate them have become more important also in sport.

A good sport manager also understands organisational culture and how it affects the everyday operations of the organisation and the athletes, employees, members, fans and the general public. Additionally, it is important to see if the current organisational culture is beneficial for the organisation or if it hinders the organisation from working properly. Nowadays, many sport organisations find themselves becoming commercialised, bureaucratised and business-like, and thus, the sport managers today need more skills and knowledge also in financial management. (Hoye et al 2015, 192-197; 217-218) Wilson et al (2016, 86) argue that, actually, all management decisions will have also financial implications. Therefore, a manager in sport and leisure needs to understand the financial side of the industry so that they can provide good, cost-effective solutions to the complex problems and the dynamic market. However, according to Hoye et al (2015, 222), many sport managers are not comfortable handling money or making financial planning, because they many times do not have the knowledge and experience of

managing complex financial issues. Furthermore, Hoye et al (2015, 247-248, 267) are also of the opinion that skills in sport marketing, i.e. marketing of sport products and services to consumers or marketing non-sport products through sport, are essential. To be successful in sport marketing, a sport manager must be competent in building and maintaining a brand for the organisation. Nowadays sport managers also need to have skills in digital sport marketing, for example through social media (DeLuca et al, 2016, 5).

Today's sport managers need to have skills to work with the media as the media organisations and consumers are interested especially in professional sport. Sport appears in the news, but nowadays broadcast coverage is provided in many sports also through exclusive arrangements where media organisations buy the rights to broadcast for example an event or a season of a particular sport or league. All the three sectors of sport and different types of sport organisations need media in order to be prosperous in today's society. The benefits for organisation can be, for example, promoting activities or events for the public or securing a financial return on investment. (Hoye et al 2015, 282-285)

Despite working either in private, public or non-profit sector of sport, there is a need of knowledge of governance, but it can look quite different in the different sectors, as the organisations exist for different reasons and have varying decision-making structures and processes. The processes of management can be quite similar in the different sectors, but the differences can be found in the governance frameworks, and thus, it is important to understand these differences. Additionally, as the field of sport is quite dynamic and changing rapidly, there is a need for making sure that the organisation is flexible enough to react to needs of the stakeholders or opportunities in the market and thus, a sport management needs to make sure that clear guidelines for decision-making and standardising procedures need to be established. (Hoye et al 2015, 129, 304-305)

5 EDUCATION IN SOCIAL SCIENCES OF SPORT AT THE UNIVESRITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

This chapter introduces the education given by the University of Jyväskylä in the field of Social Sciences of Sport. It also discusses more in detail the English-medium Master's programme from which the respondents of this study have graduated. Additionally, the previous studies conducted among the graduates of the Finnish-medium Master's programme in the field will be presented.

5.1 History of the education of Social Sciences of Sport at the University of Jyväskylä

The education in Sport Sciences started in Jyväskylä in 1963 and the Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences was created in 1968 as part of the University of Jyväskylä. Currently the faculty is the only university level institution of sport sciences in Finland. The mission of the faculty is to educate experts to the fields of physical activity and health to work in various positions in the society and to carry research and development activities in these fields. (SpoSMaPro 2015, 3)

Currently there are three disciplinary units within the faculty, namely the disciplines of Physical Education and Social Sciences of Sport, Biology of Physical Activity and Health Sciences. There are over 1,200 students completing either a bachelor or master's degree and approximately 140 doctoral students. Around 60 students study annually in the international Master's Degree Programmes of the faculty. Currently there are two international master's programmes run by the faculty, MDP in Biology of Physical Activity and MDP in Sport and Exercise Promotion, where Social Sciences of Sport is one of the two majors to choose from. (Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences, 2017)

The education of Social Sciences of Sport in Finnish language started in the beginning of the 1970's. In 1978, the discipline in Social Sciences of Sport was established as part of the department of Sport Planning that had been launched in 1971. The early years of the education took place in a time of building of the welfare state and extensive public sector which also directed the education into educating experts to work as directors of sport departments in municipalities and cities. However, as the economic situation has changed and the importance of the public sector has diminished, the education has also had to move somewhat towards the business sector and third sector activities. (Koski 1999, 177-178)

5.2 Master's programme in Sport Management

The English-medium master's programme in Sport Management was launched in 2005 based on the long-term international cooperation especially in student exchange with the European partner universities (SpoSMaPro 2015, 3). During the history of the programme, it has been called with various names and the contents have evolved to some extent. In the beginning, the programme was called the Master of Sport Science and Management Programme and in 2006 the name was changed into Master's Degree Programme in Sport Science and Management (later SpoSMaPro). In 2012, the contents of the programme were modified most radically as the element of Health Promotion was added into the content and name of the programme which was during 2013-2017 the Master's Degree Programme in Sport Management and Health Promotion.

Altogether 99 students have been admitted to the programme during 2005 and 2013, however, in 2010 and 2011 there was no intake into the programme. The students represent 24 different nationalities and the biggest groups have become from Finland (n=48), China (n=15) and Germany (n=5). Altogether 54 per cent of the students have been female and 46 per cent male.

5.2.1 Contents of the programme

The programme consists of 120 ECTS credits and takes approximately two years of full-time studies to complete. As the students studying in the programme have varying backgrounds, in terms of education and culture, together with different kinds of career aspirations, the programme aims at giving a broad knowledge of the fields of social sciences of sport and sport management with a versatile curriculum. This includes also a possibility for the students to choose a rather big amount of optional studies with which they can make their degree more individualized according to their own interests. Additionally, the programme's goal is to develop both the theoretical and the practical skills required by the complex field of sport and society. (SpoSMaPro 2015, 3)

Three disciplines can be classified within the programme. Firstly, there are contents related to Sport Sociology, such as topics on sport in relation to society and civic activities, media, globalization, tourism and the European Union. In the Sport Planning and Administration part, the courses deal with, for example, sport management, planning of sport events and facilities, sport economics and marketing. The third element is Health Promotion, which discusses the

issues in, for instance, public health and the role of sport clubs in promoting healthy lifestyle. In addition to the studies in the above-mentioned fields, the programme also includes studies in research methodology and extensive language and communication modules, which are integrated with the thesis writing process. (SpoSMaPro 2015). The contents and the degree structure of the programme are illustrated in the Table 1. The entire curriculum of 2015-2016 can be found as Appendix 2.

Table 1. The degree structure of the Master’s Degree Programme in Sport Management and Health Promotion 2013-2015 (SpoSMaPro 2013, 6).

Components	ECTS credits
1. Introduction to the master’s programme, individualized study plan and portfolio	3
2. Language modules	6-11
3. Intercultural competence	2
4. Research methods	6
5. Expertise in social sciences of sport and health promotion	40
6. Optional studies	22-26
7. Master’s thesis and seminars	36
Total number of credits	120

5.2.2 Practices in supporting the professional development of students

Already from the very beginning, the programme has had several built-in tools to support the students and to accommodate their learning experience and growth towards becoming experts in the field of sport and society. Already before starting in the programme, the students have been given writing tasks to reflect their earlier learning experiences and expectations for their studies in the SpoSMaPro programme and future career after graduation. During the studies, students are requested to record their experiences and learning outcomes and to collect the most representative pieces of work, which will be put together as their final learning portfolio, demonstrating their growth as an expert in the field.

Contacts with the working life and alumni, that is graduates from the programme, are essential as well. In various modules (for example Sport in Finland, Sport and Leisure Management, Sport Planning), several visiting lecturers are used to elaborate on the theoretical issues and connect them with the real-life circumstances. Additionally, in several modules (for example Planning and Implementation of Sport Events, Sport Marketing, Sport Planning) there are also practical tasks and projects that the students complete for, for instance, local companies, associations or municipal organisations as part of their studies. Between 2005 and 2011 there was a compulsory internship period of minimum of 200 hours in the curriculum to help the

students gain some practical experience in working in the field. Since 2012 the internship has been an optional element, but still quite a big number of students have decided on completing it as part of their degree. From 2014 onwards the second-year students have also annually interviewed the programme alumni to learn more of the current trends and requirements of the working life.

5.3 Employment of the graduates of the Finnish-medium programme

There have not been any previous studies conducted on the employment of the graduates of the English-medium Master's Degree Programme in Sport Science and Management, but there have been three similar types of studies done among the graduates of the Finnish-medium Master's programme in Social Sciences of Sport taught at the University of Jyväskylä. Therefore, these studies will be later used in my thesis in making comparisons concerning the employment situation of the graduates and the changes taking place in the field during the past few decades.

Riikka Lahti (1997) studied the graduates of 1979-2004, Kari Niemelä's (2006) study dealt with all who had graduated from the programme by 2004 and Riina Ilmola (2015) concentrated on the graduates between the beginning of 2000 and October 2014. Ilmola's study included also graduates from the English-medium programme, but there we no separation made on the programme from which the respondents had graduated when analysing the results.

Finnish graduates of 1979-1994

Riikka Lahti (1997) studied in her Master's thesis all the graduates of the Finnish-medium programme until the year 1994. The study was conducted with a questionnaire and altogether 60 responses were received. The research questions in Lahti's work tried to find answers to how the graduates were located in the working life and how did their careers look like. (Lahti 1997, 34-25)

During the study, 88.3 per cent of the respondents were employed and 69.1 per cent were working in the field of sport administration. Altogether 63.0 per cent were employed at the public sector, 11.1 per cent at universities and 18.5 per cent mainly in associations and organisations. (Lahti 1997, 37-42) The duties of the majority of the respondents included

implementation tasks, tasks that require special expertise together with planning, development and reporting duties. The respondents valued as a very important part of their job the knowledge of the social significance of physical activities. Additionally, they needed, for example, skills in making strategic plans and written and oral presentation skills. The respondents felt that they had received good foundation for their career from the educational programme. (Lahti 1997, 47-51)

The working situation of the graduates was good as only a few were unemployed by the time of the study and the respondents felt that it had been rather easy for them to find a suitable job. In their current job, they were most satisfied with the independence, challenges the job provides and the possibilities to cooperate with others. The least satisfied the respondents were with the salary and the possibilities of progressing in their career. (Lahti 1997, 52-57)

Finnish graduates of 1979-2004

Kari Niemelä (2005) included in his study all the graduates of the Finnish-medium programme until the year 2004 and, all in all, 149 responses were received to the questionnaire. The aim of the study was to find out where the graduates were working and what kind of skills and knowledge they need in their job and how should the educational programme be developed to better meet the needs of the working life. (Niemelä 2006, 53-54)

According to the study, 87.2 per cent of the respondents were employed and 74.8 per cent of them were working in the field of sport. More than half of the respondents were employed in the public sector and around 20 per cent both in the private sector third sectors. (Niemelä 2005, 59-67) The respondents needed in their jobs skills in communication, general understanding of the society and know-how in administration and planning. They were the most satisfied with the independence of the work, the amount of duties requiring expertise and the challenges the job provides. Working experience, personality, personal contacts with the employer and the education in the field were seen as the most important aspects in finding employment and this was supported by the fact that over 10 per cent of the respondents had received their job through an internship and more than half had been employed already during graduation. (Niemelä 2005, 69-77)

Finnish graduates of 2000-2014

In the most recent study, Riina Ilmola (2015) studied the current employment situation of the Finnish-speaking graduates of the Finnish-medium programme and SpoSMaPro programme who had graduated during 2000-2014. The data was gathered with an online questionnaire at the end of 2014 and altogether 87 responses were received. In addition to finding out where the graduates are located in working life, the aim of the study was also to explore how the skills and competencies received from the education correspond with the demands of the working life as experienced by the graduates.

According to the study, 86.2 per cent of the respondents were employed and 70.4 per cent of them were working in the field of sport. All in all, 43.8 per cent were working in the public sector, 26.8 per cent in the private sector and 29.4 per cent in the third sector. Over 80 per cent of the respondents informed that their job included a great deal of tasks requiring expertise in a certain field and planning, development and reporting tasks. Additionally, communication was an important part of the job for many, but only a very few informed of having tasks in sport instructing, research and teaching in their current job. Altogether 90 per cent of the respondents expressed needing a great deal of organizational skills in their job and additionally of importance were oral and written presentation skills. On the other hand, personal sporting skills and knowledge in sport facility planning were needed by only a few graduates. (Ilmola 2015, 38; 43-44)

The respondents were the most satisfied with the possibilities to influence their own job and the flexibility of the working conditions, followed by the challenges the job provides and the working community. Least satisfied they were on the salary and possibilities of progressing in the job. Overall, majority of the respondents had found jobs quite easily and had not suffered from long unemployment periods. However, only 15 per cent felt it would be easy to find a new permanent job if they became unemployed. (Ilmola 2015, 46-52)

Language and communication studies together with courses in sport economics were considered useful or very useful for their working career by 70 per cent of the respondents. Additionally, over 60 per cent valued highly the modules in sport policy and administration and leadership. Least weight from the point of view of the career was given for contents in sport history and sport ethics. (Ilmola 2015, 51) The respondents felt that they would have wished to gain more skills in business and economics as they were of the opinion that the field has become more commercialized and professional, and thus, these skills are increasingly needed in the

jobs. According to Ilmola's findings, the respondents valued the multidisciplinary approach and versatility of the educational programme as it gives a good overall view of the field of sport and a big variety of possibilities concerning the career. (Ilmola 2015, 52-54)

6 RESEARCH TASK AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research is to study the transition to working life as experienced by the graduates who started their studies in the international Master's Degree Programme in Sport Science and Management between 2005 and 2013. The study concentrates on what kind of positions they currently work in and how they feel they have benefited from the educational programme from the point of view of the needs of the working life.

This study aims at finding answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the employment situation of the graduates from the Master's Degree Programme in Sport Science and Management?
2. What kind of skills, qualifications and knowledge are required in the labour market of sport management?
3. What kind of working life changes are experienced by the graduates in the field of sport management?

