
Reading Habits and Attitudes of Parks, Recreation, and Leisure Services Professionals

Hong Suk Choi

Department of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation
Missouri Western State University

Yating Liang

Department of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation
Missouri State University

Deb Jordan

Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
East Carolina University

Abstract

This study examined recent reading practices and beliefs of parks, recreation, and leisure services professionals. For many years, faculty members have engaged in informal discussions at professional meetings and in journals about the need to bridge the gap between academicians and practitioners in terms of moving research findings into practice. At present, the primary methods for disseminating research results are through publication (in journals) and conferences (research symposia). While direct assessments have not occurred, academicians often wonder who is reading the research journals. The purposes of this study were to: (1) determine how often respondents read which periodicals, (2) ascertain reading frequencies of specific journal content, and (3) examine respondents' attitudes toward the publication and dissemination of research. After sending electronic surveys to 2000 NRPA members, 850 practitioners and academicians supplied usable data. A large majority of respondents rarely or never read research-based periodicals; the most frequently read journal among all respondents was *Parks & Recreation Magazine*. The most common types of information read by respondents were professional issues, full-length articles, and legal issues columns. The majority of respondents agreed that research articles should include a section about implications for practice, and that practitioners should read research to stay current in the field.

KEYWORDS: Periodicals, readership, reading habits, recreation, leisure studies

Please address all correspondence to: Hong Suk Choi, Department of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, Missouri Western State University, 4525 Downs Dr., St. Joseph, MO 64506, Tel: 816-271-4246, Email: hchoi@missouriwestern.edu

Introduction

Professional periodicals are one of the many resources for professionals to find expert knowledge, understand changes, and remain aware of current trends. For this study, we categorized parks, recreation, and leisure services journals into two main categories: practitioner-oriented journals and academic journals. Practitioner-oriented journals include magazines such as *Parks & Recreation Magazine*, which is published monthly by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). Targeted to practitioners, such journals often include material addressing programmatic issues, equipment and supplies, and management tips. Further, the material is presented using an informal and readily accessible writing style. On the other hand, academic journals are typically peer-reviewed periodicals with a scholarly focus, where new research is presented and existing research is critiqued. Most of these pieces are based on theory, present information about data collection and analysis, and report findings and implications for practice.

Previous research has shown that few academicians or practitioners (Jordan & Roland, 1999) read professional journals. With the added access to multiple sources of information in recent years (such as those found after conducting a search on the Internet), we wanted to know if changes have occurred in journal readership since the earlier study. Jordan and Roland (1999) conducted a study among parks and recreation professionals to determine the frequency of readership of professional publications and its content; they also examined attitudes toward publishing. No other study examining journal readership has been conducted since that time. Wanting to be able to determine journal readership and attitudes toward publishing research in the current time period (and to determine if any changes have occurred over time), this investigation replicated Jordan and Roland's previous work. The research questions were: (1) how often do parks and recreation professionals read which periodical? (2) how frequently do parks and recreation professionals read specific journal content, and (3) what attitudes do parks and recreation professionals have toward the publication and dissemination of research?

Literature Review

Scholarly and professional journals are essential in the creation and dissemination of knowledge. Most distinct fields of study publish several journals relating to their subject, each with different specialty areas and publication standards. Common attempts to assess journal quality include citation analysis and expert surveys (Franke, Edlund, & Oster, 1990; Pechlaner, Zehrer, Matzler, & Abfalter, 2004). Both methods provide important information about journal readership such as reading frequency, scientific and practical relevance, overall reputation, journal rating, journal influence, and academic career enhancement in a given field.

Citation analyses provide information about the number of times writers reference a particular article and/or journal when preparing their own paper. Indices of top-tier journals are required before citation analyses can be conducted. Such analysis utilizes objective measures of journal impact and quality (see the Social Science Citation Index; SSCI). The disciplines of management (Tahai & Meyer, 1998; Franke, Edlund, & Oster,

1990), tourism (Perdue, 1988), leisure services (Van Doren, Holland, & Crompton, 1984), and others have all made some use of citation analyses.

Another form of journal analysis, expert surveys, makes use of perceptual data, usually acquired through a survey of the experts or users. The basic assumption of expert surveys is that individual perceptions are accurate measures of quality or impact. Academic units that have utilized expert surveys for journal analysis include economics (Hawkins, Ritter, & Walter, 1973; Mason, Steagall, & Fabritius, 1997), management (Blackburn, 1990; Coe & Weinstock, 1984; Sharplin & Mabry, 1985), marketing (Theoharakis & Hirst, 2002), hospitality management (Pechlaner, Zehrer, Matzler, & Abfalter, 2004), and leisure services (Jordan & Roland, 1999).

Parks, recreation, and leisure services professionals have access to a variety of journals and magazines related to the profession. To learn about the use and content of professional periodicals, leisure scholars have conducted empirical studies to investigate author affiliation, preferred statistical tools for published research studies, and areas of specialization addressed within the articles (Van Doren, Carlton, & Heit, 1973). McLellan also examined author affiliations of selected journal articles (1980). Lewko and Crandall examined authors' professional training/education and classification of therapeutic recreation-based articles published in three specific journals (1980), while Szymanski investigated the key concepts and scope of practice in the therapeutic recreation field as portrayed in journals (1980). Using citation analysis, Van Doren, Holland, and Crompton (1984) studied the structure and boundaries of leisure research as represented in six volumes of the *Journal of Leisure Research* (JLR) and *Leisure Sciences*. Their purpose was to identify contributions from other fields, the types of citations used, the number of leisure sub-topic areas, and the age of citations utilized.

In the related travel and tourism field, some research efforts about journal readership have been published. Sheldon (1990) examined the perceived quality and use of tourism and hospitality journals. She identified journals in allied fields that are referenced and published by tourism and hospitality researchers. The results indicated a clear distinction between hospitality and tourism scholars in their journal perceptions and use, especially in the top three ranked journals. Tourism researchers published in and referenced a wider variety of journals in allied fields than did the respondents who reported hospitality as their primary discipline.

Pechlaner et al. (2004) investigated the rankings of international journals in tourism and hospitality. The goal of their work was to identify the top journals in terms of reputation and reading frequency in the tourism and hospitality fields. The results showed that scientific and practical relevance have a positive impact on the overall reputation of a journal. Of the two (scientific and practical relevance), practical relevance of the journal had a higher impact on a particular journal's overall reputation than did scientific relevance. Further, the overall reputation of a journal influenced readership frequency and impacted the careers of scholars who published in that journal.

