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Published online: 21 Sep 2020.

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ABSTRACT

Sport tourism entities serve to actively represent a locale in hosting sporting events across the United States and beyond (Sports ETA, 2019). Over the last quarter century, the number of sport tourism entities has ballooned from 13 to more than 500 expanding from the U.S. to Canada and Puerto Rico [Sports Events & Tourism Association. (2018a). *About the National Association of Sports Commissions*. https://www.sportscommissions.org/about]. However, scant research exists regarding the efforts of these entities in the larger context of sport management and tourism scholarship. The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding as to *what* sport tourism entities seek to achieve as a foundational effort to later explore if these outcomes are pursued or measured. The researchers conducted a content analysis of sport tourism entity mission statements (*n* = 132) to determine organizational desired outputs and outcomes. The analysis yielded one sport tourism entity primary output and five primary desired outcomes. Additional outcomes and qualifiers were also identified.

Introduction

For more than 25 years, scholars have been studying the field of sport tourism (e.g. Gibson, 2003; Kurtzman, 1995; Redmond, 1991; Weed, 2009). In fact, Redmond (1991) may have been the first scholar to foretell the growth of sport tourism in the U.S. when he predicted an increase in interaction among entities in sport and tourism in the twenty-first century (Redmond, 1991). Redmond's (1991) assertion was indeed, correct, and the past quarter century, sport tourism has witnessed substantial growth around the world, with many nations instituting sport tourism initiatives to encourage tourism (Gibson, 2003). In the U.S., the result of this growth has been the development of local and regional organizations to capitalize on perceived sport tourism benefits for destinations.

Today, sport tourism is a competitive industry with destinations continually vying to bring events to their locale [Sports Events & Tourism Association (Sports ETA), 2017], whether it is a one-time, mega-event like the World Cup, or a small, annually occurring event such as a youth soccer tournament. More than fifteen years ago, Gibson (2003) noted many sport tourism initiatives are driven at the state and local levels led by the

efforts of the National Association of Sports Commissions (which rebranded to Sports ETA in 2019) and the organizations that comprise its membership in the United States.

These organizations serve as a conduit between entities seeking a destination in which to conduct their event, and a destination with a specific venue suitable for hosting the event (Kidd, personal interview, July 2018). For example, a youth softball tournament organizer may require a softball field complex in a certain region of the country, with a specific number of fields, particular amenities required, and precise dates of availability. Historically, the overarching purpose for sport tourism entity initiatives was to attract events yielding economic impact for the locale (Kidd, personal interview, July 2018).

In the early 1990s, a small contingent of destination representatives engaged in sport tourism efforts met to discuss best practices. At that meeting, a professional association representing the industry was conceived and the National Association of Sports Commissions (now Sports ETA) was born (Sports ETA, 2018b). Sports ETA was comprised of 13 foundational members (Gibson, et al., 2012). Currently, Sports ETA membership roster lists 851 primary organization contacts (Sports ETA, 2018b), substantiating the growth predicted by previous scholars (i.e. Redmond, 1991). Many of these individuals are event rights holders that own and operate events. Members are also comprised of industry suppliers that provide goods or services to the industry. A more specific search filter identifies 508 of the 851 primary member contacts as 'active members', or primary contacts of organizations representing destinations or sport tourism entities.

Sport tourism entity members of Sports ETA now represent a variety of market sizes, geographic regions, and organizational structures. For example, member organizations represent destinations as large as Los Angeles, California, and Houston, Texas, with multi-million person populations, down to Ames, Iowa, or Casper, Wyoming (Sports ETA, 2018b), with much smaller resident populations. The current study analysed these additional categories for comparison and insight purposes.

At the onset of the study, the researchers expected to dive into details of 'sports commissions' exclusively. However, throughout the analysis it became apparent that, although an organization may call itself a 'sports commission', actual organizational structure varies (Sports ETA, 2018a). Sport tourism entities may represent stand-alone sports commissions, convention and visitors' bureaus (CVBs), or chambers of commerce. These entities may also represent departments of the state government, part of another public entity, such as a department of the municipal or county government (i.e. Tourism Department or Parks and Recreation Department), or a private entity such as an economic development agency.

A narrowing of the Sports ETA membership database search filter yielded 132 United States-based, self-reported 'sports commissions' (Sports ETA, 2018a). Due to this variety in structure among 'sports commissions', the researchers refer to the sample of organizations as 'sport tourism entities' rather than the common industry vernacular of 'sports commissions' to differentiate that a stand-alone sports commission is merely one possible organizational structure.

Membership statistics since Sports ETA's inception provide anecdotal evidence of the breadth and sizeable scope of the sport tourism industry in the U.S. However, sport tourism entities, as drivers of the sport tourism industry in their locales (Gibson, 2003), have made a dynamic shift throughout the past 25 years of Sports ETA's existence. In addition, the market for sport tourism is always innovating, with new sports, products

and services acting as catalysts for sport tourism efforts (Delpy, 1998). Alan Kidd, current President and Chief Executive Officer of Sports ETA articulated this shift.