Data was collected between July and October 2015 with an internet-based online questionnaire by using the mrInterview survey tool. The questionnaire is found as Appendix 1. The online questionnaire was selected as it is appropriate for this type of a study; it is an easy and prompt way of collecting information from large populations and the data can be easily analysed (Hirsjärvi et al 2004, 184). The questionnaire was sent by email to altogether 77 people who had begun their studies between 2005 and 2013 in the programme, of which 87.0 per cent (n=67) were graduates and 13.0 per cent (n=10) students. The email addresses were received from the database of the Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences at the University of Jyväskylä. According to the faculty database the total number of graduates from the programme by the time of sending the questionnaire was 67, so the questionnaire was sent to all of them, however, most likely not all the email addresses were valid.

The response rate was 49.3 per cent as the altogether 38 responses were received. The questionnaires were mainly filled in properly; only one respondent had not filled in the entire questionnaire. Unfortunately, the response rate cannot be considered very good, as in case of surveys sent for a special group of people, the response rate can be expected to be even around 70-80 per cent (Hirsjärvi et al 2004, 185). However, according to Vehkalahti (2008, 44) many times the response rates when using a survey are nowadays closer to 50 per cent. Additionally,

it needs to be noted that some groups, such as the ones being unemployed or the ones living outside Finland, could have been underrepresented among the respondents. It is possible that at least some of the email addresses of the respondents have not been active any more, as they might have been collected already several years ago, when the respondents have graduated from the programme. This might also have affected the response rate.

When the studied population is small, it is reasonable to use a census method, which means to include the entire population in the study and not take any samples of it. This also eliminates the random sampling error, as a sample of the population is not taken. (Daniel 2012) It also needs to be noted that when using a census method, the differences found in the data can be considered as actual, although they would not be found as statistically significant.

SPSS Statistics 24.0 data analysis programme was used in analysing the results. When analysing the results, the aim was to describe how the graduates of the Master's programme had been able to transit to the working life. Additionally, comparisons and conclusions were made in the form of percentages, frequencies and cross-tabulations. In addition to quantitative analysis, also qualitative content analysis was used to analyse the data from the open-ended questions. Content analysis is a commonly used method in which, qualitative textual data is categorised into clusters of similar entities or conceptual categories. This is done in order to identify consistent patterns and relationships between variables or themes. When using content analytic approach, it is important to recognise that text is open to subjective interpretation, can reflect multiple meanings and is context dependent. (Given 2008)

7 RESULTS

In this chapter, the results of my study will be explained in detail. Firstly, the background and current working situation of the graduates is presented. Secondly, the results concerning the working careers will be explored and, finally, the respondents' views on the SpoSMaPro education will be analysed.

7.1 Background information

Of all the respondents in the study, 47.4 per cent (n=18) were female and 52.5 per cent (n=20) male. Altogether 13.1 per cent (n=4) were less than 30 years old, 47.3 per cent (n=17) were between the ages of 30 to 34, 36.9 per cent (n=14) were between the age of 35 to 40 and 2.6 per cent (n=1) over the age of 40. They had started their studies between 2005 (first intake into the programme) and 2013 and had graduated between 2007 and 2015 (figure 3). All in all, 43.3 per cent (n=13) had graduated in 2010 or earlier, so they have been away from the programme 5 years or more, and 56.7 per cent (n=17) had graduated between 2011 and 2015 (figure 4). It needs to be noted that there was not intake into the programme in years 2010 and 2011, so that is why there are no respondents who would have started their studies in these years, but it has been possible to graduate during the entire time. Five respondents (13.5 %) informed that they had not graduated from the programme yet. The questionnaire was also sent to those students who had been studying for at least 2 years in the programme and could have already graduated. However, many times it takes more than two years for the students to graduate as they are working at the same time, and many of them in the field of sport management. Thus, it was considered appropriate to include them in the study.

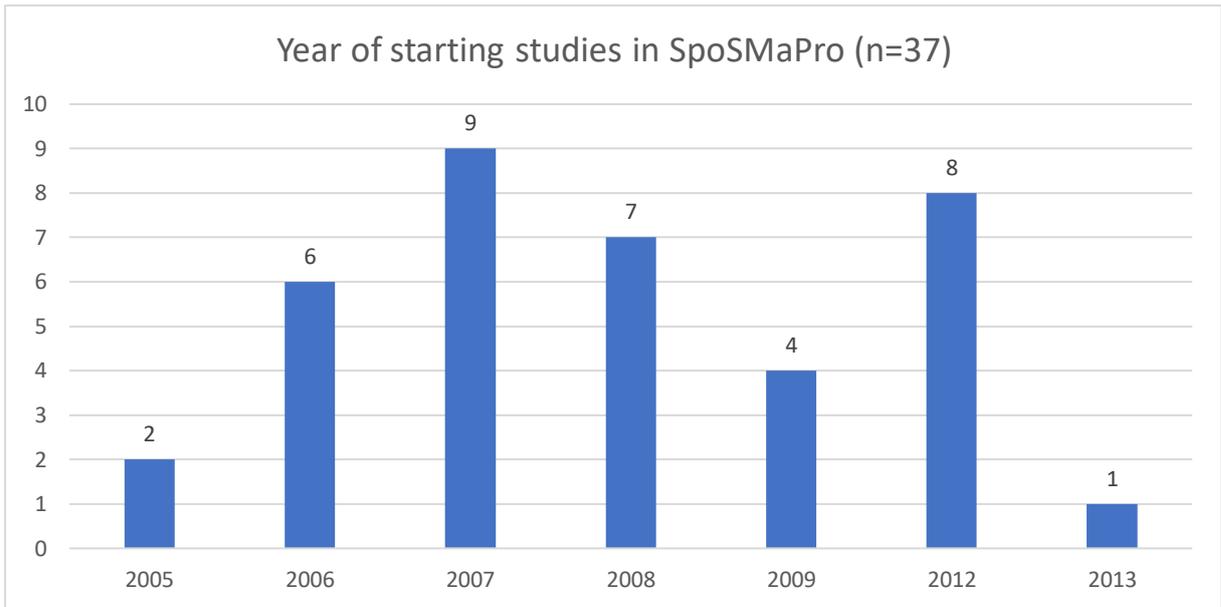


FIGURE 3. Year of starting studies in the SpoSMaPro programme.

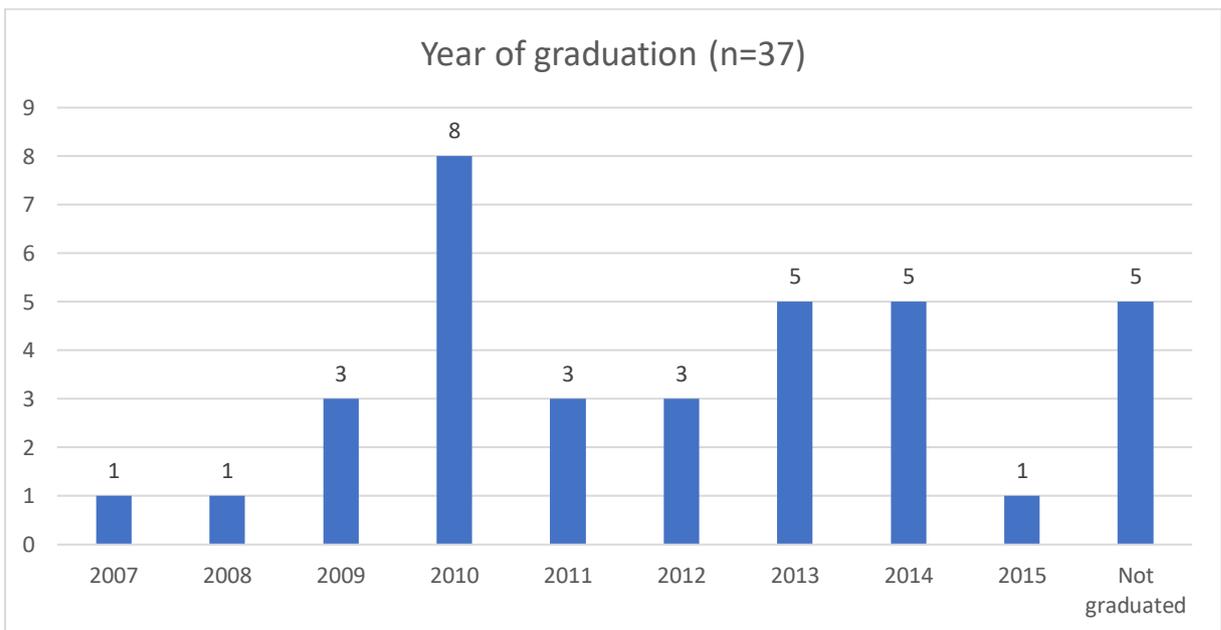


FIGURE 4. Year of graduating from the SpoSMaPro programme.

As the programme is international by nature, also the origin of the respondents was inquired. Of all respondents, 57.1 per cent (n=20) informed that they are of Finnish origin, 28.6 per cent (n=10) from other European countries, 11.4 per cent (n=4) from Asia and 2.9 per cent (n=1) from the Americas (figure 5).

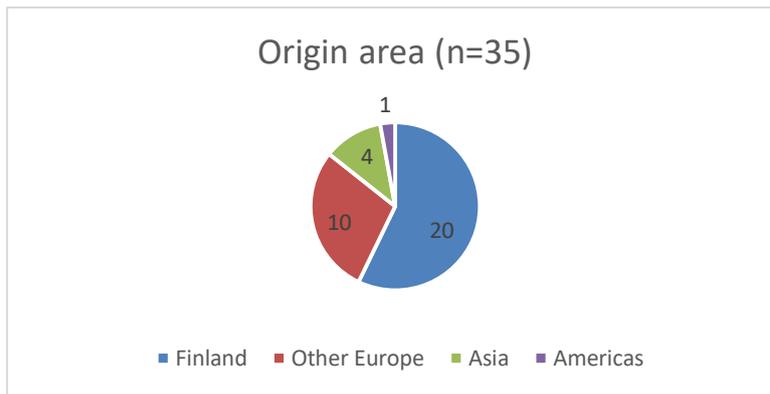


FIGURE 5. Origin areas of the respondents.

7.1.1 Previous degree

Students that are selected to the SpoSMaPro programme need to have a Bachelor degree in, for example, Social Sciences of Sport/Sport Management, other Sport Sciences (e.g. physical education, kinesiology or coaching), Social Sciences (e.g. sociology), Business Studies, Political Sciences, Health Sciences or some other related field. This means that all the students who were accepted to the programme already had an academic background degree in some field, but the background degrees, and thus, the background knowledge of the students varied a great deal. The most common background degrees of the respondents were Bachelor degree in Business Administration (n=8), Sport Management (n=5), Sport (other than Sport Management) (n=6), Social Sciences (n=2), Economics (n=2). Other fields of study included English Language, General Health Sciences, Geography, History, International Leisure and Tourism, Journalism, Law, Management and Tourism Management. Three of the respondents informed of having a Master's degree as their background degree with which they applied for the programme.

7.1.2 Optional studies

There is no requirement for completing a minor as part of the SpoSMaPro degree, but students need to include 22 to 26 ECTS credits of optional studies into their degree. These studies can be selected relatively freely according to the interests of the student and they can be completed either at the University of Jyväskylä or at some other university, as agreed between the student and the supervisor. Therefore, it is rather difficult to summarize the optional studies the

respondents had taken as part of their SpoSMaPro degree as they comprised of so many individual courses from various fields.

Most common optional studies among the graduates, as analysed from the open-ended questions in the survey, was Business studies (including business, economics, finance and marketing) as 16 respondents had taken at least one course in this field. Three respondents had completed the Basic Business Studies minor, offered by the School of Business and Economics under the University of Jyväskylä, including minimum of 28 ECTS credits. Another popular area of optional studies was Language and Communication courses (n=10), followed by studies on Sport and the EU (n=7). Altogether 14 respondents have mentioned they had taken at least one of the optional courses offered by the SpoSMaPro programme.

7.2 Current working situation

One of the main aspects of the survey was to study the current working situation of the respondents. Altogether 78.4 per cent (n=29) informed of being employed at the time, 5.4 per cent (n=2) of being on a maternity/paternity leave), 5.4 per cent (n=2) of a combination of different working situations, 2.7 per cent (n=1) of being private entrepreneur, 5.4 per cent (n=2) other (part-time work and a stay-at-home mother) and 2.7 per cent (n=1) of being unemployed. Furthermore, 58.3 per cent (n=21) of the employed were on a permanent job, 27.8 per cent (n=10) had a temporary or fixed-term position, 2.8 per cent (n=1) were working as a substitute, 2.6 per cent (n=1) were working part-time by the time of answering the questionnaire.

7.2.1 Country of work

Because it was expected that at least some of the graduates of an international programme most likely will find employment outside the country where the education has been acquired, the countries of the workplace have been analysed from the open-ended questions of the data as well. Altogether 32 respondents gave information on their current employer, for instance the name and location of the employer. Most of the respondents, that is 28 of them work in Finland, other countries represented in the data are China (n=3), Denmark (n=1), Germany (n=1), Netherlands (n=2) and Switzerland (n=2).

When comparing the origin areas of the graduates with the countries in which they are currently employed, it shows that 78 per cent (n=18) of the ones working in Finland are of Finnish origin and 22 per cent (n=5) are of other European origin. Altogether 5 graduates of other European origin than Finnish informed they were working in some other European country. The three graduates of Asian origin were working in China.

7.2.2 Field of current work

During the study, 66.7 per cent (n=24) of the respondents were working in the field of sport and 33.3 per cent (n=12) were working in some other field. The respondents who did not work in the field of sport reported working e.g. in the following fields: business consultancy, childcare, city marketing, events, finance, health promotion, IT, journalism and science and technology.

