

Safety Management Practices of High School Sports Facilities

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ABSTRACT: Sports facilities that are not being handled properly based on the efficient and effective safety management practices could cause injuries and hazards. However, there is still no clear direction initiated by the authorities in regards to sports facilities services in ensuring users safety. Therefore, this study is aimed to identify the high schools' sport facilities safety management practices in the state of Perak, Malaysia. This research was done based on observation through sports and recreation risks management survey. Research samples consisted of Physical Education and Sports Science teachers in the state of Perak. From this research several factor influencing sports facilities management in schools were identified. Through this research, the schools administrators were facilitated in managing sports facilities in schools efficiently and systematically according to safety practices that have been outlined. Hence, the safety and effectiveness of sports activities in schools could be assured.

Keywords: Safety management, risk, co-curricular, sport facilities

1. INTRODUCTION

It is widely known that schools are one of the established settings for the betterment of health and well-being among its pupils. It has been highly rationalised when physical education is being introduced and offered in schools. The importance of physical education in schools is obvious (Singh, 2005; Naidoo *et al.*, 2009). However there are a few concerns arises regarding the implementation and practice of physical education in schools. One of the concerns is whether secondary schools provide proper facilities and equipment for sport participation? Another concern is on the sports facilities safety management practices to ensure that everyone involved is protected from foreseeable risks of harm and injuries. These concerns are intense as several studies indicate that the actual numbers of learners participating in sport and recreational activities has increased. This is also due to the increased access of learners to sport participation and the influence of the media and sports on youth and children (Grayson, 2001; Singh, 2004). The duty to provide safe facilities for students, athletes and spectators as well as proper equipment is a crucial aspect. A well defined emergency procedure for an accident or injury to athletes and students is very important (Singh, 2001). Sports facilities that are not managed effectively based on the safety management practices could lead to accidents and injuries. According to Mustaffa and Esa, 2013, school principals, sports lecturers and sports secretaries stated that to date, a specific model on safety and risk management model on sports and recreation activities is still unavailable. Most practitioners in schools only based on their experiences to handle sports

equipment and facilities. Therefore, it is important to identify what are the safety management practices that are being practiced in schools, to avoid unwanted incidents. However, whether these unwanted incidents can be avoided is uncertain. According to Zakaria *et al.*, 2018, the recent accident incident involving students while performing sports activities and during a camping activity in Perak has caused wide media coverage. Hence, this study applies on the situation where the risk is the uncertainty that some loss, which is the accidental damage oh student, may occur. Based on these cases, this study is aimed to identify the factors influencing sport facilities management practices among sports teachers in high schools in Perak and also to identify the level of the sports facility safety management practices by these sports teachers.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study was done through observation technique and comprised a survey. Data was gathered by the use of a modified risk management practice in sports questionnaire originated by Sekendiz (2011). The questionnaire was adapted to suit the condition in the Malaysian education system, to identify the sports facilities safety management practices in high schools particularly in the state of Perak, Malaysia. Five-level Likert scale was used in the questionnaires. Purposive sampling was done from high schools in Perak State. The population of this study is teachers in teaching Physical Education subject at school and teachers involving in handling sports facilities and activities at school.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sports facilities safety in schools is an important aspect to look into in order to prevent injuries and accidents among students and teachers during sports activities at school. School administrators have to be aware that are handled and taken care properly could ensure the safety of its users. The awareness on the safety and risks management as well as the danger during sports activities must be given serious attention so that all activities could be done safely (Spengler *et. al.*, 2006). Students' safety issue undoubtedly requires an ethical and systematic management in order to ensure students safety during sports activities in school. The development and enhancement of co-curricular activities each year, supplemented with the increase numbers of teachers actively involved in these activities raises the exposure of students towards safety issues. Safety is the core value of an organization in providing best facilities and services to the users (Sharp *et al.*, 2010). According to Boyle (2002), more research in sports and recreation is needed to ensure all planned programs could be run safely and smoothly without any complications. A well managed sports and recreation programs could be a great increment for sports and recreation activities especially in the diversity of activities and programs. In addition, this also helped in the development and standing of other programs as well. All questionnaire items showed measurements based on the respondents' perspectives based on the sports facilities safety management in their respective schools. The interpretation scale is based on the min score of the practice level. The interpretation matrix was translated based on the combined interpretation by Nunally (1978) and Stufflebeam (1971). The comparison of the practices level can be referred based on the overall mean score on Table 1

