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Abstract

A greater understanding of the organizational processes of sport clubs can inform strategies to improve clubs' organizational effectiveness. This study examined whether sport club capacity and activities influence the organizational effectiveness of collegiate sport clubs. Sport club members ($n = 201$) completed a questionnaire, with secondary data collected from the university. Regression analysis found club operations, club fiscal responsibility, frequency of club practice, and frequency of competitions significantly, positively predict organizational effectiveness. Comparatively, club human capital and facility quality significantly, negatively predict organizational effectiveness. These results have implications relating to club training, mentorship, resource allocation, and club activities.

Keywords: *Sport club capacity, sport club activities, multiple constituency model, university administration*

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Introduction

Collegiate sport clubs (CSCs) are student organizations on college campuses established, organized, and managed by student leaders (i.e., club executive board) to facilitate recreational sport activities (e.g., practice, workshops, competition) for members of the club team (Lower et al., 2013; Warner et al., 2012). Serving over two million participating students in the United States (U.S.) alone (Blumenthal, 2009), CSCs constitute a popular outlet for sport competition, social connection, and health and wellness on college campuses (Czekanski & Lower, 2019). While the internal operations of clubs are managed by executive boards, CSCs must operate in compliance with university and sport governing body regulations, potentially impacting clubs' effectiveness (Lower & Czekanski, 2019). Collegiate clubs experience unique challenges constraining their organizational effectiveness, including university bureaucracy, limited resources and club size, and lack of student interest (Czekanski & Lower, 2019; Schneider et al., 2008). Thus, research is needed to identify factors contributing to CSCs' organizational effectiveness to improve club outcomes and preserve this important sport outlet for college students.

Sport Club Organizational Effectiveness

Organizational effectiveness is the extent to which an organization achieves its goals (Cameron, 1981). Due to the plurality of stakeholders associated with CSCs—including governing bodies, universities, club leaders and members—a multiple constituency framework to assess organizational effectiveness is appropriate. The multiple constituency approach is reliant on the “the preferences of multiple constituencies for the outcomes of organizational performance” (Zammuto, 1984, p. 606). While the multiple constituency approach is effective in assessment, it creates challenges when attempting to reconcile which constituents should receive preference (Hossein et al., 2011; Zammuto, 1984). Several perspectives mitigate this problem; however, within this context the power perspective is most useful (Zammuto, 1982, 1984). The power perspective offers preference to constituents who can manipulate an organization's functions or behavior, thus, greater power means more interest given to their perspectives (Zammuto, 1982). As the organizational effectiveness of CSCs is largely influenced by the university due to their role in establishing regulations and monitoring compliance (Czekanski & Lower, 2019; Mull et al., 2005), the current study adopted the university's preferences for club organizational effectiveness (see Methods).

Scholars have also utilized the multiple constituency approach to examine sport organizations (Eydi, 2015; Papadimitriou, 2007), finding greater understanding of the processes of effective organizations will improve the provision of services and achievement of outcomes across similarly situated organizations (Herman & Renz, 1997). Sport club capacity and activities have been identified as critical factors among effective sports clubs that contribute to goal achieve-

ment (Doherty et al., 2014; Lower & Czekanski, 2019). Organizational capacity is defined as the attributes that enable an organization to fulfill its goals (Eisinger, 2002). Human resources, finances, infrastructure, planning and development, and external relationships are considered critical capacity dimensions (Doherty et al., 2014). Even so, each of these capacity dimensions are expected to have varying influence on clubs' organizational effectiveness (Hall et al., 2003).

Despite many capacity dimensions being critical to operational efficiency, organizational effectiveness cannot be assumed based solely on capacity. Prominent sport club activities have been linked to desired club outcomes, including sport, social, and administrative activities (Czekanski & Lower, 2019; Wicker et al., 2013). However, these studies have almost exclusively focused on student outcomes - such as student learning (Mikulec & McKinney, 2014), social outcomes (Martin et al., 2019), and physical benefits (Lower-Hoppe et al., 2020)—neglecting club-level outcomes of importance to university administrators. To inform practical strategies to improve clubs' organizational effectiveness, the primary objective of this pilot study was to empirically examine the degree to which sport club capacity and activities influence clubs' organizational effectiveness. The pilot study was guided by two research questions: (RQ1) Does sport club capacity influence clubs' organizational effectiveness? and (RQ2) Do sport club activities influence clubs' organizational effectiveness?

Methodology

Participants and Procedures

Participants were sport club members from a large post-secondary institution in the Midwest, U.S. After obtaining institutional review board approval, the researchers contacted sport club officers via email to explain the study purpose and request an opportunity to survey the club team. An initial recruitment email was sent to 36 clubs, with a follow-up email sent one week later. For the 11 clubs that indicated interest, the researchers attended a team practice or meeting and distributed a hard copy questionnaire designed to take approximately 15 minutes. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. One member from each participating sport club team was randomly selected to receive a \$15 gift card.

