The Core Body of Knowledge as Perceived by Therapeutic Recreation Students vs. Leisure Services Management Students

Mary Greenwood Parr
Kent State University

Abstract

The purposes of this study were to determine if the core body of knowledge associated with leisure services represents a systemic culture pattern for leisure studies students, and to determine if therapeutic recreation (TR) students and leisure services management (LSM) students represent subcultures within the broader recreation culture pattern. Data were collected over the course of 3 semesters from 81 students enrolled at an NRPA accredited degree program. A pile-sort technique was used to determine the structure of the cultural domain for each student. Consensus Analysis was used to determine the amount of agreement regarding the structure of the domain and Correspondence Analysis was used to map the similarity among the students in multi-dimensional space. The concepts did not represent a systemic culture pattern for the leisure studies students as a group nor for the TR students. The concepts represent a weak culture pattern for the management students. Educational implications and future research needs are discussed.

Biographical Information

Mary Parr is an Assistant Professor in the Leisure Studies Department, Kent State University, P.O. Box 5190, Kent, Ohio 44242-0001.

Introduction

The area of parks, recreation, and leisure services is very diverse. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has nine branches representing a broad array of subfields and the American Association for Leisure and Recreation's "Parks, Recreation and Leisure Services Career Information" publication lists over 20 career areas for graduates of recreation and leisure service degree programs. But with this diversity comes a certain amount of fragmentation. Sessoms (1990) has commented that the field lacks clear boundaries and definition of purpose in terms of a social mandate. Henderson (1994) wrote about "product diversity" and wondered if the field is weakening because of the fragmentation and the narrow specialization that goes along with the product diversity. She expressed concern that "fewer faculty and students are able to appreciate and make use of the whole pie" (p. 5). These concerns reflect an assumption that even

though the field is fragmented, these fragments represent components of the overarching field of parks, recreation, and leisure services.

The recognition of parks, recreation, and leisure services as an umbrella field with several distinct, but related subfields implies that a core body of knowledge applicable to all of the subfields exists. The substance of this core body of knowledge is reflected in the NRPA accreditation standards for academic degree programs in leisure services. These core standards are a set of concepts that all students majoring in parks, recreation and leisure services at accredited academic programs will have been exposed to, regardless of their chosen concentration (i.e., subfield). Once the core body of knowledge is understood, then students focus on the specific knowledge required of their chosen subfield (e.g., tr, outdoor, public, commercial).

However, the appropriateness of this "recreation model" for therapeutic recreation (TR) has been debated. At the heart of this debate is the definition of therapeutic recreation. Some professionals and academicians consider therapeutic recreation to be narrowly defined as ". . . a means of treatment that involves purposeful intervention to bring about expected outcomes" (Austin, 1989, p. 146), or recreation as a means to an end. "Special recreation" is considered to be distinct from therapeutic recreation and focuses on recreation participation, or recreation as an end in itself for all persons, including those with disabilities.

Austin (1989) and O'Morrow (1981) have suggested the possibility of a two-track system for professional preparation in TR. The "special recreation" perspective perhaps belongs under the umbrella of leisure services, while the "recreation therapy" perspective perhaps would be better suited in an allied health academic unit (Austin, 1989). According to Brasile (1992), one of the top three issues facing TR, according to the 190 American Therapeutic Recreation Association members who responded to his survey, was the pursuit of options to become more closely associated with allied health professions.

On the other side of the debate are those that believe that therapeutic recreation should be more broadly defined to include recreation as therapy, recreation participation, and leisure education as proposed by Peterson & Gunn (1984). This type of definition maintains therapeutic recreation's connection to the foundation of leisure. Sylvester (1985, 1996) allows for the instrumental use of therapeutic recreation, but argues that "People who are receiving medical treatment for functional limitations caused by illness and injury retain their existential needs for meaning (self-concept) and worth (self-esteem)" (1996, p. 292). And thus a narrow focus on TR's instrumental value alone will place TR in the "ironic position of trying to offer the fastest, most efficient means to functional fitness, all the while begging the question: 'Fit for what?'" (1996, p. 292). From this perspective, therapeutic recreation, leisure, and the parks, recreation, and leisure services field are interdependent.

The appropriateness of the "recreation model" for educating competent practitioners and differences between special recreation and recreation therapy beg the question: Is there a core body of knowledge common to TR and leisure services?