With a different perspective, Jordan and Roland (1999) were interested in examining journal-related issues in the parks, recreation, and leisure services field. They investigated journal and content reading frequency, attitudes of readers toward the publication of research, and differences between academicians and practitioners in these areas.

They found that academicians read research-based journals more frequently than did practitioners, and academicians were significantly more likely than practitioners to read the *Journal of Leisure Research (JLR)*, *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration (JPRA)*, *Leisure Sciences*, *Leisure Studies*, the *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation, & Dance (JOPERD)* and *Camping Magazine*. The most frequently read of the research journals was the *Therapeutic Recreation Journal (TRJ)*, and the most frequently read periodical was *Parks & Recreation Magazine*, followed by the individual's state association magazine. The most common type of information read by all respondents was practice-based articles; book reviews were reportedly the least read type of material. Intrigued by this early work, and with a desire to determine if changes have occurred over time, the authors of this project decided to replicate the earlier Jordan and Roland study.

Methods

Sample

Following the previous Jordan and Roland (1999) study (with some methodological updating due to electronic capabilities), in this project the researchers contacted members of two branches from within the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) for participation in this study. The investigators had access to e-mail addresses of approximately 2000 members of the Society of Parks and Recreation Educators (SPRE) and American Parks and Recreation Society (APRS) (not the entire population of members); all of these individuals were contacted for inclusion in the study. In 2006, an invitation to complete the online survey was sent via email to all SPRE and APRS members for whom the National Recreation and Park Association had email addresses. Eight hundred sixty-nine (869) surveys were returned for a 42.6% response rate. After data screening, cleaning, and omitting outliers, 850 were deemed suitable for data analysis.

Survey Instrument

A self-administered electronic mail-survey questionnaire was selected due to the nationwide scope of the study. The 59-item survey included questions about demographic information, frequency of reading various periodicals, frequency of reading different types of journal content within the periodicals, and attitudes/opinions about writing and publication in professional journals and magazines. The demographic information was used to develop a sample profile and included age, sex, ethnicity, education level, occupation, job title, and length of time in the profession.

When administering the instrument, an adaptation of Dillman's (1978) Total Design Method for surveying was followed. The Total Design Method involves sending four separate mailings to the sample in an eight-week timeframe. Thus, we sent the initial email invitation to participate, and followed that with three email reminders.

Journal Readership Measures

To assess journal readership among parks, recreation, and leisure services professionals, the investigators used the Reading Habits and Attitudes of Leisure Professionals Scale (RHALP) (Jordan & Roland, 1999). Minor modifications to wording was made, and three journals were added based on comments from the Jordan and Roland study and the

rising prominence of various periodicals. The modified RHALP had acceptable reliability, with a coefficient alpha of .81.

In 1997 Jordan and Roland asked about readership of five research-based journals with a national or international distribution (*Journal of Leisure Research*, *Journal of Parks and Recreation Administration* (hard copy), *Leisure Studies*, *Leisure Sciences*, and *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*) and four nationally/internationally disseminated practitioner-based periodicals (*Parks & Recreation Magazine*; parks and recreation state association journals; *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*; and *Camping Magazine*). In 2006, three additional scholarly journals—*Annals of Tourism Research*, *World Leisure*, and *Schole* were included in the research journals list. In addition, in 2006 *JPRA* was available online.

Mimicking the 1999 study, participants answered questions about reading habits on a 5-point Likert scale with the following response choices: (1) Never, (2) Rarely, (3) Occasionally, (4) Often, and (5) Always, indicating their frequency of reading various journals and types of materials within the periodicals. For example, while item one asked respondents to indicate the frequency with which they read various periodicals, item two asked respondents to indicate their reading frequency of several types of materials found within the journals and magazines. After reviewing practitioner-based periodicals for 2000 – 2005, the most common types of materials found in the magazines and journals were full-length article, research into practice piece, program/staff/facilities management highlights, new product information/product reviews, and professional events calendar.

In addition to asking about reading habits, the remaining 35 questions focus on attitudes toward the publication and dissemination of research and relevant demographic items. Attitudinal items included such statements as Research articles are easily understood by practitioners; In general, the purpose of publishing in research journals is to advance the knowledge base of the profession; and Academicians and practitioners should work together more in writing and publishing in professional journals.

Data Analysis

The statistical analyses focused on demographic information and assessing current reading habits and attitudes of parks, recreation, and leisure professionals. Descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze demographic information (sex, age, race/ethnicity, education level, occupation, job title, and length of time in the profession). The analyses included cross tabulations identifying frequencies, mean scores, median scores, standard deviations (SD), and percentages, when appropriate. To investigate reading practices and beliefs of parks, recreation, and leisure services professionals, an independent t-test was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, 2005). Because of a relatively large sample size, the investigators selected an alpha level of .01 for all statistical tests of significance.

Results

Sample Characteristics

The vast majority of respondents were White/Caucasian (91%), and 44.4% of respondents were female. Over 90% of respondents were college-educated. About half of them (50.5%) had an associate's or bachelor's degree, 32.4% had a master's degree and

12.5% reported holding a doctoral degree. Three-quarters of respondents had been in the profession for more than 10 years (75.4%), with the majority of individuals having been in the profession for more than 15 years (64.2%).

Reading Habits

For analysis and comparison purposes, the researchers collapsed the categories of respondents' primary occupation types into "Academicians" and "Practitioners." Thus, respondents included 700 practitioners (CTRS; assistant or full director; programmer or direct leader; and other), 129 academicians (professors who do some/no research and researchers who do some/no teaching), and 21 individuals who did not report their occupation. The valid percent of respondents used for analysis was 82.4% practitioners and 15.2% academicians. The respondents were heterogeneous for years of experience and age category.