> The sport tourism industry has changed significantly from its inception more than 25 years ago. The way our members measure success and the value they provide to their respective communities is evolving. Gone are the days of solely counting hotel room nights. Sport tourism entities are now tasked with taking an active role within their destination. (A. Kidd, personal communication, July 5, 2018)

As Kidd's (personal interview, July 2018) comment summarizes, economic impact generated by visitor hotel room nights associated with sport tourism efforts has been the historic measure for success. For example, the Gainesville (FL) Sports Commission's mission statement states 'The Gainesville Sports Commission (GSC) is a not-for-profit organization that strives to promote tourism through sports while creating a positive economic impact on Gainesville and Alachua County' (Gainesville Sports Commission, 2019). As such, economic impact of sports events has been a well-researched line of inquiry (e.g. Howard and Crompton, 2013; Veltri, et al., 2009).

The changing role of sport tourism entity efforts Kidd (personal interview, July 2018) mentioned, includes the prevalence of outcomes and outputs beyond economic impact. These desired outcomes are often directly stated in the sport tourism entity mission statements. For instance, the Hampton Roads (VA) Sports Commission's mission statement outlines the organization is 'committed to strategically attracting, creating and hosting high caliber sports events, while fostering city cohesiveness and enhancing the economy, *image* and *quality of life* for the region' (Hampton Roads Sports Commission, 2019, emphasis added). This mission extends the entity's desired outcomes as it also includes Hampton Roads Sports Commission's aim to enhance the city's image and quality of life.

A similar observation can be made upon reading the Nashville (TN) Sports Council mission statement, which states 'The mission of the Nashville Sports Council is to positively impact the economy and *quality of life* of the Greater Nashville Area by attracting and promoting professional and amateur sporting events' (Nashville Sports Council, 2019, emphasis added). Hampton Roads and Nashville's mission statements reflect two ways sport tourism entities are striving to take an 'active role' (Kidd, personal interview, July 2018) in their community, through improving the destination's image and quality of life. Kansas City Sports Commission and Foundation's mission statement also encompasses expanded desired outcomes 'The Kansas City Sports Commission and Foundation will *drive the overall sports strategy*, *enrich the quality of life*, create economic impact and *raise visibility* for our region' (2019, emphasis added).

Furthermore, outputs, or the means by which sport tourism entities derive desired outcomes, must also be considered. An example of expanded outputs includes how sport tourism entities are reframing their efforts not only to recruit events but also to service events and even develop events owned and operated by the organization. The Atlantic City Sports Commission's mission statement states the organization 'strategically solicits, *creates and supports* sports related events and businesses that enhance our community's economy' (Atlantic City Sports Commission, 2019, emphasis added).

While economic impact has historically been a primary desired outcome of sport tourism entities, these examples highlight the broader scope of *what* sport tourism entities

strive to achieve. Bradish (2003) noted, 'the entity of Sports Commission is one of the greatest examples of the evolving state of sport as defined and influenced by a region's political, economic, and social goals' (p. 2). Assessing industry mission statements for desired outcomes allows researchers to identify themes present across the industry and begin to fill the scholarly void pertaining to the role sport tourism entities serve in both the sport management and tourism contexts.

As such, it is the intent of the researchers that this study not only informs industry practitioners and scholars about *what* sport tourism entities seek to achieve but also lays a foundation for future lines of inquiry assessing *if* and *how* these entities achieve these outcomes. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine *what* sport tourism entities seek to achieve through analysation of desired outcomes and outputs identified in organizational mission statements.

Review of literature

Rue and Byars (1992) define an organization as 'a group of people working together in some type of concerted or coordinated effort to attain objectives' (p. 228). Chelladurai (2005) noted that, although definitions of 'organization' vary, four main goals are present across them all: (a) multiple people, (b) specialized contributions of members, (c) coordinated efforts of members, and (d) end objectives of members are the same (p. 57). Thus, it is the fourth goal outlined by Chelladurai (2005) that concerns the primary thrust of the current study: end objectives of the organization's members. In the context of the current study, the end objectives are operationalized as the desired outcomes of the organization identified in the organization's mission statement.

Aligning with previous work by management scholars Campbell and Yeung (1991), Pearce (1982), and Pearce and David (1987), David, David, and David (2014) asserted that a mission statement is 'a declaration of an organization's "reason for being" and distinguishes one organization from other similar enterprises' (p. 96).

By extension, outcomes are what an organization hopes to achieve by way of its products or services, or the difference its product or service makes (Mills-Scofield, 2012). For example, a desired outcome for a recreation centre might be improving the health and wellness of its members. For the current study, desired outcomes are what sport tourism entities hope to achieve as determined by organizational mission statements. Outputs, contrary to outcomes, are the products or services an organization supplies the market to achieve desired outcomes (Mills-Scofield, 2012). In the context of sport tourism entities, outputs are what drives the organization's desired outcomes.

Gibson et al. (2012) commented directly on the importance of sports commissions, noting, 'In the U.S., sports commissions have played an integral role in establishing small-scale sport tourism as a viable sector of an existing tourism industry … ' (p. 161). Yet, despite the prevalence and importance of these organizations, scholarly research associated with sport tourism entities is sparse (e.g. Bradish, 2003; Delpy, 1998; Gibson, 2003; Gibson et al., 2012). Weed (2009) called for 'a theoretically and methodologically robust body of sports tourism knowledge' (p. 624). This plea, coupled with Gibson's (2003) work bringing to light the significance local sports commissions play in the broader tourism industry, underscore the need for additional knowledge in the area.

However, a foundational investigation specifically into what these organizations seek to achieve (desired outcomes) is non-existent.

Anecdotal evidence points to evolving missions for sports tourism entities. For example, a programmatic shift toward local social leverage is exemplified through initiatives such as Richmond, Virginia's SportsBackers Active RVA program (Active RVA, 2018) and the Kansas City Sports Commission and Foundation's Women's Intersport Network for KC program (Kansas City Sports Commission, 2018). Respectively, these sport tourism entity-driven programmes seek to 'make the Richmond region the most active in the nation' (Active RVA, 2018) and 'ignite lives of local girls and women through sport' (Kansas City Sports Commission, 2018).

Benefits sought by hosting sports events include, but are not limited to (a) economic growth, (b) community image enhancement, (c) building community relationships, (d) utilizing community venues and facilities, and (e) attracting repeat and high-yield visitors (Ross, 2001). Efforts among entities actively engaged in sport tourism, such as Richmond and Kansas City suggest an expansion of Ross' (2001) benefits and those traditionally siloed into generating room nights and economic impact. Further, O'Brien and Chalip (2008) emphasized sustainability of a locale's sport tourism efforts should include a portfolio of sports events to maintain steady sport tourism benefits (Gibson et al., 2012). However, specific desired outcomes of the entities responsible for a community's sport tourism efforts remain unexplored.

Bradish (2003) supplied the only in-depth analysis of sports commissions, but stopped short of analysing these organizations based upon characteristics such as organizational affiliation, (e.g. organizational structure). Despite acknowledgement by Gibson (2003) and Bradish (2003) of the role these entities play in the sport tourism landscape, follow-up inquires have not emerged. Implications for industry practitioners and academic disciplines related to analysis and understanding of sport tourism entity desired outcomes include community development, sport tourism industry trends, sport sustainability, and facility and event management. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to discover *what* outcomes sport tourism entities seek to achieve through analysis of organizational mission statements.

Method

Neuendorf (2017) defined content analysis as 'the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics' (p. 1). Simply stated by Ahuvia (2001), content analysis is used to 'code text into categories and then count frequencies of occurrences within each category' (p. 139). According to Andrew et al. (2011), content analysis is a method of unobtrusively analysing forms of communication. The primary purpose of content analysis is formation of meanings, definitions, and processes, so it is reliant on narratives, descriptions, and texts (Altheide, 1996). In the present study, the researchers conducted a content analysis of data present in sport tourism entity mission statements to identify sport tourism desired outcomes, in other words, *what* these organizations seek to achieve.

'An effective mission statement must be a clear description of where an organization is headed in the future that distinctly sets it apart from other entities and makes a compelling case for the need it fills' (Pandolfi, 2011, para. 4). Thus, the mission statement is an integral component of an organization's operation. Elements within a mission statement

include (a) identification of what the organization aims to accomplish, (b) identification of the market, (c) demonstration of the organization's philosophical premise, and (d) inspiration (Ireland & Hitt, 1992). Further, Kirk and Nolan (2010) noted that well-written non-profit mission statements can be linked to overall stronger organizational performance.

Participants

The total population for this study equalled the entire set of United States-based sport tourism entities listed as active (i.e. destination) members of Sports ETA that also self-reported as 'sports commissions' to ($n = 132$). 'For most content analysis studies, the immense task of analysing existing documents begins with the sampling procedures' (Kassarjian, 1977, p. 11). However, as Gratton and Jones (2004) pointed out, the specific sample size emerges at the point of saturation in the data collection process rather than a predetermined number. Moreover, Kassarjian (1977) noted that the sample should be random, representative, and manageable so the findings are generalizable and applicable to the population. For the purpose of this study, Sports ETA's robust membership directory portal enabled the researchers to utilize the entire population for the sample, and mission statements were collected from all 132 entities.

Instrumentation and role of the researchers

In most qualitative methods, the researcher is the primary instrument used in the study (Creswell, 2014), as was the case in the current project. Specifically, the researchers were responsible for collecting and analysing data through document examination. No additional survey or instrument was used. The researchers' role in the study presented potential issues in the research process including those of ethics, strategy, and personal bias (Locke et al., 2013). Therefore, it is vital to address the role of the researchers in a transparent and honest fashion.

The current study's lead researcher is a member of Sports ETA and was formerly the executive director of a stand-alone sports commission in a small/mid-size market, located in the northwest region of the country for five years. A co-coder was utilized, and the research team reviewed the project for potential biases.

Data collection

Data collection for the content analysis portion of the study focused on sport tourism entity mission statements' manifest content to identify emergent themes and patterns among the data. Manifest data is clear, straightforward, and obvious (Neuendorf, 2017), as opposed to latent data, which is 'beneath the surface' (Andrew et al., 2011, p. 120). This study employed data collection for mission statements by first aggregating a spreadsheet listing sport tourism entities as operationalized, then visiting each organization's website to search for the entity's mission statement. Mission statements were obtained directly on each organization's website, through its Sports ETA member directory profile, or on an official document accessed through the organization's website (i.e. an organization's annual report).

In total, this study sampled 132 Sports ETA active member organizations self-reported as 'sports commissions' ($n = 132$). Each mission statement was transcribed verbatim into the spreadsheet. In addition, the researchers gathered information regarding Sports ETA geographic region, population, and organizational structure categorization to draw on comparisons among these factors. The researchers, as the key instruments in content analysis, exercised caution in ensuring every existing mission statement was included and taking note in cases where no mission statement could be located through examination of the entity's website or official documents. The researchers collected all mission statement data over a 48 hour period to ensure data consistency.

Data analysis

The first step in data analysis was data organization. The researchers listed each entity name and mission statement in a spreadsheet. The researchers opted to hand-code the data utilizing a co-coder. The coders were guided by Tesch's (1990) eight-step coding process as outlined in Creswell (2014, p. 198). These steps are (a) reading to get a sense of the entirety of the content, (b) reading one piece of content and thinking about its meaning, (c) grouping similar topics in clusters, (d) returning to the data and comparing categories, (e) searching for new categories, (f) choosing abbreviations for each identified category or cluster of categories, (g) organizing the data by codes, and (h) recoding if necessary.

Reliability strategies

Reliability in qualitative data collection refers to whether the research approach is consistent across different researchers or projects (Creswell, 2014). In other words, the procedure produces the same results when conducted multiple times (Carmines & Zeller, 1979). It is worthwhile to note that research has identified a tendency of unreliability when latent content is hand-coded (Carlyle, Slater & Chakroff, 2008), but has not been found to be an issue in manifest content, such as that used in the present study (Neuendorf, 2017). Nonetheless, Kassarjian (1977) commented 'even the simplest and most mechanical forms of content analysis require the investigator to use his judgement in making decisions about his data' (p. 9). Reliability ensures minimization of researcher subjectivity (Kassarjian, 1977). Therefore, the researchers ensured the reliability of the content analysis by utilizing a co-coder, documenting communication regarding coding consistency, and cross-checking codes for inter-coder reliability (Creswell, 2014).

The primary researcher solicited a co-coder for the content analysis, performed inter-coder training, and cross-checked mission statement samples for inter-coder reliability prior to conducting the full content analysis (Neuendorf, 2017). The training concluded when both parties felt comfortable that the co-coder had a strong grasp of the objective. Next, the primary researchers and co-coder both conducted their content-coding independently. The researchers aggregated both coders' analyses and overlaid the respective spreadsheets to determine an inter-coder reliability value. An acceptable threshold for inter-coder reliability is 80% as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) and Kassarjian (1977). The mission statement analysis met a level of 92% inter-coder reliability between the primary researcher and the co-coder, achieving the necessary acceptable threshold.

Validation strategies

Creswell (2014) suggested implementing a variety of validation strategies. Clarifying researcher bias through the researchers' role was one method of validity for this project. A second method of validity for this study entailed the researchers noting and reporting emergent themes that ran counter to the main findings (Creswell, 2014). The final approach was to utilize an external auditor to review the project in total, consisting of one expert in the field.

Results and discussion

Results of the content analysis revealed six primary themes inclusive of one primary output and five primary outcomes, emergent from the data. An output is the product or service the organization provides to the market, while an outcome is what the organization hopes to achieve by supplying the product or service (Mills-Scofield, 2012). The primary output was events, and the primary outcome themes included: (a) economic development, (b) socio-cultural leverage, (c) destination branding, (d) tourism/business development, and (e) venue engagement (Table 1).

Category frequency identification

Nearly half ($n = 63$) of mission statements analysed were categorized as sport tourism entities structured within a CVB, despite self-reporting as 'sports commissions' to Sports ETA (Table 2). The second most-common organizational structure was sport tourism entities as stand-alone organizations, or sports commissions not associated with another entity such as a CVB ($n = 47$). These two categories accounted for more than 83% of the total sample. Ten state-level organizations (7.58%), three within a public entity (2.27%), and one within a private entity (.076%) were observed. Further, five sport tourism entities had organizational structures unidentifiable by the researchers through the data collection process (3.79%).

The highest frequency of geographic region represented in the sample was the southeast section of the United States ($n = 46$; 34.85%), including Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia (Table 3). The next most common geographic region was the midwest ($n = 36$; 27.27%), including Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. The northwest region contained the third highest frequency ($n = 19$; 14.39%), comprised of Alaska, Colorado, Northern California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and

Table 1. Content analysis themes.

Number	Theme	Output or outcome
1	Events	Output
2	Economic development	Outcome
3	Destination branding	Outcome
4	Socio-cultural leverage	Outcome
5	Tourism/Business development	Outcome
6	Venue engagement	Outcome

Table 2. Entity frequency by organizational structure.

Organizational structure	N	Percentage
Stand-alone	47	35.61%
Within CVB	63	47.73%
Within chamber	3	2.27%
State level	10	7.58%
Within public entity	3	2.27%
Within private entity	1	0.76%
Unidentified	5	3.79%
Total	132	100%

Wyoming. Following the northwest was the northeast, with 12.88% of the population (*n* = 17). The northeast category included Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and the District of Columbia. The southwest region recorded 10.61% of the sample (*n* = 14), including Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and southern California.