Professional Status

The issue of the development of a core body of knowledge is key to the attainment of professional status. Both therapeutic recreation and parks, recreation and leisure services have been working toward professional status for quite some time. According to Reynolds and O'Morrow (1985), "All professions draw on a well-defined and well-organized body of knowledge that serves as their basis for claiming that its practitioners, and no others, have the theoretical and technical skill to do what it is they profess to do" (p. 133). Parks, recreation and leisure services include TR in their professional domain as defined above. Evidence of this lies in the fact that the examination required for certification as a Leisure Professional includes TR as one of the four major component knowledge areas (management, programming, and natural resources and facilities management are the other three).

Studies that have attempted to identify important content areas and to validate the core accreditation standards have included TR practitioners in the respondent sample (Brademas, Lowrey, Gress, & Bostrom, 1981; Zito, 1982). However, results, in some cases, have implied that differences exist in the relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities for various recreation settings and jobs. For example, Zito (1982) found differences in the relevancy of the core accreditation standards dependent upon the respondent's primary area of responsibility (outdoor, commercial/ tourism, municipal, and therapeutic).

TR studies of required competencies focus on knowledge, skills, and abilities specifically required for TR practitioners, and thus include skills that may not be required of more general recreation practitioners (Oltman, Norback, & Rosenfeld, 1989; Stumbo, 1986). These types of studies attempted to identify the boundaries of TR knowledge, and thus its practice. In other words, what makes it unique from other professions in general, and parks, recreation, and leisure services specifically? Studies more broadly aimed at the field of leisure services also focus on knowledge, skills, and abilities required for leisure services providers, in order to establish professional boundaries. The results of these studies place a heavy emphasis on administrative and management tasks (e.g., Brademas, et al., 1981; Busser & Bannon, 1987).

However, many of the core knowledge areas that have been identified in TR and Leisure Services are similar in a broad sense, but may take on different connotational meanings when applied to a particular practical setting. For example, "knowledge of assessment techniques" may imply a different set of actions for a recreation therapist versus a public recreation manager. It is interesting to note that competency studies in both TR and the broader leisure services field have consistently found leisure theory and philosophy to be relatively less important than other knowledge areas (e.g., in TR see Stumbo, 1986; in leisure services see Zito, 1982) or not identified at all (see Brademas, et al., 1981; Busser & Bannon, 1987).

The current study is an extension of Parr's (1996) study that compared the structure of the conceptual domain among leisure services management (LSM) students, academicians teaching and conducting research in leisure services management, and

public parks and recreation managers. Previous research has not addressed the potential differences among TR students and management students in their understanding of the professional knowledge base. Students enrolled in NRPA-accredited programs have been exposed to a core body of knowledge that is purportedly common to all leisure services providers, regardless of concentration area or subfield. However, it is possible that specialty courses associated with a given concentration area apply the core body of knowledge to unique contexts. Thus, the core concepts may take on specialized meanings relevant to the context.

The current study used the theoretical approach of cognitive anthropology, specifically, cultural consensus analysis, to examine how much shared knowledge (or agreement) exists among leisure studies students concerning the structure of the core parks, recreation, and leisure services curricula.

Cultural Consensus Analysis

Cognitive structure is a term used by both cognitive psychologists and cognitive anthropologists. Cognitive structure refers to the way in which individuals process information and store it in memory for future use; combining bits of information that appear similar into larger chunks based on a person's interaction and experience with the concept. Anthropologists study cognitive structure from the perspective that an individual's stored knowledge (or cognitive structure) may represent a systemic pattern of cultural knowledge. That is, what counts for "relatedness," or similarity, is a function of culture and people who belong to a particular culture will organize, or "chunk" their knowledge of the cultural domain in similar ways (Romney, Weller, & Batchelder, 1986).

As described by Van Raalte, Brewer, Brewer, and Linder (1993), "Cultural consensus analysis is a method of pooling subjects' judgments when the 'correct' answers are not known." (p. 228). This is achieved by correlating each participant's responses with the responses of every other participant and in this manner an aggregate, or "culturally correct" response set is determined. In the case of the current study, the culturally correct response set would be an aggregate picture of the structure of the core leisure services content domain. (See Parr, 1996, regarding the aggregate structure of the content domain for samples of LSM students, academicians associated with leisure services management, and public parks and recreation managers.)