To determine who reads which periodicals, respondents were asked about their professional reading habits. The attitudinal items offered response choices on a 5-point Likert-scale anchored with Never and Always. In the analysis, the five-point scale for these items was reduced to three—Never/Rarely, Occasionally, and Often/Always. The results of respondents' frequencies of reading selected periodicals are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Frequency of Reading Selected Periodicals (Percent)

| | Never/Rarely | | | Occasionally | | | Often/Always | | |
|---|--------------|------|------|--------------|------|------|--------------|------|------|
| | All | Pra | Aca | All | Pra | Aca | All | Pra | Aca |
| Research-focused Journals | | | | | | | | | |
| Journal of Leisure Research (JLR) | 70.5 | 79.5 | 22.0 | 18.0 | 16.2 | 27.6 | 11.5 | 4.3 | 50.4 |
| Leisure Sciences (L Sci) | 83.8 | 91.7 | 42.2 | 9.8 | 6.0 | 29.7 | 6.5 | 2.4 | 28.1 |
| Leisure Studies (L Stu) | 81.6 | 87.3 | 10.0 | 13.6 | 9.9 | 33.3 | 4.8 | 2.8 | 15.1 |
| Journal of Parks and Recreation Administration (JPRA) | 69.1 | 76.0 | 32.5 | 19.4 | 16.3 | 35.7 | 11.5 | 7.7 | 31.7 |
| Therapeutic Recreation Journal (TRJ) | 79.7 | 83.9 | 57.5 | 7.6 | 7.1 | 10.2 | 12.7 | 9.0 | 32.3 |
| Annals of Tourism Research (ATR) | 93.1 | 96.3 | 76.0 | 4.7 | 3.1 | 12.8 | 2.3 | 0.6 | 11.2 |
| World Leisure (WL) | 92.3 | 95.8 | 73.6 | 4.7 | 3.3 | 12.0 | 3.0 | 0.9 | 14.4 |
| SCHOLE | 87.2 | 95.6 | 42.4 | 8.0 | 3.8 | 30.4 | 4.8 | 0.6 | 27.2 |
| Practice-focused Journals | | | | | | | | | |
| Park and Recreation Magazine | 4.4 | 3.5 | 9.3 | 13.7 | 12.8 | 18.6 | 81.9 | 83.7 | 72.1 |
| Camping Magazine | 79.6 | 81.0 | 72.2 | 12.6 | 12.2 | 15.1 | 7.8 | 6.8 | 12.7 |
| Journal of Physical Education, Recreation, & Dance (JOPERD) | 80.0 | 83.0 | 64.0 | 13.5 | 12.6 | 18.4 | 6.5 | 4.4 | 17.6 |
| State Journals | 26.0 | 23.4 | 40.2 | 10.4 | 8.9 | 18.9 | 63.6 | 67.7 | 40.9 |

Acknowledging that respondents included many more practitioners than academicians, overall, the majority of the respondents do not read research/scholarly journals (69% to 93% rarely/never read research-based periodicals). Among the eight scholarly journals listed, respondents reported reading the *JPR*, *TRJ*, and *JLR* more frequently than other journals. Having said this, it is important to note that fewer than 40% of those responding indicated that they read any of these three research journals occasionally, often, or always (30.9%, 20.3%, and 19.5%, respectively). Further, in examining frequency of reading on the 5-point scale, the largest mean was 2.53, indicating that respondents rarely read these journals (1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Often, 5 = Always).

Practice-focused journals presented a very different picture, as frequency of readership was much higher for two of the four journals. Responses indicated that *Parks & Recreation Magazine* and state association journals (e.g., *Texas Parks and Recreation Society Magazine*) had much higher readership than did the other journals. Over 80% of the respondents reported that they read *Parks & Recreation Magazine* often or always, while over 60% reported reading state association journals often or always. Fewer than 10% of respondents reported reading *Camping Magazine* or *JOPERD* often or always.

Independent t-tests were employed to determine the significant differences between academicians and practitioners in frequency of reading selected periodicals. The differences in self-reported reading habits of practitioners and academicians were found to be statistically significant for all periodicals, except *Camping Magazine* (see Table 2). The results indicated that academicians read *JLR*, *Leisure Sciences*, *Leisure Studies*, *JPR*, *TRJ*, *Annals of Tourism Research*, *World Leisure*, *Schole*, *Camping Magazine*, and *JOPERD* more frequently than did practitioners.