The respondents were also asked about the sector in which they work and 38.9 per cent (n=14) informed of working in the public sector which is this study includes for example towns and municipal organisations and educational institutions. On the other hand, 36.1 per cent (n=13) were working in private businesses or as entrepreneurs and 22.2 per cent (n=8) in the third sector which comprises of, for example, associations, non-profit organisations and foundations (figure 6).

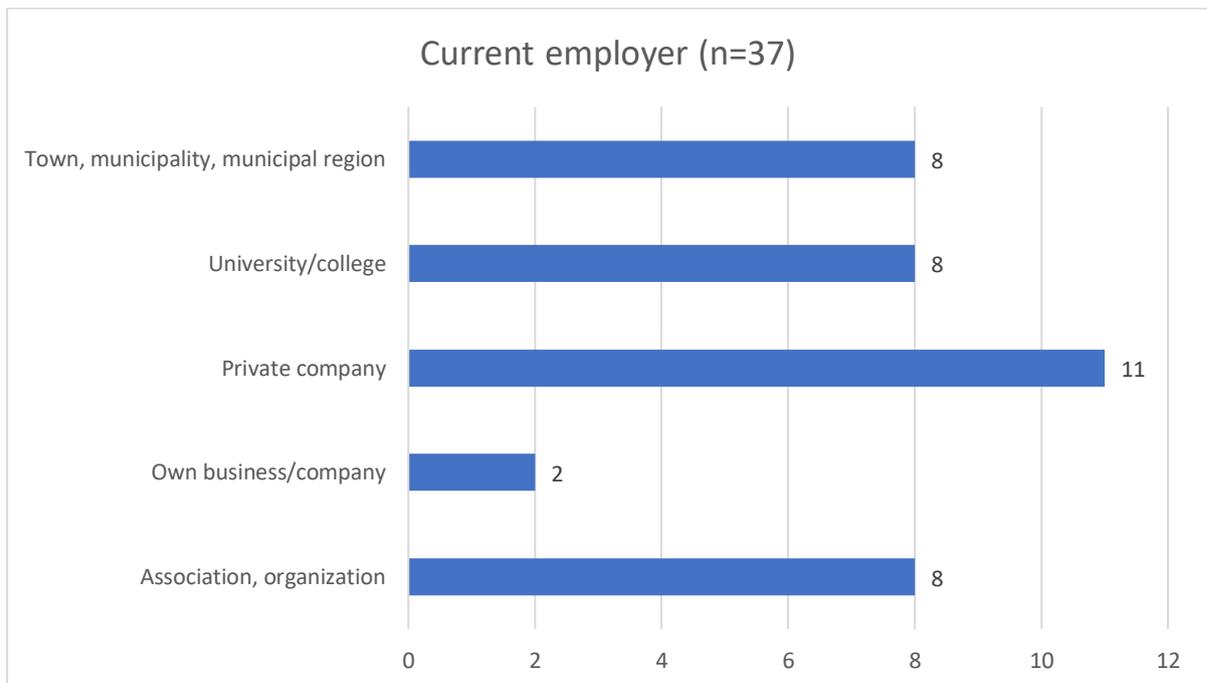


FIGURE 6. Current employers of the respondents.

When running a cross-tabulation of the working field and the sector of the current employer, the results show that 58.3 per cent (n=7) of the ones working outside the field of sport are working in a private company. In contrast, only 16.6 per cent (n=4) of the ones working in the field of sport informed of working in a private company. Furthermore, 25.0 per cent (n=6) of the respondents working in the field of sport informed of working in an association or organization and the corresponding number is only 8.3 per cent (n=1) for the ones working outside the field of sport.

7.2.3 Job titles

The respondents were asked to give their current job title to get an insight into the various duties they might have as part of their work. The titles are grouped here according to the sector of the employer. The titles given in Finnish by the respondents have been translated into English and the original Finnish version of the title is placed in brackets.

- **In the public sector:** Development Manager (kehittämispäällikkö), Doctoral Student, International Coordinator, Leisure Secretary (vapaa-aikasihteeri), Manager, PE Teacher, Planning Officer (suunnittelija), Project Management Assistant, Project Manager, Researcher/Lecturer, Sports Instructor
- **Third sector:** Broadcaster Information Coordinator, Executive Manager (toiminnanjohtaja), Organisation Coordinator, Planner, Project Manager Testing Coordinator (doping), University Sport Manager
- **Private sector:** Advisor in City and Region Marketing, Business Consultant, Community Specialist (sport marketing), Club Manager, Customer Support Manager, Event Producer, General Manager, Group Exercise Instructor, Head of Marketing & Customer Experience, Managing Director, News reporter, Regional lawyer

7.2.4 Salary

The respondents were asked to give their monthly salary in their national currency, which was then converted into euros when analysing the results. However, it is rather difficult to compare the salaries as the graduates are working in different parts of the world and salaries are very different in different countries. Thus, the comparison was done only for the ones working in

Finland and who have given their salary information. The salaries vary from 2,000 euros to 9,500 euros, the medium being around 3,500 euros and the median wage 3,200 euros (figure 7).

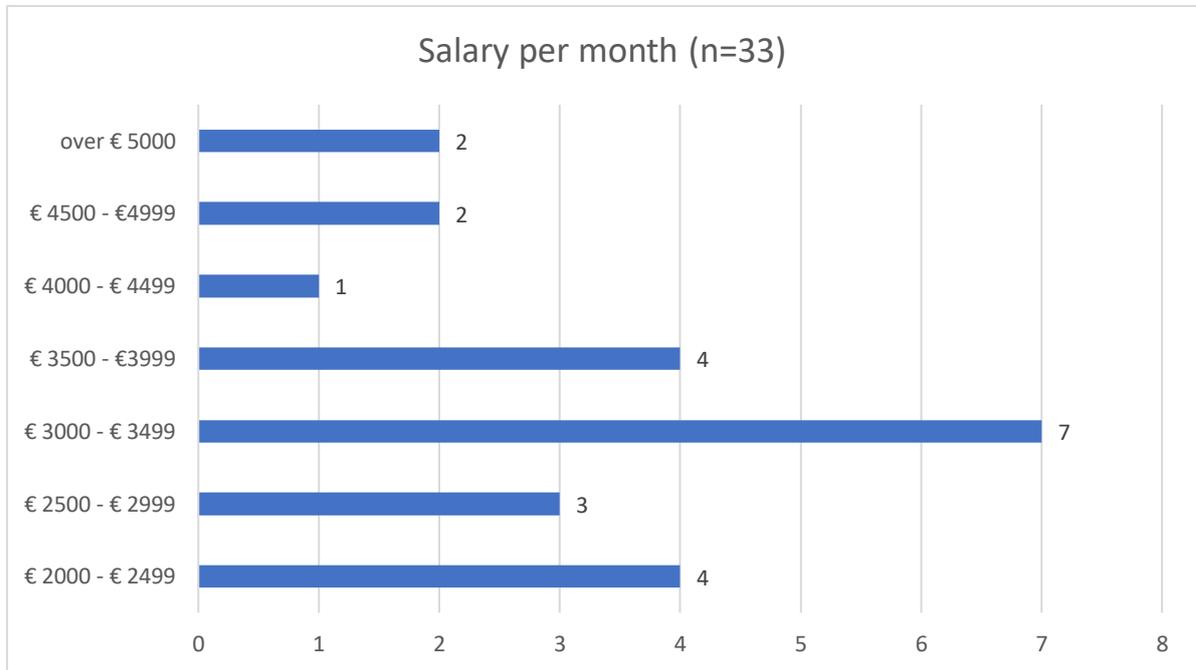


FIGURE 7. Salary per month for respondents working in Finland.

7.2.5 Finding the current job

The respondents had received their current job mainly (52.5 %, n=21) with an application to a position that was advertised online in job advertisements or job openings. Altogether 25.0 per cent (n=10) had received their job by contacting the employer directly and 22.5 per cent (n=9) had been contacted by the employer, meaning that they were headhunted for the position. Furthermore, 20.0 (n=8) per cent had found their job through acquaintances or relatives and 7.5 (n=3) per cent had gotten the job with an open application. Only 10.0 per cent (n=4) had been able to secure the job through an internship and 2.5 per cent (n=1) through the social media.

One question in the survey also aimed to discover more in detail if the respondents had been able to secure the current job through their previous contacts, which they had with their current employer during their studies in the form of, for instance, internship, summer job or thesis. Of the respondents, 22.2 per cent (n=8) reported of having a contact through the studies with their current employer, whereas 77.8 per cent (n=28) responded of not having any contact with the current employer.

7.2.6 Significance of SpoSMaPro education for current job

The respondents were asked to estimate the significance of the SpoSMaPro education for their current job on a five-point Likert scale (1 = no benefit at all ... 5 = very beneficial) and 63.9 per cent (n=23) answered that they found the education to be beneficial or very beneficial (giving the value of 4 or 5) for their current job. On the other hand, 16.7 per cent (n=6) were of the opinion that the education was not that beneficial (giving the value of 1 or 2) for them in relation to their current job. The information is illustrated in more detail in figure 8.

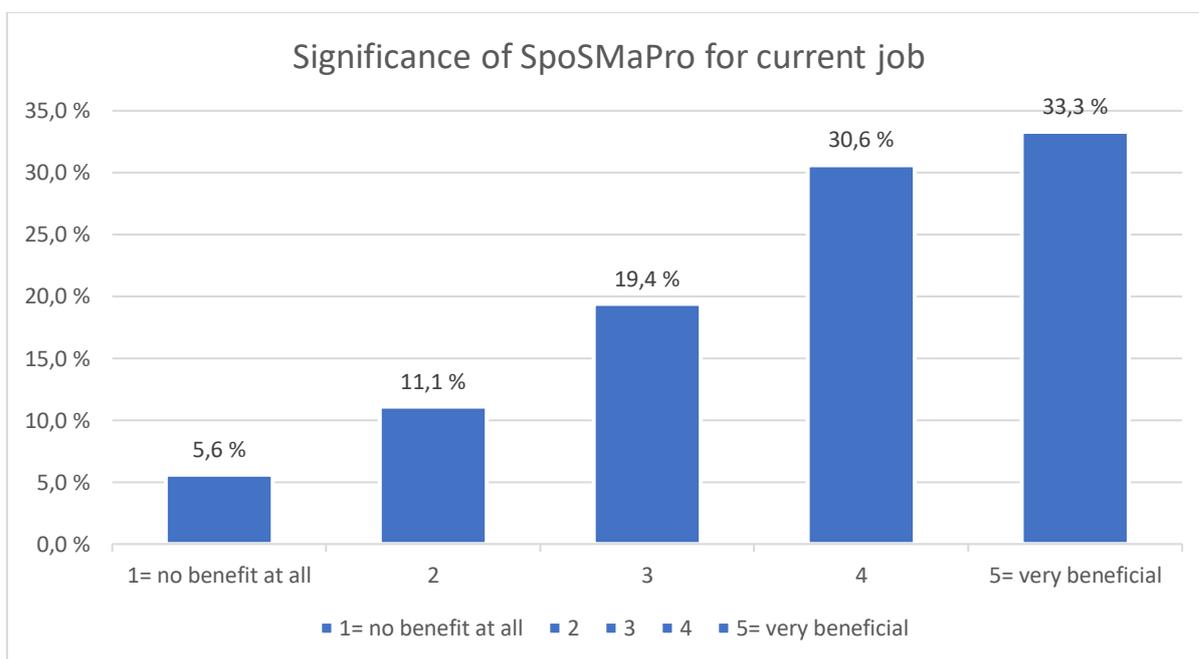


FIGURE 8. Significance of the SpoSMaPro education for the current job.

When comparing the field of work with the significance of the education for the current job, it is apparent that the education is valued as more significant among the ones working in the field of sport. However, also among the ones working in some other field 50 per cent (n=6) say that the education has been beneficial or very beneficial for their current job (figure 9).

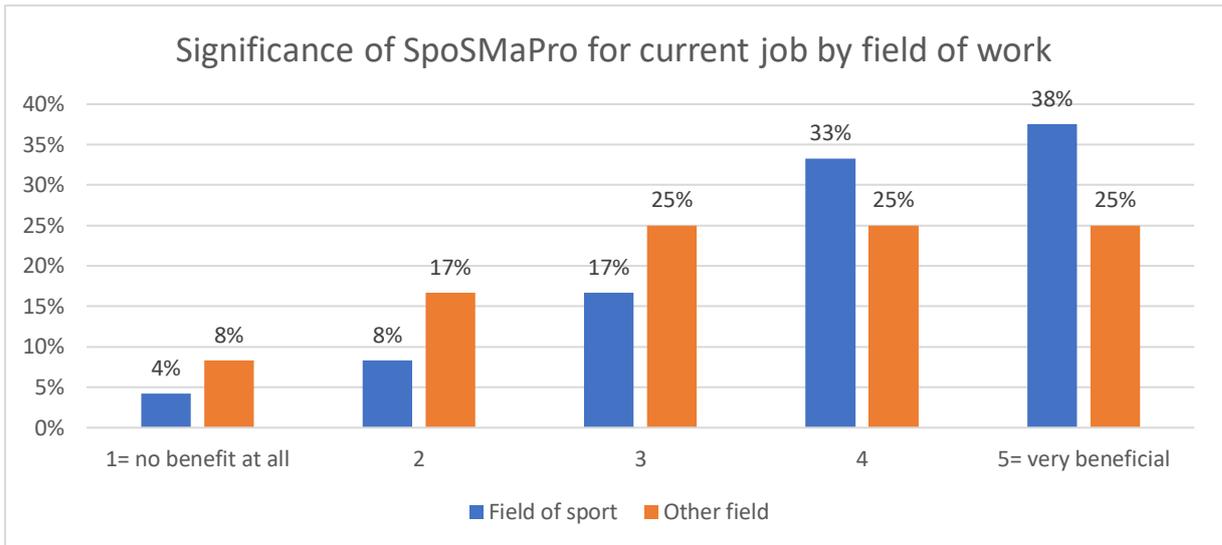


FIGURE 9. Significance of SpoSMaPro education for current job according to working field.

