

Legal Competencies Essential for Golf Directors

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Abstract

Although a number of publications has described legal aspects as one of the requisite management competencies in a variety of recreational sport contexts, there have been few research efforts to specify and clarify the legal knowledge essential for golf directors. The purpose of this study was: (1) to identify the requisite foundation of knowledge in relation to legal liability, the law, and risk management that assists golf course directors; (2) to examine a profile of legal competencies that golf directors actually need to possess; and (3) to provide information that could be used to structure a curriculum focusing on legal aspects. A total of 390 PGA certified golf course directors participated in this study. The result of factor analysis on legal competencies of golf directors indicated the presence of a 6-factor model, which consisted of 37 observed competencies. The results made it possible identify a number of opportunities for discussion and potential areas for research.

Keywords: Legal Competencies, Risk Management, Golf Management

Introduction

Golf is one of the most popular leisure sport and has grown into an enormous business in the United States. The size of the U.S. golf industry in 2011 was \$ 43.5 billion consisting of \$29.85 billion for golf facility operations, \$2.07 billion for golf course capital investment, \$5.64 billion for golf supplies, \$2.05 billion for endorsement/tournaments/associations, and \$3.9 billion for charities (Statista, 2014). According to the National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA, 2012), golf-related expenditures ranked third in recreational pursuits in 2012. No matter what types of facilities golf directors manage, golf operations comprise different aspects of golf management.

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According to the golf management curriculum created by the Professional Golfers' Association (PGA, 2009), golf apprentices are required to complete a variety of courses in golf management such as turf grass management, golf car fleet management, tournament operations, merchandising and inventory management, food and beverage control, golf operations, human resources, customer relations, business planning, golf club fitting, and golf teaching skills.

While golf operations include various complex tasks, golf directors must be aware of the importance of legal aspects because issues of law have been inextricably woven into their managerial responsibilities. In today's litigious society, one minor mistake may lead to the risk of lawsuits against any golf facilities because of the many participants and such a large financial assets involved. Yet, the current golf management program by the PGA neglects legal aspects as part of golf management competencies.

Over the past three decades, litigation and award expenses related to recreational sport have steadily increased (Rapp, 2012) and are expected to continue to increase in the future (Cotton & Wolohan, 2013). The trends in civil and criminal cases revealed the massive problems of legal actions in the United States. In 2013, approximately 328,403 civil cases were filed in the federal district and appellate courts and this was a 4.3% increase compared to the year of 2000 (U.S. Courts, n.d.). In terms of sport-related injury, approximately 1.9 million people visited emergency room in 2012 (U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, n.d.). As a result of this trend, golf directors need to gain and maintain essential legal literacy in these areas of the law that could possibly influence the golf operation and its delivery. It is vital for golf directors to demonstrate that they have identified and classified potential risks and implemented adequate measures to control them.

Although many studies were completed on the subject of legal aspects relating to recreational sport contexts (Fields & Young, 2010; Jamieson, 1980; Lee, Farley, & Kwon, 2010; Skipper, 1990; Toh, 1997; Yong, Fields, & Powell, 2007), a review of literature indicated limited benchmarking information regarding legal competencies in the field of golf management. Thus, the purpose of this study was: (1) to identify the requisite foundation of knowledge in relation to legal liability, the law, and risk management that assists golf directors; (2) to examine a profile of legal competencies that golf directors actually need to possess; and (3) to provide information that could be used to structure a curriculum focusing on legal aspects.

The findings of this study can benefit the golf management field by providing a foundation of legal literacy that assists golf directors. This information provides academicians a conceptual paradigm for making necessary adjustments to recreational sport law courses in golf management curricula. Further, this study may assist the PGA in developing a legal aspects curriculum in its apprentice education program by identifying the importance of legal competencies for golf directors.

Related Literature

Due to an increasing number of lawsuits and prevalence of sports injuries, a fundamental sense of legal aspects and risk management has become an important part of the golf management competencies and professional preparation for current golf directors (Choi, 2010). In order to gain a better understanding of suitability for this study, it is necessary to review the previous literature on this topic. The following sections discuss the legal competencies as part of management skills studies in recreational sport and areas of legal concerns for golf operations.