Table 2

Independent T Test for Reading Habits of Practitioners and Academicians

| | | N | Mean | t | df | p | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------|-----|------|--------|-----|------|---------------------------------|---------------|-----|------|--------|-----|------|--------------|-----|------|---------------------------------|---------------|-----|------|--------|-----|------|--------------|-----|------|---------------------------------|---------------|-----|------|--------|-----|------|--------------|-----|------|----------------------------|---------------|-----|------|--------|-----|------|--------------|-----|------|----------------------------|---------------|-----|------|--------|-----|------|--------------|-----|------|----------------------------|---------------|-----|------|--------|-----|------|--------------|-----|------|----------------------------|---------------|-----|------|--------|-----|------|--------------|-----|------|----------------------------|---------------|-----|------|-------|-----|------|--------------|-----|------|------------------|---------------|-----|------|-------|-----|------|--------------|-----|------|----------------|---------------|-----|------|-------|-----|------|--------------|-----|------|----------------|---------------|-----|------|-------|-----|
| Journal of Leisure Research | Practitioners | 679 | 1.49 | 18.623 | 804 | .000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Academicians | 127 | 3.57 | | | | Leisure Sciences | Practitioners | 672 | 1.12 | 16.255 | 798 | .000 | Academicians | 128 | 2.72 | Leisure Studies | Practitioners | 668 | 1.31 | 9.995 | 792 | .000 | Academicians | 126 | 2.27 | Journal of Park and Rec. Admin. | Practitioners | 674 | 1.64 | 10.791 | 798 | .000 | Academicians | 126 | 2.98 | Therapeutic Rec. Journal | Practitioners | 675 | 1.50 | 7.699 | 800 | .000 | Academicians | 127 | 2.50 | Annals of Tourism Research | Practitioners | 667 | 1.09 | 9.263 | 790 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 1.70 | World Leisure | Practitioners | 69 | 1.10 | 9.815 | 792 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 1.82 | SCHOLE | Practitioners | 666 | 1.10 | 20.706 | 789 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 2.70 | Park & Recreation Magazine | Practitioners | 694 | 4.61 | 3.585 | 821 | .000 | Academicians | 129 | 4.26 | Camping Magazine | Practitioners | 658 | 1.52 | 2.523 | 782 | .012 | Academicians | 126 | 1.81 | JOPERD | Practitioners | 665 | 1.43 | 5.935 | 788 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 2.07 | State Journals | Practitioners | 688 | 3.89 | 5.271 | 813 |
| Leisure Sciences | Practitioners | 672 | 1.12 | 16.255 | 798 | .000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Academicians | 128 | 2.72 | | | | Leisure Studies | Practitioners | 668 | 1.31 | 9.995 | 792 | .000 | Academicians | 126 | 2.27 | Journal of Park and Rec. Admin. | Practitioners | 674 | 1.64 | 10.791 | 798 | .000 | Academicians | 126 | 2.98 | Therapeutic Rec. Journal | Practitioners | 675 | 1.50 | 7.699 | 800 | .000 | Academicians | 127 | 2.50 | Annals of Tourism Research | Practitioners | 667 | 1.09 | 9.263 | 790 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 1.70 | World Leisure | Practitioners | 69 | 1.10 | 9.815 | 792 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 1.82 | SCHOLE | Practitioners | 666 | 1.10 | 20.706 | 789 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 2.70 | Park & Recreation Magazine | Practitioners | 694 | 4.61 | 3.585 | 821 | .000 | Academicians | 129 | 4.26 | Camping Magazine | Practitioners | 658 | 1.52 | 2.523 | 782 | .012 | Academicians | 126 | 1.81 | JOPERD | Practitioners | 665 | 1.43 | 5.935 | 788 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 2.07 | State Journals | Practitioners | 688 | 3.89 | 5.271 | 813 | .000 | Academicians | 127 | 3.02 | | | | | | |
| Leisure Studies | Practitioners | 668 | 1.31 | 9.995 | 792 | .000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Academicians | 126 | 2.27 | | | | Journal of Park and Rec. Admin. | Practitioners | 674 | 1.64 | 10.791 | 798 | .000 | Academicians | 126 | 2.98 | Therapeutic Rec. Journal | Practitioners | 675 | 1.50 | 7.699 | 800 | .000 | Academicians | 127 | 2.50 | Annals of Tourism Research | Practitioners | 667 | 1.09 | 9.263 | 790 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 1.70 | World Leisure | Practitioners | 69 | 1.10 | 9.815 | 792 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 1.82 | SCHOLE | Practitioners | 666 | 1.10 | 20.706 | 789 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 2.70 | Park & Recreation Magazine | Practitioners | 694 | 4.61 | 3.585 | 821 | .000 | Academicians | 129 | 4.26 | Camping Magazine | Practitioners | 658 | 1.52 | 2.523 | 782 | .012 | Academicians | 126 | 1.81 | JOPERD | Practitioners | 665 | 1.43 | 5.935 | 788 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 2.07 | State Journals | Practitioners | 688 | 3.89 | 5.271 | 813 | .000 | Academicians | 127 | 3.02 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Journal of Park and Rec. Admin. | Practitioners | 674 | 1.64 | 10.791 | 798 | .000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Academicians | 126 | 2.98 | | | | Therapeutic Rec. Journal | Practitioners | 675 | 1.50 | 7.699 | 800 | .000 | Academicians | 127 | 2.50 | Annals of Tourism Research | Practitioners | 667 | 1.09 | 9.263 | 790 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 1.70 | World Leisure | Practitioners | 69 | 1.10 | 9.815 | 792 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 1.82 | SCHOLE | Practitioners | 666 | 1.10 | 20.706 | 789 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 2.70 | Park & Recreation Magazine | Practitioners | 694 | 4.61 | 3.585 | 821 | .000 | Academicians | 129 | 4.26 | Camping Magazine | Practitioners | 658 | 1.52 | 2.523 | 782 | .012 | Academicians | 126 | 1.81 | JOPERD | Practitioners | 665 | 1.43 | 5.935 | 788 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 2.07 | State Journals | Practitioners | 688 | 3.89 | 5.271 | 813 | .000 | Academicians | 127 | 3.02 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Therapeutic Rec. Journal | Practitioners | 675 | 1.50 | 7.699 | 800 | .000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Academicians | 127 | 2.50 | | | | Annals of Tourism Research | Practitioners | 667 | 1.09 | 9.263 | 790 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 1.70 | World Leisure | Practitioners | 69 | 1.10 | 9.815 | 792 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 1.82 | SCHOLE | Practitioners | 666 | 1.10 | 20.706 | 789 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 2.70 | Park & Recreation Magazine | Practitioners | 694 | 4.61 | 3.585 | 821 | .000 | Academicians | 129 | 4.26 | Camping Magazine | Practitioners | 658 | 1.52 | 2.523 | 782 | .012 | Academicians | 126 | 1.81 | JOPERD | Practitioners | 665 | 1.43 | 5.935 | 788 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 2.07 | State Journals | Practitioners | 688 | 3.89 | 5.271 | 813 | .000 | Academicians | 127 | 3.02 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Annals of Tourism Research | Practitioners | 667 | 1.09 | 9.263 | 790 | .000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Academicians | 125 | 1.70 | | | | World Leisure | Practitioners | 69 | 1.10 | 9.815 | 792 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 1.82 | SCHOLE | Practitioners | 666 | 1.10 | 20.706 | 789 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 2.70 | Park & Recreation Magazine | Practitioners | 694 | 4.61 | 3.585 | 821 | .000 | Academicians | 129 | 4.26 | Camping Magazine | Practitioners | 658 | 1.52 | 2.523 | 782 | .012 | Academicians | 126 | 1.81 | JOPERD | Practitioners | 665 | 1.43 | 5.935 | 788 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 2.07 | State Journals | Practitioners | 688 | 3.89 | 5.271 | 813 | .000 | Academicians | 127 | 3.02 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| World Leisure | Practitioners | 69 | 1.10 | 9.815 | 792 | .000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Academicians | 125 | 1.82 | | | | SCHOLE | Practitioners | 666 | 1.10 | 20.706 | 789 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 2.70 | Park & Recreation Magazine | Practitioners | 694 | 4.61 | 3.585 | 821 | .000 | Academicians | 129 | 4.26 | Camping Magazine | Practitioners | 658 | 1.52 | 2.523 | 782 | .012 | Academicians | 126 | 1.81 | JOPERD | Practitioners | 665 | 1.43 | 5.935 | 788 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 2.07 | State Journals | Practitioners | 688 | 3.89 | 5.271 | 813 | .000 | Academicians | 127 | 3.02 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| SCHOLE | Practitioners | 666 | 1.10 | 20.706 | 789 | .000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Academicians | 125 | 2.70 | | | | Park & Recreation Magazine | Practitioners | 694 | 4.61 | 3.585 | 821 | .000 | Academicians | 129 | 4.26 | Camping Magazine | Practitioners | 658 | 1.52 | 2.523 | 782 | .012 | Academicians | 126 | 1.81 | JOPERD | Practitioners | 665 | 1.43 | 5.935 | 788 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 2.07 | State Journals | Practitioners | 688 | 3.89 | 5.271 | 813 | .000 | Academicians | 127 | 3.02 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Park & Recreation Magazine | Practitioners | 694 | 4.61 | 3.585 | 821 | .000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Academicians | 129 | 4.26 | | | | Camping Magazine | Practitioners | 658 | 1.52 | 2.523 | 782 | .012 | Academicians | 126 | 1.81 | JOPERD | Practitioners | 665 | 1.43 | 5.935 | 788 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 2.07 | State Journals | Practitioners | 688 | 3.89 | 5.271 | 813 | .000 | Academicians | 127 | 3.02 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Camping Magazine | Practitioners | 658 | 1.52 | 2.523 | 782 | .012 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Academicians | 126 | 1.81 | | | | JOPERD | Practitioners | 665 | 1.43 | 5.935 | 788 | .000 | Academicians | 125 | 2.07 | State Journals | Practitioners | 688 | 3.89 | 5.271 | 813 | .000 | Academicians | 127 | 3.02 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| JOPERD | Practitioners | 665 | 1.43 | 5.935 | 788 | .000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Academicians | 125 | 2.07 | | | | State Journals | Practitioners | 688 | 3.89 | 5.271 | 813 | .000 | Academicians | 127 | 3.02 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| State Journals | Practitioners | 688 | 3.89 | 5.271 | 813 | .000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Academicians | 127 | 3.02 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Note: (1=Never Read, 2= Rarely Read, 3=Read Occasionally, 4= Read Often, 5= Always Read * $p < .01$)

