



College Student Perceptions of Professional Development Through Sport Management Club Participation



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Introduction

Background Literature

Traditionally, college students engaged in learning within the classroom setting. Research indicates that students can also learn in extracurricular activities such as internships and student clubs (Brown & Johnson, 2018). While research in the field of sport management has focused on the role of internships in professional development (e.g. Hayes & Mudrick, 2018; Young & Baker, 2004), less research has focused on the role of sport management clubs and how club participation may enhance a club member's professional development. In addition, little research has focused on barriers that prevent students from joining.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine student perceptions of the role that sport management clubs play in their professional development and barriers students face in joining those clubs.

Research question

- What skills do students think sport management clubs help them build?
- What barriers prevent students from joining sport management clubs?

Methodology

Sport management majors from three universities were invited, via email, to complete a survey via Survey Monkey about their involvement in their on campus sport management club.

A survey was developed, based on the previous research by Mikulec and McKinney (2014) and Brown and Johnson (2018). The survey covered such topics as why they joined the club, and if they received professional development opportunities as a club member.

Frequencies were run to determine differences between students who were active club members, inactive club members, former club members, and those who have never been club members.

Results

In question 5, we asked “Are you a member of a sport management club on campus?” 183 responses were recorded among four categories:

Category 1: Yes, I am an active member of the sport management club - 26 responses

Category 2: Yes, I am a member but I am not active - 27 responses

Category 3: No, I have never belonged to a club - 119 responses

Category 4: No, I once belonged but do not now - 11 responses

Categories 1, 2, and 4 were used in response to the following questions:

Question 8 - “Why did you choose to participate in the sport management club?” Table 1

Question 9 - “What benefits and experiences have you actually gained from participating in the sport management club?” Table 2

Question 12 - “To what extent do you believe your participation in the sport management club helped you develop the following skills or knowledge?” Table 3

Category 3 was used in response to:

Question 6 - “To what extent are the following factors preventing you from becoming involved with the sport management club?” Table 4

Table 1 - Question 8

	NOT AT ALL	NOT REALLY	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT	VERY MUCH	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Build my resume	2.44% 1	7.32% 3	7.32% 3	48.78% 20	34.15% 14	41	4.05
Build my interpersonal skills (such as communication, conflict management, leadership, etc.)	2.44% 1	14.63% 6	9.76% 4	41.46% 17	31.71% 13	41	3.85
Learn more about the sport management program at my college/university	0.00% 0	12.50% 5	17.50% 7	35.00% 14	35.00% 14	40	3.92
Learn more about internship/job opportunities in sport management	0.00% 0	7.32% 3	4.88% 2	19.51% 8	68.29% 28	41	4.49
Meet other students/make new friends	0.00% 0	9.76% 4	12.20% 5	36.59% 15	41.46% 17	41	4.10
Network with sport management faculty	0.00% 0	4.88% 2	17.07% 7	26.83% 11	51.22% 21	41	4.24
Network with industry professionals	2.50% 1	0.00% 0	10.00% 4	27.50% 11	60.00% 24	40	4.42
Feel more involved with my college/university	9.76% 4	0.00% 0	24.39% 10	26.83% 11	39.02% 16	41	3.85

