
**Criteria of Participation at the Sport and Recreation Services of Municipal
Organizations**

Georgia Yfantidou, Aikaterini Tsernou, Maria Michalopoulos, George Costa

Department of Physical Education and Sport Science, Democritus University of Thrace

Correspondence with:

Georgia Yfantidou

gifantid@phyed.duth.gr

Thessalonikis 9, 69100 Komotini Greece

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the services of municipal authorities of Komotini Greece, as they are recorded through the opinions of citizen's of the municipality. In order to examine the services, a questionnaire was used that included questions about the participation in the programs, the reasons / factors for participation in exercise, the content of the programs and the personal characteristics of the citizens (exercising and no exercising people at municipal organization). Subjects in this study were 303 people all citizens of municipality of Komotini. Factor analysis detected five factors in the questionnaire: 1) quality of instructors, 2) functionality, 3) availability and program provision, 4) other services and 5) location. Also, were applied two-way factor analysis between the factors "age" and "education", "weekly frequency of exercise" and "monthly duration of exercise", "age" and "income" to find which of the criteria affect the participation. From the analysis appeared important effect of criteria of "weekly frequency of exercise" and was realised difference between the rungs.

Keywords: sport services; municipal authorities; sports for all

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Introduction

The last years has been realised worldwide an extensive expedition for the promotion and growth of sports as means of entertainment and recreation. The argumentation for the growth of recreation sports was supported of psychological and social profits that participants obtain and are accompanied by increased attribution for work and decreased expenses of medical care (Alexandris and et., 1999; Weese J., 1997). Fundamental object of study constituted the finding of the factors of participation in athletic programs. This element is important for those who are related directly or indirectly with the planning and the organization of athletic programs, and those who intend to invest in the amounting athletic industry (Alexandris, 2000).

A characteristic of rise of standard of living that is observed the last decades is the creation of additional needs in the sector of recreation and recreational activities. Simultaneously the requirement for quality of provided services grows. This tendency is strengthened at the sectors that concern immediately the health, as they function as counterpoise in tedious, sedentary and with minimal natural activity daily life in the cities. According to Reichheld and Sasser Jr. (1990) "the real revolution of quality comes at the services and in the next decades it will be revealed its importance".

According to Kyriazi and et. (1992), in a country as Greece which has been found in Olympic orbit, the significance of sports and the activities that are encompassed are taking the attention and the interest of total of population. The conclusions of research revealed the increase of participants the last years, the need of exercising people for recreation and improvement of physical state after the implementation of brand-new programs. The obligations of municipal organization that must cover the needs of exercising people of entire city are too many and interdependent: high level sport, the infrastructure sport and sports for all with varied content.

Up to today reaction by the institutions of state or municipal authorities is the creation of sports programs for all. The basic however recipients of this programs are the children and content of programs is the learning of athletic agilities. Equivalent big

team of acceptance are also the women young and medium age who aiming at the improvement of physical state and appearance (Michalopoulou and et, 1998).

The aim of municipal authorities is to provide to the citizens the chance to improve their biotic level, while the athletic conscience of citizens is cultivated and their free time turns to advantage recreationally. Unfortunately, as mentioned by Papadimitriou (1998), the general culture of state and the system that is followed, includes the bureaucracy to a large extent, thing that renders municipal organizations slow. As result, the assimilation of new techniques of management by the public athletic sector is time-consumed and not feasible under the existing conditions.

Aim of research

The aim of the present research was to investigate the factors that characterize the sport services of municipal organization. Specifically it concerns if the municipal organizations provide programs of exercise which cover the needs of citizens and how the citizens perceive it and what criteria influence their participation in the programs of sports for all.

Methodology

Sample

The sample of research were 303 individuals, 135 men and 153 women, (15 missing values) members at the sport programs of municipal organization of Komotini or not, all residents of prefecture of Rodopi. With the method of random sampling based on gender and age, were assembled 303 questionnaires, which constituted the data of research. The initial number of questionnaires that was given was 500. The contact with the members of municipal organization became after authorisation of organization and the approach to the members became at their participation in the programs. The participation in the research was voluntary.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire that was used for the aims of the research was based on the questionnaire of Michalopoulos M., Argyropoulou E., Kosta G., Tzetzis G. and Ntoulos D. (1998). The reliability of the questionnaire was checked calculating Cronbach a for all the questions and was satisfactory ($\alpha = .86$). The questionnaire included 29 questions and was constituted by 4 parts. The first part included the recording of general characteristics of participation to programs of mass exercise and recreation, the second part the special characteristics, such as reasons that are considered important and

determine the participation. Finally, the third part was about the criteria of participating at the programs and activities of municipal organization of Komotini, while the fourth part concerned demographic characteristics. Concretely, at the questions of reasons of participation the responders checked with "x" the answer that suited them. At the questions for the criteria of participation they marked "x" to the number of a scale from the 1 (less important) to the 7 (very important). At the demographic questions they marked with "x" their answer.

Process

Initially information was collected via interview with the sport manager of municipal organization, the interview included 20 questions that concerned the sport services and the programs that are provided, the economic elements, the management of organization, the personnel, promotion and the probably problems during the effort to provide qualitative services to citizens. The answers contributed in the configuration of questionnaire, which the exercised citizens immediately supplemented after their practise to the program and in other cases in their residence and they returned it to their trainer of each program, who was responsible to deliver it to the researcher. For the citizens who do not participate to municipal sport programs the completion became at their attendance at the prefecture of Rodopi. Elderly people who could not read the questions were oral, after their requirement.

Statistical analysis

Factor analysis became to find the criteria that characterize the sport services of municipal organization. After, two-way ANOVA was realised for the total criteria of participation between the following pairs: a) of "age" and "education", b) "weekly frequency of exercise" and "monthly duration of exercise" and c) "age of members" and "income", aiming to find the criteria of participation that have decisive effect in the configuration of opinion of members for the services.