The third and final content category examined in the mission statement analysis was market size of the destination where the entity is located (Table 4). Sports ETA divides market size into five categories spanning from fewer than 100,000 to more than 1,000,000 residents. For this analysis, the most frequent market size recorded was more than 1,000,000 (*n* = 37; 28.03%). This group was followed by both 100,001–250,000 and 250,001–500,000, each recording 26 occurrences (19.7%). A market size of 500,001–1,000,000 accounted for 18.18% (*n* = 24), and the group with a market of fewer than 100,000 resulted in 11.36% of the total (*n* = 15). It is noted that four organizations within the sample (3.03%) chose not to report market size to the association.

Primary output identification

As previously defined, outputs are concerned with the products or services provided by an organization, and outcomes are what the organization aims to achieve through these outputs (Mills-Scofield, 2012). The core output from the content analysis referenced the product or service of events (*n* = 91; 68.94%). The codebook identified three main references to the category of events. The first was event recruitment, whereby the destination actively recruits an event. An example of event recruitment included such phrases as 'hosting a wide variety of sporting events', 'attract amateur sporting events', and 'proactively identifies, pursues and attracts new sporting opportunities'. The recruitment element draws on the proactive efforts of the organization to bring in outside events to the community.

The second aspect of the events output was the concept of event servicing, or assisting events. Phrases such as 'supports marquee sports-related events', or 'supports high-profile,

Table 3. Entity frequency by geographic region.

Geographic region	N	Percentage
Northeast	17	12.88%
Southeast	46	34.85%
Midwest	36	27.27%
Northwest	19	14.39%
Southwest	14	10.61%
Total	132	100%

Table 4. Entity frequency by market size.

Market size	n	Percentage
Under 100,000	15	11.36%
100,001–250,000	26	19.70%
250,001–500,000	26	19.70%
500,001–1,000,000	24	18.18%
More than 1,000,000	37	28.03%
Not provided	4	3.03%
Total	132	100%

major sports events' emerged in the data. The event servicing aspect of this output focuses on an effort to support existing events in the community, rather than to recruit or to develop events. Examples of ways sport tourism entities might service events include providing volunteers, assisting with event permitting processes, promoting the event via social media, or any variety of efforts ancillary to the actual competition. Some form of servicing events is often included in a destination's recruitment efforts.

The third component of the events output is event development. Event development elements in the mission statements specifically called out the organizations' role in building sports events. Many mission statements containing this language discussed creating events, for example 'creation of local tournaments' or 'development of high-profile, signature sporting events'.

Primary outcomes identification

The researchers spent considerable time digesting the coded mission statement data in order to parse the vast amount of content down into approximately five to seven themes (Creswell, 2014) that serve to identify the primary outcomes sought by sport tourism entities (Table 5). The desired outcomes, in order of most frequently occurring to least, include: (a) economic development ($n = 89$; 67.42%), (b) destination branding ($n = 70$; 53.03%), (c) socio-cultural leverage ($n = 62$; 46.97%), (d) tourism/business development ($n = 35$; 26.52%), and (e) venue engagement ($n = 20$; 15.15%). Additional less frequent themes that emerged from the content analysis are identified next.

Additional outputs and outcomes identification

For the current analysis, no starkly opposing outcomes emerged within the data set. However, items that emerged either in a singular occurrence, or in no more than a few occurrences, are worth noting. The prevalence of these outcomes and outputs was substantially less frequent than the primary output and outcomes.

Table 5. Frequency of mission statement primary desired outcomes.

Outcome	n	Percentage
Economic development	89	67.42%
Destination branding	70	53.03%
Socio-cultural leverage	62	46.97%
Tourism/Business development	35	26.52%
Venue engagement	20	15.15%

The first additional output that emerged included the perceived role of the sport tourism entity within achievement of the primary outcomes. Several organizations sought to be a leader in these efforts, to 'drive sports strategy', or to serve as the 'main point of contact'. The notion of advocacy paralleled this sentiment in a few mission statements, implying a role of activism in promoting sport tourism and other efforts within the respective communities. Advocacy, in this regard, implies an output of those sport tourism entities as it is a service provided to meet a desired outcome.

An additional item that emerged in the data worth noting was the experiential aspect of sport events. This concept was articulated in ways such as 'entertainment', 'memorable experiences', 'championship environment', and 'athlete and fan experience'. These descriptors point toward creating personal meaning that transcends the competition of the sporting event and should be noted in the context of fan and athlete experience outcomes.

Finally, a trace of data text mentioned phrases such as 'underserved populations' and 'creating participatory opportunities'. These output-oriented phrases seemed to scantly indicate concern with reaching and engaging the local underserved population, as opposed to a solely non-local (i.e. visitor) focus, or one that serves higher socio-economic members of the community.

Qualifier identification

In addition to the outputs and outcomes that emerged from the analysis of mission statements, the authors noticed a recurrence of two categories of phrases that did not describe outputs or desired outcomes. Rather, these two categories seemed to provide parameters, or qualifiers, to the outputs and outcomes. These two categories were athlete level and geographic scope. Athlete level refers to the level of competition, or age bracket, of sought participants. Examples of terms used to describe desired athlete level include: (a) youth, (b) amateur, (c) intercollegiate, and (d) professional. Twenty-seven mission statements, or 20.45%, designated specific athlete level, and 15 mission statements (11.36%) specified a focus on youth sports events particularly.

The second qualifier category, geographic scope, referenced the region from which the destination seeks to draw events and/or participants. For example, some destinations included words such as 'regional', 'state', 'national', or 'international-level' to describe the geographic parameters within which the entity focuses its efforts. In total, 18 (13.66%) mission statements contained this type of geographical qualifier.

