

A Case Study: Parents perceptions of the effectiveness of a youth sports program in a community-based athletic association

The purpose of this research is to profile parental perceptions of their community-based athletic association's organizational effectiveness. Specifically parents' perception of policies and procedures in delivering their youth basketball program will be examined. Minimal research has addressed program organizational effectiveness in relation to youth sport policies (Chalip & Green, 1997), where the majority of youth sport practices and policies are formed with limited consideration from sport management scholarship (Hedstrom & Gould, 2004). This research project is being conducted in two stages. The first stage surveyed 272 parents' about their perceptions of delivery of services by their respective teams and leagues within the basketball program. Stakeholders indicated program effectiveness pertaining to providing, 1) quality equipment, 2) child-centered services where a strong focus is placed on advancement of fair play, skill development, quality instruction, and a fun environment, and 3) providing positive experiences for participants. Finally, the majority of parents believed that league and team policies and procedures were fair. Despite overwhelming positive perceptions, contradictions existed about whether the league provided quality equipment, facilities, matching of player skills, scheduling of practices, and providing too few opportunities for team play. Noteworthy, our findings contradict the current literature, which suggests that adherence to sportsmanship and fair play in youth sports may be declining (Shields, Bredemeier, LaVoi, & Power, 2005). *Dr. Nicole LaVoi, Dr. Lisa Kihl, Matt Soroka, and Charles Campisi*

Given our initial and counter-normative findings according to the limited literature on youth sport organizational governance, the goals of the second stage of this research is twofold. We first aim to expand and examine why organizational stakeholders believe their community-based basketball program is effective (in terms of structure, climate and programming), and second we will unpack the contradictions that surfaced from the initial survey data. Using a case study approach, this investigation will be accomplished through the utilization of parental, coach and administrative focus groups, individual interviews, and documents. Multiple sources of data will help us to investigate what organizational policies and procedures, and how their implementation can create effective youth sport programming. This research intends to provide youth sport administrators with a model program in order to help enhance the quality of existing youth sport programming and organizational effectiveness. This study will complement and expand existing empirical work on the effectiveness of youth sport organizations.

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