

The Students Low Participation in Intramural Sport at the University

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Keywords: Intramural, Sports, Recreation, Free Time.

Abstract: Participation in intramural sports is beneficial for university or college students, these benefits include weight control, reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, low blood pressure, increased energy levels, reduced risk of osteoporosis, increased mood state, and reduced stress levels and increased student life through social interaction and competitive challenges. The purpose of this study is to investigate deeper into issues related to the low participation of students in intramural sports. The method used is qualitative method. The research design used is a focus group that has a collection of individuals with similar characteristics and experience in semester 2 students at Majalengka University to discuss a topic. The focus is on the topic, and the fundamental data is the group discussion transcripts around the topic. The result of this research is the non-participation students of Majalengka University in intramural sport caused by five factors such as time, play characteristics, social aspect, information, and offer.

1 INTRODUCTION

Regular physical activity is part of a healthy lifestyle to reduce the risk of many chronic health problems, including heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity, colon cancer, breast cancer, anxiety, and depression (Haskell et al., 2007). The campus intramural sports program can provide an ideal opportunity for students to maintain a healthy level of physical activity. The benefits in carrying out the above intramural sports activities will be met if an adult collects at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity per day for five days per week. Even recently, its recommendations were revised to include an intense 20-minute intense physical activity alternative per day for three days per week (Cooper, Schuett and Phillips, 2012).

The level of physical activity declines further as adolescents move into young adulthood. Research shows that only 38% of students regularly participate in high physical activity and only 20% participate in moderate physical activity, where high school students have a 65% participation rate in strong physical activity and a 26% participation rate in moderate physical activity (Douglas et al., 1997).

In Indonesia, particularly at the University of Majalengka there is the low participation of students in intramural sports. Although there is no exact data

what percentage of students who follow or who do not follow intramural sports, the writer concludes this matter from the fact that there are only few students use their free time for intramural sports.

From this phenomenon, according to the results of previous research and the real situation experienced by Majalengka University students related to the low participation of intramural sports on campus, the researcher tries to find out the cause factors of low participation of students to intramural sports at Majalengka University.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Intramural Sport

Intramural sport is a different matter throughout the campus recreational literature. Intramural sports are recognized as an entire campus recreation department, having a special program area or idea of the type of recreational activity.

Intramural is defined as an activity undertaken under the auspices of a particular institution and where all participants become members of a particular institution (Stoll, 2008) as well as organized and structured sports and events offered to students, faculty and staff on campus especially for

socialization, competition and pleasure (Radtke, 2008).

2.2 Intramural Sport Benefit

Previous research has supported the role played by intramural programs in stress reduction, holistic health, promoting social bonding, interaction and teamwork (Artinger and Forrester, 2006).

The participation of recreational sports influences students' perceptions of the campus community (Elkins, Forrester and Noël-Elkins, 2011). Improving the quality of college life (Ellis et al., 2002), leadership and communication skills (Lindsey, 2012), intrinsic motivation (Cooper, Schuett and Phillips, 2012), the benefits of healthy physical activity (Forrester and Arterberry, 2006), value clarification (Rothwell and Theodore, 2006) and improved academic achievement (Maas, 2001).

Thus, intramural sport is not only a source of physical activity, but has also been proven to affect the participants' own future involvement in physical activity (Forrester et al., 2007) and the involvement of others through peer influence (Leslie, Owen and Sallis, 1999).

3 METHODS

The method used in this research is qualitative method. Qualitative methods begin with the research area and allow the theory to emerge from the data rather than starting with assumptions and tests. This research is more likely to resemble the reality that occurs in majalengka university students rather than drafting a concept based only on experience, assumptions or speculation.

The research design used is a focus group that has a collection of individuals with similar characteristics and experience to discuss topics. The focus is on the topic, and the fundamental data is the group discussion transcripts around the topic.

3.1 Participant

Participants in this study were using the criteria of 2nd semester students at Majalengka University with prior experience in sports activities at High School, no prior experience in high school sports, or current participation in the Student Activity Unit program.

3.2 Population

The population in this study is the 2nd semester students at Majalengka University, consisting of 54 students from class A and B.

3.3 Sample

The sample of the study was chosen by using the 2nd semester student at Majalengka University. Of 54 students as population, 42 students who had volunteered by identifying themselves after being asked to participate through the recruitment method were selected. Recruitment method was done in 2 ways by spreading the sheets at recruitment events and personal communication in the classroom. All the selected samples got a free lunch and money of 20 thousand rupiah.