Analysis insight

The objective of the study was to identify the organizations' primary desired outcomes to understand *what* sport tourisim entities seek to achieve. The next step in the study entailed shifting from identification of outputs, outcomes, and qualifiers, to analysing what these findings may mean and why they may have occurred. Comparisons were also made overlaying demographic category frequencies with outputs and outcomes to provide additional insight.

Broadly, for example, although filtered by self-reported 'sports commissions' within the Sports ETA member directory, nearly half of the sample resulted in organizations which are

a part of a convention and visitors bureau. The analysis revealed their structure is, in fact, within a CVB. The CVB example was the most striking example of this phenomenon; however, evidence of the other organizational structure categories present suggests it was not isolated.

There are several possible reasons so many sports commissions are housed under CVBs. First, sport tourism entities may have spun off from, or developed out of CVBs. Second, the entity could exist within a CVB for operational and financial efficiency. For example, if a CVB already has employee benefits in place, accounting personnel, and human resources, it may make sense for the sport tourism entity to realize cost savings associated with sharing such resources. Another potential reason is the nature of the sport tourism industry and the perceived credibility these organizations garner by being called a 'sports commission' versus a CVB. Traditionally, sports commissions are more operationally focused and bring a greater level of expertise in the sport industry than one might find among CVB personnel.

Primary output insight

Prior to the analysis, the researchers expected to discover outcomes alone; however, as the analysis progressed, the emergence of one output became clear. Contrary to popular belief, in the United States, sporting events from the mega level down to youth sport tournaments do not randomly migrate to certain destinations. Rather, sport tourism entities proactively target, recruit, and even build them (Sports ETA, 2017). In fact, one trend discussed at the 2018 NASC Symposium spurred by data collected by Lawrence-Benedict (2018) suggested that more than 30% of sport tourism entities are now developing their own events to expand their portfolio. This trend, Lawrence-Benedict (2018) asserted, showed significant increase year-over-year and is expected to continue rising.

Cumulatively, the notion of events in mission statements, whether recruiting, servicing, or developing, emerged as the prevalent output of sport tourism entities. This finding is logical in that the essence of sport tourism entities is, in fact, the sporting event. Without sports events, the industry would not exist; thus, the event is the primary product of the organizations. Further, it is imperative to keep in mind sport events encompass a vast array of events from small, youth events to large, professional-level events. Sports ETA (2018b) currently boasts an event count of more than 1120 unique events, notwithstanding many rights-holders produce numerous events on an annual basis.

Primary outcomes insight

Outcome 1: Economic development. Unsurprisingly, economic development is the most frequently noted desired primary outcome of sport tourism entity mission statements. Whether an organization noted economic development directly, or via related concepts, such as driving economic impact or direct spending, these mentions were coded to the economic development outcome. Examples of terms addressing economic development included 'strengthening economic prosperity', 'enhance the region's economy', and 'stimulating economy growth'.

In the sport tourism industry, entities often articulate the importance of generated economic activity as the primary value proposition for existence, in addition to the rationale for investment among public and private agencies. These elements are common at industry conferences and educational offerings, as evident by the calculator

available from both the Sports ETA (2020) and Destinations International (2018), the professional membership associations for the sport tourism and tourism industries, respectively.

Although discussion of economic impact is common among sport tourism entities, as evidenced by the emergence of this desired outcome in the content analysis, it is important to note that researchers (e.g. Howard & Crompton, 2013; Taks et al., 2011; Veltri et al., 2009) have spent considerable time analysing accuracy of economic impact. Taks et al. (2011) even pointed out a noteworthy advantage of cost-benefit analysis over economic impact analysis for a medium-size sporting event. The economic role of sporting events in a community is imperative to understand; however, the propensity for organizations to call out economic impact as a desired outcome in their mission statements underpins the need for further education on this topic.

Outcome 2: Destination branding. The second most-common primary outcome identified in mission statements centred on the marketing of the destination and its perception to outside audiences. Destination branding emerged in a variety of fashions as organizations drew on the importance of the brand of their respective communities. For instance, sport tourism entities noted the importance of driving destination branding attributes, including: 'assist in improving [the destination and state's] image', 'positive national exposure', 'promoting our region as a recognized sporting destination', '[develop] visibility', 'enhance the area's image', 'promote [the destination] nationally and internationally as a premier sports tourism destination', 'positive exposure', and 'position [the destination] as the premier sports destination'. Exposure, image, marketing, brand, and visibility were commonly utilized words describing destination branding in the mission statement samples.

It is interesting to examine the role that sport tourism is thought to have on a destination's brand. Chen and Funk (2010) examined destination image, experience, and revisit intention, by comparing sport and non-sport tourists. This research effort was an intriguing way to assess the perception of tourists who had already made an initial visit to the destination. However, the concept of destination branding in terms of the role of sport tourism entities also relates to how a destination is perceived by non-locals, and the role hosting notable events may serve in enhancing that brand. What is more, a better understanding is needed to determine how sport tourism organizations measure and track brand perception and awareness, and the key performance indicators used to measure success.

