

Running Head: LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Review: Gender and Programming

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Gender has an instrumental role in many of the daily functions in society. When it comes to recreation the role of gender in program offering is no different, as many specific and collaborative programs, sports, and classes are offered based on gender biases. From evaluating existing literature, in the case of gender programming, themes that emerged included intrapersonal perceptions towards participation, amount of gender discrimination, and program evaluation.

In regards to intrapersonal constraints, perceptions of programs varied by genders based on several factors such as psychological perceptions, constraints, and self worth. Male participants often showed a higher level of self worth for recreational pursuits, while social and physical development, and lifetime pursuit of activity were even on the gender scales (Yoh, 2009. p.934). Psychological influences on program participation were based on variables such as motivations or skill, which also can be constraints, but in most responses constraints were more time related based on several different variable such as work, school, and family (Young, Ross, & Barcelona, 2003. p. 57). Overall, intrapersonal constraints seemed to be similar in regards to both genders, with the only evidential difference being males having a higher level of self worth when it comes to program participation (Yoh, p. 934).

There were also some studies which have looked at possible cases of gender discrimination as being barriers to recreational pursuits for students. Although many would see simple discrimination and lack of availability as common barriers this was not overly evident in the findings. Again similar to the personal perceptions discussed in the intrapersonal barriers with women facing self consciousness and time barriers as major barriers rather than lack of

participation due to discrimination and availability (Young, Ross, & Barcelona, p. 57). Although there was no real evidence of gender discrimination, gender dominance of certain activities was acknowledged as a possible deterrent to participation (p.54).

Many articles discussed program evaluation and measurement as an area that is critical but also in many cases in need of greater depth. Outcomes often portray experiences for some and in regards to evaluations of programming, and for campus recreation the case is no different. Most recreation programs focus on quality and effectiveness of programming, where evaluation and enhancement of programs and services combine with satisfaction for programmers to assess effectiveness (Weese. 1997. p. 265). In another case, effectiveness was based on participant treatment and benefits, along with the administration of the programs offered, both on a participant and professional levels. (Tsigilis, Masmanidis, Koustelios. 2009. p.75). Overall, program effectiveness was discussed but rarely challenged or portrayed in a negative aspect in regards to gender.

It is also important to recognize that gender in the context of sport has been studied in many different fields, such as sociology, recreation and leisure, and psychology. The Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) has provided policy and protocol to help protect gender equity within its membership (Canadian Interuniversity Sport, 2005). The Canadian government has also seen it essential to provide opportunities and equity to both sexes in sport through their generation of *Actively Engaged: A Policy on Sport for Women and Girls* (Canadian Heritage, 2009). While neither of these policies speaks directly to the equity of women in intramural recreational activities it does show that the sociological ideology of the general Canadian society understands

and relates to the idea that females should be entitled equitable sporting opportunities. Also, there are multiple non-profit organizations which promote sport for women such as the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport. This is a lobbying group which provides valuable resources and research regarding women's participation, interaction and enjoyment in physical activities (CAAWS, 2010).

When discussing the issue of gender in an organized recreational setting it is important to understand and be able to distinguish the difference between gender equity and gender equality. Gender equality refers to "providing fair or just treatment", while gender equality refers to "the state of being the same" (Canadian Heritage, 2009). Canadians have started using equity as a measure of how to provide recreational activities, as it is understood that males and females are different, have different needs as well as enjoy different recreational activities. That is to say, just because there is a recreational football team for men, there doesn't have to be one for women, rather if there is an opportunity in sport for men there should be one for women. So if no women want to play football have an all girls dance team, or field hockey team to make the amount of opportunities fair.

Similar to the interpersonal constraints discussed previously, it is important to recognize the difference in goals and objectives of genders in campus recreation and also consider what motivates individuals to participate in these activities. Leslie, Sparling and Owen (2001) have shown that in Australia and the United States men and women's motivations for participation in campus recreation is quite different from one another. Males were focused on weight gain, while women were focused on weight loss (Leslie, Sparking & Owen, 2001), so while they were both

motivated by the ideology of “looking good” to the opposite sex to reach that goal they need to recreate in very different ways.

Overall, it has been shown that when investigating gender in campus recreation it is essential to focus on certain aspects of the offerings. These aspects including the differentiation between offerings for men and women, as often there are different motivations for the different genders to participate in campus recreation. It is most institutions objective to supply adequate and successful programming but awareness of the possibilities of inequitable or discriminatory program offerings must be evaluated through the satisfactions of the individuals taking part themselves.

References

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Running Head: PROGRAMMING RECOMMENDATIONS

Gender Programming Recommendations

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## Programming Recommendations 2

After reviewing literature and assessing programming in the field regarding gender and programming, some areas of future improvement have emerged. Most research had a focus on participation in women's leisure regarding constraints, and after assessing program offerings at various Canadian universities certain areas for possible improvement were seen. Possible areas of improvement in programming included providing equity for females in recreation pursuits, as well as improvements in gender dominance within programming. Evaluation was also seen as an important tool but is rarely used in effective forms. By overcoming these issues, participation by both males and females in campus recreation can be seen as equal and empowering on many levels of life.