Results

Structural validity and reliability

The examination of structural validity of questionnaires became through the factor analysis which included the analysis in main components (principal components analysis) and then the varimax rotation of axes. The number of factors was determined with the criterion that eigenvalues should be bigger than 1.00. The factor analysis (Table 1) revealed five factors: 1) quality of instructors, 2) functionality, 3) availability and

program provision, 4) other services and 5) location. The results confirm the structural validity of questionnaire of Michalopoulos M. et al. (1998).

Table 1. Results of factor analysis which revealed five factors.

VARIABLES	FACTORS				
	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of instructors					
The municipal organization realise that it promise.					
	.68				
The personnel correspond to the complaints of members.	.77				
The personnel interest itself for the progress of members.	.81				
Functionality					
Appearance and functionality of facilities.		.61			
Cleanness of facilities – lockers room.		.71			
Kindness of personnel.		.79			
Knowledge of personnel.		.68			
They manage situations of direct need and inform.		.54			
Availiability and program provision					
The personnel maintains good file of customers.			.48		
The offered programs are renewed regularly.			.58		
Quality of equipment.			.83		
Quality of organization.			.77		
The activities begin-finish in their hour.			.52		
Other services					
Variety of programs and weight machines.				.59	
Convenient schedule of programs.				.74	
Lack of rush at the weight machines/programs.				.77	
Information by the personnel for problems/changes.				.60	
Location					
Location of municipal gym.					.42
Sociability, acquaintances.					.77

Note: loadings smaller the 0.40 are not reported.

Criteria of participation

The total perception for the important criteria of participation at the programs of exercise turned up from the sum of all scores of the question: "Which criteria from the following you consider important in order to select to participate at a program of exercise / municipal gym". It was realised that the elderly and medium level education people participate more at the programs, therefore two-way analysis was applied between the factors "age" and "education" and the findings showed that it does not exist statistically important interaction to the total perception of citizens for the important criteria of

participation at the programs of exercise with $F_{(24,232)} = 0.891$, $p > 0.05$. Also, it does not exist statistically important main effect of factor "age" with $F_{(8,232)} = 1.066$, $p > 0.05$ and it does not exist important effect of factor "education" with $F_{(5,232)} = 2.188$, $p > 0.05$.

Also, it was realised that most exercised people participate 7-9 months which is the period for municipal organization and three times a week as the most programs last, therefore two-way analysis was applied between the factors "weekly frequency of exercise" and "monthly duration of exercise" and the findings showed that it does not exist statistically important interaction to the total perception of citizens for the important criteria of participation at the programs of exercise with $F_{(10,255)} = 1.044$, $p = 0.406 > 0.05$. Also, it does not exist statistically important main effect of factor "monthly duration of exercise" with $F_{(3,255)} = 1.109$, $p = 0.346 > 0.05$, but it exists important effect of factor "weekly frequency of exercise" with $F_{(5,255)} = 3.099$, $p = 0.010 < 0.05$. For the localisation of statistically important differences it was applied test multiple comparisons Sidak and was realised statistically important difference between the rungs: 7 times a week ($M = 104,25$) and 3 times a week ($M = 111,65$) and also between 7 times a week ($M = 104,25$) and 5 times a week ($M = 117,69$).

Finally, by the descriptive analysis it was observed that most members of municipal organization have low income and a lot of members participate the last years, thus in order to find if these factors affect the total perception for the factors of participation, it was done two way ANOVA and realised that it does not exist statistically important interaction to the total perception of the citizens for the most important factors of participation at the exercise programs between factors "antiquity of members" and "income" with $F_{(28,199)} = 0.622$, $p > 0.05$. Also, it does not exist statistically important main effect of factor "antiquity of members" with $F_{(9,199)} = 0.749$, $p > 0.05$ and it does not exist important effect of factor "income" with $F_{(5,199)} = 0.876$, $p > 0.05$.

Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of the present research was to collect information for the recording of attitudes and opinions on the subjects that interest the organisation, the content and the participation at the services of exercise and recreation of municipal organization of Komotini. The factor analysis revealed five factors: 1) quality of instructors, 2) functionality, 3) availability and program provision, 4) other services and 5) location, therefore the model of Michalopoulou M. et al. (1998) for the recreation activities is valid for the sport services of municipal organizations.

Criteria of participation

At the present research, it resulted from the analysis that it does not exist statistically important difference because of gender to the total perception for the most important criteria of participation. According to the means of answers of women and men, they consider also two genders that all factors are important and pursue high services.

Also by the examination of interaction and main effect of factors "age" and "education" for the most important factors of participation, there were not realised statistically important differences. It deserves to report that the education level marginal did not present statistically important difference, however it is marked difference mainly between the graduates of lyceum and higher education institutions. Rather is owed on the "severity" of answers of graduates of higher education institutions who know the importance of factors, contrary to the graduates of lyceum whom answers were enough high in importance.

As well as it was not presented statistically important interaction of factors "weekly frequency of exercise" and "monthly frequency of exercise". It was marked however main effect of factor "weekly frequency of exercise". Those who participate seven days at sport programs of municipal organization do not give so much attention at the peripheral elements of exercise, but at the exercise itself, while those who participate three or five times interest to have high services, because they participate mainly for recreation.

Finally, it was not marked statistically important interaction of factors "antiquity of members" and "income" with the variable total factors of participation, but also it was not marked main effects. As it appears everybody judge the present conditions and no other previous experiences at the sport programs of municipal organization. Also, the income did not present differences, as it was expected, because the programs are almost free of charge for everybody.

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