A Resource-Based View of Organizational Sustainability in the Sport-for-Development Context

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Many sport-for-development (SFD) organizations have emerged in the nonprofit/voluntary sector that uses sport as a medium by which to facilitate desired outcomes in public health, social inclusion, education, and intercultural exchange and conflict resolution (Schulenkorf, Sherry, & Rowe, 2016). Organizational sustainability is a key condition for SFD organizations to achieve these social missions and objectives (Weerawardena, McDonald, & Mort, 2010). Previous literature highlights the importance of SFD organizations’ resource acquisition and mobilization in sustaining their operations (Welty Peachey, Cohen, Shin, & Fusaro, 2018). However, there is a lack of research focused on SFD organizations’ sustainability, specifically from a resource-based view. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the critical resources within SFD organizations and their implication for organizational sustainability.

Several scholars suggest that resource-based views (RBV) can play an important role in understanding an organization’s effectiveness and sustainability (Barney, 1991; Rumelt, 1984; Wernerfelt, 1984). Barney (1991) classified resources into three types: (1) physical resources, (2) human capital resources, and (3) organizational resources, while the importance of (4) financial resources and (5) technological capabilities have also been highlighted (Hofer & Schendel, 1978). Although RBV originates in the business context (Barney & Arikan, 2001), it has proven to be a useful perspective for examining the competence and sustainability of nonprofit organizations (Weerawardena et al., 2010), particularly as the boundaries between for-profit and nonprofit sectors have become increasingly blurred (Selsky & Parker, 2005). In order to understand the resource profiles of SFD organizations, and how they contribute to organizational sustainability, two research questions were developed: (a) What critical resources do SFD organizations have? (b) Are there any differences between based on organizational maturity?

Method

This study will focus on 63 SFD organizations in the Midwestern region identified from the web-directory of the International Platform on Sport and Development (sportanddev.org) and Up2Us Sports, a national SFD nonprofit. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form 990s, which provide financial and administrative data for US nonprofits, will be collected through Guidestar, an information service for databases on US nonprofits. Consistent with previous research (e.g., Bowman, 2011; Brown, 2005), (1) total revenue; (2) a measure of revenue diversification (Herfindahl-Hirschman index [HHI]); (3) the number of paid staff and volunteers; (4) the number of voting board members; (5) total fixed assets; and (6) investment in information technology (IT), accounting, and other supportive resources will be measured. In addition to descriptive statistics, analysis of variance (ANOVA) will be conducted to compare differences in critical resources by three stages of organizational maturity (1 = 0-5 years, 2 = 6-10 years, 3 = more than 10 years).

Expected Findings

This study expects to find different types and levels of resource profiles based on organizational maturity stages. The discussion will focus on implications for SFD organizational sustainability. Full data collection and analysis will be completed before the conference presentation.