However, before a researcher can appropriately analyze the structure of the aggregate response, there must be evidence of a systemic culture pattern. The consensus analysis model is used to determine the existence of a systemic culture pattern and is based on several assumptions. First, ". . . that whatever the cultural reality is, it is the same for all informants in the sample" (Romney, Weller, & Batchelder, 1986, p. 317) and thus a culturally correct answer exists for each question asked of the respondents. Second, the knowledge of each individual is independent of all of the other individuals in the group and responses are independently given. Finally, all of the questions or response items come from the same cultural domain; that is, concepts related to leisure services would not be mixed with concepts related to mechanical engineering.

To determine the fit of the model, and thus the existence of a systemic culture pattern, the inter-respondent correlation matrix is factor-analyzed. A researcher can conclude that a systemic culture pattern exists given a factor solution where the first factor is at least three times as large as the second (Borgatti, 1990) and thus "accounts for all of the structure in the matrix other than sampling variability" (Romney, Weller, & Batchelder, 1986, p. 323). If the factor solution is unsatisfactory then it is likely the first assumption of the model has been violated (Borgatti, 1990), that is, the research participants did not respond based on their knowledge of a common culture.

Cultural consensus and professional knowledge

Theoretically, professional knowledge could be considered a systemic culture pattern in that it supposedly consists of knowledge uniquely held by members of the profession. For example, as a result of training and education, law professionals possess legal knowledge and expertise that the general population does not have. Thus, a unique body of professional knowledge is, by definition, knowledge shared by those within the profession and not commonly shared by those outside of the profession (Reynolds & O'Morrow, 1985; Sessoms, 1990; Stumbo, 1986).

In the case of leisure services, the knowledge base is purportedly contained in the accreditation standards (Stumbo, 1986). As discussed earlier, these standards represent the core body of knowledge unique to leisure services, including TR. If this is true, then these areas of knowledge should represent a coherent conceptual domain (systemic culture pattern) for students from accredited programs. Alternative possibilities are (a) the domain does not represent a systemic culture pattern for leisure services students (i.e., they do not agree, as a cultural group, on how the concepts fit together to form the knowledge base), or (b) that the structure of the domain represents different cultural patterns, dependent upon a student's concentration area. That is, the shared knowledge of the concepts among TR students may be structurally different than the shared knowledge among general leisure services management students because the concepts mean different things in different contexts.

A final issue relates to whether or not students trained in a particular field, but with relatively little professional experience, can be considered "members of the culture." Albert (1992) used consensus analysis to compare gerontologists (professionals), intensive caregivers (nonprofessionals with practical experience) and college students (no experience) on their knowledge of home health care tasks. He found that all of the groups represented systemic culture patterns as defined by the consensus model, i.e., each of the groups agreed among themselves regarding the correct answers. However, the gerontologists had the highest level of agreement regarding the correct answers and the college students had the lowest level of agreement, within their respective groups.

A series of studies related to perceptions of the professional role of sport psychologists found that undergraduate students (Van Raalte, Brewer, Linder, & DeLange, 1990) football players (Van Raalte, Brewer, Brewer, & Linder, 1992) and sport psychologists (Van Raalte, Brewer, Brewer, & Linder, 1993) have similar perceptions of

the professional role of sport psychologists. These studies demonstrated that an individual may have knowledge of a culture without being considered an "expert" with several years of training and practical experience. In addition, Van Raalte et al. (1993) pointed out the importance of these types of studies in the "Clarification of the scope and boundaries of the role of sport psychologists . . . as it determines how we practice (e.g., how we label ourselves, bill clients, present ourselves to the public and potential consumers) and where the field will go in the future" (p. 223). The clarification of the scope and boundaries of parks, recreation, and leisure services has been identified as a relevant issue that needs to be addressed as we work toward professional status in parks, recreation, and leisure services (Sessoms, 1990).

The core concepts related to parks and recreation practice outlined in the 1991 NRPA Accreditation Standards constituted the conceptual, or cultural domain under investigation in this study. The "questions" asked of these participants are whether each concept is similar to any or all of the other concepts through the use of a pile-sort technique. The purposes of this study were: a) to determine if the core concepts of the accreditation standards represent a systemic culture pattern among leisure studies students, b) to determine if leisure services management (LSM) students and TR students represent subcultures within the cultural domain, and c) to determine if there are relationships among several independent variables (age, gender, semesters before internship, amount of recreation-related job experience, and year in school) and the amount of shared knowledge, or competency of the respondents.