Legal Competencies Studies

Early studies related to management competencies for recreational sports managers confirmed the importance of legal competencies. Jamieson (1980) initiated the first empirical analysis of competency among recreational sport administrators. While developing the competency instrument, Jamieson investigated the validity and reliability of the instrument and tested its adequacy of the instrument. Of 12 areas in the management competency model, the most needed legal competencies included safety/accident prevention, program techniques, personnel/customer relations, organizational policies/procedures, facility/maintenance, and business procedures.

A few years later Jennings (1984) claimed that chairpersons of physical education and recreation departments in four-year colleges ranked legal competency items higher than other management competencies for entry level recreational sports personnel. Both chairperson groups regarded safety/accident prevention, personnel/customer relations, officiating, legality, facilities maintenance, and program techniques as important competencies among entry-level recreational sports professionals. With the modification of Jamieson's instrument, Skipper (1990) found six managerial tasks deemed important to collegiate sports facility managers. Those six

areas were resource management/facility planning, computer utilization, facility operations, philosophy/foundations, marketing, and event/schedule management.

Based on Jamieson's (1980) competency analysis instrument, Toh(1997) constructed another research instrument to determine sport management competencies. A total of 96 competency statements divided into 10 categories were developed. Toh tested the validity and reliability of the sport management competency model by surveying managers from private athletic clubs, Young Men's Christian Associations (YMCAs), and parks and recreation agencies. The results indicated six areas of sport management competency: governance, sport foundations, budgeting, risk management, computer skills, and communications. Since four of his categories associated with legal competencies were not included, Toh suggested that further study should be conducted to verify appropriateness for the determination of sport management competencies among different populations. Those excluded legal competency items were business procedures, facility/equipment management, management techniques, and research/evaluation.

In terms of the legal competency study, Young (2001) specified the fundamental legal knowledge needed among recreational sport professionals with experience in both municipal and educational settings. Essential legal topics for recreation sport professionals included (in order of importance): risk management, administrative law, tort law, contract law, products liability, constitutional law, judicial system, and legal research. Respondents indicated risk management as the most important area because they perceived that appropriate risk management techniques might help to reduce their liability. Descriptions of legal topics are as follows:

Administrative law is the study of governmental regulation by administrative agencies and the nature and scope of judicial review exercised by the courts over such agencies.

Constitutional law is the study of the judicial legal function as it relates to the powers of the federal government and the powers delegated to the states by the federal government.

Contract law is the study of contract formation, termination, avoidance, performance, breach of performance, remedies for breach and dispute resolution. Judicial system is the study of the structure and relationships of the federal, state, and local court systems, how laws are made, and the trial system.

Legal research is the study of how to locate and look up case law while using a variety of resources (i.e., annotated law reports, law reviews, legal dictionaries and encyclopedias, etc.) in researching legal topics.

Product liability is the study of negligence, breach of warranty, and strict liability in tort as it relates to recreational sport equipment.

Risk management is the study of risk identification, evaluation, treatment and implementation with the goal of learning to efficiently manage the organization by reducing the potential for loss to property, clients, employees, and the public.

Tort law is the study of a wrongful act resulting in an injury, loss or damage for which the injured party can bring civil action. This area includes a study of negligence and defenses to negligence. (“Methods,” para. 3)

Pedagogical research in the recreational sport field also revealed the importance of legal competencies. Stier and Schneider (2000) and Petersen and Pierce (2009) claimed that a legal aspects course was one of the most important courses within the undergraduate sport management curricula. Further, the legal aspects content is recommended in core content areas by accreditation bodies in the fields of recreation (National Recreation and Park Association, NRPA: Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions, COAPRT, 2014), sport management (Commission on Sport Management Accreditation, COSMA, n.d.), hospitality management (Accreditation Commission for Programs in Hospitality Administration, ACPHA, 2013), and business administration (Association to Advance College Schools of Business, AACSB, 2013). Accreditation procedures have been established to legitimize programs and ensure a standard of excellence to the given field. The National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association (2014) included legal liability and risk management as part of its eight professional core competencies. The legal competencies consist of risk management/crisis management, injury liability, sports waivers/consent, the legal process, and insurance coverage and plans. Noticeably, some legal competencies are also imbedded in the curricula such as human resource management, business management, and facility management.