In the open-ended questions, the respondents who were working in some other field than sport, listed some of the aspects they felt they were still able to utilize of the SpoSMaPro education in their current work. Such were management practices (sport management, project management), research skills and data analysis, creativeness, organization skills, sociological understanding, teamwork, marketing and health promotion.

7.2.7 Duties and skills needed in the job

When asked about the proportion of certain tasks and duties in the current job, 77.8 per cent reported planning and development tasks and 75.0 per cent communication as important or very important in their job. Additionally, expertise in a special area was seen as significant part of the job for 63.9 per cent of the respondents. Conversely, 77.8 per cent of the respondents informed that sport instructing was not at all or not that much part of their current job. Moreover, teaching and human resource management are important in only a few respondents' duties. Furthermore, 47.2 per cent (n=17) of the respondents reported that research tasks are only of little or no importance in their duties (figure 10).

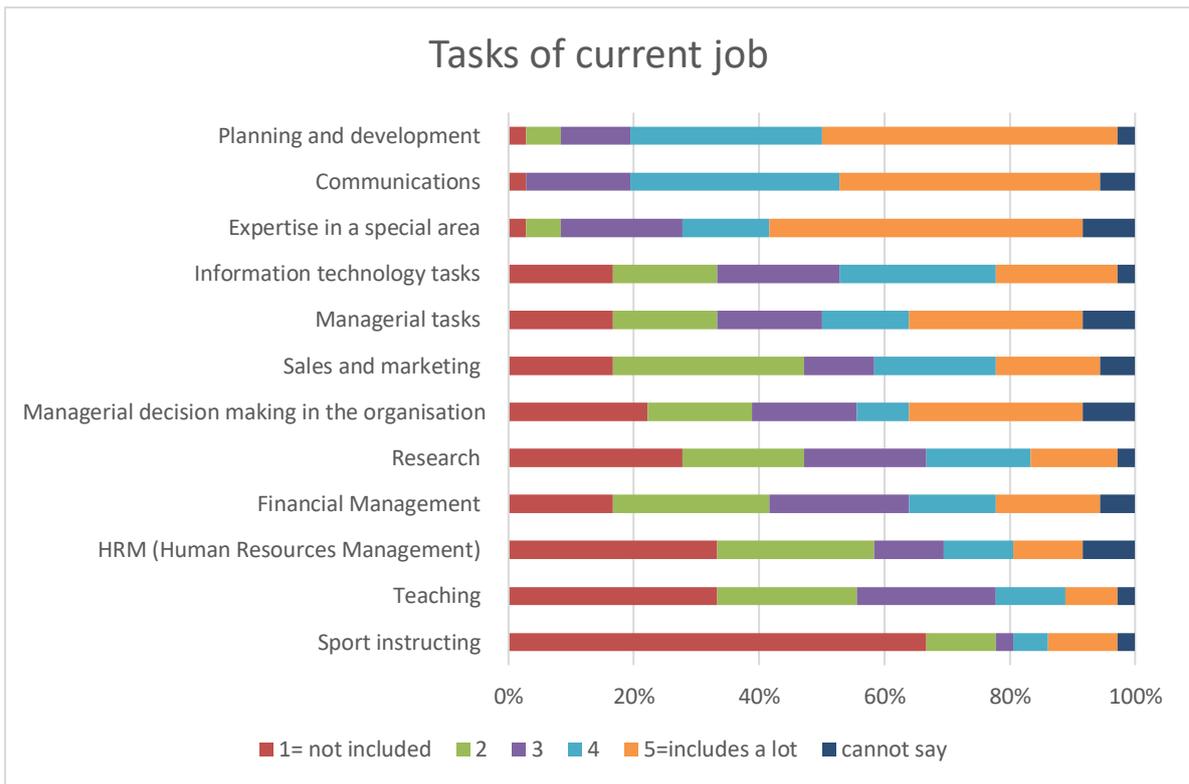


FIGURE 10. Proportion of tasks in current job.

In addition to specific tasks, the respondents were also asked to evaluate their current job in relation to knowledge and skills needed in it. Communication skills (both oral and written presentation skills) were seen as important or very important by over 80 per cent of the respondents. Similarly, organisational skills and leadership skills received high scores. On the contrary, personal sport skills were the least needed as 63.9 per cent saw them as not at all important or not that important in their job. Additionally, of less importance were knowledge and skills in outdoor and sport facility planning (figure 11).



FIGURE 11. Knowledge and skills needed in current job.

7.2.8 Satisfaction with current job

Overall, the respondents seem to be rather satisfied with their current job. The most satisfied they were with the possibilities to influence their own job, the challenges the job provides, the flexibility of the working conditions and the working community, as around 70 per cent of the respondents informed of being satisfied or very satisfied with these aspects. Least satisfied the respondents were on their salary and leadership in the organisation as only around 40 per cent were satisfied or very satisfied with these (figure 12).



FIGURE 12. Satisfaction with aspects of current job

Concerning the question on the satisfaction with the correspondence of the current job and the SpoSMaPro education there was some difference when taking into consideration the working field. Of the ones working in the field of sport, 66.6 per cent (n=16) were either satisfied or very satisfied with the correspondence whereas among the ones working currently in some other field the percentage was 41.6 (n=5). On the other hand, 25.0 per cent (n=3) of the ones working outside the field of sport felt they were unsatisfied with the correspondence (figure 13).

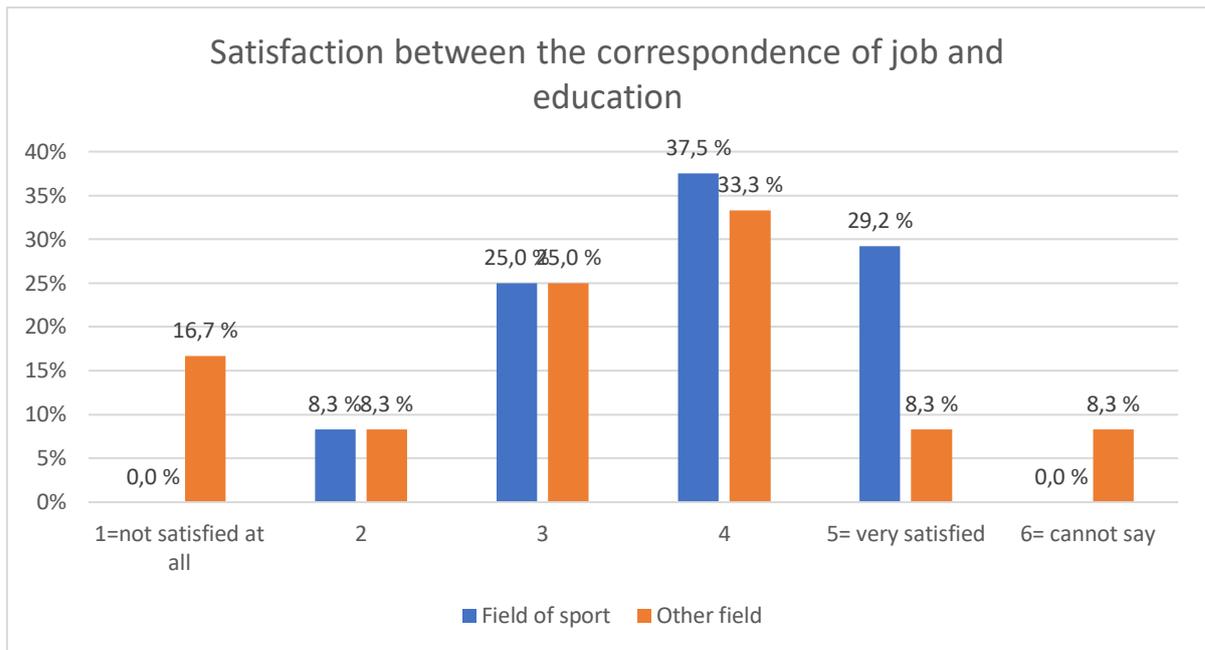


FIGURE 13. Satisfaction with the correspondence of the current job and the SpoSMaPro education by the working field.

7.3 Working career

This section will introduce the working careers of the respondents, from the point of view of being able to find employment. Also, the questions relating to the changes taking place in the working field and benefit of the education for the working career will be explored.

7.3.1 Finding employment

As the most significant factors in finding employment the respondents rated previous work experience (82.9 % saw as significant or very significant), followed by performance in the job interview (77.1 % saw as significant or very significant), other education acquired (65.7 % saw as significant or very significant) and the degree from the SpoSMaPro programme (60.0 % saw as significant or very significant). The least weight was given to grades, personal sport career, gender and Master's thesis topic (figure 14).

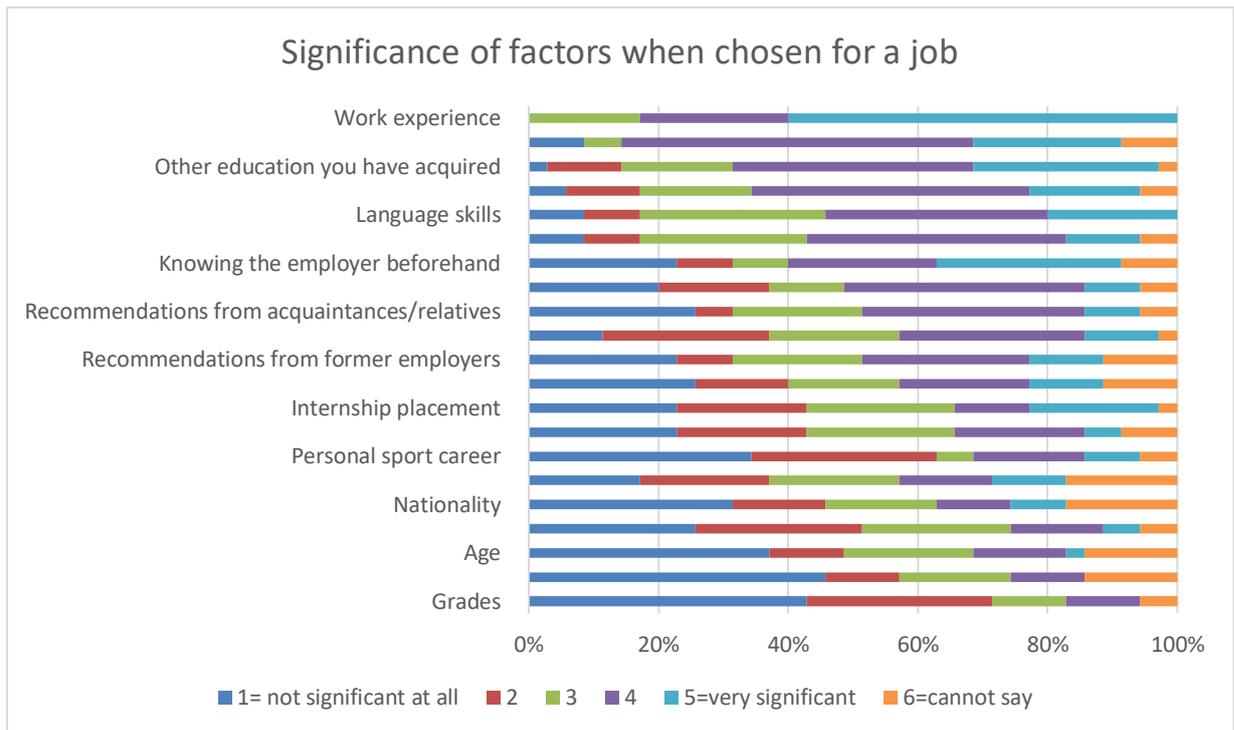


FIGURE 14. Significance of various factors when chosen for a job.

7.3.2 Number of jobs and unemployment

In addition to giving information on their current job, the respondents were asked to list their other jobs and working titles, organisations and lengths, which they have had after graduating from the programme. According to the results, the respondents had had between one to seven full-time jobs and 2.9 of them on average. Seven respondents informed of having had more than three jobs after their graduation.

In addition, the length of possible unemployment was enquired with two questions. Firstly, the length of employment before finding the first job after graduation and secondly, the total length of employment after graduation from the SpoSMaPro programme. Altogether 75.0 per cent (n=27) of the respondents informed that they have not been unemployed at all between graduation and finding their first job and the rest of the respondents reported of being unemployed between one to six months before finding their first job after graduated. This is also somewhat supported by the fact that 44.4 per cent (n=16) were already employed full-time by the time of graduation and 11.1 per cent (n=4) were employed part-time (figure 15). Only two respondents expressed that they deliberately prolonged their graduation because of the difficult employment situation. The total lengths of unemployment after graduation vary from zero to 12 months with 69.4 per cent (n=25) of the respondents informing of not being employed

at all, 19.6 per cent (n=7) of being employed for one to six months and 11.2 per cent (n=4) of being employed over six months.