Outcome 3: Socio-cultural leverage. Perhaps one of the most interesting outcomes identified through the content analysis was the emphasis on desired social and cultural outcomes of the sport tourism efforts of these organizations. Thirty-eight out of 132 organization mission statements (or 28.79%) in the sample mentioned quality of life specifically, while 21 (15.91%) addressed building community. These elements, coupled with health and wellness and social outcomes, were folded into the primary outcome of socio-cultural leverage.

It became apparent that many sport tourism entities are indeed concerned with the role the organization's efforts are playing for the local populous. This finding is interesting in light of the heavy emphasis on economic development, noting that while economic impact is driven by promoting non-local spending in a community, sport tourism entities are often balancing achieving both outcomes. Mission statements noted this dichotomous

effort. For example, 'enhancing our economy and community', and 'to create, promote, and support sporting events that will have a positive impact on the economy and quality of life in [a destination]'.

Outcome 4: Tourism/Business development. Despite the organizations' roles as sport tourism entities, only about one-quarter (26.52%) of mission statements directly articulated an outcome related to tourism development. One may argue, however, that many of the other outcomes (e.g. economic development) are the result of tourism development. Verbiage used to describe tourism/business development as a primary outcomes included: 'maximize sport tourism related sporting events and business', 'secure those events and meetings involving overnight hotel stays', 'promote tourism', 'promotion of [destination], its cities and businesses through overnight room stays', 'patronage of member restaurant, attraction and services businesses', and 'economic prosperity of the community through tourism development'.

It is important to differentiate development of tourism and business from economic impact in outcome one. While outcome one referred to statements regarding economic impact, direct spending or the like, outcome four pertains more specifically to driving patronage to hotels and businesses without the connection of the potential economic impact derived. In other words, in some cases the mission statements noted a desire to generate hotel room nights without mentioning the seemingly logical extension that the room nights generated would equate to increased economic vitality. While these outcomes may parallel one another, the researchers chose to err on the side of reporting these categories separately.

Outcome 5: Venue engagement. The final primary outcome of the mission statement content analysis is the premise of venue engagement. Although only present in 20 of the 132 analysed statements, venue engagement emerged as a unique component due to its relationship with physical assets in a community. For example, development and enhancement of sport-related facilities, and leading the charge behind these efforts appeared in a number of mission statements. One mission statement noted its efforts to 'support the continued development and maintenance of safe, high-quality athletic facilities' and another articulated its role in the effort to 'construct and utilize sports facilities'.

Other mission statement elements related to venue engagement detailed the desired partnership between the sport tourism entity and area venues. One mission statement noted 'supporting recreational facilities in the community', another commented on 'maximizing the potential of all regional sports facilities and venues'. In addition, rental and 'filling' of destination venues constituted venue engagement as a primary outcome of entity mission statements, such as 'maximizing utilization of [community] facilities' and 'hosting events in partner facilities'. Further, one organization's mission statement led with its intention to develop and maintain sports facilities and to service the debt they incur.

Whether selling, collaborating with, constructing, or enhancing, the wide spectrum of venue engagement practices among sport tourism entities is certainly a primary outcome. This finding parallels the explosion of community sporting venue developments conveyed recently by the New York Times (Drape, 2018). Venue engagement, and the shape that relationship takes on between the venue and sport tourism entities, therefore, is an increasingly important outcome to include.

Category comparison insight

Frequencies were examined in relationship to other content analysis outcomes for a specific subset of the given demographic variable, as opposed to counts across all mission statements. This distinction is noteworthy due to the differences in the number of mission statements examined in each category. For example, when exploring differences by geographic region, the number of instances of the variables for the southeast region must be analysed as a percentage relative to the other outcomes within that region, rather than comparing the frequency of instances between subcategories.

Organizational structure. Content analysis of mission statements was assessed based upon organizational structure. Stand-alone ($n = 47$) and within CVB ($n = 63$) represented 111 of the 132 total structures (83.84%). The only other organizational structure category with more than a few was state level with 10. State-level yielded relatively equal frequency of economic development ($n = 7$), socio-cultural leverage ($n = 6$), and destination image ($n = 6$).

Among the larger categories of stand-alone sports commissions and those sport tourism entities within a CVB, a number of findings were notable. Both stand-alone sports commissions and those entities within a CVB showed the highest frequency of economic development as a desired outcome with 38 (80.85%) and 35 (55.56%) occurrences within each category, respectively.

While both stand-alone sport tourism entities and those within CVBs displayed frequent desire for economic impact development, their second most frequently occurring desired outcomes differed. Thirty, or 63.83%, of stand-alone organizations' second most frequent desired outcome is socio-cultural leverage, which emerged the fourth most frequent desired outcome among entities within CVBs ($n = 19$; 30.16%).

The second and third most frequent desired outcomes for entities within CVBs are destination branding ($n = 33$; 52.38%) and tourism/business development ($n = 25$; 39.68%), respectively. Destination branding was the third most frequently cited among stand-alone entities appearing in nearly half of the mission statements ($n = 22$), but tourism/business development only appeared seven times (14.89%).

These findings are interesting in that both organizational structure types place a strong emphasis on economic development through their mission statements; however, the outcome of socio-cultural leverage is higher in stand-alone entities versus their CVB counterparts. Circling back to the definition of CVB, and the recent increase in the marketing emphasis of these organizations, this finding is logical. Entities housed within a CVB appear to have a more common desire to seek both destination branding and increased tourism/business development outcomes.