Instrument

The questionnaire consisted of established scales and developed items organized into three sections: member engagement (5 items), sport club capacity (33 items), and sport club activities (9 items). The member engagement section included open-ended items ascertaining members' leadership roles and involvement with the club. Sport club capacity was assessed across four dimensions (outputs, human resources, infrastructure, and finances) using Doherty and Cuskelly's (2020) community sport club capacity scale, demonstrated to be valid and reliable. Participants indicated the extent to which each statement describes their sport

club through a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 6 (to a great extent). To assess sport club activities, the researchers developed six open-ended questions related to the frequency of club practices, competitions, travel, overnight trips, and community service. Benson and Eys' (2017) social inclusionary tactics subscale, found valid and reliable, measured club social activities. A 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) was adopted.

Secondary Data Collection

Club-level data were obtained through the university's Recreational Sport department. For this study, organizational effectiveness was operationalized by sport clubs' adherence to university administrative policies and guidelines. The university investigated calculates an administrative compliance score (ACS) for each sport club annually to evaluate and track organizational effectiveness, which in turn impacts university resource allocations to clubs (e.g., funding, facility space). The ACS is calculated based on the university's sport club compliance checklist (found in the Sport Club Handbook), which includes 11 categories (compliance, president meetings, semester reports, coach's meeting, treasurer's training, risk management training, community service/charity, fundraising, student membership, regional involvement, and community reputation), each with associated tasks. If a sport club completes all tasks associated with a category, they earn the designated number of points for that category. For example, if a club president attends all seven president meetings across the academic year, the club earns 35 points (5 points per meeting). A club's ACS score is out of 100 possible points, which represents the cumulative total points across the 11 categories. For this study, clubs' ACS score corresponded with the year the questionnaire was administered. Additionally, individual educational records were requested from the university's Registrar Office to capture the demographics of the sample.

Data Analysis

Survey data were exported to SPSS for hierarchical linear regression analysis. Preliminary data screening revealed a nominal amount of missing data, which were subsequently treated through single imputation for a complete dataset (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). Subsequently, assumptions of multiple regression were examined (Lomax & Hahs-Vaughn, 2012). Outliers were removed and quadratic data transformations conducted to address issues of non-normality with the human resources - human capital and ACS variables (Bruce et al., 2008). Once the assumptions were established, a hierarchical linear regression was conducted, with sport club capacity dimensions entered into block one, sport club activities entered into block two, and total ACS as the dependent variable. An $\alpha < .05$ level of significance was adopted.

Results

A total of 201 sport club members completed the survey, representing competitive (80.6%), recreational (7.0%), and instructional clubs (12.4%). Within the

sample, 64 club members reported fulfilling a sport club leadership position (e.g., Captain, President, Vice President). Club members indicated an average involvement in CSCs of four academic semesters. Overall demographics indicate a fairly homogenous sample comprised of 71.9% males and 28.1% females. The vast majority were Caucasian (77.4%), followed by “Two or More Races” (9.1%), Hispanic (4.5%), Asian (4.0%), “Race Unknown” (2.5%), “Non-Resident Alien” (1.5%), or Black or African American (1.0%). Academic rank consisted of 8.6% freshmen, 21.2% sophomores, 23.7% juniors, 39.4% seniors, and 7.1% graduate students.

Hierarchical Linear Regression

Descriptive statistics were calculated to synthesize the larger dataset (see Table 1). Sport club members reported greatest capacity related to club operations, human resources, facility quality, and communication. Club finances, formalization, and facility availability were capacity dimensions with lower reported scores. Sport club members reported upwards of 30 hours per week of involvement in club activities. Sport clubs’ adherence to university administrative policies and guidelines varied considerably, with clubs receiving an average total ACS of 75 points out of 100 (*SD* = 15.52).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