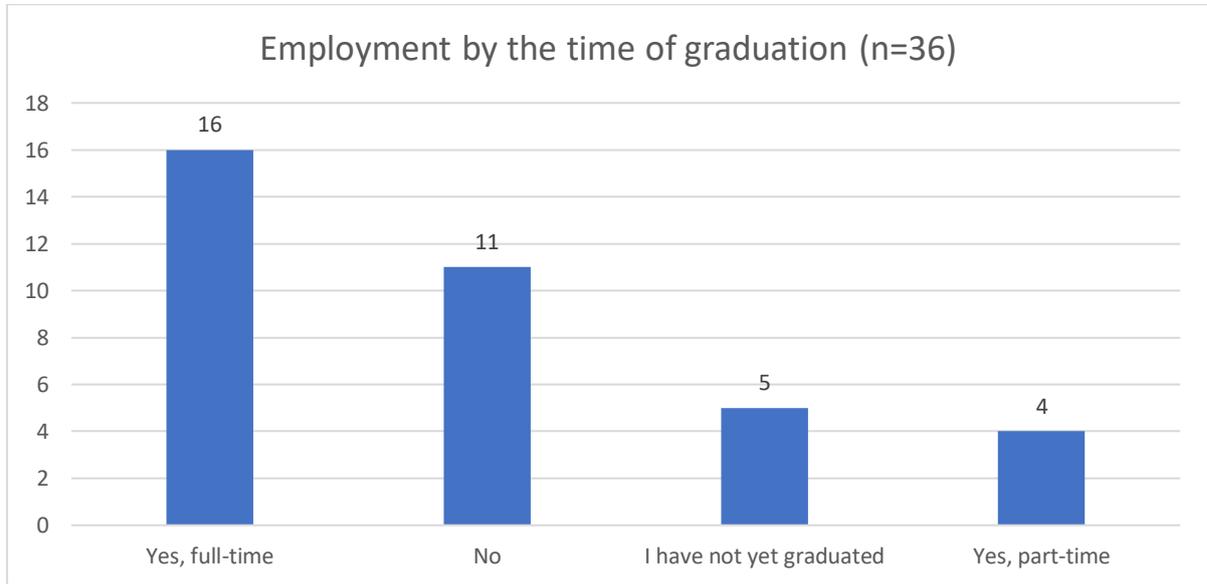


FIGURE 15. Employment by the time of graduation

In order to find out how the respondents saw the current employment situation in the field of sport, they were asked to evaluate how easy it would be to find a new job that would correspond with their education and work experience if they became unemployed. The results show that 41.7 per cent (n=15) of the respondents would find it difficult or very difficult to find a permanent job whereas 38.9 per cent (n=14) saw it to be easy or very easy to find a temporary job.

The respondents were also asked to give the number of jobs they have applied for after graduation and how many of their applications have been successful. According to the results 50.0 per cent (n=18) had applied for less than five jobs, whereas 13.9 per cent (n=5) had applied for more than 20 jobs (figure 16). On the other hand, 61.1 per cent (n=22) had received one to two jobs with their applications, 13.9 per cent (n=5) had been able to secure three to five positions and only one respondents informed of not being able to get a job at all (figure 17).

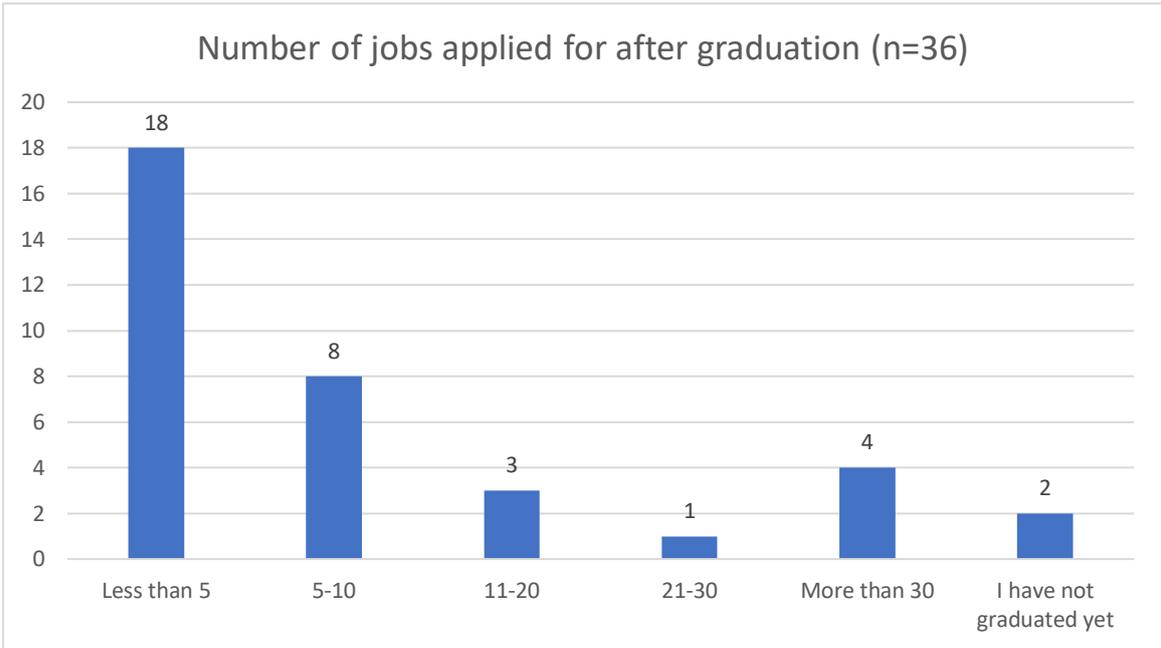


FIGURE 16. Number jobs applied for after graduation.

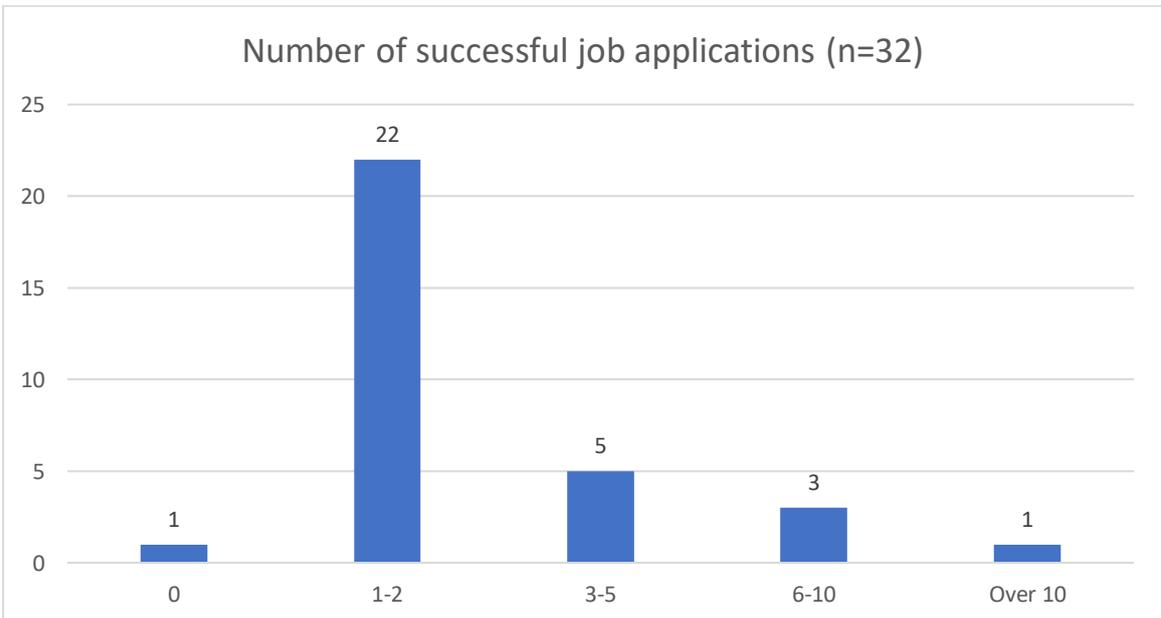


FIGURE 17. Number of successful job applications.

7.3.3 Additional education acquired

In one of the open-ended questions, it was possible for the respondents to inform the additional education they have acquired in addition to the SpoSMaPro degree. This could give indication

on the elements that the respondents have felt missing or scarce in the SpoSMaPro curriculum, but which are still needed in the working life by the graduates. Altogether 21 respondents listed some of the additional education they have acquired in either working life or elsewhere. The responses varied a great deal, but the most common additional education was in the field of business, economics and marketing as seven respondents informed of having taken further studies on these topics. Other fields mentioned at least three times were leadership, coaching and language and communication studies.

7.3.4 Changes taking place in the field of sport management

The respondents were also asked to assess in which ways the field of sport as a professional working environment has changed during their working career. Some of the respondents felt that due to their relatively short working career, they were not able to answer the question, but quite many expressed their thoughts about the current changes taking place in the field. Definitely, the most common answer was that the field has become more business-oriented and professionally run, in all of the three sectors, which can also mean that there are more highly educated people working in the field and fighting for the same jobs.

“The field of health and fitness has become more business oriented.”

“It is becoming more and more professional. People are better educated and simply, better at their jobs.”

“More organisations becoming professionally run, but still a lack of positions for specifically sport educated backgrounds. It is a closed employment market.”

“It has become more professional. In the field of international sport events, there are more and more people with good qualifications and a broad knowledge which is why the fight for jobs get tougher and tougher.”

“More and more management and business skills needed in the third sector.”

“The private sector is getting more relevant in terms of employing people; borders between the three sectors have become increasingly blurred -> good examples of this are the various skills needed in the different sectors as well as the elements of business-like operation in the third sector.”

Some respondents were of the opinion that there has been a shift to more part-time work and that one will need to do several jobs simultaneously. It was also expressed that due to the changes in the structures of sport organisations less people are employed especially to the public sector, but more on the private and third sector. Additionally, the increase in the use of technology in the field was mentioned in couple of the answers.

“Work is more and more hectic and it might be that you will need to have several part-time positions at the same time.”

“There has been lots of changes. Organization structures have changes in the national associations (SLU, Nuori Suomi, Kuntoliikuntaliitto--> Valo). Field is more organised at the moment and the general employment contracts have improved.”

“More reliant on technology. Athletes want high quality reliable training data. Many people are prepared to pay money for technology if they believe it will make them get fit.”

7.3.5 Benefits of SpoSMaPro education for working career

The respondents were asked to evaluate the significance of some of the subject areas taught in the SpoSMaPro programme for their whole working career. According to the results, most value was given to language and communication studies as 85.7 per cent (n=30) responded that they found them to have been beneficial or very beneficial for them. In addition, planning and implementation of sport events, sport and leisure management and sport planning received high scores. On the other hand, the respondents rated as the least beneficial the contents of health sciences, research methodology, sport sociology and civic activities in sport (figure 18).

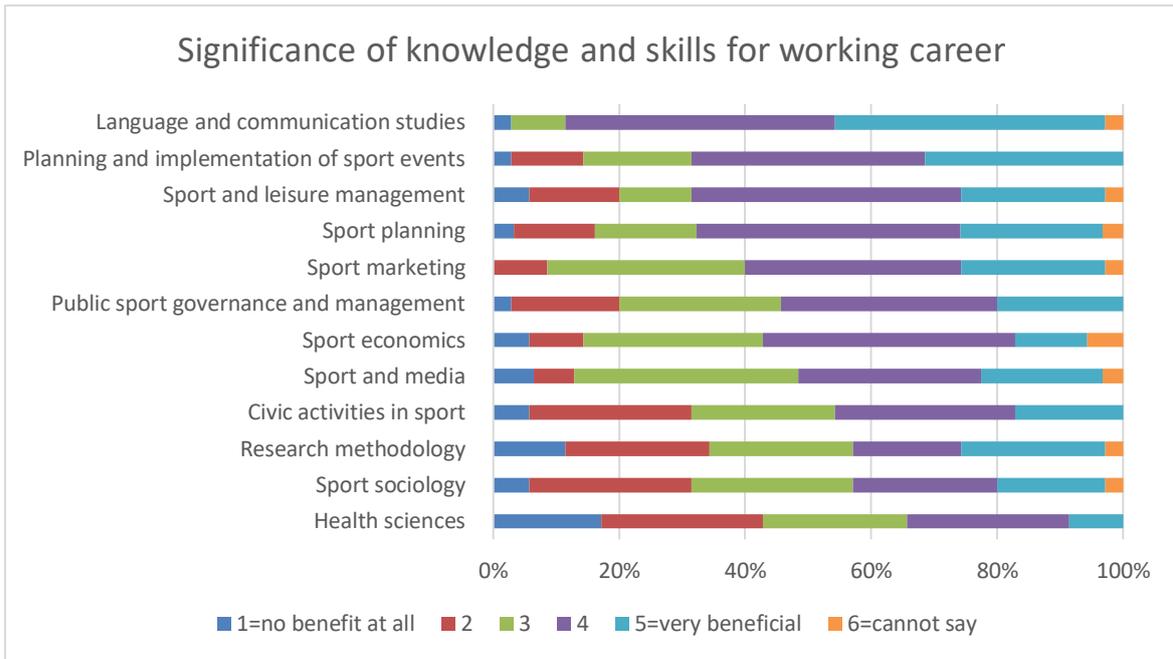


FIGURE 18. Significance of the knowledge in the subject areas for the whole working career.

7.4 About the SpoSMaPro education and ideas for future development

One of the open-ended questions dealt with the best aspects of the studies in the SpoSMaPro programme. Around half of the respondents mentioned the fact that they had especially enjoyed the international and multicultural programme and group of students. Through meeting people from various parts of the world, the students had gained new insight into the field of sport and life in general.

“(...) the international experience (knowing different cultures, realizing many aspects of my country that I hadn't seen before and about the world) (...)”

“I enjoyed the international atmosphere and the study abroad year gave me a lot.”

“To study in multicultural group and acquiring information from many different areas of sports management.”

Majority of the respondents also appreciated the versatile contents of the programme as they felt it gave a profound look at the field of sport and an opportunity to continue to study or work

on broad range of fields. Additionally, the fact that there was also a great deal of optional studies within the curriculum, which means possibilities to select contents of the degree quite freely, was seen as one of the best features of the programme.