Risk Management Plans

Numerous studies in the scholarly literature have addressed the need for risk management in recreational sport programs. Since the 1990s, recreational sport professionals have realized importance of effective risk management practices, and risk

management practices among recreational sport professionals have been improved (Mulrooney & Styles, 2005). Risk management studies agree that the use of risk management plans and manuals has been an excellent managerial practice to provide quality services and to continue financial wellbeing (Lee, Farley, & Kwon, 2010; Mulrooney & Green, 1997; Stier, Schneider, Kampf, Haines, & Gaskins, 2008; Young, et al., 2007).

Yong et al. (2007) claimed that recreational sport directors were aware of and concerned about the risk issues most often litigated and took the proper steps to reduce the incidence of risk issues becoming litigations and to successfully defend the litigations that were filed. Young and her associates analyzed published legal cases relating to campus recreation within the last 30 years and examined campus recreation directors' risk management perceptions with the published cases. Of the 54 campus recreation related cases, the most frequent type of case was tort law followed by discrimination, criminal, employment and labor, and tax status/property rights/zoning cases. The risk issues that recreational sport directors worried about the most dealt with facility maintenance, travel of student groups, negligent supervision, training of staff, inappropriate use of equipment, and providing a safe environment. Young and her colleagues asserted that directors as well as staff members need to effectively handle risk factors facing the recreational sport organization and they must educate themselves in legal issues and effective risk management practices.

In recreational sport programs at Division I-A colleges and universities, the most needed part of the risk management plan was the supervision of activity followed by staff training, written policies/procedures, emergency plan, facility check list, release/consent form, warning signs, and inspection procedure (Lee et al., 2010). In order to ensure participants' safety in the activity, most programs with a risk management plan provided supervision of activities and safety training to both full-time and part-time staff members. Regarding the relationship between a risk management plan and the reported participant injury rates, universities without a risk management plan had higher injury rates than universities with a risk management plan. The majority of recreational sport program directors perceived that a well written risk management plan can improve the quality of services for participants, reduce injury rates, reduce money paid for loss claims, and save on insurance premiums.

To investigate how risk management practices have advanced in recreational sport contexts, Stier and his colleagues (2008) surveyed the current risk management

practices, procedures, and policies associated with intramural and sport activities. Many administrators attempted to protect themselves from liability by using waiver forms, using Automated External Defibrillators (AED), having Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid certifications for staff members, providing supervision of activities, having restrictive policies, and using communication devices. The use of a waiver was common practice for recreational sports programs, and most programs required a signed waiver prior to participation in intramural sport. All recreational sport programs provided some sort of supervision for home events and did not require a coach to have First Aid/CPR certifications.

Similarly, Kampf, Haines, Schneider, Stier, and Gaskins (2011) described current legal practices in club sport programs. The legal practice areas included the use of waivers, travel, coaching, first aid/CPR, and supervision. The results revealed that most programs kept participants to self-administer and self-regulate their programs. While traveling to away games, participants used an outside vendors the most followed by the use of private transportation, driving personal vehicles, and renting organization owned vans. However, few programs provided professional employees to accompany teams during away travel. Noticeably, while the majority of recreation administrators had a written risk management plan, some administrators did not. Regarding risk management efforts, some professional staff had been given responsibility for overall risk management of the total intramural program. Therefore, all club sport programs need to prepare a written plan for emergencies and designate the professional staff who is in charge of emergency procedures in case of an incident or accident at a home event and during away travel.

Golf directors have various responsibilities such as organizing golf tournaments, supervising golf clinics, managing golf carts, merchandise, foods and beverages, as well as monitoring and maintaining facility and equipment.

