

Describing Factors Affecting Participation of Students in Public Sport

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Abstract

The current research aims at describing factors affecting participation of students in public sports. Descriptive – correlation research method was used and field study was used for data collection. Research statistical population included all students of Kerman University of Medical Sciences. 374 students were selected as sample using stratified random sampling method. In order to collect data, a 57-item questionnaire with high reliability and $\alpha = 0.875$ as reliability coefficient was used. In this research, descriptive and inferential statistics (structural equation modeling) was used for data analysis. Findings showed that acquiring physical health, mental health development, awareness and positive attitude ranked first to third in perceptual factors, and media and advertisement, sport facilities development, and social support ranked first to third in social factors. Results in structural equation modeling showed that there is positive significant relationship between perceptual and social factors and participation of students in public sport. Although awareness and attitude of students toward public sport was at optimal level, participation of students was at moderate to low level. Effective steps can be taken in development of public sport in universities by proper planning and development of advertisement and sport facilities.

Key words: Perceptual, Social, Participation, Students, Public sport

INTRODUCTION

Today, sport, in particular, public sport, has been accepted as a social phenomenon in the world, and it is highly considered by sports managers and scholars of physical education and sports science as a multidimensional tool with wide impact on the health of individuals, healthy social relationships (Motameni et al., 2014), promoting physical and psychological health, happiness, expanding social interactions and enriching leisure time (Zarei and Tondnevis, 2003), positive effects on promoting quality of life in different people (Mozafari et al., 2010), increasing life expectancy, strengthening solidarity and participation, consolidation of social relations (Faraji et al., 2014), positive social relationships, enhancement of physical activity and

development of psychological and social dimensions (Shabani et al., 2014), feeling goodness and general health (William, 2008), gaining health, social interaction, vitality and happiness (Mahdizadeh et al., 2013).

Growing progress of modern technologies has brought about such a phenomenon known as motor deficiency which influences different physical, mental, and social aspects of life of people. Leaving current status and achievement of a relatively optimal status requires appropriate tools such as exercise as a multifaceted tool with wide health, economic, and social impacts. Undeniable educational role of sports activities, especially in adolescents and youths, is valuable in preventing from diseases, hindering most social harms, and ethical distortions (Roshandel, Arbatani, 2007).

Considering reduced mobility and physical activities, World Health Organization and International Federation Medicine Sport in a joint statement declared that almost half of the world population lack physical activity and mobility, and asked the governments to support physical activities and physical readiness as part of their health policies (Kolman, 2006).

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Thus, academic planning for enrichment of free time of the people especially youths and university students, which constitute considerable part of the community, is crucial for their perfect growth and development. Because negligence to the way of spending free time and lack of varied and scientific programs not only hinders manifestation of talents and creativity of youths, but also causes deviations and physical and psychological disorders in them. Healthy and dynamic population is the basic need of every society for progress and development.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Current research aims at describing perceptual - social factors affecting participation of students of Kerman University of Medical Sciences in public sport. Research method is descriptive in terms of nature, and it is survey, and it is applied research in terms of research objective. Library method was used for review of literature. In this process, following review of theoretical foundations of research and semi-structured interview with experts, 14 factors were identified as perceptual - social factors affecting participation of students in public sport. In this research, questionnaire was used as the main data collection tool. Research statistical population included all students of Kerman University of Medical Sciences in 2015 academic year. Statistical sample of research was specified as 374 among total students of Kerman University of Medical Sciences based on Morgan Table. Thus, given distinct classes of students with different fields and disciplines in the university, 400 questionnaires were distributed among students using stratified random sampling method. A questionnaire with 57 items was used in this work for data collection. Content validity of questionnaire was confirmed by 8 experts of physical education field. In order to determine reliability of final version of questionnaire, it was distributed among 50 male and female university students, and reliability coefficient was obtained as = 0.875 by Cronbach's alpha. In order to analyze data, descriptive statistics was used for analysis of demographic characteristics. Frequencies, means and standard deviation were also calculated. For inferential data analysis, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used for determining internal stability of tools, and structural equations modeling (SEM) was used for determining causal relationship between variables, and path analysis was used for testing research hypotheses. To this end, Lisrel 8.8 software was used.