Table 3 - Question 12

	DID NOT DEVELOP	NOT REALLY DEVELOPED	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT DEVELOPED	HIGHLY DEVELOPED	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Conflict Management	12.50% 5	17.50% 7	50.00% 20	15.00% 6	5.00% 2	40	2.83
Critical Thinking	7.50% 3	12.50% 5	42.50% 17	27.50% 11	10.00% 4	40	3.20
Event Planning	10.00% 4	12.50% 5	30.00% 12	32.50% 13	15.00% 6	40	3.30
Fundraising	12.50% 5	12.50% 5	30.00% 12	30.00% 12	15.00% 6	40	3.23
Leadership	10.00% 4	10.00% 4	30.00% 12	27.50% 11	22.50% 9	40	3.42
Networking	5.00% 2	0.00% 0	22.50% 9	30.00% 12	42.50% 17	40	4.05
Oral Communication	7.69% 3	5.13% 2	23.08% 9	46.15% 18	17.95% 7	39	3.62
Organization/Time Management	7.50% 3	10.00% 4	42.50% 17	17.50% 7	22.50% 9	40	3.38
Team Work	7.50% 3	12.50% 5	32.50% 13	25.00% 10	22.50% 9	40	3.42
Appreciation of Diversity	10.26% 4	15.38% 6	38.46% 15	20.51% 8	15.38% 6	39	3.15
Work Ethic	7.50% 3	12.50% 5	40.00% 16	22.50% 9	17.50% 7	40	3.30
Written Communication	10.00% 4	12.50% 5	37.50% 15	27.50% 11	12.50% 5	40	3.20

Table 2 - Question 9

	DID NOT GAIN	NOT REALLY GAINED	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT GAINED	STRONGLY GAINED	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Build my resume	10.00% 4	7.50% 3	17.50% 7	35.00% 14	30.00% 12	40	3.67
Build my interpersonal skills	7.50% 3	5.00% 2	27.50% 11	40.00% 16	20.00% 8	40	3.60
Learn more about internship/job opportunities in sport management	2.44% 1	4.88% 2	21.95% 9	31.71% 13	39.02% 16	41	4.00
Meet other students/make new friends	2.44% 1	9.76% 4	19.51% 8	39.02% 16	29.27% 12	41	3.83
Network with sport management faculty	2.44% 1	12.20% 5	29.27% 12	29.27% 12	26.83% 11	41	3.66
Network with industry professionals	7.32% 3	12.20% 5	26.83% 11	24.39% 10	29.27% 12	41	3.56
Feel more involved with my college/university	4.88% 2	9.76% 4	26.83% 11	29.27% 12	29.27% 12	41	3.68

Table 4 - Question 6

	NOT AT ALL PREVENTING ME	SOMEWHAT NOT PREVENTING ME	NEITHER NOT AT ALL OR VERY MUCH	SOMEWHAT PREVENTING ME	VERY MUCH PREVENTING ME	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
I didn't know we had a sport management club	41.46% 34	9.76% 8	19.51% 16	7.32% 6	21.95% 18	82	2.59
I didn't know the meeting times and locations	25.61% 21	14.63% 12	13.41% 11	20.73% 17	25.61% 21	82	3.06
Lack of time to go to meetings	13.41% 11	6.10% 5	19.51% 16	34.15% 28	26.83% 22	82	3.55
Meeting times conflict with other responsibilities	14.63% 12	7.32% 6	17.07% 14	28.05% 23	32.93% 27	82	3.57
The meetings are disorganized	53.66% 44	6.10% 5	30.49% 25	4.88% 4	4.88% 4	82	2.01
The club is not welcoming or friendly	56.79% 46	4.94% 4	29.63% 24	4.94% 4	3.70% 3	81	1.94
I am not interested	32.93% 27	19.51% 16	9.76% 8	24.39% 20	13.41% 11	82	2.66

Discussion

Sport management club members reported that their acquired skills met their expectations. For example, many of our participants wanted to improve their interpersonal skills (M=3.85) and build their resume (M=4.05). These expectations, and others were met. They also reported better networking (M=4.05) and time management skills (M=3.38) which both supports and expands on the research by Brown and Johnson (2018).

In comparison, students who were not club members reported that they either did not have the time to attend meetings, did not know when meetings were, or that meeting times conflicted with their schedules.

Conclusions

Sport management clubs have the potential to improve the professional development skills our profession requires. Foubert & Grainger (2006) found a statistically significant difference among students who are more involved in university clubs (e.g attend meetings) than students who were not involved, related to career planning, and educational involvement. Thus, future studies should look at ways of increasing membership and how to create opportunities for students who cannot be, due to work commitments, active members.

References

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