As a number of publications indicated (Lee et al., 2010; Stier, et al., 2008; Young, 2001, 2007), essential legal topics within the scope of work for golf directors may include tort law, contract law, premises liability, participatory and contractual forms, negligence, human resources laws, product liability, fiduciary responsibilities, constitutional law, and administrative law. Since a comprehensive risk management manual not only helps to reduce the frequency of legal claims, but also generates an environment where the inherent risks are minimized (Cooper, 1997; Lee et al., 2010), golf directors should create a sound risk management plan that serves the customer, the

employee, and the organization. A strong risk management plan evaluates policies, areas, facilities, staff, participants, and programs on a continuous basis. It can classify if any organizational policies are contradictory to local, state, or federal laws, regulations, and ordinances (e.g., American with Disabilities Act, Fair Labor Standards Act, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, etc.). Golf directors should include the comprehensive risk management in the training of each golf professionals in the golf environment. Further, it would be beneficial to future golf professionals if golf management programs and PGA education programs implement these legal competency areas in their curricula.

Methods

Subjects

Regarding the sampling method, judgment sampling was used to measure different golf environments including different populations served and year-round and seasonal golf facility. Among the Association's 14 Districts, four Districts (District 2, 11, 12, and 13) were chosen from the PGA Membership and Golf Directory. District 2 includes New York, New Jersey, and Philadelphia; District 11 includes California and Hawaii; District 12 includes New Mexico and Texas; and District 13 includes Florida and Georgia.

A total of 390 PGA certified golf course directors who were in a golf operations position participated in this study. Usually, individuals who manage golf courses in the United States are licensed professionals who hold a membership from the PGA (PGA, 2014). Therefore, they were deemed to be the most suitable population from which to collect feedback on fundamental legal knowledge needed.

Instrument

The instrument used for the data collection was Toh's (1997) Competencies of Sport Managers (COSM) instrument because the COSM was the most appropriate instrument that assessed the suggested competencies required to manage recreational sports that were related to the purpose of this study. Further, the COSM was one of the few instruments in the recreational sport field of study to convey evidence of validity and reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .97$). Toh's study provided information of value for the selection of competencies and the general framework for the questionnaire.

Of the 96 competency statements categorized within 10 areas from the COSM, a total of six legal competency factors were selected. It was determined that modifying the original statement of the COSM was appropriate because the legal needs of directors in the golf industry might differ from those of managers in the recreational sport field. In the content validity process of legal competencies instrument modified for this study, the Delphi technique was executed using information provided by a panel of experts. Five PGA professionals who held the general manager position with more than 10 years of expertise in golf management were selected to form the expert jury.

Of the modified 39 legal competency statements, the jurors were asked to evaluate and validate the statements. Throughout three steps of the content validation process for legal competencies instrument by expert jurors, all 39 statements were retained. The result of Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency reliability of the legal competencies instrument was found to be .95. Hereafter, the instrument measuring legal competencies essential for the golf directors is identified as the Legal Competencies of Golf Directors (LCGD). The six-factor golf legal competencies include (1) business procedures; (2) facilities/equipment management; (3) personnel/customer relations; (4) emergency planning; (5) risk management; and (6) legal compliance.

A four-point scale Likert-type was chosen because by omitting a neutral answer respondents are required to indicate some level of importance. According to StatPac (2005), a physical placement of a "neutral" category (at the midpoint of the scale) makes a difference in conclusions that can be drawn from the data.

Thus, respondents rated the importance of legal competency statements using a four-point Likert scale: 1. Unimportant, 2. Of little Important, 3. Important, and 4. Critically Important.

Procedures

Respondents voluntarily self-selected by responding to the electronic survey. The Tailored Design Method (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009) for internet survey was implemented for purposes of data collection. It is modified from Dillman's Total Design Method which includes four mailings in eight weeks. Thus, the initial email invitation to participate was sent, and followed by three email reminders. During the electronic mailing processes, 423 out of 1,223 questionnaires were returned for a

response rate of 35%. After data screening, cleaning, and omitting outliers, 390 were deemed suitable for data analysis.

Factor Analyses

In order to identify integral constructs underlying the items on the LCGD, this study chose to employ exploratory factor analysis (EFA) rather than confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). As empirical research presented evidence, CFA may be a less desirable technique for determining the number of factors measured by a data set because specification searches in correlation matrices often do not uncover the correct population model (MacCallum, Roznowski, & Nowrutz, 1992). Therefore, this study employed EFA to determine the correct number of factors to retain and rotate (Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum, & Strahan, 1999).