3.4 Procedure

This study was conducted for two months and taken place at Majalengka University, which has a large room that is able to accommodate the entire sample, has a comfortable chair where the participants sit so they can see each other as they speak.

The focus of the discussion is exploration and includes statements from participants about experiences, feelings, understandings, desires, and emotions related to participation in intramural sports. While the questionnaire asks the participants, how many hours of class they live, if they live inside or outside the campus, what organizations they attend, how much time of the week they are busy with the organization. Category one "engages in high school sports but is currently not involved in intramural sports," two "engage in fitness and fitness programs on campus or use of a fitness center but currently not involved in intramural sports," and three "not participating in sports in secondary school.

Data from the three focus groups were analyzed through categorization and comparison of the main themes that emerged after re-reading the results of the three discussions. The themes are compared to each other and the previous theme of the literature review, and some specific examples of the discussions are used to emphasize the main theme.

3.5 Instrument

This research uses focus group discussion and analysis to determine the reason of the students' inability to follow intramural sport. It is based on literature reviews and recommendations from experts

in the fields of recreation, sports management and related recreational areas. Because this research has an explorative approach, the aim is to ask students directly give their reasons for not participating, in order to allow more specific surveys questions, questionnaires and program research in the future.

Focus groups were held at three meetings in the Majalengka University classroom. The large room has a comfortable chair and has air conditioning where the participants sit so they can see each other as they speak. As soon as the participants arrive, the researcher reminds participants about the statement, refutation, willingness and confidentiality of the initial flyer for recruitment and they are given an implied consent form.

A demographic questionnaire is used to rule out confounding variables associated with the topic. Questionnaires ask participants about the age, how many hours of class they are having, whether they live on or off campus, what organizations they attend, how much time of the week they spend in the organization, and other questions there are 3 categories of participants.

Category one "engages in high school sports but is currently not involved in intramural sports," two "are involved in outside and inside campus fitness programs or use of fitness centers but are currently not involved in intramural sports," and three "do not participate in sports in High School.

4 RESULTS

Participating in intramural sports can benefit the students in terms of friendship, social bonds, exercise and decreasing stress levels. Nevertheless, many of Majalengka university students did not receive these benefits because of their low participation. It is important to use qualitative method to directly ask the students the reasons of not participating in order to develop a theory that has contradictive assumptions about this topic. The theory and participants' direct response would help the researchers and college professionals to more understand the students' experience aspect in this university. The results of the three focus group discussion indicated that there was perceived benefits of participating in intramural sports and the students' reasons for participating and not participation in this sport.

4.1 Focus Group

The total students of three focus groups were 42 students. The group one consisted of 19 students, 5

students for group 2 and 18 students for group 3. The discussions followed by a series of questions were led by moderators and the researcher himself. During the discussions, the participants of each group interacted with other group while the moderator and recorder observed them. Moderators mainly spoke during the pause in the conversation and at the end of the topic to further discuss some important points in the discussion including the reasons of participating or not participating in intramural sports.

4.2 Findings

Few words connecting during the conversation among focus groups were developed into the main theme of student participations in intramural sports. The themes are time, game characteristics, social aspects, information, and offerings. Each theme provides comments and insights on the benefits of intramural sports and the reasons for participating and not participating.

Time was the first topic that came up when the participants were asked questions for not participating in intramural sport. Most of the students answered that they had no enough time, found trouble in finding time or were not interested in making such time commitments.

Regarding with game characteristics (sport), the competition characteristics were raised as an issue to make intramural sport more fun and to add their intramural sports experience. Some of them even wanted to participate in competition level so that they could play with the same competitive player.

In terms of social aspect, the participants discussed the social bonds such as to be part of a team, to make friends, to meet new people, and to play in the recreation league joyfully. The issues in social aspects were important because they were related with the students' perceptions and experiences which could hinder them for participating in intramural sport.

Information was one of other themes that made the students participate or not participate in intramural sport. The students stated that they did not know about the program offered in intramural sports. In the discussions, they suggested to give a lot of publicity. They were afraid of playing without any knowledge of the sport rules or the involved process.

In terms of offerings, the students in this research discussed the program offered in intramural sports including facilities, the atmosphere of overall programs. They recognized that the knowledge of these elements came from what they heard and

beyond of their perceptions in intramural students at Majalengka University.