“The studies included wide range of information regarding to sports.”

“Discussions about sport-related topics, meeting new people, interesting lectures and learning about the field in general.”

“Compact curricula in 2 years, possibilities for future studies.”

“I enjoyed the freedom the studies had to offer. Within most of the courses you could focus on your own interest field. Furthermore, I really appreciated the international and interactive character.”

“(…) relative freedom to choose what to concentrate on during the studies.”

The diverse teaching methods used in the programme was something appreciated by many of the respondents. Some of the teaching methods might have also been very different that the students had been used to in their home countries. The number of students in each of the year groups has varied from ten to 19 and big part of the studies are completed within this small group. This was valued by many as they had enjoyed working in a small and tight group and been able to make friends with them during the studies. Some of the respondents had also enjoyed the relatively relaxed atmosphere and low hierarchy between students and teachers, which is common to the Finnish higher education system.

“(…) The way of teaching (independent learning, reading, group work, options of studying abroad) (…).”

“The lecturer and student interaction and the interesting topics that made us search and utilise the information we gathered to use in real world contexts. Research and analysis methods for me personally has made me better prepared and to utilise in my working environment.”

“We had a really good group of fellow professionals during my time there. We are still actively in touch with each other through various social media sites.”

“Company with peers - still in contact with many classmates (…)”

“(...) the importance that students have as human beings and not only the results they can give, the horizontal relationship between students and teachers or professors (...)”

7.4.1 Ideas for developing the SpoSMaPro programme further

In order to get some fresh insights from the working life perspective in developing the curriculum of the programme, a question was included about the ideas the graduates had on improving the programme further. Altogether 22 respondents expressed some ideas of development. The most common answer (n=7) had to do with increasing the cooperation and contacts with the employers and working life and adding more practical aspects in to the curriculum.

“(---) Get more exchanges with the "real working life" in order to show students for what they study and so that they can start networking already while at uni. Less theoretical stuff and more practical related topics.”

“More cooperation with other faculties at the uni and other stakeholders in the field of sport may bring even more know-how available for the students.”

Additionally, increasing the importance, quality and length of the internship placement were mentioned many times together with the wishes to include more business and management contents in the curriculum, especially in relation to the needs of the working life of today. Someone also expressed their concern on finding employment for foreign students in Finland to keep them in the country after graduation.

“I would extend the period of the internship. Personally, I found it useless to do such a short internship, where I had already done several 6-months internships. Moreover, I think internships should be at least 4 months of length in order to get to know a company/business/industry etc.”

“I would like to suggest more courses on contemporary topics/trends of sport and more content on sport marketing and management.”

“When I look at how the curricula was during my time, I would suggest to definitely improve the marketing bit as this is a crucial factor in today’s sport business. (---)”

“More work needs to be done to ensure that those students that graduate stay in Finland and we don't have this (Brain drain). Establishing internship placements so that students can continue there upon graduation is one option.”

7.4.2 Greetings to the current students

At the end of the questionnaire, the respondents had the opportunity to send greetings and advice to the current students in the programme. The responses were very versatile. A very common advice, however, was the importance of utilizing the networking opportunities both within the programme, but also outside of the university to broaden the knowledge of the field and the possibilities of finding employment after graduation.

“Network, maintain good relations with your peers and teachers, study smart (not necessarily hard :), enjoy Finland, Jyväskylä and the people you meet.”

“Work hard with what you are interested in. Connect with people within the university and especially with organisations outside the university.”

“Socialise as much as possible with the group. Use every opportunity to network and make contacts, especially if you plan on working in Finland. If you like the look of an organisation, send them an open application and be super persistent. I was in contact with the organisation for more than 6 months before it paid off.”

“Don’t just rely on your studies! If you want to work in sports, get your nose in the business by volunteering e.g.!”

As the programme gives quite many possibilities for flexibility in the selection of the study contents, it was also advised that students should utilize this as much as they can. Additionally, the importance of working hard on the thesis and finding a good internship placement were mentioned.

“Try to take courses in various subjects to gain broad knowledge of the field.”

“Enjoy this wonderful international experience to the fullest, and develop yourself as much as possible in the directions you would want to develop yourself in!”

“Enjoy your time in Jyväskylä, Enjoy the studies, Try to find an internship place where there is a possibility to continue there after studies.”

“Study hard, enjoy your time at JYU. Start and finish thesis asap.”

Some respondents also highlighted the good opportunities the programme gave in finding employment in the field after graduation. Most were also of the opinion that the students had made a good choice in applying to the programme and wished that they would enjoy their time in the programme to the fullest as it only takes two years and, thus, goes very fast.

“The programme is highly recommendable in order to be employed after graduation in this field.”

“Good luck in your studies, SposMaPro is an excellent programme that will give you great chances of finding the job you want to have in the future.”

“Enjoy your time in the greatest campus in Finland! Take full advantage of your time there :)“

“2 years are short. So treasure every second in Liikunta. I believe you will benefit a lot from SposMaPro”

8 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, the results of my study will be analysed in more detail and conclusions made based on the analysis. Also, the reliability and validity of the study will be discussed, together with the significance of the study. Finally, some suggestions are made for further studies that could be conducted on the topic in the future.

8.1 Respondents and working life

Altogether 38 responses were received to the survey and of them, 43 per cent (n=13) of the respondents had graduated in 2010 or earlier, so they have been away from the programme five years or more, and 57 per cent (n=17) had graduated between 2011 and 2015. Five respondents (13.5 %) informed that they had not graduated from the programme yet, but they were included in the study as they are in the working life currently. As 57 per cent of the respondents had graduated between 2011 and 2015, they have most likely not been than long in the working life, and their views of the needs of the working life and the changes taking place in it can be limited, which some of them also stated also in the open-ended questions. On the other hand, as 43 per cent of the respondents have been away from the programme for 5 years or more, their views, for instance, on the contents of the programme might be somewhat out-of-date.

As the programme is international by nature, also the origin of the respondents was inquired. Altogether 57 per cent (n=20) informed that they are of Finnish origin, 29 per cent (n=10) from other European countries, 11 per cent (n=4) from Asia and 3 per cent (n=1) from the Americas. It would have been good to receive answers from also others than such a big number of Finnish graduates as it can give quite a one-sided view of the situation of the graduates. However, the big number of Finnish respondents is explained by the fact that 48 per cent (n=48) of the overall student body during 2005 and 2013 has been of Finnish origin. As most of the Finns have stayed in Finland for work, they have also most likely kept closer contacts with the programme and the university and have probably therefore responded better to the survey.

The students admitted to the programme already have a previous higher education degree and the most common background degrees of the respondents were Bachelor degree in Business Administration (n=8), Sport Management (n=5), Sport (other than Sport Management) (n=6), Social Sciences (n=2), Economics (n=2). In addition to these background degrees, there was a variety of other fields represented. It is important to take this information into account when

analysing the results, as it can be the case that students' background might affect their answers in many ways, for example in their views on the contents of the programme, employment opportunities or the field in which they are currently working.

As only one respondent informed of being unemployed and almost 80 per cent were employed full-time by the time answering the survey, it seems that almost all have some kind of relation to working life and a majority of them (58%) were working in a permanent position. Furthermore, 70 per cent reported that they had not been unemployed at all after graduation. Thus, the working situation of the graduates looks very good and they have not heavily suffered from unemployment. However, it needs to be noted that the ones who are currently unemployed or in a worse professional situation might be underrepresented in this study, as they might not be so willing to answer such a survey.

As the programme and the student body is international, it was expected that the graduates are working in various parts of the world. However, 28 of the respondents were currently working in Finland and only nine in some other country. Furthermore, 78 per cent (n=18) of the ones working in Finland were of Finnish origin and 22 per cent (n=5) of other European origin. This raises the question, whether a bigger number of the international graduates would have liked to stay in Finland to work, but they have not been able to find suitable jobs in Finland. For example, all of the graduates of Asian origin had moved to China for work. This question is, however, difficult to answer based on this survey, as there were such a few graduates of other than Finnish origin responding to the survey and there was no separate question inquiring this detail.

Of the ones taking part in the survey, 67 per cent (n=24) stated that they are currently working in the field of sport and 33 per cent (n=12) were working in some other field. These results are quite compatible with the results of Ilmola (2015) as in her study 70 per cent were working in the field of sport and 30 per cent in some other field. On the basis of the previous studies within the Finnish education of Social Sciences of Sport, the trend seems to be that graduates are working increasingly also in other fields. In Lahti's (1997, 39) study the proportion was 10 per cent and in Niemelä's (2006, 66) study it was 15 per cent. The increase in working in other fields could be due to many facts, for example, that due to the structural changes in the field there are less positions available or the graduates might feel that the salaries are not competitive in this field. It can be also that the education gives such a good overall basis for working in various fields and positions, so that it is easy and attractive to use this possibility. Moreover, the students entering the SpoSMaPro programme already have another degree, which is many

times from another field, and additionally many of them have also some working experience. Thus, it can be easier for them to return to some other field in case there are no suitable positions available in the field of sport. Unfortunately, it was not inquired from the respondents, why they are working in some other field, so it is not possible to know the reasons for sure.

The respondents are spread working in various sectors of the society as 39 per cent informed of working in the public sector, 36 per cent in private businesses or as entrepreneurs and 22 per cent in the third sector. In the most recent study among the Finnish Social Sciences of Sport graduates by Ilmola (2015), the shares are quite the same, although a bigger share of the respondents of my study seem to be working on the private sector. When compared also to the two other previous studies conducted among the graduates of the Finnish education, it seems that there is a decreasing trend of graduates finding work in the public sector and the jobs are increasingly located in the private and third sector.

The respondents' monthly salaries varied from 2,000 euros to 9,500 euros, the medium being around 3,500 euros and the median wage 3,200 euros. However, it is difficult to compare the salaries as the graduates are working in different parts of the world and salaries are very different in different countries. Thus, the comparison was done only for the ones working in Finland and who have given their salary information. However, the salaries are quite similar as reported by the graduates of the Finnish programme, so it seems that the SpoSMaPro graduates have been able to secure similar level jobs as those graduating from the Finnish programme, although the English-medium programme might not be that familiar among the employers. Also, the fact that many of the SpoSMaPro graduates have a previous degree in some other field and often also work experience before starting in the programme, might give them an advantage concerning the salaries.

Finding a suitable job can sometimes be difficult and, on the other hand, there are many ways to secure a suitable job. The respondents of this study had received their current jobs in rather traditional ways, that is, mainly with an application to a position that was advertised online in job advertisements or job openings. Only ten per cent (n=4) had been able to secure the job through an internship and 22 per cent (n=8) reported of having some contact through the studies with their current employer, whereas 78 per cent (n=28) responded of not having any contact with the current employer.

The above-mentioned findings are also supported by the fact that previous work experience was considered as the most significant factor in finding employment, followed by performance in

the job interview, other education acquired and the degree from the SpoSMaPro programme. This could indicate that the direct connections to working life are not crucial as such in finding a job, but more important are the opportunities to learn the skills needed in working life. Skills acquired in working life are seen important, but also the fact that education is considered beneficial as well. Most likely, a combination of all these aspects can give a good basis for finding employment and, thus, there should be possibilities to connect with the working life also during the studies. According to the respondents, and what is very typical for Finnish educational system and Finnish society, the grades of the degree and the gender have played only a small part in finding employment. However, it would be interesting to see if this looked any different if there were more graduates coming from outside of Finland represented in this study.

What do the graduates then do in the current jobs? Almost 78 per cent reported planning, development tasks, and 75 per cent communication as an important or very important feature in their job. Additionally, expertise in a special area was seen as significant part of the job for 64 per cent, although the amount is much less than in the study of Ilmola (2015, 43) where over 80 per cent informed working a great deal with this aspect. However, all of this indicates that the graduates are mainly in such jobs that equal their education with regard to the demands of the job. Conversely, almost 80 per cent of the respondents informed that sport instructing was not at all or not that much part of their current job, so it seems that the respondents do not do, at least full time, sport instructing although they might do it more in addition to other duties. Also, human resource management, teaching, sales and marketing and research tasks are important in only a few respondents' duties.

Although throughout the study, many of the respondents requested more business management contents to be added to the SpoSMaPro programme, this is not reflected in the current duties of the graduates, as this task area does not seem to be that important in the jobs. However, this could be because the graduates do not feel comfortable taking jobs with such tasks, and thus, not even apply to such positions or are not selected for them. According to Hoyer et al (2015, 222) many sport managers are not comfortable handling money or making financial planning, because they often do not have the knowledge and experience of managing complex financial issues. Overall, based on the replies in various sections of the survey, this financial management and business side is getting more important in the field of sport and should be taken into account when planning the curriculum of the programme.

According to various researchers (e.g. Alla, 1996; Atkins, 1995, Eraut, 2002; Young, 2002 as cited in Tynjälä et al. 2006, 76), in addition to subject specific knowledge, academic graduates need also many other skills in working life. This was also supported by the findings of my study. Communication skills (both oral and written) were seen as important or very important by over 80 per cent of the respondents in their current job and, additionally, organisational skills and leadership skills received high scores. What also needs to be noted is that the 56 per cent informed of needing intercultural skills in their jobs, which could be higher than usually as the graduates come from an international programme and might end up more easily in such jobs where there is the element of internationality or interculturality. However, unfortunately this cannot be compared to, for example, the studies among the Finnish education, as the need for intercultural skills has not been inquired in that survey. On the other hand, an aspect missing from the questionnaire of this study, was the element of team working skills, which can be considered as important for academic graduates on the basis of the previous research and theories. Possibly a question concerning this element could be added to future studies on the SpoSMaPro graduates.