In looking at the two types of periodicals, the results revealed (not surprisingly) that academicians read research-focused journals more frequently than did practitioners. Over one-half of the academicians reported reading *JLR* often or always ($M=3.57$), while approximately 4% of practitioners ($M=1.49$) did so ($t=18.623$, $df=804$, $p=.000$). Nearly one-third of academicians read *JPRA* and *TRJ*, while only between 8% and 9% of practitioners did so. Reading frequencies for *JPRA* ($t=10.791$, $df=798$, $p=.000$) and *TRJ* ($t=7.699$, $df=800$, $p=.000$) also differed: academicians ($M=2.98$, *JPRA* and $M=2.50$, *TRJ*) read those journals occasionally while practitioners ($M=1.64$, *JPRA* and $M=1.50$, *TRJ*) did rarely. This low reading frequency of *JPRA* by practitioners was the highest reading frequency by practitioners of all research-based journals.

In relation to practice-focused journals, the investigators found significant differences in frequency of reading *Parks & Recreation Magazine* and state association journals. Practitioners ($M=3.89$) were significantly more likely than academicians ($M=3.02$) to read their state association journal ($t=5.27$, $df=813$, $p=.000$). Though practitioners and academicians were equally likely to read *Parks & Recreation Magazine* often or always, a statistical difference was found between the two groups ($t=3.59$, $df=821$, $p=.000$). Most of practitioners read *Parks & Recreation Magazine* always ($M=4.61$), while most academicians did so often ($M=4.26$).

In addition to being asked to report frequency of reading various publications, respondents were asked to indicate their reading frequencies for various types of materials commonly found within periodicals (e.g., full-length articles, professional highlights). When respondents read professional journals, 94/86% of them said they read these sections occasionally or often/always. The rank order of the five most frequently read types of materials in journals included: (1) full-length feature or research articles (2) professional issues, (3) legal issues/risk management, (4) news and updates, and (5) program/staff/facility management highlights.

When comparing reading frequencies of journal contents between practitioners and academicians, the researchers found significant differences in almost all types of contents. Table 3 demonstrates the results of independent t-tests on reading frequency of journal content. Academicians reported reading full-length articles, research-into-practice summaries, and invited commentary pieces more frequently than did practitioners. Practitioners, on the other hand, indicated that they read program/staff/facility management highlights, legal issues, professional issues, product information, the professional events calendar, and news and updates sections more frequently than did academicians. No significant differences were found between practitioners and academicians in reading frequency of book and resource reviews.

Attitudes and Opinions

In addition to wanting to update an understanding of how frequently professionals read discipline-specific periodicals, the investigators also wanted to ascertain current attitudes toward writing and dissemination of research. Thus, survey respondents were asked to express their level of agreement with a variety of statements related to the publication and dissemination of research. These 22 items were rated on a five-point Likert scale, from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. For the present analysis, responses were collapsed into three categories—Agree, Neutral, and Disagree (see Table 4).