Method

Participants

Data were collected over the course of three semesters from students enrolled in an internship seminar class at an NRPA accredited degree program at a midwestern university. The internship seminar class at this university must be completed, along with concentration and core course requirements, prior to undertaking the 600-hour internship. All students are required to take eight core leisure studies courses. In addition, TR students complete nine hours of TR coursework and approximately 30 hours of coursework in related areas such as psychology, anatomy, and medical terminology. The LSM students complete an additional six hours of program management coursework and approximately 30 hours of coursework related to management or other subspecialty chosen by the student.

A total of 81 students participated in the study with 34 representing the therapeutic recreation (TR) concentration and 47 representing the leisure services management (LSM) concentration. The majority of the students were Euro-American (92%) and female (65.5%) with a mean age of 23 years. Fifty percent of the students indicated they intended to do their internships immediately following the semester in which data were collected. Another 41% indicated they had one semester of coursework remaining before being eligible for internship. While the number of respondents appears small, Romney, Weller, and Batchelder (1986) demonstrated that if a systemic culture pattern exists, then very few informants are needed to discern the structure of the pattern because of the rigorous assumptions underlying the statistical model (p. 327).

Materials

A pile-sorting technique was used to ascertain the structure of the content domain for the students participating in the study. The materials included a packet of 29 slips of paper with the 29 content areas included in the NRPA's Accreditation Standards printed on a separate slip of paper, blank slips of paper, and a questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed to assess demographic information and amount of job related experience, and to allow participants to explain their category systems.

Data Collection

The data collection procedure took place during a regularly scheduled class period of the internship seminar class near the end of each semester, and was administered to all participants at the same time. (The group administration of this task has been used in previous studies with no discernible problems in data collection or interpretation. See Parr, 1992/1993) The students were instructed to sort the slips of paper into piles, or categories, according to their similarity and that they could make as many piles as they felt were necessary to accurately reflect the similarity and distinctions among the concepts. The criteria for judging similarity was determined by the students. As each student finished the pile sort task, they were free to move on to the next step in the procedure, continuing at their own pace. Students were instructed to label each of their piles by writing a descriptive name of their choosing on a blank slip of paper and clipping it to its corresponding pile. With their labeled piles of paper in front of them, the students used the appropriate space on the questionnaire to record their category labels and the common attributes of the items in each pile. Finally, the respondents were asked to write a brief description of how their piles related to one another. (For a more detailed description of the pile-sort technique, see Parr, 1992/1993.)

Data Analysis

The pile-sort data is converted to a series of item by item similarity matrices; one matrix for each respondent. For example, if student A places item one and item five in the same pile, a one is entered into the corresponding cell of the matrix. The individual similarity matrices are then used as input for the Consensus Analysis technique. The Consensus Analysis procedure consists of several steps. First, the individuals' similarity matrices are examined to determine how similar each respondent is to every other on the basis of their pile-sort data. The result is a matrix of inter-respondent correlations. The inter-respondent correlations, or agreement matrix, is then factor- analyzed and the resulting eigen-values are used as criteria to judge the fit of the model.

The agreement matrix is then used as input for the Correspondence Analysis. Correspondence Analysis is a scaling technique that maps the distance among respondents in multi-dimensional space. This technique provides a graphic illustration of the similarity among the respondents. Respondents whose pile-sorts are highly similar to one another will be clustered together, while respondents who are dissimilar will be further apart. It is also possible to ascertain whether subcultures exist. If separate systemic culture patterns

exist for TR students and LSM students (i.e., they represent subcultures), then two clusters should be evident. The TR students will be more similar to each other than they are to the LSM students and vice versa. The ANTHROPAC program was used for both the Consensus Analysis and the Correspondence Analysis (Borgatti, 1990).

In conjunction with the Consensus and Correspondence Analyses, Weller & Romney (1990) suggest that any interpretations of the results should be undertaken with the raw data in mind. Examining the raw data by visual inspection can inform researchers about the possible information it contains. The "raw data" of interest in the current study are the item by item aggregate similarity matrices (one for TR students and one for LSM students) generated from each group's individual similarity matrices. The item by item aggregate similarity matrix represents the number of times each concept was placed in the same pile with any other concept.