All in all, the respondents seemed to be rather satisfied with their current jobs. The most satisfied they were with the possibilities to influence their own job, the challenges the job provides, the flexibility of the working conditions and the working community. Furthermore, the respondents were also rather satisfied also with the correspondence of their current job and the education received from the SpoSMaPro. As the respondents are satisfied with their current jobs, it could indicate that they most likely will stay in the jobs and in the field. Salary was one of the aspects the respondents were least satisfied with, but people in general might also be unsatisfied with their salary. Also in the previous studies (Ilmola 2015; Lahti 1997; Niemelä 2006) conducted among the Finnish students, salary has been one of the aspects the respondents have been least satisfied as well.

8.2 Education in relation to the needs of the working life

This study also aimed at finding out how well the graduates feel they have received the needed skills for their working career from the education. Most value was given to language and communication studies taught in the SpoSMaPro programme as 86 per cent (n=30) responded that they found those either beneficial or very beneficial for them. Thus, it seems that the graduates value the most something that is not the core content of the programme, but rather

additional “soft” or generic skills that are most likely needed in jobs equalling the level of their education. This is supported by, for example, a Swiss study conducted among sport science graduates, where the generic competencies were also considered as particularly important in relation to the current job by graduates (Schlesinger et al 2015, 125) In addition, planning and implementation of sport events, sport and leisure management and sport planning received high scores, which could indicate that the graduates have benefited from, or appreciate, the more practical elements of these modules, as all of them are more practically, rather than theoretically, oriented.

The education in the SpoSMaPro programme was evaluated rather important and beneficial for the current jobs of the graduates. On the other hand, as the graduates have also another degree, it can be difficult to identify the exact importance and influence of a certain degree to the job. However, it is interesting to notice that also among those graduates who are currently working in some other field than sport, 50 per cent (n=6) said that the education has been beneficial or very beneficial for their current job. Conversely, it needs to be noted that 50 per cent of them did not see that much benefit of the programme although the programme aims at giving a comprehensive education that could be utilised broadly. This could also indicate that the graduates are in such jobs that might have lower skill and knowledge requirements, and thus, they are not able to utilise the learning outcomes in their current job.

The survey also aimed to convey some of the missing elements in the SpoSMaPro curriculum as perceived by the graduates. Especially interesting was the fact that there was such a big number of respondents with a previous degree in the field of business and, furthermore, the most common optional studies or further studies completed by the respondents were to be Business studies (including business, economics, finance, marketing). Furthermore, there were a great deal of wishes to include more business and management contents in the programme. This is undoubtedly something that needs to be taken into consideration when developing the curriculum. It seems that it is not enough that the students are able to take for example the Basic Business Studies contents as part of their optional studies, but possibly, they would like to see contents combining the sport and business and that the courses would be offered directly by the SpoSMaPro programme. Therefore, it would be interesting to find out in more detail, what kinds of business study content in particular the graduates feel they would need.

Another popular area of optional studies completed by the respondents was Language and Communication courses, although the programme already includes a big number of these studies. This could be due to the fact that the students are already internationally oriented and

want to utilize the possibilities the university offers in e.g. foreign language courses, but also that they would like to have a career were these skills can be utilized.

In the survey, there were no specific questions about the aspects that the graduates would leave out from the curriculum and the respondents did not make any such suggestions in the open-ended questions either. However, the respondents saw that the least important for their career were the contents in health sciences, research methods, sport sociology and civic activities in sport. As the health sciences became a part of the curriculum only in 2013, for most of the graduates this response option was actually not applicable which can at least to some extent explain the result.

Furthermore, 47 per cent (n=17) of the respondents reported that research activities are only of little or no importance at all in their current duties. Unfortunately, the importance of research skills for the current job was not directly inquired, but instead there was a question about the skills in data collection methods which leaves out, for example, skills in analysing or reporting research findings. It can be argued that the respondents need these skills in their jobs, as they most likely need at least some basic understanding of interpreting and reporting research findings, although they might not directly have research duties, as such, as part of their jobs. However, they might need skills in conducting at least small surveys and analysing and utilising existing research data. Overall, research skills are of course valuable in writing the Master's thesis as part of the degree and give possibilities for continuing for PhD studies, so they are needed as part of the programme curriculum also in the future.

Additionally, the contents of sport sociology and civic activities of sport are such core elements and of importance for an expert in the field of social sciences of sport, that excluding them from the curriculum is not an option also in the future. It can also be argued, that the above-mentioned contents will give some underlying basis for analytic thinking skills and understanding of the society around us, so although the need for them in the working life is not so apparent, they are still most likely needed in the jobs of professionals in the field.

Concerning the changes in the field of sport management, the respondents felt that the field of sport as a working life field had become more business-oriented and professional in all of the three sectors, which is also supported by the previous studies in the field (e.g. Ilmola 2015). However, some of the respondents felt that due to their relatively short working career they were not able to express their thoughts on this. Thus, it would be interesting to repeat the study to have students' views recorded after a few more years in the working life. In addition, it seems

that the competition for jobs has become severer as there are more highly educated people competing for the jobs, and in the same time, there are many structural changes happening in the field, which diminish the number of positions especially in the public sector. However, the graduates feel that there might be new possibilities opening in the private and third sector. This needs to be taken into consideration also when developing the programme and the contents of the curriculum. Additionally, new contacts to private and third sector actors could be created in order to help the students to become familiar with these sectors and learn from the professionals on the special characteristics of the various sectors.

The respondents named the international and multicultural programme and groups of students as the best factors of the SpoSMaPro education as it gives an opportunity to gain new information and insights into the field from multiple perspectives. In an international programme this is of course an added value when compared to more monocultural programmes. Additionally, the multidisciplinary approach with the versatile contents and the varying teaching methods of the programme were highly valued. However, for some it might feel that during the two years, it is possible only to scratch the surface of so many different topics, but it should be emphasised that students can select certain contents they want to study more deeply through their optional studies, internship and Master's thesis. On the other hand, the diverse contents can give a good basis for possibilities in working on a variety of professions in the future.

Many respondents had enjoyed working in a small and tight group of students with a low hierarchy between the students and staff during the two years in the programme. In a small group of students, it is easier to go deeper into the topics and the students become a cohesive unit helping each other in the learning process. Additionally, the teaching staff can have a more personal contact with the students and help them in their learning individually. As the resources seem to be constantly decreasing in the higher education in Finland, it would be important to ensure that there is a possibility, also in the future, to maintain small group sizes especially at the Master level of studies. In addition, it would be important that there were enough resources for individual instruction for the students to find the suitable contents for their studies and to enable them to develop the required skills and competencies for the needs of the working life.

The most common answer how to develop the SpoSMaPro programme further had to do with increasing cooperation and contacts with the employers and working life and the practical aspects in the curriculum. This was also highlighted by the requests to increase the importance, quality and length of the internship placement. This supports the information from previous

studies (e.g. De Luca et al, 2016, 5; Ilmola 2015; Schwab et al 2015, 8) and literature in the field of sport management that students would like to have more contacts with the working life already during their studies to learn about the skills and knowledge needed for their career and to be able to direct their studies in a proper way. However, as it can be argued that a great deal of these connections and practical elements can already be found in the current curriculum, one can wonder how much of this kind of content would be enough from the point of view of the graduates. It is also possible that the changes made to the curriculum regarding the practical elements in the past few years are not seen in this study yet, so it would be interesting to see if the results were different if the study was repeated in a few years' time.

What was interesting concerning this topic was that in addition to requiring the networking opportunities to be created by the programme, the graduates also saw that it is the responsibility of the students to utilise these connections and be active outside the university settings in creating their own networks during the two years of studies. This was considered especially important for international students if they liked to stay in Finland after graduation. Overall, the graduates congratulated the current students in making a good choice of coming to the programme, as they seem to feel that the programme gives a good basis for finding employment in the field of sport management.

Overall, the results are very similar with the results of the studies conducted on the Finnish education in Social Sciences of Sport. This could be explained by the fact that English-medium programme stems from the Finnish programme, although there are some differences as well. Moreover, most of the respondents were Finns working in Finland, so that might also explain why their responses are very similar to the Finnish study.

8.3 Reliability and validity of the study

As measurements are seldom perfect, especially when using questionnaires, it can often cause measurement errors. Thus, reliability and validity of the research need to be evaluated. Although many times used as synonyms, reliability and validity have different meanings in statistics. Reliability concerns the consistency of measures and the ability to receive similar results when the study is repeated. Validity on the other hand, tries to assess to which extent a concept measures the thing it was designed to measure. Although being different concepts, reliability and validity are still related to each other. If a measure is not reliable, it cannot be valid. However, a study can be reliable although it might not be valid. Thus, the most

appropriate research design should be used to ensure both the reliability and the validity of the research. (Singh, 2007)

According to Hirsjärvi et. al. (2004, 184) the advantages of surveys are the facts that it is possible to collect large amounts of data, it is effective and easy to analyse. However, the interpretation of the data can prove problematic and there are also weaknesses in the survey method. Many times, the data can be shallow and the research theoretically modest. When using a survey method, it is not possible to know, for example how serious and truthful the respondents have been in their answers or how well the response options have worked from the point of view of the respondents, i.e. for instance if they have understood them correctly. These problems are of course possible in my study, as the respondents are only quite few and it is not possible to know how truthfully they have answered to the questions and if they have understood all the questions as intended.

The questionnaire used in my study is mainly similar to the one used in Riina Ilmola's study in 2015. Thus, the questionnaire was tested and used before, which increases the reliability and validity of it. Additionally, prior to sending the questionnaire to the respondents, it was tested among a small group of people related to the programme and modified on the basis of the feedback. Furthermore, as the results received in my study are very similar to the results of Ilmola's study, it indicates that the measure can be considered quite reliable. Moreover, the topic studied has been very familiar to the respondents as it concerns their own education and working career. Thus, there should not have been any problems in the respondents not being aware of the issue studied, as might be the case in some survey studies (Hirsjärvi et al 2004, 184).

As there were only a rather small number of respondents (n=38) and the response rate was 49.3 per cent, it is not possible to make assumptions regarding a larger population on the topic. However, that is not even necessary as the study is concentrating on the exclusive group of the graduates from the SpoSMaPro programme and aims at analysing, interpreting and presenting the situation of this small population and not making any larger generalisations. However, with a larger response rate and especially among the international graduates, the results could be considered more reliable and could give somewhat different view on the situation of the graduates.

8.4 Significance of the study

The results of my study can have importance for various groups and purposes. Firstly, they can work as feedback for the staff on whether the programme functions in giving the graduates the needed skills for working life and, thus, guide the programme staff in developing the programme in the future. It seems that the graduates are very content with the “soft” or generic skills they have learnt in their studies in the programme, so this side of the programme is functioning well in this respect. However, as they have been able to secure suitable jobs in relation to their education, it seems that the programme is able to give them a good basis on other areas as well. Nevertheless, according to the results, more emphasis should be placed in the future on some of the core contents of the programme, especially on the business contents of the programme. Secondly, the study gives information for current students on the needs of the working life and can guide them in their choices for optional studies and how to make connections with working life already during the studies. Students need to be active in this respect and try to utilise all the possibilities created by the programme and create additional contacts for example through internship or voluntary work. Thirdly, also possible future applicants to the programme can get information on the contents of the programme and what kind of career opportunities it could create for them as it also illustrates the current situation of the professional field.

8.5 Suggestions for further studies

It is important to conduct such studies in the future as well. According to Voorhees and Harvey (2005, 10) there is a need for research to be conducted to be able to base the development of higher education in relation to working life and the employment market on facts and not on intuition. Especially as the field of sport is changing so rapidly, it is important to study the programme and the views of the graduates on a regular basis to receive information on the changes taking place in the field that should be taken into consideration in the development of the educational programme. Additionally, as higher education institutions and programmes are faced with increasing quality demands from both the government and students, it is important to study the programme and the learning outcomes to be able to ensure the quality of the education also in the future.

It would be interesting and important to receive more information on the graduates that have moved abroad after graduation to find out what kind of jobs they have received and if they have moved away from Finland voluntarily or would they have wanted to stay in Finland after graduation. It would be also interesting to compare the plans of the students concerning their career and working country to the actual situation after graduation. Furthermore, as there were so few respondents in the study, a further study could be conducted with a more qualitative approach, i.e. by interviewing the graduates to receive more in-depth information on their careers and views on the education. Another interesting research method could be analysing the documents produced by the students as part of their Personal Learning Plan and Portfolio and to compare the information, for instance on the career plans of the students with interviews or surveys conducted among the graduates after of few years in working life.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Questionnaire

Appendix 2. SpoSMaPro Curriculum 2013-2015

Appendix 1. Questionnaire

Dear former and current students of SpoSMaPro,

it has been 10 years since we launched our Master's Programme in Sport Management at JYU. At first the name of the programme was Master's Degree Programme in Sport Science and Management. Since 2012 we have been officially called Master's Degree Programme in Sport Management and Health Promotion. This was due to some alterations in the contents of the programme when we added health aspects to the curricula.

Now, in order to acknowledge the 10 year anniversary of our programme, it is about time that we inquired about your employment and career situations, and how you see your studies at SposMapro have influenced your working and life situations. For that purpose we would kindly ask you to fill in the questionnaire through the link below. In order to develop and market our programme in the future, it would be extremely important that we received information about your perceptions about our programme and heard about your experiences in working life.

It takes about 15 minutes to answer to the questions at:

<http://MRINTERVIEW2.ad.jyu.fi/mriWeb/mriWeb.dll?l.Project=SPOSMA>. The results will be handled in full confidentiality.

In case you have any questions concerning the survey, please contact Hanna Vehmas at hanna.m.vehmas@jyu.fi.