Study Variables	<i>n</i>	Min.	Max.	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
CSC Capacity							
Outputs - Operations	202	1.00	6	5.19	.75	-1.43	4.24
HR - Human Capital	202	2.33	6	5.64	.56	-2.63	9.99
HR - Human Capital (Quad. Trans.)	202	5.44	36	32.17	5.57	-1.89	4.58
HR - Succession	202	3.20	6	5.27	.61	-0.79	0.18
Finance - Alternate Sources	201	1.00	6	4.21	1.26	-.56	-0.23
Finance - Fiscal Responsibility	201	1.50	6	5.00	.90	-1.13	1.48
Infrastructure - Formalization	202	3.00	6	4.98	.72	-0.48	-0.15
Infrastructure - Facility Availability	202	1.33	6	4.63	1.03	-0.54	-0.08
Infrastructure - Facility Quality	201	1.00	6	5.30	.89	-1.73	3.72
Infrastructure - Communication	202	3.00	6	5.36	.729	-1.41	1.81
CSC Activities							
Practice	196	1.00	18	7.13	3.46	1.11	1.87
Member Involvement	196	0.00	30	9.67	6.69	1.63	2.44
In-Season Competitions	196	1.00	50	18.04	15.27	0.79	-0.71
Travel	196	0.00	12	4.82	2.00	0.10	2.09
Overnight Trips	196	0.00	12	3.69	2.29	0.93	1.55
Community Service	177	0.00	52	9.09	8.12	1.88	5.06
Social Activities	202	1.33	6	4.93	1.06	-0.97	0.31
CSC Organizational Effectiveness							
Total ACS	201	5.00	98	75.13	15.52	-2.78	10.52
Total ACS (Quad. Trans.)	201	25.00	9604	5884.12	1746.97	-0.91	2.92

Note. Quadratic transformations were performed to address issues of non-normality (Bruce et al., 2008)

Hierarchical linear regression was conducted to examine whether sport club capacity and sport club activities predict clubs' organizational effectiveness, operationally defined by their total ACS. The results revealed block one significantly contributed to the regression model ($F(9, 181) = 4.74, p < .001$), accounting for 19.1% of the variance in total ACS. Therefore, block one was maintained and block two added to the model. Block two was also significant ($F(15, 175) = 5.46, p < .001$), accounting for an additional 14.3% of the variance in total ACS. Cumulatively, sport club capacity and sport club activities accounted for 33.4% of the variance in total ACS. Table 2 summarizes the standardized regression coefficients and associated p -values. The data transformation limits interpretation of the beta values; therefore, the discussion will focus on significance and direction of the standardized regression coefficients.

Table 2*Hierarchical Linear Regression Model*

	<i>Standardized B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Δ <i>R</i> ²
<i>Constant</i>	3060.04	1141.42	2.68		
Block 1				.19	.19
Outputs - Operations	497.51*	241.54	2.06		
HR - Human Capital (Quad. Transformation)	-77.38*	27.82	-2.78		
HR - Succession	-41.32	360.51	-0.12		
Finance - Alternate Sources	103.89	119.82	0.87		
Finance - Fiscal Responsibility	640.52**	176.03	3.64		
Infrastructure - Formalization	-9.04	178.30	-0.05		
Infrastructure - Facility Availability	-38.82	141.87	-0.27		
Infrastructure - Facility Quality	-367.72*	158.37	-2.32		
Infrastructure - Communication	-169.68	234.13	-0.73		
Block 2				.33	.14
Practice	183.09**	48.11	3.81		
Member Involvement	-14.22	27.16	-0.52		
In-Season Competitions	42.88**	10.06	4.26		
Travel	84.31	73.55	1.15		
Overnight Trips	-6.49	82.62	-0.08		
Social Activities	12.01	132.98	0.90		
Community Service	-1.50	15.01	-0.10		

Note. $p < .05^*$, $p < .01^{**}$. Total ACS Score (Quad. Transformation) utilized as the dependent variable.

Discussion

The present study assessed whether sport club capacity and sport club activities influenced the organizational effectiveness of CSCs. In evaluation of RQ1, the results demonstrated club operations and fiscal responsibility significantly, positively predicted organizational effectiveness. This finding suggests clubs offering desired programs/services for their members, running day-to-day operations efficiently, and maintaining a balanced budget are likely to achieve desired club outcomes. As a means of managing university resources and liability (Schneider et al., 2008), administrators require that clubs adhere to university policies and

procedures (e.g., travel compliance, facility reservations) to remain active. Correspondingly, sport clubs that are organized, on-task, and prioritize member experiences are more likely to comply with university protocols to gain the resources and approvals needed to provide desirable programming (Lower & Czekanski, 2019). Further, to secure the necessary resources to offer these programs/services, clubs must be fiscally responsible by engaging in fundraising, revenue diversification, and budgeting (Wicker et al., 2013), as university allocations are nominal (Czekanski & Lower, 2019).

The results also demonstrate human capital and facility quality significantly, negatively predicted organizational effectiveness. This finding was surprising because it suggests clubs with people knowledgeable about the sport and access to quality facilities are less likely to achieve desired club outcomes. Warner et al. (2012) found sport club members acknowledged the importance of choosing an effective leader that can make the right decisions. However, knowledge of a sport does not necessarily correspond to knowledge of club governance, administration duties, or university policies. Indeed, Hoye and Cuskelly (2004) suggested club executive boards may be selected based on the best or most popular players, but these individuals may not have management, organizational, or communication skills necessary to effectively run the club. Human capacity is also constrained by recurring turnover of student leadership attenuating the continuity and performance of the executive board (Lower & Czekanski, 2019). Furthermore, while club members may perceive facility quality, their executive board may not be effectively managing that resource (e.g., not securing optimal facility reservations), impacting overall effectiveness. This highlights the importance of club leadership that can manage operational responsibilities.

