AN EXAMINATION OF SPORT VOLUNTEERISM THROUGH THE LENS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Author: Katie Misener

email: katie.misener@ryerson.ca

Co-authors: Doherty, Alison (first author) Cuskelly, Graham

University: Ryerson University

Faculty: Ted Rogers School of Management

This paper draws on the findings of a project examining organizational capacity in community sport clubs. The purpose of this paper is to describe the critical elements of human resources capacity as they are defined by the clubs themselves, and to identify the relative magnitude of those elements in the clubs. The findings will enhance our understanding of sport volunteerism in community clubs by viewing it through the lens of organizational capacity.

Method
A sequential mixed-methods (qualitative-quantitative) approach (Creswell, 2005) was used to first uncover the critical elements of capacity in community sport clubs, and then measure the extent of capacity with a broader sample. In the first phase, 13 focus groups were conducted with 51 presidents of community sport clubs in five different Canadian communities. The sample was generated from clubs representing a broad range of individual and team sports whose contact information was publicly available. A total of 23 different sports were represented in the final sample. Participants were asked to describe their clubs’ greatest human resource strengths and challenges with regard to achieving their goals. These strengths and challenges represent critical elements of capacity. Inductive analysis of the transcripts from the audio-recorded focus group interviews uncovered several critical elements. In the second phase, an online survey was developed to measure the capacity elements. Again, the sample was generated from clubs across a broad range of sports whose contact information was publicly available. Data were collected from 365 club presidents from 20 different sports across different communities, for a response rate of 22%. Psychometric analyses indicated support for the human resources capacity elements and A MANOVA statistic was used to examine their relative magnitude in the community sport clubs.

Results
The focus group findings uncovered six critical elements of capacity, including (1) Positive attitude of volunteers, (2) Human capital in the form of valued skills and experience, (3) Common focus among volunteers on the values and priorities of the club, (4) Sufficient volunteers to do the work, (5) Continuity of volunteers, and (6) Volunteer development and support. Analysis of the survey data revealed that club presidents perceived volunteer attitude and capital to be corresponding elements as they loaded onto a single factor. Results of the MANOVA indicated that volunteer attitude and capital were the greatest strengths of the club, followed by volunteers having a common focus, and the club’s volunteer development practices. The weakest elements were volunteer continuity and having sufficient volunteers. The findings provide insight into what community sport clubs have self-identified as critical elements of human resources capacity in their organization, and the relative strength of those elements. The implications of these findings for building community sport club capital are discussed, and directions for further research are presented.
References: