

Information as a factor of perceived constraints and students' participation in campus recreational sports programs

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Aim of paper and research questions

The aim of the present research was to examine how the university students' information level affects the average of the perceived constraints, as well as their participation level concerning the campus recreational sports programs.

Literature review

Information constitutes one of the main factors for the participation of an individual in campus recreational sports programs. According to Goodbey (1985), an individual can exhibit an interest in participation only after being informed, while lack of information leads to less participation or no participation at all. Thus, constraints seem to be evident only after the information process is completed. The constraints related to lack of information lead to no participation. Previous research has shown that lack of information was referred to as one of the significant perceived constraints factors that influence participation in sports and recreational activities (Alexandris & Carroll, 1999; 1997; Young, Ross, & Barcelona, 2003). Kouthouris, Tsouvista and Alexandris (2006) maintain that applicable advertising, promotion and circulation of the campus recreational sports programs facilitate massive participation.

Research design and data analysis

In the study voluntarily participated 3.041 students of seven Greek universities. Out of them, 48.1% (1453) were males and 51.9% (1568) females, with a mean age $M = 20.84$ years old, $S.D. = 2.10$. Sample included student who participated or not in campus recreational sport programs.

For the evaluation of the perceived constraints by the students during decision making process the University Sport Constraint Questionnaire (USCQ) was used (Masmanidis, 2008). USCQ comprises 25 items for measuring nine factors.

To investigate whether students' information level was associated with their level of participation in campus recreational sport programs a chi-square analysis was performed. One Way ANOVA was used to compare the differences between perceived constraints concerning the students' participation in campus recreational sports programs on the basis of their information level. In addition, a post hoc analysis was performed by using the Scheffe criterion.

Results

Frequency analysis revealed that 79.2% did not participate in any activity organised by the campus administrators, whereas the vast majority of students (91.7%) did not pay any attention to announcements and information relevant to the campus recreational sports programs.

Chi-square analysis showed that information level was associated with participation level ($\chi^2_{(4)} = 468.56, p < .001$). In particular, students informed concerning the campus recreational sports programs, exhibited a statistically higher participation rate, compared to those not informed.

One-way ANOVA revealed that there were statistically significant differences among the information levels concerning the constraints factors, $F_{(4,1816)} = 37.00, p < .001$. Scheffe post hoc test revealed that the higher the attention the students paid in announcements and information concerning the campus recreational sports programs, the lower level of perceived constraints.

Discussion and conclusion

Results of the present study showed that about 40% of the students in the Greek universities ignore the existence of campus sport administrators and only one out of ten students pays much or too much attention to the announcements and the information regarding the campus recreational sports programs. In addition, chi-square analysis exhibited that the students who were more informed about campus recreational sports programs, participated to a greater rate in these programs. Alexandris and Carroll (1999), suggest that knowledge constraints might relate to inadequate marketing and promotion of the sport service product. In their research Masmanidis, Tsigilis and Koustelios (2002) pointed out that campus sport administrators do not promote effectively their programs.

Some of the reasons for such an ineffective promotion and advertisement of the sport programs might be due to the infrastructure and functionality problems anticipated in the university facilities. The extended space covered by buildings and the breaking of the facilities into pieces (often a single university may be accommodated in different parts of the city or even in another town as well) inhibit information. Furthermore, the big volume of information received on an everyday basis by the students, by means of random announcements, probably constitute one more obstacle.

Participants in sports and recreational activities have different orientations, needs and expectations (Chelladurai, 1999). Therefore, campus recreational sports programs have to fulfil the above elements while at the same time their promotion should aim at bringing forth orientations, needs and expectations. Information constitutes a significant factor affecting the perception of constraints in the decision making process concerning campus recreational sports programs. The campus sport administrators should give priority to the identifiability of campus sports as well as to adopt marketing and management strategies, for the most effective promotion and advertisement of the campus recreational sports programs.

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