In evaluation of RQ2, the results demonstrated frequency of club practice and in-season competitions significantly, positively predicted organizational effectiveness. This finding suggests clubs that are regularly involved in local and national sport activities are more likely to achieve desired club outcomes. Haines and Fortman (2008) found clubs practicing at least four or more times per week, traveling, and competing at a high level demonstrated significant gains in student learning outcomes, such as time management, leadership, managing finances, communication, and organization. Astin's (1999) theory of student involvement proposes a direct proportional relationship between involvement in educational programs and student learning. Therefore, clubs that facilitate regular sport activities cultivate a learning environment for members to gain critical skills necessary to effectively run the club.

The sport club structure is reliant on effective decision-making and administrative oversight from student leaders for club sustainability. Factors identified in this study that contributed to organizational effectiveness can provide student leaders direction to continually improve club outcomes. Club executive boards can utilize these results to develop effective strategies to manage their operational and fiscal responsibilities, appropriately select qualified leaders, and consistently

schedule practices and competitions to maximize member engagement. Through these efforts, sport clubs can continue to promote sport competition, social connection, and health and wellness on college campuses (Czekanski & Lower, 2019).

Implications

While many universities adopt a liberal administrative philosophy to enable student development through sport clubs (Mull et al., 2005), many scholars suggest a “hands-off approach should be preceded with formal structured training and communication to provide ... student leaders with the necessary skill sets needed to achieve their administrative goal” (Czekanski & Lower, 2019, p. 242). Research has identified several topical areas for sport club training, including university procedures and documentation, communication protocols, fundraising and financial management, delegation of responsibilities, and marketing and promotion (Lower & Czekanski, 2019; Schneider et al., 2008).

Scholars have also revealed most CSCs adopt a simple organizational structure, with centralized leadership (i.e., executive board) and informal operations (e.g., lack of recruitment, election, or evaluation of leadership), which can inhibit organizational effectiveness (Czekanski & Lower, 2019). Similarly, this study found sport clubs’ human capital negatively related to organizational effectiveness. University practitioners may consider providing additional mentorship and support considering the substantial responsibilities attributed to club executive boards and poor transition of club leadership (Lower & Czekanski, 2019). Sport clubs may also seek volunteer involvement of a coach or club advisor to support supplementary responsibilities (Sharpe, 2006). Involvement of coaches and advisors can increase club capacity and facilitate leadership development within the executive board (Hall-Yannessa & Forrester, 2005), enhancing the organizational effectiveness of the club.

Further implications pertain to resource allocations and financial management. Allocating university resources to sport clubs generally supports the institution’s mission of developing leaders (Flosdorf et al., 2016). However, such investment should be accompanied with club training on budgeting, financial transactions, and navigating facility reservation systems to optimally use university resources. In reviewing the budgets of participating sport clubs, the more effective clubs raised and spent significant sums of money. Therefore, practitioners should not only share fundraising ideas and encourage clubs to actively engage in fundraising initiatives (Czekanski & Lower, 2019), but also direct clubs to utilize those funds fully and efficiently for member benefit.

Limitations and Future Research

While the current study extends our understanding of the factors contributing to CSCs’ organizational effectiveness, limitations of the study must be considered when interpreting the findings. The study design limits operationalization of organizational effectiveness to criteria at one university. Though the ACS is like point systems at other universities (e.g., Penn State University; University of Wis-

consin), further research is needed to explore the various facets of club organizational effectiveness. As universities have distinct perspectives and measures of organizational effectiveness, sport clubs should strategically pursue activities that meet the objectives of their associated institution to achieve organizational effectiveness and maintain a positive social exchange relationship. This consideration could provide a gainful area for future research to draw comparisons between schools' definitions of effectiveness to ascertain whether more generalizable recommendations can be made for continually improving sport club operations and relationships with their respective institutions.

The current study focused exclusively on sport club capacity and sport club activities as potential contributors to clubs' organizational effectiveness. Future research should consider additional factors, such as club training and mentorship. Researchers may also consider adopting a qualitative approach to understand what promotes and inhibits clubs' organizational effectiveness from the voice of key stakeholders. Based on the multiple constituency approach (Zammuto, 1984), the preferences of additional stakeholder groups, such as sport clubs and sport governing bodies, should be explored. In light of many positive outcomes of CSCs, including student development (Haines & Fortman, 2008), club health and sustainability (Lower & Czekanski, 2019), and university recruitment and retention (Lifschutz, 2012), identifying ways to improve clubs' organizational effectiveness and overall outcomes should remain a priority.

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