For the current study, the matrix consisted of the twenty nine accreditation standards that appeared on the cards. The cells in the matrix correspond to all possible pairs of concepts. Therefore, the maximum value for each cell in the item by item matrix is equal to the total number of respondents (all of the respondents put the two items in the same pile) and the minimum value is zero (none of the respondents put the two items in the same pile). High numbers indicate that respondents agreed that the two items are similar, while low numbers indicate that the respondents agreed that the two items are dissimilar. A mid-range number indicates the respondents do not agree on the similarity of the items. The respondents' pattern of agreements can be assessed in this way, in addition to the Correspondence and Consensus Analyses.

Finally, correlations were run to determine if an individual's cultural competence (the extent to which that individual agreed with the others) was related to identifiable demographic variables including age, gender, semesters before internship, amount of recreation-related job experience, and year in school.

Results

The results of the initial Consensus Analysis with the total group of students indicated that the core concepts representing the knowledge base for parks, recreation, and leisure service professionals do not represent a systemic culture pattern for these students and that possible subcultures exist. The assumptions of the model were not met, in that the ratio of the second factor to the first factor was less than 3.0 (see Table 1).

To determine if subcultures related to TR and LSM existed, a Correspondence Analysis was run to map the respondents' similarity in multi-dimensional space. If TR and LSM subcultures exist, then two distinct clusters of respondents should appear. As is demonstrated in Figure 1, this is not the case. There appears to be one distinct cluster with several outliers (six of the seven outliers are LSM students).

TABLE 1

*Estimates of Agreement and Strength of Competency Factor
in Leisure Studies Students, TR Students, and LSM Students*

	All students	TR students	LSM students
Mean agreement	.36	.39	.36
Strength of competency factor	2.59	2.80	3.21
N	81	34	47

Note: Mean agreement is the average Pearson correlation for respondents' correlations with each other. The strength of competency ratio is the ratio of the first to the second eigenvalue.

To further test the notion of subcultures, each group (TR and LSM) was analyzed separately using Consensus Analysis to determine the amount of shared knowledge for each concentration area. The results, also presented in Table 1, indicate that the assumptions of the model were met for the LSM students, but not for the TR students. Although the factor ratio for the LSM students was just above the 3.0 threshold, the mean agreement (mean inter-respondent correlation) was only 0.362. These results suggest that systemic culture patterns did not exist for the students as a whole and the subgroup of TR students, and perhaps a weak systemic culture pattern exists for the LSM students.
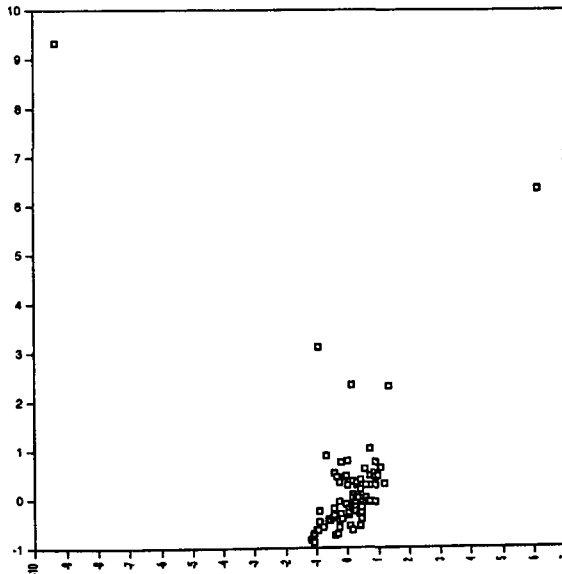

Figure 1. Correspondence plot for all students.

Correspondence Analyses were also run separately for the TR group and the LSM group (see Figures 2 and 3). As shown in Figure 2, the bulk of the LSM students were clustered rather tightly together with a few outliers. The TR group, on the other hand, showed fewer extremes but appeared to be more widely dispersed overall (Figure 3). This may explain why the TR students have a higher mean agreement than the LSM students (see Table 1). The LSM group has more outliers that skew the mean, but when mapped, the bulk of the LSM students fall in a tight cluster.