RESULTS

In this research, in order to specify data adequacy for analysis and correlation matrix evaluation, Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) as a measure of sampling adequacy index

and Chi-square or Bartlett's test of sphericity were used. KMO = 0.897 denotes adequacy of factor analysis model for data (this index above 0.6 is acceptable).

Given research data, out of 374 subjects, 52.9 percent of them were females and 47.1 percent were males. Research data also showed that 96.8 percent of students participating in the research were single and 3.2 percent were married. 23 percent of subjects were 19 years old, 21.9 percent were 20 years old, and 55.1 percent were 21 and above.

According to findings of structural equations model and results reported in Table 1, it is observed that all path coefficients and t statistics have acceptable values, and these indexes indicate that measured observational variables (perceptual and social factors) are well reflection of latent variables (participation in sport activities and public sport).

Considering Table 2, it is observed that Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) and Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) as the main indexes of model fit were above 0.9, which denotes confirmation of model. Chi square ratio to degree of freedom (2.26) was below 3, which is acceptable value for confirming research model. RMSEA is also 0.023, and since it is smaller than 0.08, it denotes that the model is acceptable. Finally it is observed that other fit indexes (IFI, NFI, CFI) are all at good level and above 0.9, thus model fit is supported and relational model of research for perceptual and social factors and participation in public sport is supported.

DISCUSSION

Structural equations modeling results showed that all identified factors (knowledge and positive attitude on participation in public sport, (path coefficient = 0.65, T = 10.15), gaining physical health on participation in public sport (path coefficient = 0.73, T = 9.64), development of psychological health on participation in public sport (path coefficient = 0.58, T = 8.47), development of social interaction on participation in public sport (path coefficient = 0.56, T = 8.84), gaining sport skill and experience on participation in public sport (path coefficient = 0.45, T = 7.62), enrichment of leisure time on participation in public sport (path coefficient = 0.49, T = 6.55), environmental quality on participation in public sport (path coefficient = 0.42, T = 7.93), service quality on participation in public sport (path coefficient = 0.52, T = 6.70), sport equipment and locations on participation in public sport (path coefficient = 0.68, T = 5.35), media and advertisement on participation in public sport (path coefficient = 0.55, T = 5.18), social support and encouragement on participation in public sport (path coefficient = 0.66,

Table 1: Path coefficients and t statistics related to structural equations model for investigation of research relational model

Factors	Path	Factors affecting participation in sport	Path coefficient	T statistics	Result
Perceptual	Knowledge and attitude on participation in sport	Knowledge and information	0.63	10.15	Confirmed
		Positive attitude	0.65	9.19	Confirmed
		Personal tendency and interest	0.67	8.45	Confirmed
	Promotion of physical health on participation	Individual health and distance from diseases	0.74	9.14	Confirmed
		Fitness	0.68	8.64	Confirmed
		Weight control	0.70	10.35	Confirmed
	Promotion of psychological health on participation	Vitality	0.66	8.47	Confirmed
		Increased self-confidence	0.61	9.41	Confirmed
		Reduced stress and anxiety	0.71	8.70	Confirmed
	Development of social interaction on participation	Improvement of social relations	0.69	8.03	Confirmed
		Avoiding social deviations	0.65	8.68	Confirmed
		Belonging to group and sense of cooperation	0.56	10.13	Confirmed
	Gaining skill and experience on participation	Gaining sport skill and experience	0.51	9.62	Confirmed
		Familiarity with new skill and types of sports	0.41	7.53	Confirmed
		Progress in learning and academic affairs	0.38	7.22	Confirmed
Participation an previous history in sport	Family history and participation in sport	0.50	10.31	Confirmed	
	Student history and participation in sport	0.49	7.36	Confirmed	
	Peer participation in sport and associations	0.41	8.40	Confirmed	
Enrichment of leisure time on participation	Filling leisure time	0.47	9.55	Confirmed	
	Membership in sport associations	0.37	7.50	Confirmed	
	Participation in healthy environment	0.41	6.77	Confirmed	
Social	Environmental quality on participation	Design and attraction of sport environment	0.56	7.93	Confirmed
		Security of sport environment	0.57	7.69	Confirmed
		Hygiene and cleanliness of sport environment	0.51	9.06	Confirmed
		Variety of recreational sport programs	0.53	6.88	Confirmed
	Service quality on participation	Quality of access to services	0.50	7.51	Confirmed
		Quality of communication between management and staff	0.49	6.79	Confirmed
		Quality of facilities and locations	0.73	9.35	Confirmed
	Facilities and sport locations on participation	Matched equipment and student needs	0.70	6.69	Confirmed
		Variety of means and sport locations	0.75	8.21	Confirmed
		Role of media in awareness	0.77	10.18	Confirmed
	Media and advertisement on participation	Role of media in positive attitude	0.73	8.30	Confirmed
		Role of media on participation	0.70	7.64	Confirmed
		Family support	0.59	8.45	Confirmed
	Social and cultural support	Peer support	0.52	10.37	Confirmed
		University and community support	0.55	7.49	Confirmed
Peer recommendation and encouragement		0.49	9.11	Confirmed	
Recommendation and encouragement on participation	Family recommendation and encouragement	0.57	8.61	Confirmed	
	Physicians an coaches' recommendation and encouragement	0.55	8.55	Confirmed	
	Managers and coaches interested in sport	0.44	9.33	Confirmed	
Management and planning	Having formulated sport development plan	0.49	6.75	Confirmed	
	Having adequate budget for port development	0.45	8.19	Confirmed	