Table 3

Reading Frequencies of Journal Contents

| | | N | Mean | t | df | p | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|----------|-------------|----------|-----------|----------|---|---------------|-----|------|-------|-----|------|--------------|-----|------|---|---------------|-----|------|-------|-----|------|--------------|-----|------|---|---------------|-----|------|-------|-----|------|--------------|-----|------|---|---------------|-----|------|-------|-----|------|--------------|-----|------|---|---------------|-----|------|-------|-----|------|--------------|-----|------|---|---------------|-----|------|-------|-----|------|--------------|-----|------|------------------------------|---------------|-----|------|-------|-----|------|--------------|-----|------|--------------------------|---------------|-----|------|-------|-----|------|--------------|-----|------|--------------------------|---------------|-----|------|-------|-----|
| Full-length feature or research articles | Practitioners | 694 | 4.12 | 5.039 | 821 | .000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Academicians | 129 | 4.69 | | | | Research into practice piece | Practitioners | 688 | 3.31 | 8.465 | 814 | .000 | Academicians | 128 | 4.52 | Invited paper/commentary | Practitioners | 688 | 2.92 | 5.001 | 812 | .000 | Academicians | 126 | 3.63 | Program/staff/facilities management | Practitioners | 688 | 3.99 | 5.978 | 813 | .000 | Academicians | 127 | 3.17 | Legal issues/risk management | Practitioners | 688 | 4.20 | 6.363 | 810 | .000 | Academicians | 124 | 3.39 | Professional issues | Practitioners | 692 | 4.31 | 3.087 | 818 | .002 | Academicians | 128 | 3.94 | New product information/product reviews | Practitioners | 690 | 3.55 | 9.635 | 817 | .000 | Academicians | 129 | 2.18 | Professional events calendar | Practitioners | 691 | 3.56 | 3.467 | 816 | .001 | Academicians | 127 | 3.06 | News and updates | Practitioners | 694 | 3.98 | 4.512 | 819 | .000 | Academicians | 127 | 3.38 | Book or resource reviews | Practitioners | 692 | 2.94 | 0.172 | 818 |
| Research into practice piece | Practitioners | 688 | 3.31 | 8.465 | 814 | .000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Academicians | 128 | 4.52 | | | | Invited paper/commentary | Practitioners | 688 | 2.92 | 5.001 | 812 | .000 | Academicians | 126 | 3.63 | Program/staff/facilities management | Practitioners | 688 | 3.99 | 5.978 | 813 | .000 | Academicians | 127 | 3.17 | Legal issues/risk management | Practitioners | 688 | 4.20 | 6.363 | 810 | .000 | Academicians | 124 | 3.39 | Professional issues | Practitioners | 692 | 4.31 | 3.087 | 818 | .002 | Academicians | 128 | 3.94 | New product information/product reviews | Practitioners | 690 | 3.55 | 9.635 | 817 | .000 | Academicians | 129 | 2.18 | Professional events calendar | Practitioners | 691 | 3.56 | 3.467 | 816 | .001 | Academicians | 127 | 3.06 | News and updates | Practitioners | 694 | 3.98 | 4.512 | 819 | .000 | Academicians | 127 | 3.38 | Book or resource reviews | Practitioners | 692 | 2.94 | 0.172 | 818 | .863 | Academicians | 128 | 2.92 | | | | | | |
| Invited paper/commentary | Practitioners | 688 | 2.92 | 5.001 | 812 | .000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Academicians | 126 | 3.63 | | | | Program/staff/facilities management | Practitioners | 688 | 3.99 | 5.978 | 813 | .000 | Academicians | 127 | 3.17 | Legal issues/risk management | Practitioners | 688 | 4.20 | 6.363 | 810 | .000 | Academicians | 124 | 3.39 | Professional issues | Practitioners | 692 | 4.31 | 3.087 | 818 | .002 | Academicians | 128 | 3.94 | New product information/product reviews | Practitioners | 690 | 3.55 | 9.635 | 817 | .000 | Academicians | 129 | 2.18 | Professional events calendar | Practitioners | 691 | 3.56 | 3.467 | 816 | .001 | Academicians | 127 | 3.06 | News and updates | Practitioners | 694 | 3.98 | 4.512 | 819 | .000 | Academicians | 127 | 3.38 | Book or resource reviews | Practitioners | 692 | 2.94 | 0.172 | 818 | .863 | Academicians | 128 | 2.92 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Program/staff/facilities management | Practitioners | 688 | 3.99 | 5.978 | 813 | .000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Academicians | 127 | 3.17 | | | | Legal issues/risk management | Practitioners | 688 | 4.20 | 6.363 | 810 | .000 | Academicians | 124 | 3.39 | Professional issues | Practitioners | 692 | 4.31 | 3.087 | 818 | .002 | Academicians | 128 | 3.94 | New product information/product reviews | Practitioners | 690 | 3.55 | 9.635 | 817 | .000 | Academicians | 129 | 2.18 | Professional events calendar | Practitioners | 691 | 3.56 | 3.467 | 816 | .001 | Academicians | 127 | 3.06 | News and updates | Practitioners | 694 | 3.98 | 4.512 | 819 | .000 | Academicians | 127 | 3.38 | Book or resource reviews | Practitioners | 692 | 2.94 | 0.172 | 818 | .863 | Academicians | 128 | 2.92 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Legal issues/risk management | Practitioners | 688 | 4.20 | 6.363 | 810 | .000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Academicians | 124 | 3.39 | | | | Professional issues | Practitioners | 692 | 4.31 | 3.087 | 818 | .002 | Academicians | 128 | 3.94 | New product information/product reviews | Practitioners | 690 | 3.55 | 9.635 | 817 | .000 | Academicians | 129 | 2.18 | Professional events calendar | Practitioners | 691 | 3.56 | 3.467 | 816 | .001 | Academicians | 127 | 3.06 | News and updates | Practitioners | 694 | 3.98 | 4.512 | 819 | .000 | Academicians | 127 | 3.38 | Book or resource reviews | Practitioners | 692 | 2.94 | 0.172 | 818 | .863 | Academicians | 128 | 2.92 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Professional issues | Practitioners | 692 | 4.31 | 3.087 | 818 | .002 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Academicians | 128 | 3.94 | | | | New product information/product reviews | Practitioners | 690 | 3.55 | 9.635 | 817 | .000 | Academicians | 129 | 2.18 | Professional events calendar | Practitioners | 691 | 3.56 | 3.467 | 816 | .001 | Academicians | 127 | 3.06 | News and updates | Practitioners | 694 | 3.98 | 4.512 | 819 | .000 | Academicians | 127 | 3.38 | Book or resource reviews | Practitioners | 692 | 2.94 | 0.172 | 818 | .863 | Academicians | 128 | 2.92 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| New product information/product reviews | Practitioners | 690 | 3.55 | 9.635 | 817 | .000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Academicians | 129 | 2.18 | | | | Professional events calendar | Practitioners | 691 | 3.56 | 3.467 | 816 | .001 | Academicians | 127 | 3.06 | News and updates | Practitioners | 694 | 3.98 | 4.512 | 819 | .000 | Academicians | 127 | 3.38 | Book or resource reviews | Practitioners | 692 | 2.94 | 0.172 | 818 | .863 | Academicians | 128 | 2.92 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Professional events calendar | Practitioners | 691 | 3.56 | 3.467 | 816 | .001 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Academicians | 127 | 3.06 | | | | News and updates | Practitioners | 694 | 3.98 | 4.512 | 819 | .000 | Academicians | 127 | 3.38 | Book or resource reviews | Practitioners | 692 | 2.94 | 0.172 | 818 | .863 | Academicians | 128 | 2.92 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| News and updates | Practitioners | 694 | 3.98 | 4.512 | 819 | .000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Academicians | 127 | 3.38 | | | | Book or resource reviews | Practitioners | 692 | 2.94 | 0.172 | 818 | .863 | Academicians | 128 | 2.92 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Book or resource reviews | Practitioners | 692 | 2.94 | 0.172 | 818 | .863 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Academicians | 128 | 2.92 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Note: (1=Never Read, 2= Rarely Read, 3=Read Occasionally, 4= Read Often, 5= Always Read * $p < .01$)

The majority of respondents believed that both academicians and practitioners should work together more in writing and publishing in professional journals (88.4%). Over 81% of respondents agreed that published findings should advance the profession and the knowledge base of the profession in both the research and practice arenas. Moreover, 84% believed that it is important for research articles to include a section about implications for practice, and that practitioners should read research to stay current in the field (82%). Respondents also agreed that all published articles should have some applicability to professional practice (71%) and should be written in such a way as to bridge the gap between research and practice (63%). However, fewer than 9% of respondents agreed that the findings of research-focused journals are easily applied practitioners.