5 DISCUSSION

The results of this study included the benefits of participation in intramural sports and the reasons for non-participated students. The themes obtained from the discussion were time, game characteristics, social aspects, information, and offerings. Summary of the main themes above provide the basis for comparing each theme with other theme mentioned earlier in the theoretical review of a sport or the process involved of a sport.

5.1 Time

The participants responded that they did not have enough time to play intramural sport. This issue raised frequently during the focus group discussions. This finding was similar as the research conducted by (Meacci, Price and Kuga, 1982; Lankford *et al.*, 1993). They found that male and female students had busy schedule and lack of time to participate in intramural sport. The students' schedule varied on each week; therefore, it was difficult to get the same time for the participants. They wanted to have flexible time in which they could come and leave as they like. The other discussed issues were students' activities and lecture schedule. These issues were also found in the previous similar studies (Meacci, Price and Kuga, 1982; Smith and Missler, 1994). The students considered that university life was generally not conducive for weekly organized activities because everyone had different schedule.

When discussing in terms of commitment, most of the students were not sure to make commitment to play intramural sport. This is because of limited time or they do not want to play with stranger people. Furthermore, they stated that they did not have to do intramural sport for something that they would miss such as going to the mall.

5.2 Game Characteristics (Sport)

The participants were interested in competition but they wanted to play in the same competition level. They did not want to play on teams with people who are too competitive or not competitive enough. For example, in group discussions some students say they did not want to play with people who are too competitive.

The findings of the competition level were supported by other following studies, (Hanson and Krauss, 1998; Bourgeois *et al.*, 1995; Kanters, 2000; Bussler and Fisher, 1997). All of the research findings showed that the students looked for competitor and intramural sport experience. In a study conducted by Hanso, it was discovered that the reason of most students' participation in intramural sport was competition. On the contrary, other students merely wanted to have fun in playing intramural sport.

The idea proposed by the participants was to try this sport so that they could see whether they liked it or not. They could have willingness to participate in intramural sport only if they knew the activities and programs in that sport. Therefore, they wanted to see how the game worked before making the commitment to participate on the intramural sport. They thought that knowing the rules of game first was such a good idea that they would not play bad or disappoint the teammates in the game which relied on teamwork.

5.3 Social Aspect

Social bonds and relationships are often considered as referred concepts in some literature review. These concepts relate with making friends, meeting new people, and building relationship. These concepts were found in some researches (Atinger *et al.*, 2006; Bialeschik, 1988; Meacci, 1982; Meacci and Price, 1986; Kanters, 2000; Bussler, 1997; Hanson and Krauss, 1998).

Avoiding the conflict is the last reason of non-participation students in intramural sport. They stated that the aspect of intramural sport could make them to have different arguments with their teammates. (Milton, 1992) stated that a player would walk out of the game because of the conflicts with his teammates which consequently affect his friendship. (Smith, 1992) also had similar findings that if the social interaction was negative, it would hinder the students' participation.

5.4 Information

Most of the participants mentioned the lack of information about program, process, staff and rules of intramural sport. They were confused and had lack knowledge about the activities offered, the registration process and participation, and other issues which differentiated between intramural sports and other college recreational programs. Accessibility issues were also addressed in terms of processes, information and other structural issues that impede students' participation.

5.5 Offering

The research participants would like to play because the intramural sport could help them to relive stress and allow them to meet new people. They also wanted some activities such as water sports which were not currently offered.

The people participated in this sport because they had free time from class and work (Smith and Carron, 1992). In this research, many participants stated that they would play intramural sport as a chance to do something different and it was not a part of their daily routine. Two studies discussed the benefits of intramural sport in relieving the stress.

6 CONCLUSIONS

This research raises the question what will encourage students to participate in intramural sports and the reasons of not participating. Based on the findings and limitations of this study there are some conclusions about the reasons for not participating in intramural sports.

Regarding with the question of not participating in intramural question, the participants only answered one. They would automatically replied that they had not enough time. Nevertheless, after further review, it was found complicated reasons in which each participant had his own reason and different reasons. Based on the consistency of responses from focus groups compared with literature review, some major themes for non-participating students were found. Students did not participate in intramural sports not only because of structural problems such as lack of information, lack of competition, process problems, accessibility problems or the inability to form teams but also their low self-awareness due to lack of experience and poor knowledge of the game rules.

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