Results

Sample Characteristics

The vast majority of respondents were male (94%), with only 23 female respondents. More than half of respondents (58%) were between 35 and 49 years old. One-fifth of the population was 35-39 years old (19.7%), almost one-third (31.6%) were over age 50; fewer than 2% of respondents were younger than 30 years old. Of the respondents, 57.8% had earned a bachelor's degree, followed by those who completed some college (18%), and high school graduates (10.3%).

Golf directors in private golf courses comprised the largest sub-group within the sample at 47.8% with 187 responses, followed by those at semi-private golf courses at 29.9% and 127 responses. Public golf facilities formed the smallest portion of the sample, representing 19.4% with 76 responses. The majority of the respondents (75.6%) indicated that they had been employed in the golf industry for over 13 years. One hundred seventy-nine (45%) respondents indicated that they had been working as directors in the golf industry for over 20 years.

Descriptive Statistics for the Legal Competencies Variables

The legal competencies perceived as important for the effective performance of a golf director were (in order of importance): organizational policies and procedures,

followed by risk management, personnel/customer relations, facility/equipment management, emergency planning, and legal compliance (Table 1). Approximately 30% of the golf directors indicated that knowledge in organizational policies and procedures was extremely important for the golf course operation. Though the legal compliance scale received the lowest mean score ($M=2.58$) with a range of 2.47 to 2.73 on the 4-point scale, legal compliance items are important legal competencies for golf operation. Table 1 presents means, standard deviations, and coefficient alphas for total scales in testing the dimensions of legal competencies.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for the Legal Competencies Variables

Legal Competencies	Number of Items	<i>M</i>	SD	Coefficient Alpha
Organizational Policies and Procedures	9	3.16	.67	.90
Facility/Equipment Management	7	2.89	.74	.89
Personnel/Customer Relations	7	3.02	.76	.88
Risk Management	6	3.10	.76	.87
Emergency Plan	4	2.83	.73	.82
Legal Compliance	4	2.58	.83	.79

Exploration of Dimensions of Legal Competencies for Golf Course Directors

A principal component analysis with a direct Oblimin rotation scheme was performed to discover the pattern of the factor structure in the relationship to legal competency variables measured by the LCGD. To determine whether factor analysis was an appropriate measure and to estimate the number of factors for the data, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling and Bartlett's test of sphericity were examined using SPSS FACTOR. The resulting values of both tests indicated that factor analysis was an appropriate measurement [Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy, .94 and Bartlett's test of sphericity, $c^2=8353.93$, $p<.000$].

Based on these observations, it was expected that the factorability of the correlation matrices produced by each dataset would be adequate. The solution with six factors met the goals of interpretability. The six factors extracted explained 59.6% of the overall variance in the solution. Table 2 shows the factors and their contributions to explaining variance.

