Examining Perceived Values of Sport Event Service Learning: A Longitudinal Assessment
Exploring Gender Differences

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Service learning is the concept of providing students with the opportunity to take course objectives and theories and put them into practice. It is implemented in many courses and is a staple for many sport management programs. As with most programs, the goal of sport management service learning should be to assess whether the students recognize and take advantage of the value it has to offer. Every student will approach service learning with differing expectations and levels of commitment. Additionally, their ability to learn from the opportunity may be determined, in part, by their age, gender, class standing, race, etc. (Nichols & Monard, 2001). In an industry historically dominated by males, investigating and identifying service learning outcomes based on gender provides valuable information for structuring opportunities in a way to prepare females more effectively.

The study is a continuation of an ongoing longitudinal study which began in 2005. Current participants in the study total 756 undergraduate students (431 male, 325 female, M age = 22.5, SD = 4.67 yrs.) enrolled in sport management and physical education classes at a University in the Southeastern United States, with an expectation of an additional 200-300 subject responses by the end of the Fall 2016 semester to add to the analyses. Participants were aware of the purpose of the study and were assigned to service learning sport event sites. Upon completion of service learning students completed a 22-question Likert-type survey based on a service learning theory developed by Wang, Ye, Jackson, Rodgers, and Jones (2005). The survey questions measured three characteristics of service learning: Personal Competence/Self Reflection, Interpersonal Relationships, and Program Enhancement/Social Responsibility.

Data analysis was a 2 x 3 factorial design used to examine the effects of gender and academic year on the three subscales. Univariate analysis of variance procedures was conducted on each of the three subscales using the .05 alpha for significance. Upon significance, Fisher’s LSD test was conducted for post hoc analyses. All analyses were performed with IBM-SPSS version 22.0.

Initial findings do not indicate significant differences overall between males and females on the three subscales. However, upon further investigation, The Analysis of Variance results displayed a significant interaction between academic year and gender interaction. Data showed significant differences between sophomore males and females on Interpersonal Relationships and Personal Competence; in each subscale, the male students valued their service learning activities higher than their female counterparts. Additionally, data showed significant differences between sophomore males and junior/senior males on each of the three subscales.

Preliminary findings from this earlier assessment (n=235) completed for years 2005-2010 (Keshock, Pugh, Heitman, Forester & Bradfsford, 2012) suggest males beginning in their major program were experiencing and valuing service learning differently from females. Specifically, they were placing a higher value on the relationships that come out of service learning activities as well as their own growth of competence in the area. Service learning program changes were made in 2011 to possibly remedy the lesser value female students placed on service learning by adding different types of service learning sporting events. Furthermore, instead of selecting a particular service learning event for each class students were offered the opportunity to choose from a variety of event options to fulfill their experiential requirement. In an attempt to determine whether these same findings in the first six years of the study (2005-2010) have remained constant over time even after program changes were made during the last six years (2011-2016) of data collection- the same statistical applications are to be applied when Fall 2016 semester data is entered. If results
suggest female subjects still place limited value on service learning experiences alternative strategies may have to be considered for adoption.