T = 8.45)) have positive significant impact on participation of students in public sport. Findings of this work are consistent with findings of many research works such as Zarei and Tondnevis(2003), Ramezaninejad et al. (2009), Mozafari et al. (2010), Azizi et al. (2011), Heydarinejad

and Ghodrathnama (2011), Emami et al. (2013), Faraji et al. (2014) and William and Brudzynski (2008).

Finally given research data and previous findings it is concluded that industrial development and modern

Table 2: Model fit indexes

Fit indexes	Index values	Criterion	Interpretation
Chi-square ratio to degree of freedom (χ^2/df)	2.26	Between 1-3	Acceptable
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	0.92	Above 0.9	Acceptable
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)	0.94	Above 0.9	Acceptable
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.023	Below 0.08	Acceptable
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.91	Above 0.9	Acceptable
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.93	Above 0.9	Acceptable
Incremental Fit Index (CFI)	0.92	Above 0.9	Acceptable

technologies especially Internet and social networks have created such a phenomenon known as motor deficiency, and it has reduced participation of students in health-centered and public sports, and influenced different physical, psychological, and social aspects of human life, especially university students, which are viewed as the main national capital and source of social and economic development for the community. Physical and psychological needs of youths should be recognized and the path should be paved for prosperity and growth of their talents. Hence, development of health-centered sports at public level and its extension among students and different classes of society and providing grounds for full-scale growth is regarded as a national task, and research, formulation of strategic programs, and delivery of administrative plans for growing health-centered and public sports are the major activities of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Sports for All Federation, universities, and other sport organizations in the country. Since public sport is a basic factor in health of individuals and communities, the need for its development is felt more than ever. State authorities and responsible organizations should not consider investment and research on health-centered and public sports as additional cost, rather it should be considered as an investment in personal and public health. Thus, it is suggested all educational organizations, education organization, Ministry of Sciences, Research, and Technology, Ministry of Health, and other organizations involved in sport have close cooperation in implementing public sport programs with support and participation of Ministry of Sports and Youth so that grounds are provided for public sport culture growth. Hence, following practical recommendations are provided for planning and formulating public sport development in order to eliminate motor deficiency, increase life expectancy through promotion of physical, psychological, and social health of community individuals, as well as increases vitality, empathy, consolidation and social participation, and to strengthen social bonds, to enrich leisure time and to avoid machine life:

- Widespread research on society needs and interests in public health section
- Evaluating resources, capabilities, deficiencies, and defects in public sport for planning and formulating public sport development strategy
- Segmentation of sport market, provision of products

and various and attractive programs appropriate to the public needs and demands for public sport development for each class of the society in order to increase motivation and participation in health-centered and public sports

- Development of recreational and sport facilities and spaces in universities, offices, organizations, parks, mosques, schools, and other religious and commercial locations
- Establishing health paths in every city and suitable locations with installation of physical readiness and sport tools
- Assigning expert and capable coaches and human resources in public sport stations for offering scientific and basic practices
- Widespread advertisement in all media for culture making on health-centered and public sports for increasing awareness toward benefits and positive effects of sport on body and mind
- Establishing volunteer movement for development of health-centered and public sport for delivery of more services to the community

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