What is more, when breaking down the presence of socio-cultural leverage one layer further, 42.55% of stand-alone entities reflected a desire for quality of life as an outcome, while only 15.87% of those entities within CVB reciprocated that desire. Cumulatively, these findings suggest while many of the desired outcomes among different organizational structure types are the same, the emphasis each organization category places on each is quite different.

Geographic region. Examining the frequencies of desired outcomes by geographic region provided another avenue for comparison. The northwest and the northeast regions were both quite similar in that destination branding was the most frequently

appearing desired outcome in their mission statements ($n = 9$; 47.37% and $n = 10$; 58.82%, respectively). However, destination branding was highest in the midwest with 66.67% of entities in this region conveying destination image as a desired outcome in mission statements.

The midwest also had the second highest frequency of economic development outcomes with nearly three quarters ($n = 26$; 72.22%) of mission statements containing this element. This finding was second only to the southeast, with 36 instances, or 78.26%. Economic development appears to be a relatively sought-after desired outcome regardless of demographic variable. However, the midwest entities focus on destination branding is interesting. Perhaps these destinations are striving for ways to differentiate themselves from one another, or compete with potentially higher perceived 'tourist' destinations in the southeast, for instance.

Socio-cultural leverage emerged commonly in mission statements across geographic regions as well. The midwest's frequency was 58.33% ($n = 21$) and the southeast's was 50% ($n = 23$). Although these two geographic regions were the most frequent to mention socio-cultural leverage, the southwest was not far behind with 42.86% of statements, followed by the northwest (36.84%) and then the northeast (29.41%). These findings suggest that, while varied in the presence of mission statements, sport tourism entities across all geographic regions realize the need to address socio-cultural leverage.

Market size. It is clear entities classified in the smallest market size, those under 100,000, are concerned with economic development and tourism/business development (both 60.00%). This category put little emphasis on socio-cultural leverage ($n = 1$; 6.67%) compared to all other market sizes which ranged from 37.50% (500,001–1,000,000) to 62.16% (more than 1,000,000). One rationale for this finding may be the staff size and bandwidth present among sport tourism entity personnel in small markets. These organizations may operate with minimal staff, thus narrowing their focus on the core elements of economic and tourism/business development.

On the opposite end of the market size spectrum, the mission statements analysed in destinations with a population more than 1,000,000 equally reflected the desired outcomes of economic development, socio-cultural leverage, and destination image (all $n = 23$; 62.16%). Somewhat ironically, these findings are parallel to that of smaller market entities in the 100,001–250,000 population range. For this sub-category, economic development instances occurred 16 times (61.54%), socio-cultural leverage occurred 14 times (53.85%), and destination branding was close behind at 13 instances (50%). It is interesting organizations in the largest and one of the smallest market size possess such strong similarities in the desired outcomes portrayed in their mission statements. This similarity may be coincident or may be a function of benchmarking off larger markets. Additional research is warranted in this regard.

Moving up to the next largest market size, although only slightly higher, destination branding was actually more frequently reported ($n = 17$; 70.83%) in organizations with a market size of 500,001–1,000,000 than any other desired outcome, including economic development ($n = 16$; 66.67%). This market size was the only subcategory in which economic development did not appear at least tied for the most frequently occurring desired outcome. The third most frequent desired outcome for market size 500,001–100,000 is socio-cultural leverage, with only nine instances, or 37.5% frequency. This finding seems

to suggest that for the 500,001–1,000,000 market size, economic impact and destination image are the most emphasized desired outcomes.

Another factor that should be noted among this subcategory is that Sports ETA's market size segmentation results in different rages. For example, 500,001–1,000,000 market size represents a 500,000 person population scope, whereas the smallest market represents a potential of 100,000 person range. Nonetheless, the frequency comparisons among destinations in certain market sizes is intriguing.

Conclusion

The significance of the current study is multi-faceted for both practitioners and academicians. First, findings from the study can educate practitioners with a holistic overview of *what* sport tourism entities desire to achieve as they work toward continued organizational sustainability. Understanding this evolution of desired outcomes is particularly important for scholars and practitioners alike, as the sport tourism industry is in its relative infancy, with Sports ETA originating merely slightly more than 25 years ago (Sports ETA, 2018b).

As for this study's role in the broader sport management academic landscape, the findings serve as the first study of its kind diving into the role sport tourism entities seek to play in the larger sport management and tourism contexts. The primary objective of this study was to determine *what* sports tourism entities seek to achieve. Thus, these findings lay the foundation for future studies exploring *if* and *how* sport tourism entities pursue and measure these desired outcomes. In other words, are these stated outputs and outcomes really being achieved by sport tourism entities and how can one be certain? Exploration of outcomes such as destination branding and socio-cultural leverage through sports tourism entity efforts present a logical next step in this line of inquiry. In addition, it is the hope of the researchers that these findings serve as a catalyst to spark future empirical research related to sport tourism entities and to incorporate the role sport tourism entities serve in existing lines of scholarly inquiry.

Like all research efforts, the current study faced several limitations. The researchers acknowledge that the diversity of organization characteristics, particularly organizational structure, is a limitation. The division of respondent structures among stand-alone sports commissions, CVBs, or department of a CVB specifically may be perceived as a limitation to the study.

Disclosure statement

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