Table 2: Factor Analysis of Legal Competencies for Golf Directors

Legal Competency Items	Factor Loading					
	Ft 1	Ft 2	Ft 3	Ft 4	Ft 5	Ft 6
Implement planning strategies for programs (e.g., group lessons, tournaments, special events, etc.)	.74	.11	.19	.18	.08	-.09
Utilize effective problem-solving skills related to accidents or emergencies	.72	.11	.12	.13	.25	.07
Prepare organizational guidelines for staffing and programming	.72	.22	.20	.18	.20	.24
Establish standard of performance for program operation	.68	.09	.09	.16	.25	.21
Prepare and review incident/accident reports	.67	.17	.23	.14	-.03	.26
Evaluate staff for career development	.65	.16	.30	.10	.07	.09
Conduct meetings with legal professionals for updating legal issues	.65	.18	.15	.06	.15	.07
Train, recruit, interview, and hire full-time/part-time staff	.62	.13	.24	.11	.06	-.10
Utilize effective procedures to handle reports, registrations, notices, etc.	.52	.24	.19	.30	.06	.16
Develop planning schedules for facility maintenance	.09	.74	.12	.06	.16	.21
Implement system for inventory of equipment and supplies	.12	.74	.16	.12	.21	-.01
Design strategies/policies to prevent misuse of facilities and equipment	.14	.72	.21	.11	.25	.16
Conduct routine inspections of facilities and equipment	.23	.71	.07	.18	.07	.08
Provide legal input for facility maintenance and development	.22	.69	.15	.08	.23	.13
Develop appropriate means of storing equipment and supplies	.15	.68	.16	.15	.16	.04
Administer an equipment lease and purchase system and a facility reservation system	.11	.59	.13	.17	.03	.29
Handle disciplinary action, accidents, protests, and eligibility status reports	.21	.09	.72	.19	.05	.13
Use sound procedures for settling protests	.26	.12	.72	.14	.27	-.09
Prepare written documentation of protests	.22	.17	.70	.18	.31	.03
Establish eligibility guidelines for customers, members, and/or golfers	.32	.13	.65	.19	-.02	.21
Develop personnel/customer related policy	.13	.32	.62	.03	.02	.17
Establish procedures reflecting fair treatment of both staff and customers, members, and/or golfers	.26	.14	.61	.08	.24	.14
Utilize procedures to regulate the conduct of customers, members, and/or golfers	.35	.19	.53	.21	.10	.16
Implement sound procedures for scheduling, postponements, rescheduling, and forfeiture of golf games, special events, and tournaments	.26	.20	.17	.74	.15	-.13

Demonstrate a legal knowledge of the organizational and operational aspects of different types of golf programming (e.g. special events, tournaments, group lessons, etc.)	.27	.16	.04	.74	.15	-.05
Organize legal clinics for staff and/or marshals	.07	.14	.17	.65	.04	.25
Implement appropriate system of procurement and evaluation of staff and/or marshals	.14	.16	.17	.61	.16	.32
Adapt programs to the special needs of persons with disabilities	.14	.09	.18	.60	.20	.29
Supervise customers, members, employees, and/or organizations	.28	.20	.14	.44	-.06	.29
Exercise effective decision making in dealing with accidents	.23	.27	.18	.13	.76	.11
Coordinate training for staff on legal and safety issues (e.g., first aid training, CPR training, ADA, OSHA, etc.)	.19	.32	.13	.16	.65	.27
Establish a safety program to prevent injuries and accidents	.23	.38	.22	.11	.64	.21
Demonstrate an understanding of inherent risks of golf	.24	.24	.22	.18	.63	.21
Implement legal framework for fiscal management	.11	.26	.05	.19	.09	.66
Write and process contractual agreements for both staff and customers, members, and/or golfers	.05	.25	.21	.17	.23	.64
Demonstrate an understanding of both basic business and sport laws and other important legal matters	.20	.19	.37	.08	.20	.58
Understand and implement appropriate legislation that applies to golf	.15	.08	.21	.18	.39	.57
Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings	5.2	4.7	4.4	3.3	2.9	2.8
Total % of Variance	13.4	12.1	11.2	8.4	7.3	7.1
Cumulative %	13.4	25.5	36.7	45.2	52.5	59.6

In factor 1, a total of nine items had loadings of greater than .40 and accounted for 13.38% of the total variance. The item with the largest loading at .74 was “Implement planning strategies for programs (e.g., tournaments, special events, group lessons, etc).” The lowest loading at .52 was “Utilize effective office procedures to handle reports, registrations, notices, etc.” All items loading on this factor were concerned with “Organizational Policies and Procedures.”

The seven variables that loaded on factor 2 had a loading ranging from .74 to .59. Variables “Develop planning schedules for facility maintenance” and “Administer an equipment lease and purchase system and a facility reservation system” had the

highest and lowest loading respectively. Factor 2 was named “Facilities and Equipment Management” and explained 12.11% of the total variance.

For factor 3, seven variables had loadings ranging from .72 to .53. The highest factor loading was “Handling disciplinary action, accidents, protests, and eligibility status reports” and the lowest factor loading was “Utilize procedures to regulate the conduct of customers, members, and employees.” Most items loading on this factor were concerned with tasks related to “Personnel/Customer Relations.” This factor explained 11.23% of the variance in the total variance.