Table 1: Overall mean score of the facilities safety management practices level

| Mean Score | Score Interpretation |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| 1.01 until 2.00 | Low |

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 2.01 until 3.00 | Moderately Low |
| 3.01 until 4.00 | Moderately High |
| 4.01 until 5.00 | High |

All data obtained were recorded and from this study, eight facilities safety management practices factors were identified. These factors are inspection process, maintenance procedures, staffs' management, emergency plans, facilities design, program management, user's information and insurance policy. The mean score and interpretation of score are described in Table 2.

Table 2: The mean size and score interpretation of facilities safety management practices level, based on each elements.

| Elements | Highest size | Lowest Size | Mean Score | S.D. | Score Interpretation |
|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|------------|------|----------------------|
| Inspection Procedure | 0.38 | -0.61 | 2.79 | 3.5 | Moderately Low |
| Maintenance Procedure | 0.42 | -0.72 | 2.86 | 4.1 | Moderately Low |
| Staff's Management | 0.61 | -0.87 | 3.74 | 3.8 | Moderately High |
| Emergency Plans | 0.54 | -0.63 | 3.75 | 4.4 | Moderately High |
| Facilities Design | 0.69 | -0.88 | 3.85 | 3.5 | Moderately High |
| Program Management | 0.74 | -1.02 | 3.83 | 3.9 | Moderately High |
| Users' Information | 0.66 | -0.55 | 3.83 | 4.6 | Moderately High |
| Insurance Policy | 0.47 | -0.76 | 3.69 | 5.2 | Moderately High |

Based on the study, respondents agreed to all the elements of the safety management practices of high school sports facilities that were being investigated. From the data, all of the elements studied showed moderately high score interpretation, except inspection and maintenance procedures that were reported moderately low. According to Hronek and Spengler's (2002) and Carpenter (2000), the elements of risk management practices of physical education will create a safe environment and minimize injuries or losses. Attarian (2012) also stated that the elements of risk management can reduce the probability, severity of accidents and injuries. According to Li (2014), facilities are one of the reasons of sports injuries among primary and secondary school students, apart from other influencing factors. Meanwhile, according to Singh and Surujlal (2010) in their studies, there were a percentage of respondents who were in disagreement that sports facilities at their schools were appropriate for safe participation. They indicated that there was no clear written policy that identifies who is responsible for the inspection and maintenance of the safe of sports facilities. Inspections and maintenance of sport facilities were not conducted and recorded. Singh (2004) stated that educators have a legal responsibility to ensure that all sports facilities have to meet the minimum safety standards that are prescribed before it can be operated and used. In the meantime, there were also several concerns on the safety of equipment used

during sports activities at school. Based on this study, some of the main concerns are, coaches and staffs involved were not aware that an athlete is not responsible for knowing the necessary kinds of protective equipment needed, or whether the equipment is properly fitted or in a safe condition to be used. Another finding is that coaches and the staff in charge did not keep equipment inventory records up to date. In addition, equipment were not regularly inspected and checked to ensure that they are free from defects and safe to be used during regular activities as well as during competitions. Coaches must not permit defective or damaged apparatus to be used by athletes or students under any circumstances (Grayson, 2001). Finally, coaches and administrators did not aware that they are liable if rules that specify the use of protective equipment such as pads, mouthpieces or helmets are not enforced. All safety measures regarding the use of sports facilities and equipment need to be taken seriously in order to prevent accidents and injuries.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, overall the level of sports facilities management practices in high schools in the state of Perak, Malaysia is at moderately high level. Therefore diversified efforts need to be taken to increase awareness on the importance on safety issues of the sports facilities and equipment during physical activities and sports at school. Serious concerns need to be addressed by the school administrators, coaches and everyone involved in handling these facilities and equipment. This is collectively in line with the governments' aspiration to encourage sports culture among society. Nonetheless, if the safety issues of sports facilities and equipment are not handled seriously, the effort to cultivate sports spirit and motivation among society is barely achievable. Therefore, the governments' aim to produce a healthy and active society could not be accomplished.

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