Play the Game Conference

Eindhoven
29th of October

Bricks are not enough
How the human factor impacts local environments for sport and leisure

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THE HUMAN FACTOR: MANAGERS OF SPORTS FACILITIES

- What influences users’ satisfaction in sports facilities?

- How does management and management forms influence users’ satisfaction in sports facilities?
ARE BRICKS ENOUGH?
Historically bricks have been the center of attention:
How do we get a sufficient supply of sports facilities?

1936
The NOC and Sports Confederation of Denmark has propagandized for the construction of sports facilities.

"Like every city needs a hospital for the sick every city needs a sports facility for its healthy citizens"

1974
White Paper on Sport

"Public authorities must undertake building sports facilities…"

Sports clubs are the preferred organizer of sports activities
THE DANISH CASE
Background and challenges to sports facilities

• Sports facilities are heavily subsidized by local government (municipalities).

• Voluntary sports clubs are the main user of sports facilities. Sports clubs use sports facilities for free or for a minor fee.

• Many sports facilities are not used by a large proportion of the sports participants (mostly adults).

• Many sports facilities are not used to their full capacity (low utilization).

• Many sports facilities have a maintenance backlog.
THE HUMAN FACTOR:
MANAGERS OF SPORTS FACILITIES

- Responsible for a sports facility (owned by a municipality or self-governed institution).

- Men (86 percent), 52.5 years old, 10 years of management experience in sports facility.

- 64 percent become a manager with no experience of working in a sports facility.

- Many managers have a background as a craftsmen.

- One in three managers have never taking courses in management – few have attained a longer course.

Foto: Hallen nr. 80, 1983
Halinspektøren i Nakskov
Idrætscenter foran den store planlægningstavle
THE HUMAN FACTOR: MANAGERS OF SPORTS FACILITIES

Managers’ work:
• Management is about maintenance and caretaking.
• Management does not undertake sports activities. Sports clubs do this.

Forms of management:
• One manager – one facility
• One manager – more facilities
• No manager on site
RESEARCH PROJECT ON SPORTS FACILITIES
Data on management and user satisfaction

- Focus on organizing, steering and management of sports facilities.

- 50 out of 98 Danish Municipalities are taking part in the research project (+900 sports facilities).

- Surveys at the administrative and management level.

- Surveys on performance of sports facilities: usage, user satisfaction, economy, and building standards.

‘Sports Facilities for the Future’
A three-year research project undertaking by The Danish Institute for Sports Studies and The University of Southern Denmark

Supported by: TrygFonden
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Supported by: TrygFonden
Two-sided questionnaire, 12 questions, conducted onsite

Inspired by CERM-PI (Australia) and the National Benchmark Service (England)

23 municipalities, 290 sports facilities, conducted during two weeks in March 2017

Random selected users, 22,238 respondents (49 percent women, 51 percent men)
## ASPECTS OF USER SATISFACTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Satisfaction (score)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The sports facility is always clean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sports facility is in good repair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sports facility is suitable for my sport(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sports facility is pleasant to be in/at</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sports facility is easy to use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sports facility have good conditions for arrival</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sports facility is inviting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sports facility is situated in a safe neighborhood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The staff is friendly/kind</td>
<td>1: Disagree strongly. 5: Agree strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The staff is easy to get into contact with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The staff can most often answer my questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The exercise activities I use have a clear structure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The exercise activities I use have good coaches/instructors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I use the sports facility I get a time-out from everyday life</td>
<td>1: Not at all, 5: To a great extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I use the sports facility I enjoy the company of others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I use the sports facility I get exercise/increase my health</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I use the sports facility I am getting better at my sport(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
FOUR FACTORS OF SATISFACTION

THE FACILITY
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THE EXERCISE ACTIVITIES
• The exercise activities I use have a clear structure
• The exercise activities I use have good coaches/instructors

https://www.flickr.com/photos/yatkuu/
https://www.flickr.com/photos/tonistokes529/
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THE GAINS
• When I use the sports facility I get a time-out from everyday life
• When I use the sports facility I enjoy the company of others
• When I use the sports facility I get exercise/increase my health
• When I use the sports facility I am getting better at my sport(s)
USER SATISFACTION IN SPORTS FACILITIES

- Users are very satisfied (non-users, or users who have stopped using the facility are not included).

- Regular users are more satisfied than visitors.

- Women are more satisfied than men, 20-49 year olds are less satisfied.

- Highest satisfaction in sports facilities with decentralized management.

In overall terms, how satisfied are you when you visit/use the facilities? (percent)

(\(n=21.109\))
USER SATISFACTION IN SPORTS FACILITIES

- $R^2 = 0.277$ – 27.7 percent of the variance in satisfaction is explained by factors related to The Facility, Staff and Gains.

- The Facility is the most important factor for satisfaction.

- Most important items: “The sports facility is in good repair” “The sports facility is inviting”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Facility</td>
<td>0.370***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Staff</td>
<td>0.136***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Exercise Activities</td>
<td>-0.004ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gains</td>
<td>0.118***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Control for Gender, Age, Years of use, Weekly use, Form of Management, Type of Facility
CONCLUSIONS

• Change of focus from *just* bricks to a focus on bricks *and* the function of sports facilities.

• Users are very satisfied with the sports facility they use.

• The Facility, Staff and Gains influence users’ satisfaction.

Does the human factor in sports facilities influence satisfaction among users?

• In the Danish case, bricks are vital

• However, the human factor is important in keeping the facility in good repair and making it inviting

Thank you for your attention