Factor 4 was named “Risk Management” and consisted of six items ranging from .74 to .44. The variable with the highest loading was “Implement sound procedures for scheduling, postponements, rescheduling, and forfeiture of golf games, special events, and tournaments” and the one with the lowest loading was “Supervise golfers, customers, and/or members.” These six variables together accounted for 8.44% of the total variance.

Four items with a factor loading ranging from .76 to .63, loaded on factor 5. Items “Exercise effective decision making in dealing with accidents” and “Demonstrate an understanding of specific inherent risks of golf” had the highest and lowest loading respectively. All items appeared to be concerned with emergency procedures; thus, this factor was named “Emergency Planning.” Together, these four variables explained 7.31% of the total variance.

Finally, factor 6 consisted of four variables that had a factor loading ranging from .66 to .57. The highest loading was “Implement legal framework for fiscal management,” and the lowest loading was “Understand and implement appropriate legislation that applies to golf.” Most items loading on this factor were concerned with legal compliance. It was thus named “Legal Compliance.” This factor accounted for 7.12% of the total variance.

Overall, 37 of 39 items on the legal competencies loaded on six factors at a factor loading of .40 or higher. It appears that golf directors who are employed at different environments shared perceptions of important legal competencies for effective golf operation. Two items were not interpreted because of the weak relationship between item and factor (e.g., factor loading lower than .40 and double-loading). These two items were “Utilize effective office procedures to handle registrations, reports, and notices,

etc.” and “Supervise governing or appeal board.” Even though these items were not included in classifying factors in the present study, these items may be important legal competencies for golf directors because both documentation of any incidents/accidents and supervisory issues is prevalent disputes in recreational sport.

Discussion

The findings of this study represented the necessary knowledge in legal competencies and a profile of essential legal competencies for golf directors in the United States. These findings underlined an understanding of the foundational areas important to the legal aspects in golf. The result of factor analysis on legal competencies of golf directors indicated the presence of a 6-factor model, which consisted of 37 observed competencies. The six factors were labeled: (1) Organizational Policies and Procedures, (2) Facilities/Equipment Management, (3) Personnel/Customer Relations, (4) Risk Management, (5) Emergency Planning, and (6) Legal Compliance.

The results of this study suggest that the LCGD is an internally consistent, reliable, and valid measure of major areas of legal competencies in golf. Further, all items in the legal competencies instrument were content validated and considered to be necessary and important by expert juries. Therefore, the legal competencies instrument seems appropriate for the verification of the golf legal competencies. Because no previous researchers, to this investigator’s knowledge, have reported legal competencies in the golf context, the legal competencies instrument in this study could be useful for researchers interested in exploring legal competencies in different golf environments.

The findings of this study also provide golf directors with important information regarding adequate knowledge of legal competencies. For instance, organizational policies and procedures in legal competencies are of very high importance for golf directors. This clearly indicates that golf directors must develop organizational policies and procedures for communicating with their staff to maintain a standard of care mandated by the courts and expected by their customers. When negligence litigation occurs, a standard of care is applied to determine the competence of a professional. One way to measure the standard of care is derived from standards of practice developed by professional organizations. Liability associated with negligence can be minimized when staff members at golf facilities adhere to standards of practice. Therefore, golf directors need to develop sound organizational policies and procedures

in accordance with the standards of the PGA and the United States Golf Association (USGA). Further, golf directors may comply with standards from recreational sport associations such as the ethical creed from the North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM), and the code of ethics and interpretive guidelines from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).

In terms of facilities/equipment management, golf directors indicated the following as important competencies in effective golf operations: developing policies for periodically inspecting equipment and golf areas (e.g., driving range, practice green, golf course); providing facility development; administering equipment lease; and providing personnel to supervise golf areas to assist in accident or injury situations. Because most legal litigations regarding personal injuries and negligence are involved with equipment and facilities, it is essential for golf course directors to have sufficient knowledge in facilities/equipment management. Consistent with the findings from many publications (Jamieson, 1980; Jennings, 1984; Lee, et al., 2010; Skipper, 1990; Toh, 1997; Young et al., 2007), golf directors in the present study considered managing facilities and equipment as an important competency because they are in charge of golf tournaments, facilities, lessons, and course operations.