Since the data do not indicate systemic culture patterns for the students as a whole or the subgroup of TR students, further statistical analysis to determine the aggregate structure of the content domain, using the agreement matrix as input, is inappropriate. However, the raw data, in the form of the aggregate proximity matrix for each group, can be examined to determine if pairs or groups of concepts either go together or don't go together, and if differences between TR students and LSM students exist. Since the two groups had different numbers of participants (TR, n = 34; LSM, n = 47), the frequencies in each cell were converted to percentages; thus the value in each cell of the matrix represented the percentage of respondents who placed the two concepts in the same pile. The values were initially divided into high (> 66.6%), medium (33.3% - 66.6%), and low (< 33.3%) categories. For further contrast, cells containing values less than 10% were identified.
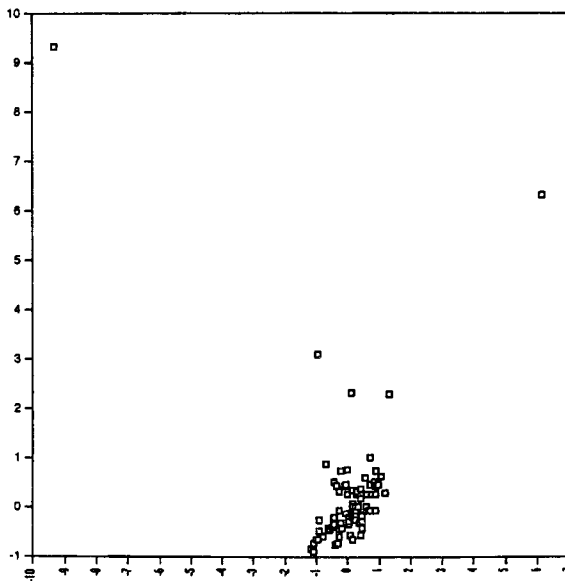

Figure 2. Correspondence plot for LSM students.

Table 2 shows the pairs of items with high agreement for the TR group and the LSM group. The table also reflects differences in agreement between the two groups.

The greater the difference in percentage points between the two groups, the less the groups agreed about the combination of the pair of items. While the values in the table reflect the percentage of people placing a given pair of items in the same pile, it is clear that several of the items go together in larger piles. This is illustrated by the logical conclusion that if "A" and "B" are in the same pile and "B" and "C" are in the same pile, then "A" and "C" must also be in the same pile. Finance, business, marketing, and public relations are interrelated with a tie to the legislative process and legal foundations. Leisure activities, leisure education, and leisure theory and philosophy are interrelated with a tie to the history of the profession; and programming, assessment techniques, and evaluation represent an interrelated category.
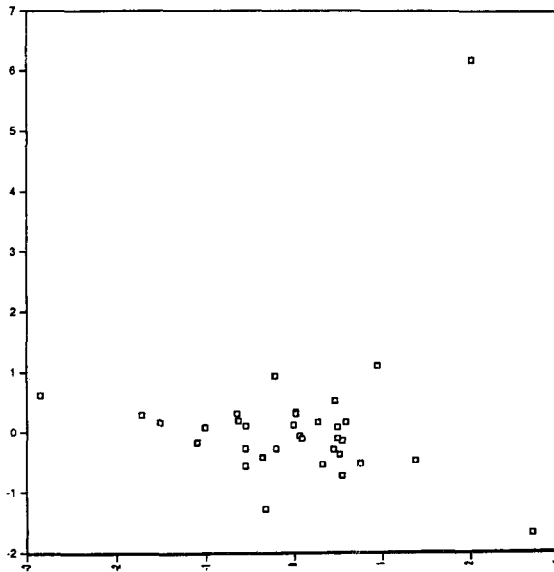

Figure 3. Correspondence plot for TR students.

Differences in agreement between the TR group and the LSM group are also apparent. More TR students than LSM students agreed among themselves that items related to "finance," "business," "marketing," "public relations," "the legislative process," and "legal foundations" belong together. Similarly, more TR students than LSM students agreed that "assessment techniques," "programming," and "evaluation" belong together. Interestingly, more LSM students than TR students agreed among themselves that "leisure theory and philosophy" and "leisure activities" belong together.

Finally, correlations were run to determine if cultural competence was related to identifiable demographic variables including age, gender, semesters before internship, amount of recreation-related job experience, and year in school. None were significantly related to individual competency for the students as a group.