Thanking you all for your input and wishing you all the best,

Hanna Vehmas &
Anna-Katriina Salmikangas &
Auli Pitkänen

PS. We will soon send you also more information on the upcoming 10-year celebration of the Master's Programmes at Liikunta which will be held during 4-5 December 2015!

PAGE

Page 1/12**Questionnaire**

GENDER

Gender

- Male
 Female

BIRTH

Year of birth

(1900 - 2000)

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ORIGIN

Origin area

- Finland
 Other Europe
 Asia
 Americas
 Australia&Ocenia

MARITAL_STATUS

Marital status

- Single
 Married or in co-habitation
 Divorced or widow(er)

CHILDREN

Number of children

(0 - 10)

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BEGIN_SPOSMAPRO

Which year did you begin your SposMaPro studies?

(2005 - 2013)

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DEGREE_BEFORE

Which degree did you complete before your SposMaPro studies? What was major?

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GRADUATED

Have you graduated from your SposMaPro studies?

- Yes, year of graduation? : _____
- No, I have not yet graduated

OPTIONAL_STUDIES

What optional studies did you include in your Master's degree (courses/modules/minor)?

OTHER_UNIVERSITY

What other university level studies have you completed?

WORKING

What is your working situation at the moment?

- Employed
- Leave of absence
- Maternity/parental leave
- Laid off
- Unemployed
- Full-time student

- Private entrepreneur
 Combination of different working situations (e.g. part-time work + studies/training),
 what? : _____
 Other, what? : _____

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SPORT

Are you employed in the field of sport at the moment?

- Yes
 No

WORK_AT_THE_MOMENT

If you are NOT employed in the field of sport, in which field do you work at the moment?

CURRENT_JOB

If you are NOT employed in the field of sport, what kind of aspects of your degree in social sciences of sport can you utilize in your current job?

CURRENT_EMPLOYER

What is your current employer?

- Town, municipality, municipal region
 Government
 University/college
 Other public sector unit, what? : _____
 Private company
 Own business/company
 Association, organization
 Other, what? : _____

Not employed

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EMPLOYER

Name and location of your current employer (if you are employed)

TITLE

What is your working title at the moment? (if you are employed)

NATURE_WORKING

What is the nature of your current working situation?

- Permanent job
- Substitute
- Temporary/fixed term position
- Part-time position
- Other, what? : _____
- Not employed

SALARY3

**What is your monthly salary in your country's own currency?
(Please indicate the currency)**

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PROPORTION

Approximately what is the proportion of the following task areas in your current job.

Scale: 1= not included, 5=includes a lot

	1= not included	2	3	4	5=includes a lot	cannot say
Managerial decision making in the organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Managerial tasks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
HRM (Human Resources Management)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial Management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Planning and development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information technology tasks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sales and marketing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expertise in a special area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sport instructing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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SKILLS_IN_JOB

How important it is to have the knowledge and skills of the following aspects in your job?

Scale: 1= not important at all, 5= very important, 6= cannot say

	1= not important at all	2	3	4	5= very important	6= cannot say
Legislation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public governance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial management and planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Outdoor and sport						

facility planning and maintenance	<input type="radio"/>					
Data collection methods	<input type="radio"/>					
Leadership skills	<input type="radio"/>					
Organisational skills	<input type="radio"/>					
Language skills	<input type="radio"/>					
IT skills	<input type="radio"/>					
Written expression skills	<input type="radio"/>					
Oral presentation skills	<input type="radio"/>					
Knowledge of sports	<input type="radio"/>					
Personal sport skills	<input type="radio"/>					
Marketing skills	<input type="radio"/>					
Business management skills	<input type="radio"/>					
Event management skills	<input type="radio"/>					
Intercultural skills	<input type="radio"/>					

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IMPORTANT_FACTORS

How important do you see the following factors in regard to learning new knowledge and skills in general?

	1= not important at all	2	3	4	5= very important	6= cannot say
Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hobbies and leisure interests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

CONTACT

During your studies, were you in contact (e.g. internship, summer job, thesis) with your current employer?

- No
- Yes, in which way? : _____

SIGNIFICANCE_SPOSMAPRO

Estimate the significance of the SposMaPro education for your current job.

- 1= no benefit at all
 2
 3
 4
 5= very beneficial

CURRENT_JOB_SA

**How satisfied are you in the following aspects of your current job?
Scale: 1=not satisfied, 5= very satisfied, 6= cannot say**

	1=not satisfied	2	3	4	5= very satisfied	6= cannot say
Salary	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Challenges the job provides	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Possibilities to influence your own job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Possibilities to advance in the career	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leadership in the organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexibility in working conditions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Correspondence between the job and your education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stability of the job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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UNEMPLOYED

If you became unemployed (or if you are) at the moment, how easy it would be to find a new job that would correspond with your education and work experience?

	1= very difficult	2	3	4	5= very easy	6=cannot say
Permant job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Temporary job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

PROLONG

Did you prolong your graduation on purpose because of a difficult employment situation?

- Yes
 No

- Cannot say

HOW_MANY_JOBS

How many jobs have you applied for after your graduation?

- Less than 5
 5-10
 11-20
 21-30
 More than 30
 I have not graduated yet

APPLICATIONS

How many of your job applications have been successful (including those job offers that you have turned down)?

- 0
 1-2
 3-5
 6-10
 Over 10
 I have not applied for any jobs

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GOTTEN_JOB

In which way have you mainly received a job? You may choose more than one alternative.

- With an application to a position that was advertised online in job advertisements/job openings
 With an open online application
 Through acquaintances or relatives
 By contacting the employer directly
 Through labour force bureau
 Employer contacted you
 Through the social media
 Via internship
 Other ways, which? : _____
 I have not received any job

LIST_JOBS

List all the full time jobs, working titles, organisations and lengths of employments in the chronological order, after your graduation

EMPLOYED_GRADUATION

Were you employed at the time of your graduation?

- Yes, full-time
 Yes, part-time
 No
 I have not yet graduated

AFTER_YOUR_GRADUATION

How many months were you unemployed before finding your first job?

(0 - 99)

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MONTHS_IN_TOTAL

How many months in total have you been unemployed after your graduation?

(0 - 99)

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EVALUATE

How would you evaluate the significance of the following factors when you have been chosen to jobs that you have applied for?

	1= not significant at all	2	3	4	5=very significant	6=cannot say
Degree in the Social Sciences of Sport	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Optional studies in your Sport management degree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other education you have acquired	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Master's thesis topic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Grades	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Internship placement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Recommendations from acquaintances/relatives	<input type="radio"/>					
Recommendations from former employers	<input type="radio"/>					
Knowing the employer beforehand	<input type="radio"/>					
Performance in the job interview	<input type="radio"/>					
Education background of the recruiting interviewer	<input type="radio"/>					
Language skills	<input type="radio"/>					
International experience (e.g. study exchange)	<input type="radio"/>					
Voluntary activities	<input type="radio"/>					
Leisure time hobbies/interests	<input type="radio"/>					
Personal sport career	<input type="radio"/>					
Age	<input type="radio"/>					
Gender	<input type="radio"/>					
Nationality	<input type="radio"/>					
International degree	<input type="radio"/>					

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SIGNIFICANCE_SUBJECT

In your opinion, what has been the significance of the knowledge in the following subject areas for your whole working career?

	1=no benefit at all	2	3	4	5=very beneficial	6=cannot say
Sport sociology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Civic activities in sport	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sport marketing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sport and leisure management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public sport governance and management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sport economics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sport and media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sport planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Health sciences	<input type="radio"/>					
Planning and implementation of sport events	<input type="radio"/>					
Language and communication studies	<input type="radio"/>					
Research methodology	<input type="radio"/>					

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PROFESSIONAL_CHANGED_DURING_CAREER

In your opinion, in which way the field of sport as a professional working environment has changed during your working career?

BEST

What were the best aspects of the SposMaPro studies?

QUEST48

What kind of additional education have you acquired in the working life or elsewhere?

DEVELOP_SPOSMAPRO

How would you develop the curricula of SposMaPro?

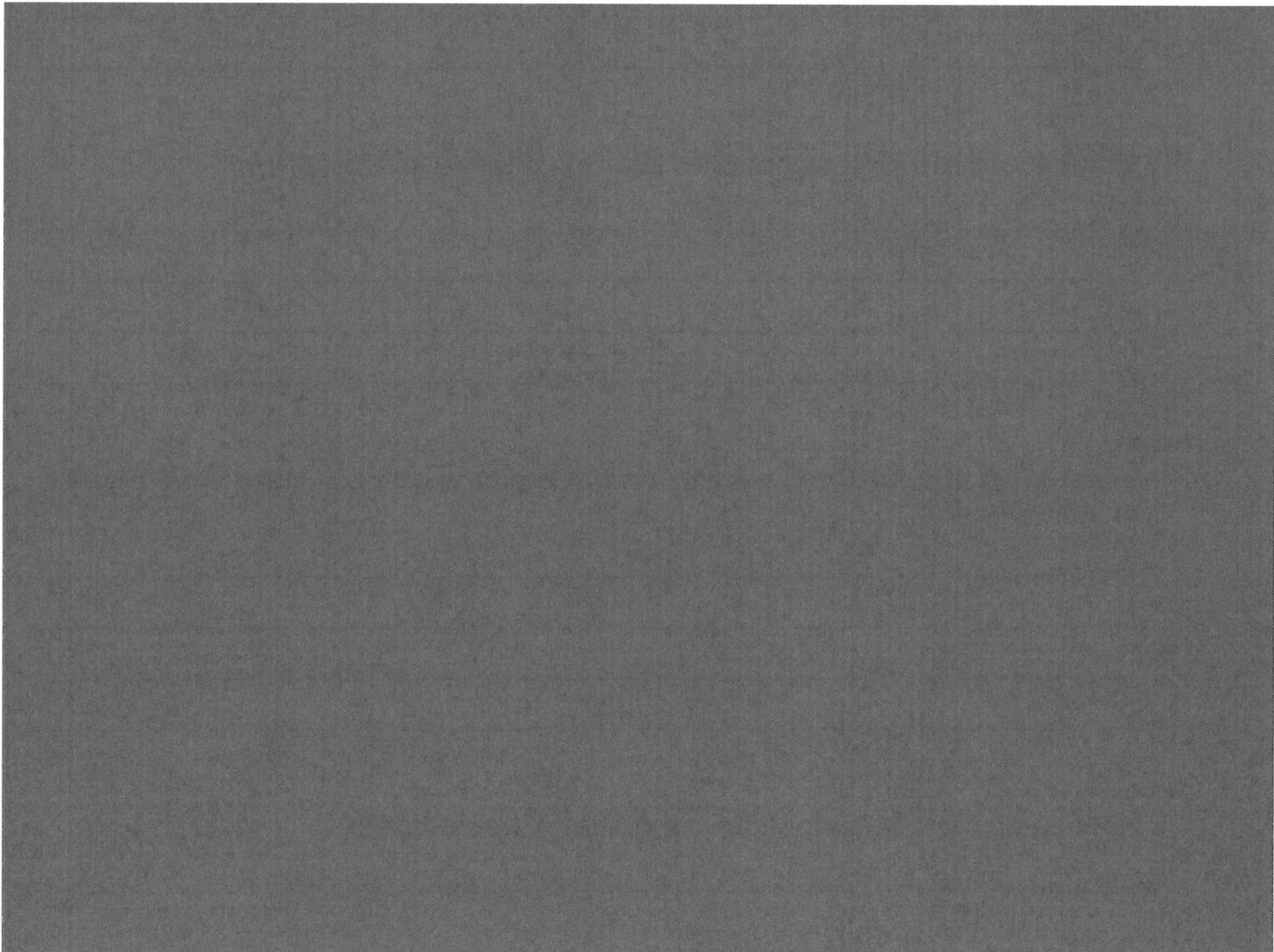
GREETINGS

What kind of greetings or advice would you like to send to the current and new SposMaPro students?

ALUMNI

Are you interested in taking part in the alumni activities of the SpoSMaPro programme?

- Yes, your email address : _____
- No



Appendix 2. The curriculum of 2013-2015 in the Master's Degree Programme in Sport Management and Health Promotion

Compulsory modules	ECTS credits
LTKY006 Orientation to Studies	1
LTKY007 Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods	6
LYTS526 Social Interaction Skills	2
LYTS509 Theory, Sport and Society	4
LYTS511 Sport and Leisure Management	4
LYTS518 Sport in Finland	4
LYTS528 Research Seminar 1	3
LYTS529 Research Seminar 2	4
LYTS522 Sport and Media	4
LYTS536 Public and Voluntary Sectors in Sport	4
LYTS533 Public Health and Health Promotion	4
LYTS502 Professional Development and Expertise	2
LYTS512 Sport and Economics	4
LYTS514 Sport Planning	4
LYTS516 Master's Thesis Seminar	5
LYTS510 Sport and Globalisation	4
LYTS534 Applications of Health Promotion to Sport and Sports Clubs	4
LYTS517 Master's Thesis	24
Optional modules offered by the SpoSMaPro programme	
LYTA504 Current Issues in Management and Social Sciences of Sport	2/4
LYTA505 Sport Tourism	4
LYTA506 Planning and Implementation of Sport Events	6
LYTA510 Independent Reading on Sport Science and Management	2
LYTA508 Organisation and role of sport in the EU and its member states	2/4
LYTA509 Sport Marketing	2/4
LYTA511 International Perspectives to Organisation and Management of Sport	2/4
LYTS527 Internship Programme	7
LTKY008 Lecture Pass in the Field of Sport and Health Sciences	1-4
Language and communication modules	
XSU0005 Finnish 1 or XRU0402 Akademic Swedish for Finnish students	5/2
XENX009 Research Communication	4
XENX018 International Project Skills	2
Total number of ECTS credits (minimum)	120