Equity in the recreation profession and programming is the first area of improvement to assess. Gender equity refers to "providing fair or just treatment", which in programming and opportunities in recreation is now becoming a necessity and standard (Canadian Heritage, 2009). However, there is still evidence that women are not offered as much opportunity as males and also not given the same chance for court or field time. This can be seen as gender dominance still as many male only programs are offered, but often there is significantly less female only programming. An example discussed earlier in the literature review provides insight into the equitable approach of programming treatment to benefit both genders. If there is a recreational football team for men, to be equitable there doesn't have to be one for women. However, if there is an opportunity in sport for men there should be one for women. So, if no women want to play football an alternative may be programming that women may enjoy such as an all girls dance team, which then makes the amount of opportunities fair.

Building from this is also offering more beneficial and empowering co-ed programs. To do this, schools can implement equality in participation by ensuring equal amounts of gender must be on the playing surface at each time. For example, in a volleyball league of sixes, ensure that three men and also three women must be on the court at all times. Most programs will insist on at least two but not enforce three. By enforcing equal gender participation the opportunity for enjoyment for all is increased. Evidence of this type of programming was seen for Carleton and UBC programming in rules for co-ed soccer and cross volleyball respectively (see Appendix A).

While these rules are enforced due to the Universities trying to promote an environment of equal competition, all of these rules at all of the universities studied use gender-based verbiage in their writing of the rules. These schools use language such as “there must be a minimum of 3 women on the court/field at all times”. Again, the rule is inserted to improve the quality and equity of the league, but by defining the rule around the female context there is a feeling of the women being weaker or minimized. The rule would be the exactly the same if the rule was altered slightly to say that there needs to be an equal amount of males and females on the/court field. This minor adjustment can have the same competitive changes within the game yet take some of the gender bias of women being “weaker” out.

Offering more opportunities with increased co-ed programming was also evident at the University of Ottawa, where programs such as ball hockey, basketball, dodge ball, flag football, soccer, ultimate Frisbee, volleyball (individual and team) were all offered in individual gendered and co-ed programming (see Appendix A). Aside from this as well was that Dalhousie

University intramurals has a policy in which females are eligible to participate in men's leagues if programs are not offered in co-ed or women's, in which they must participate at lowest level (i.e recreational versus competitive), but are still given the opportunity to participate and are not unjustly denied access to participation. This simple rule enhanced the gender equity at the school allowing women athletes to participate in sports that other female athletes may not be interested in pursuing. Often campus recreation athletes are high level, competitive athletes that either did not make the varsity team or due to school commitments do not have the time to play on the varsity. These types of female athletes would not have any difficulty competing at this level of play due to their skill in such a sport.

Lastly, for program improvements and assessment many campus programs could be made through effective evaluation of the sports programs based on numerous variables differing by offerings. Western University uses an intramural sports league evaluation which assesses and evaluation of scheduling and officiating, rules, the coordinators success, and the overall league experience in general (see Appendix A). There is also additional feedback which can be acquired and provide programmers with observations from a participant perspective regarding future offerings. By offering evaluations there is an enhancement of programs and services, which is combined with satisfaction from programmers in assessing program effectiveness (Weese, 1997, p. 265). This is an essential part of providing gender equity within campus recreation, but it must be recognized that the feedback is only coming from the participants and not those that were unable to participate. Therefore, schools must understand not only the wishes and desires of the participants but also those that are unable or unwilling to participate for whatever reason.

## Programming Recommendations 5

In Conclusion, from reviews of literature and current program assessment, improvements in campus recreational settings are possible. By focussing on improving gender equity, providing effective co-ed program choices and evaluation of services, professionals and programmers in the recreation field can ensure that there is efficiency and opportunity within activities provided. While it has been shown the positive effects campus recreation has on students' lives, it is important to allow access to as many students as possible. In doing so, campus recreation can be used as a tool for not only empowering individuals physically, but also in enhancing their social interactions and overall quality of life.

Appendix A

Program Evaluations: University of Western Ontario

[http://campusrec.uwo.ca/intramurals/eval\\_league.htm](http://campusrec.uwo.ca/intramurals/eval_league.htm)

Intramurals Guide: University of Ottawa

<http://www.geegees.uottawa.ca/node/158>

Intramural Guide: Dalhousie University

[http://www.athletics.dal.ca/documents/Campus%20Recreation/Intramural\\_Policy\\_Manual.pdf](http://www.athletics.dal.ca/documents/Campus%20Recreation/Intramural_Policy_Manual.pdf)

Intramural Guide: McGill University

<http://www.mcgill.ca/athletics/recreation/>

Intramural Guide: Carleton University

<http://www2.carleton.ca/athletics/intramurals/intramurals-101/>

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