The researchers found statistically significant differences between academician and practitioner responses to 13 of the 22 attitude items (see Table 4). Among the notable differences were findings that academicians ($M=3.70$) believe more strongly than practitioners ($M=2.69$) that it is perfectly acceptable to publish research for the sake of sharing complex information without application to practice ($t=6.372$, $df=820$, $p=.000$). Academicians ($M=3.28$) agreed more than practitioners ($M=2.62$) that practitioners do not know how to apply information found in professional journals ($t=4.326$, $df=818$, $p=.000$), nor do they ($M=4.44$) believe that practitioners ($M=3.84$) should be more involved in the conduct and publication of research ($t=4.802$, $df=815$, $p=.000$).

On the other hand, practitioners differ from academicians in their attitudes about writing and publication in professional journals and magazines. Practitioners ($M=3.38$)

Table 4

Results of Crosstab for Attitudes toward Writing and Publication (Percent)

| Attitude | Agree | Neutral | Disagree |
|---|-------|---------|----------|
| 1. In general, the purpose of publishing is to advance the profession. | 81.1 | 13.8 | 5.1 |
| 2. Research articles are easily understood by practitioners. | 31.6 | 36.4 | *32.0 |
| 3. In general, the purpose of publishing is to bridge the gap between research and practice. | 63.3 | 24.7 | 12.0 |
| 4. People in academia do not read enough practitioner-oriented articles; they focus on research too much. | 43.3 | 40.9 | *15.8 |
| 5. It is important for all research articles to include a section about implications for practice. | 84.0 | 12.2 | *3.8 |
| 6. Practitioners should read research to stay current in the field. | 81.8 | 14.1 | 4.1 |
| 7. Practitioners do not know how to apply information found in professional journals. | 25.6 | 35.3 | *39.1 |
| 8. Not enough academicians are writing for general readers. | 51.5 | 38.9 | *9.6 |
| 9. Practitioners do not read enough professionally related journals | 50.7 | 37.8 | 11.5 |
| 10. In general, the purpose of publishing is to aid practitioners in solving local problems. | 41.0 | 31.0 | *28.0 |
| 11. Research articles are easily applied by practitioners. | 8.9 | 35.7 | *55.4 |
| 12. All those in recreation, parks, and leisure services have a responsibility to read and understand research-based articles. | 41.8 | 33.6 | *24.6 |
| 13. All published articles should have some applicability to the practice of the profession. | 71.0 | 14.5 | *14.5 |
| 14. In general, the purpose of publishing in research journals is to advance the knowledge base of the profession. | 81.8 | 13.4 | 4.8 |
| 15. Academicians have a responsibility to write for practitioners. | 53.1 | 32.5 | 14.4 |
| 16. People who publish write more for academicians than practitioners. | 54.0 | 35.2 | *10.8 |
| 17. In general, the purpose of publishing in practitioner-based journals is to advance the knowledge base of the profession. | 82.7 | 12.8 | *4.5 |
| 18. The problem with practitioner-oriented articles is that they are not based on theory. | 10.7 | 46.4 | 42.9 |
| 19. Practitioners should be more involved in the conduct and publication of research. | 56.2 | 34.4 | *9.4 |
| 20. It is not important for practitioners to be able to understand research articles. | 13.1 | 12.1 | 74.8 |
| 21. It is perfectly acceptable to publish research for the sake of sharing complex information without application to practice. | 31.9 | 28.8 | *39.3 |
| 22. Academicians and practitioners should work together more in writing and publishing in professional journals. | 88.4 | 10.6 | 1.0 |

* $p < .01$

believed more strongly than academicians ($M=2.60$) that the purpose of publishing is to aid practitioners in solving local problems ($t=5.074$, $df=819$, $p=.000$). Regarding the understanding of research articles, significant differences were found between practitioners and academicians ($t=4.802$, $df=815$, $p=.000$). Practitioners ($M=3.14$) believe more strongly than academicians ($M=2.17$) that research articles are easily understood. Practitioners also assert more strongly than academicians that people in academia do not read enough practitioner-oriented articles; they focus on research too much ($t=4.802$, $df=815$, $p=.000$). Practitioners ($M=3.66$) agreed more than did academicians ($M=2.95$) that the latter group fails to read enough practitioner-oriented articles.

Respondents were asked to describe their opinions about publication if they had an article published in the past two years. Of 850 respondents, a total of 190 respondents (22%) reported that they had published articles within the past two years. Eighty-seven percent of respondents believed that they had contributed to the field of parks, recreation, and leisure services through their publications. They also believed that writing practical and applied articles helps keep them connected to the field (77%). Further, 56% of respondents indicated that it is worthwhile to publish in non-refereed journals. No statistically significant differences were found between academicians and practitioners regarding their opinions about publication.

Discussion

Readership Habits

This study replicates a study conducted in 1997 (Jordan & Roland, 1999) examining the professional reading habits of practitioners and academicians in parks, recreation, and leisure services. Consistent with the results of the 1997 study, it remains apparent that few professionals read scholarly/research-focused parks, recreation, and leisure services journals. Academics read research-based journals more frequently than did practitioners. The most frequently read of the research-focused journals in the 1997 study was *TRJ* while the most frequently read research-focused periodical in the 2006 study was *JPra*. There was some consistency in the most frequently read practice-based periodicals in the two studies. Practitioners read these journals more frequently than did academicians. The most frequently read practice-based periodical was *Parks & Recreation Magazine*, followed by the individual's state association magazine.

While respondents were not asked directly about the reasons for their professional reading habits, several volunteered reasons in the open-comments section of the survey. A lack of time was the most common factor influencing low levels of readership. A lack of time to accomplish daily job tasks is a common complaint voiced by professionals at all levels and in all sectors. To take time to read (which may be perceived as "not working") may be viewed as taking time from other pressing tasks.

This lack of time relates to the information volunteered by some that practitioners often look for quick, easily accessible, current, and focused information via such avenues as web sites and electronic mailings. The publication process, review methods, and article length might negatively influence practitioners in terms of reading research articles.

In addition, availability and access issues have changed over time. Many practitioners indicated that they had never heard of several of the journals. Other changes have also

occurred over the past 10 years. *JPra*, for instance, has been available in electronic format for the past several years. This could contribute to ease of access via one's personal computer. *JLR* and *TRJ* are no longer direct benefits of membership in a professional association; thus, these journals are no longer 'automatically' received by potential readers. Individuals desiring either of these journals must first be aware of their existence, know the publisher, take the initiative to subscribe, and pay additional fees. *Parks & Recreation Magazine* and one's state association journal, on the other hand, are member benefits, often received at one's home or office, and personally addressed.

In the comparison of content types read by respondents, a direct corollary existed between the 2006 study and the 1997 study. Overall, the reading frequencies of journal contents were similar rather than different. For instance, respondents in both studies read full-length feature/research articles, product information, and resource reviews often or always; similarly, the respondents in both studies who reported reading news and updates did so often or always.

It is also true, of course, that the size of the targeted readership for the various journals is significantly different. For instance, scholarly/research journals are typically targeted to academicians; thus the potential pool of readers is much smaller than the practitioner pool.

Mission statements of scholarly periodicals in parks, recreation, and leisure services frequently include verbiage that indicates that the study of leisure is interdisciplinary and that the journal is intended for both academics and practitioners (Madrigal, 1999). If this is truly their desire, publishers of scholarly/research journals may wish to consider different ways for reaching the practitioner readership.

Attitudes

A good deal of agreement was found among respondents (81%) that the purpose of publishing in both scholarly and practice-based journals is to advance the knowledge base of the profession. A slightly larger percentage believes that research articles should include a section on implications for practice. Lastly, close to 90% of respondents believe that practitioners and academicians should work together more when writing and publishing in professional journals. This high level of agreement on these items is striking—clearly practitioners and academicians find writing and publishing to be important to the growth and development of the parks, recreation, and leisure services profession.

In the more recent study, one-third of survey respondents agreed with the statement, Research articles are easily understood by practitioners. Slightly fewer respondents agreed with this statement in the 1997 study. In both studies, a majority of respondents agreed that Practitioners should read research to stay current in field.

Although a larger number of respondents agreed that a purpose of publishing is to aid practitioners in solving local problems, they also indicated that published research is not easily applied to practice. Dahl (1999) clarified several possible explanations for this view. Some perceive a lack of relevance to the real world setting; this may be interpreted as "anti-intellectual" or as a desire for concentrated, specialized responses to day-to-day challenges. Dahl also suggested that the multi-disciplinary nature of the field is such that

practitioners do not find leisure research useful because practice occurs within complex societal settings, yet research tends to be focused and narrowed.

Although Stewart (1999) stated that academicians and practitioners communicate in several forums besides peer-reviewed literature, this study found that a gap between practitioners and academicians has persisted over the past several years. Pedlar (1999) suggested bridging this gap between practitioners and academicians by speaking each other's language through "action research," by encouraging researchers and practitioners to co-write papers, by pursuing the implications of the research and investigating its relevance for practice, and by developing research for its implementation in practice.

Conclusion

Periodicals in the field of parks, recreation, and leisure services are regarded to be of tremendous benefit to diverse stakeholders including researchers, academicians, practitioners, librarians, and journal editors. The results of this study demonstrated the practitioners and academicians in the parks, recreation and leisure service field still need to find ways to communicate with each other more effectively through professional journals. These journals are the outlets to share the knowledge to advance the field and professionals need to fully take advantage of these resources. Additionally, publishers need to find more innovative ways to fully reach and expand their audiences. Technology has an increasing impact on how people access information and future research may be focused on how technology impacts the readership of professional journals and their readers' habits and attitudes.

References

- Blackburn, R. (1990). Organizational behavior: Whom do we talk to and who talks to us? *Journal of Management*, 16, 279–305.
- Coe, R., & Weinstock, I. (1984). Evaluating the management journals: A second look. *Academy of Management Journal*, 27, 660–666.
- Dahl, R. (1999). A commentary on the perils of intellectual isolation. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 31, 199-201.
- Dillman, D. (1978). *Mail and telephone surveys: the total design method*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.
- Franke, R., Edlund, T., & Oster, F. (1990). The development of strategic management: Journal quality and article impact. *Strategic Management Journal*, 11, 243-253.
- Jordan, D., & Roland, M. (1999). An examination of differences between academics and practitioners in frequency of reading research and attitudes toward research. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 31, 166-170.
- Hawkins, R., Ritter, L., & Walter, I. (1973). What economists think of their journals? *Journal of Political Economy*, 81, 1017-1032.
- Lewko, J., & Crandall, R. (1980). Research trends in leisure and special population. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 12, 69-79.
- Madrigal, R. (1999). Comment on the impact of leisure research. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 31, 195-198.

- Mason, P., Steagall, J., & Fabritius, M. (1997). Economic Journal rankings by types of school: Perceptions versus citations. *Quarterly Journal of Business and Economics*, 36, 60-79.
- McLellan, R. (1980). The state of the art...research. *Parks & Recreation*, 15, 62-67, 90.
- Pechlaner, H., Zehrer, A, Matzler, K., & Abfalter, D. (2004). A ranking of international tourism and hospitality journals. *Journal of Travel Research*, 42, 328-332.
- Pedlar, A. (1999). Speaking each others' language: should insularity concern us? *Journal of Leisure Research*, 31, 181-184.
- Perdue, R. (1988). *Tourism and commercial recreation in research about leisure: Past, present, and future*. Champaign, IL: Sagamore Publishing.
- Sharplin, A., & Mabry, R. (1985). The relative importance of journals used in management research: An alternative ranking. *Human Relations*, 38, 139-149.
- Sheldon, P. (1990). An authorship analysis of tourism research. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 18, 473-484.
- SPSS. (2005). *SPSS Base 14.0 User's Guide*. Chicago, IL: SPSS Inc.
- Stewart, B. (1999). Myth of leisure research: an uneasy alliance. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 31, 185-188.
- Szymanski, D. (1980). An index for determining trends in selected leisure journals and publications. *Therapeutic Recreation Journal*, 14, 42-51.
- Tahai, A., & Meyer, M. J. (1998). A revealed preference study of management journals' direct influences. *Strategic Management Journal*, 20, 279-296.
- Theoharakis, V., & Hirst, A. (2002). Perceptual differences of marketing journals: A Worldwide perspective. *Marketing Letters*, 13, 389-402.
- Van Doren, D., Carlton, S., & Heit, M. (1973). Where it's at: A content analysis and appraisal of the Journal of Leisure Research. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 5, 67-73.
- Van Doren, D., Holland, S., & Crompton, J. (1984). Publishing in the primary leisure journals: Insight into the structure and boundaries of research. *Leisure Sciences*, 6, 239-256.