A possible explanation for the importance assigned by golf directors to personnel/customer relations may be caused by their more frequent interactions with members, customers, and the public than directors in different settings (e.g., campus recreation, private athletic clubs, YMCA, parks and recreation agencies, etc.) have. Golf directors require more of an emphasis on a fundamental knowledge of personnel/customer relations as an important legal aspect of their job. Golf directors in contrast may deal with, but are not limited to, members, staff, and the public in situations such as handling disciplinary action, settling protests, developing policy, and regulating the conduct of members, customers, and employees. Because golf directors deal primarily with regulations by club or association members, respondents ranked personnel/customer relations an important legal competency. The personnel/customer relations role was considered to be an important management competency identified by Jamieson (1980) and Jennings (1984). For golf directors, the personnel/customer relations role could include initiating interaction with other agencies, clubs, and golf courses.

In terms of emergency planning, golf directors regarded this as important legal competencies related to members, golfers, and the public in emergency situations such

as implementing sound procedures for scheduling, postponements, rescheduling, and forfeiture of golf games, special events, and tournaments. Because golf directors considered emergency procedures as governed by state statutes, governmental agencies, and professional associations (SchoepferBochicchio, 2013), this is an important legal competency in golf operation. Professionals in recreational sport programs supported this finding in Lee and his colleagues' study (2010). They perceived that emergency planning was an important part in a sound risk management plan.

The risk management literature in the recreational sport context supported the findings of this study that risk management is an important legal competency for golf course directors. Young and her associates (2007) claimed that risk management was the most important legal knowledge needed for recreational sport professionals. Sound risk management policies and procedures must be developed in order to reduce participant injuries, negligence, and legal lawsuits (Cooper, 1997; Lee, et al., 2010; Fields & Young, 2010). As part of the best practice management system within golf and recreational sport contexts, the risk management process should be implemented. It is important for golf directors to have an ability to develop, implement, and manage risk management plans for their effective golf operation.

In this study, the importance of legal compliance was consistent with the findings of Jamieson (1980). Recreational sport administrators in municipal, military, and institutional settings considered legal compliance in order to prevent accident and lawsuits as important golf management competencies. Similar results were found in studies from Jennings (1984), Fields and Young (2010), and Young (2001). Golf directors as well as recreational sports managers need a fundamental understanding of legal concepts related to the individual manager's segment of the golf, recreation, or leisure industry. They should learn types of risks and risk prevention strategies as much as possible and constantly care for the safety of those in and around their facilities/golf courses. As many researchers stressed, a comprehensive risk management plan is of utmost importance and best practice for golf course directors. Further, a sound risk management plan is vital to not only reduce participant injuries, negligence, and legal lawsuits, but to achieve organizational synergy and success.

Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed the essential legal competencies for golf directors. According to this study, the development of legal competencies helps to

improve a golf course director's management competencies. These findings underline the six-factor legal competencies that comprise the fundamental legal knowledge for the golf management field. The six-factor golf legal competencies can be used as a guideline when a director operates a golf facility. The current directors can implement the legal competencies model to discover the potential areas in which they need to improve and/or manage their golf sites effectively.

The model can also be used as a guideline for directors when recruiting junior golf professionals to ensure the assistant golf professional possesses the minimum standards of legal competencies in golf. Although it is unknown for the purpose of this study how the professional golf management curriculum from the PGA is developed, the importance of the theoretical and foundational contexts for legal competencies cannot be undervalued.

Even though statistical results indicated that the perceived importance of legal competencies for golf directors is a six-factor model, it does not mean that it is the only model. When developing the model, two issues are raised: (1) whether the model is consistent with the data, or (2) whether the model is consistent with the real world (Toh, 1997). It is unknown whether the six-factor model is replicable in time or with directors in different golf environments such as different golf courses and/or different regions. Hence, it is necessary to test the model again using different samples to further examine whether it has a reasonable correspondence to reality.

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