It's a Love/Hate Relationship: Work Motivation and Job Satisfaction of Sport Management Faculty Members

Sarah Stokowski, University of Arkansas
Bo Li, University of Arkansas
Stephen Dittmore, University of Arkansas

Abstract 2015-213  9:55 AM  (Seigniory)

Although aspects of sport management have been seen far back as when gladiators fought in packed stadiums in ancient Greece (Hall, 2003; Parkhouse, 1996), sport management education is a relatively new idea. The inaugural sport management program was started at Ohio University in 1966 (Parks, Quarterman, & Thibault, 2011). Since then, sport management programs have seen a relative fast and drastic increase at colleges and universities. As of 2009, in countries spanning across the globe (i.e. Canada, China, United States) there were 243 sport management undergraduate programs, 173 master’s programs, and 41 doctoral programs (North American Society for Sport Management, 2011; Parks et al., 2011). Colligon (2011) estimated that the sports industry is one of the largest in the world, worth between $480 and $620 billion dollars, and the industry is expected to grow $145.3 billion by 2015 (Belzer, 2014). With sport being a constantly growing lucrative global enterprise (Pedersen & Thibault, 2014, Pitts & Stotlar, 2007), the opportunities for sport professionals is endless, and need for sport management faculty members to not only teach students about the field but to conduct meaningful impactful research is justified (Hall, 2003; Jackson & Pedersen, 2000; Pitts & Stotlar, 1996).

Faculty members play an important role on college campuses. Academic factors, including the reputation of faculty members, has been shown to be one of the most important college choice factors for students in determining an institution of higher learning (Easter, 2012; Strayer, 2002). Not only is choosing a college one of the most important choices in an individual’s life (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), but “a student’s choice of major can directly affect their choice of college” (Easter, 2012, p. 25). Furthermore, an academic major can directly impact a student’s career path and their ability to develop both personally and professionally (Porter & Umbach, 2006). Faculty interaction with students has been shown to be another crucial variable in regards to student retention (Bausell & Magoon, 1976). To ensure the success of the organization, it is important faculty are retained (Lavania, Sharma, & Gupta, 2011). Faculty hiring has been shown to be difficult for many institutions, and along with hiring difficulties; faculty turnover appears to be a problem (Lavania et al., 2011). The median faculty retention rate is only 11 years (Kaminski, 2012). By offering sport management programs, institutions can potentially attract students; however, in order for students to be retained and for programs to achieve continuity, faculty members need to be satisfied in hopes of avoiding turnover (Hanish & Hulin, 2003). Thus, it is important to understand job satisfaction to assist with retention efforts of both students and faculty and to increase stability of sport management programs.

Despite the growth of sport management programs, little is known about sport management faculty. A detailed search revealed that few studies have examined job satisfaction of sport management faculty (Hall, 2003). Hall’s (2003) study of sport management faculty members in the United States examined “job satisfaction using the pay and promotion facets of the Job Descriptive Index and the Job in General Scale” (p. ix). It was determined that gender, the type of institution (i.e. public, private), rank (i.e assistant, associate), college (i.e. business, education), age, teaching experience, and salary all impacted job satisfaction (Hall, 2003). Hall (2011) continued this important line of research, and using the same scale, surveyed sport management faculty members in Australia, citing similar findings. Although Hall’s (2003, 2011) research provides an excellent foundation on which to build upon, Hall (2003) recommends that future research is warranted to offer a greater understanding of this population.

In order to increase job satisfaction, it is important to understand work motivation (Tella, 2007). Work motivation consists of factors (i.e. focus, determination, willingness, stamina, desire) within an individual’s social world that determine work-place conduct (Latham & Pinder, 2005; Pinder, 1998). It is human nature to obtain satisfaction, but without motivation it is nearly impossible to reach the point of fulfillment (Martens, 1987, 1990; Vealey, 2005;
Stokowski, Huffman, & Aicher, 2013). Weege et al. (2006) found that those who had high work motivation also experienced high job satisfaction, and tended to be retained by their employer. Although studies abroad have examined work motivation, little is known about work motivation in the United States, specifically for faculty members in the sport management discipline.

This study examines two primary research questions. RQ1: Is there a relationship between work motivation and job satisfaction among sport management faculty members? RQ2: What levels of motivation predict job satisfaction? Using the NASSM (2014) list of global sport management programs, the researchers visited program websites to obtain email addresses of program faculty. Faculty were then sent an e-mail inviting them to participate in a survey that consisted of a demographic form, The Motivation at Work Scale (Gagne et al., 2010), and a modified version of the The Job Satisfaction Survey (Spector, 1997) as well as the Faculty Job Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction Scale (Wood, 1976). This study is informed by two theoretical frames: Herzberg's two factor theory, which revolves around factors that motivate employees, who are found to be either satisfied or dissatisfied (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959), and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000), allowing the researchers to better understand motivation as a continuum that impacts human behavior. The data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics for demographic information and correlations to find the relationship between the Motivation to Work Scale and the job satisfaction instrument. Furthermore, multiple regression will be run to determine what levels of motivation (i.e. intrinsic, extrinsic, a-motivation) predict job satisfaction. MANOVA will highlight group differences (i.e. gender, type of institution, salary) in motivation and satisfaction.

Although this study is in progress, the researchers hope that the results will inform institutional policy, assist in student recruitment and retention efforts, and support colleges and universities in motivating faculty, ultimately leading to greater job satisfaction and increased faculty retention.