TABLE 2

Pairs of Items with High Agreement by Concentration

Item Pairs	TR group (%) n=34	LSM group (%) n=47	Difference in % between groups
decision-making & problem solving	88.2	80.9	7.3
business & finance	85.3	83	2.3
business & public relations	67.6	55.3	12.3*
business & marketing	76.5	78.7	2.2
business and legal	67.6	48.9	18.7*
finance & public relations	79.4	61.7	17.7*
finance & marketing	88.2	85.1	3.1
marketing & public relations	70.6	57.4	13.2*
concept of a profession & professional issues	70.6	70.2	.4
special populations & accessibility	73.5	53.2	20.3**
programming & evaluation	73.5	34	39.5**
programming & assessment	79.4	36.2	43.2**
assessment & evaluation	79.4	63.8	15.6*
legal foundations & legislative process	67.6	48.9	18.7*
ethics & professional issues	61.8	70.2	8.4
leisure activities & leisure education	64.7	72.3	7.6
leisure education & leisure theory & philosophy	61.8	70.2	8.4
leisure theory & philosophy & leisure activities	55.9	74.5	18.6*
leisure theory & philosophy & history of the profession	64.7	72.3	7.6

Note:
* difference of 10-20 percentage points
**difference greater than 20 percentage points

Discussion

Perhaps the most significant finding of the study is that the core body of knowledge for the parks, recreation, and leisure services field does not represent a systemic culture pattern for these TR students and represents a weak pattern for the LSM students. This means that for the TR students the core concepts do not fit together as a system in any agreed upon way. There are at least two possible interpretations of this finding. First, it is possible that a distinct core body of knowledge exists for TR; that is, some other set of concepts comprise the conceptual, cultural domain of TR. This lends support to the argument that TR is a distinct field of practice.

Another possible interpretation is that this finding is reflective of these particular students and their educational process. While amount of job-related experience was not correlated with individual's level of agreement, the TR students appeared to have more general recreation experience than TR experience. Since their experience is limited and comes from a variety of recreation and nonrecreation settings, the TR students may have more difficulty tying their practical and educational experiences together to form one conceptual domain. The management students on the other hand had very little, if any, TR experience. Most general recreation jobs and recreation "fringe" jobs such as bartending, waitressing, or retail sales of recreation equipment and clothing provide experience that can be related to administrative tasks associated with leisure service agencies. Thus the LSM students exhibited a systemic culture pattern because somehow they were able to combine their coursework and experience into a coherent whole. (Or at least more coherent than the TR students.)

While the concepts do not represent a systemic culture pattern, upon inspection of the raw data, some interesting differences were found. The TR students showed a higher agreement among several of the "administration" item pairs than did the LSM students. Again, this may be a function of the relevancy of the items. Having less experience and coursework related to these items, the TR students tended to put them into one big pile. Perhaps the LSM students were able to make finer distinctions among the concepts, putting them into smaller, discrete piles. As students make more, smaller piles, the potential for variability is greater. Thus their agreement would be lower on any given item pair.

Given the nature of the TR process that is taught in many undergraduate curricula, it makes intuitive sense that these TR students, more than LSM students, would link programming, assessment, and evaluation together. The two biggest differences between the groups were in the links between programming and evaluation, and programming and assessment. The concepts of evaluation and assessment may have much clearer meaning for the TR students because of the context in which they are learned and practiced, i.e., their relation to the TR process. For the LSM students, there was little agreement about the similarity of the "programming" item to any of the other items. Perhaps this is because once the core knowledge is learned (e.g., history, philosophy, leadership, programming), LSM students focus more on administrative issues while TR students focus directly on the TR process including assessment, programming, and evaluation.

While the number of respondents in this study is sufficient to detect a systemic culture pattern if it exists (Romney, Weller, & Batchelder, 1986), there may be institutional differences among accredited versus non-accredited academic degree programs, and even among accredited programs, related to faculty experience, practica requirements, institutional mission, etc. Parr (1992/1993) also found a weak culture pattern among management students at another university, however, institutional differences should be addressed in future research.

Implications

While the findings reported here may not be surprising, and differences between TR students and LSM students make intuitive sense, the existence of, and type of differences, are in fact empirical questions. Where previous research has attempted to define core competencies for leisure service professionals and therapeutic recreation specialists, this study is the first to address TR students' and LSM students' understanding of those core competencies and whether or not the competencies represent a common body of knowledge. Future research is necessary to assess practitioners' perceptions of the conceptual structure of the core knowledge base in therapeutic recreation and leisure services to assess the appropriateness of the distinctions identified by these students. Comparing students with practitioners can help identify areas where student knowledge is incongruent with practitioner knowledge.

The findings of this study also emphasize the notion that "a layering of TR courses on top of recreation courses" (Austin, 1989, p. 152) may not be an appropriate model for educating students. While it is possible that the body of knowledge associated with TR is separate and distinct from parks, recreation and leisure services, it is also possible that more emphasis should be placed on integrating the core concepts with TR practice within the educational process, including course content, course sequencing, and experiential opportunities. As Murphy and Weissinger (1990) suggested, the educator's task is not simply to impart content knowledge, but to also teach students how to process information and experiences, facilitating the integration of theory and practice. In order to complete the "teaching transaction," it is necessary for educators to understand how students organize their knowledge and that students in therapeutic recreation and leisure services management may organize this knowledge differently.

References

Accreditation Standards of the National Recreation and Park Association. (1991). Alexandria, VA: National Recreation and Park Association

Albert, S. M., (1992). The autonomy of lay and professional knowledge in home health care. Journal of Aging Studies, 6, 227-241.

Austin, D. R. (1989). Therapeutic recreation education: A call for reform. In Issues in TR: A profession in transition, D. M. Compton, Ed., Champaign, IL: Sagamore, pp. 145-156.

Borgatti, S. P. (1990). Provisional documentation: ANTHROPAC 3.0 [computer program manual].

Brademas, D. J., Lowrey, G. A., Gress, K., & Bostrom, D. (1981). A model job analysis procedure for the park and recreation profession. Champaign, IL: Office of Recreation and Park Resources.

Brasile, F. M. (1992). Professional preparation: Reported needs for a profession in transition. Annual in Therapeutic Recreation, III, 58-71.

Busser, J. A., & Bannon, J. J. (1987). Work activities performed by management personnel in public leisure service organizations. Journal of Park and Recreation Administration, 5(1), 1-16.

Henderson, K. (Winter 1994/5). A challenge before us. SPRE Newsletter, 19(1), Arlington, VA: National Recreation and Park Association, p.5.

Murphy, W. D., & Weissinger, E. (1990). Application of cognitive instructional techniques in leisure studies curricula. Schole, 5, 1-14.

Oltman, P., Norback, J. & Rosenfeld, M. (1989). A national study of the profession of therapeutic recreation specialist. Therapeutic Recreation Journal, 23, 48-58.

O'Morrow, G. S., (1981). Therapeutic recreation accreditation: Its problems and future. Therapeutic Recreation Journal, 15(2), 31-38.

Parks, recreation, and leisure service career information. Reston, VA: American Association for Leisure and Recreation.

Parr, M. G. (1993). Examining the relationship between leisure theory and recreation practice (Doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1992). Dissertation Abstracts International, 53 (11), 4081A.

Parr, M. G. (1996). A cognitive approach to understanding the conceptual structure of the parks, recreation, and leisure services field. Schole, 11, 9-22.

Peterson, C. A., & Gunn, S. L. (1984). Therapeutic recreation program design (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Reynolds, R. P., & O'Morrow, G. S. (1985). Problems, issues, and concepts in therapeutic recreation. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Romney, A. K., Weller, S. C., & Batchelder, W. H. (1986). Culture as consensus: A theory of culture and informant accuracy. American Anthropologist, 88, 313-338.

Sessoms, H. D. (1990). On becoming a profession: Requirements and strategies. Journal of Parks and Recreation Administration, 8(4), 33-42.

Stumbo, N. J. (1986). A definition of entry-level knowledge for therapeutic recreation practice. Therapeutic Recreation Journal, 20, 15-30.

Sylvester, C. D., (1985). Freedom, leisure, and therapeutic recreation: A philosophical view. Therapeutic Recreation Journal, 19, 6-13.

Sylvester, C. D., (1996). Critical theory, instrumental rationality, and therapeutic recreation. Proceedings of the 8th Canadian Congress for Leisure Research, CA, 289-293.

Van Raalte, J. L., Brewer, B. W., Brewer, D. D., & Linder, D. E. (1992). NCAA division II college football players' perceptions of an athlete who consults a sport psychologist, Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 14, 273-282.

Van Raalte, J. L., Brewer, B. W., Brewer, D. D., & Linder, D. E., (1993). Sport psychologists' perceptions of sport and mental health practitioners. Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 5, 222-233.

Van Raalte, J. L., Brewer, B. W., Linder, D. E., & DeLange, N. (1990). Perceptions of sport-oriented professionals: A multidimensional scaling analysis. The Sport Psychologist, 4, 228-234.

Weller, S. C., & Romney, A. K. (1990). Metric Scaling: Correspondence Analysis. Newbury Park: Sage.

Zito, A. J. (1982). An evaluation of the professional education core standards of the recreation, leisure services, and resource education national council on accreditation (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Iowa, 1982). Dissertation Abstracts International, 43, 2573A.