Exploring Student Perceptions of Involvement in Professional Recreation Organizations

Ingrid E. Schneider
Arizona State University

Randy J. Virden
Arizona State University

Abstract

This study examines the professional organizational involvement and perceptions of undergraduate students. An important educational objective for any profession is to encourage student professional involvement and development. A common manifestation of this objective in the park and recreation field is involvement in organizations such as the National Recreation and Park Association and its state association affiliates. Little information, however, is available on students' interest in and perceptions of such professional involvement. This study investigated student familiarity with and interest in recreation professional organizations in one southwestern state in the United States. Further, student perception of benefits and deterrents to involvement in professional organizations were explored. Results indicate recreation student's interest and familiarity differ by class level and emphasis area. Students also perceive multiple benefits and deterrents to professional involvement. Suggestions to foster further development in professional organizations by students are presented. Research questions are also raised concerning the changing role of academic institutions and professional organizations in promoting professional involvement.

Keywords: professional development, professional involvement, student attitudes, perceived benefits, constraints, recreation profession

Biographical Information

Ingrid Schneider and Randy Virden are Associate Professors in the Department of Recreation Management & Tourism, PO Box 874905, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ 85287-4905.

Introduction

The relationship between institutions of higher education and the recreation profession has been, and continues to be, important to the well-being and advancement of the parks and recreation field (McLellan & McLellan, 1990; Searle & Harper, 1989). This relationship functions symbiotically at many different levels including research,

curricula development, professional training, and employment. The park and recreation profession and higher-learning institutions share the important responsibility of socializing students and new professionals, into their chosen profession (Clark, 1995; Henderson & Bedini, 1989; Sessoms 1990).

Sessoms (1990) argues that educators play a key role in the professional socialization of recreation students in two ways: a) development of the professional literature, and b) direct influence on their views. Among the many principles recreation educators attempt to instill in students is the importance of professional development which includes interaction with the professional community (Burton, 1991). Interaction with the professional community is facilitated by professional recreation organization membership and involvement. The existence of professional organizations is an important indicator that a field is actually becoming a profession (Shapiro, 1970). To the extent that professional involvement is necessary for the survival of a profession, student participation in such organizations enhances and ensures professional development and viability.

Information on student interest and involvement in professional organizations is limited. In fact, except for statistics of student membership in organizations, knowledge of student involvement is virtually nonexistent in the park and recreation literature. An examination of Schole articles from the past decade reveal no studies of professional organization student involvement. Similarly, a paucity of information exists on student perceptions of the benefits of and deterrents to professional organizational involvement. Without such information, the ability to understand student involvement and efforts to improve student participation in professional organizations are limited at best. Additionally, the nature of the park and recreation profession is changing; this is especially evident in academic curricula where new professional emphases have emerged in the past decade. Hall (1993) suggested educators survey students to understand their affiliation needs and plan involvement activities designed to increase professional commitment.

Educators and professional organizations alike will benefit from understanding student familiarity with and interest in professional organizations. Educators may be able to better integrate professional development in their curriculum and co-curricular activities and enhance student perceptions of the benefits and ease of belonging to professional organizations. Organizations that know how students perceive them and their goals can market effectively to students and their needs. These organizations can also investigate and address deterrents to involvement. Hopefully, these actions will lead to increased student professional organization involvement as well as accomodation of students in organizations and academic institutions.

Student participation in professional organizations is a result of their decision process. Decisions involve choices between alternatives based on the integration of knowledge about the alternatives and the expectations associated with the alternatives. This consumer behavior approach is based on expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964) and assumes that people are goal oriented in attempting to solve some sort of problem or meet a need (Peter & Olson, 1999). In this decision making process, a problem is recognized, alter-

native solutions are sought and evaluated, and then a decision is made and evaluated. In this case, the decision is whether students join professional organizations and what their perceived expectations, in the form of benefits and deterrents, about professional involvement are. Alternative solutions are to join or not join an organization and, if the choice is to join an organization, to decide which organization to join. After evaluation of these alternatives, students decide whether or not to join and be involved in the professional organizations. These choices are based on the students' goals, knowledge about the organizations (or lack of) and past experience and their expectations of possible rewards.

This study was initiated by the state Parks and Recreation Association to better understand their relationship with undergraduate students. The purpose of this study was to explore student familiarity with and interest in professional recreation organizations. Specifically, the research objectives were to: (a) identify and differentiate student familiarity with and interest in both national and state recreation associations, (b) examine students' perceptions of the benefits and deterrents to involvement in professional recreation organizations, (c) examine the structure underlying the benefit and deterrent items used in the study, and (d) make recommendations for increasing student professional involvement and for future research regarding professional involvement.

Professional Organization Involvement

The undergraduate accreditation standards, established by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Council on Accreditation, require academic programs to demonstrate compliance with a variety of academic standards or proficiencies. Among these standards is evidence of "substantial student participation and involvement in professional organizations and activities" for baccalaureate program accreditation (NRPA, 1990, p. 3). Participation in societies and associations reflects an important aspect of the academic experience for undergraduate students and should be encouraged by educators involved in parks and recreation programs.

While promoting professional involvement is one of the educators' responsibilities, the manner in which that is accomplished varies. Sessoms (1990) points out a number of ways educators can influence student views including the development of professional literature, role modeling, direct instruction and provision of appropriate socialization into the profession through internships and apprenticeships. Of course professional organizations must similarly facilitate and encourage student involvement. Any organization is dependent on new members to keep the organization vital and healthy. New professionals typically emerge from academic institutions. Professional organization involvement actually extends student learning beyond the classroom by providing opportunities to interact with professionals and attend educational seminars. "Membership in professional organizations...empowers the professional practitioner and completes the transformation from a passive student to an active member of the professional constituency" (Nutter & Adkinson, 1989, p. 62).

In addition to NRPA accreditation guidelines which professionally bind educators and other professionals to encourage student professional development, the NRPA Professional Code of Ethics articulates a responsibility to encourage student professional development (Clark, 1995). Similarly, the state park and recreation association ethics code includes two related to professional involvement: the "professional shall volunteer to participate in the state affiliate or chapter, branch and national functions" and the "professional shall be committed to strive for improvement of individual knowledge and skill in the recreation and park profession and give assistance in the professional development of...students" (Pezoldt, 1977, p. 33). Thus, an important component of professional development, articulated by both educators and professionals, is to instill among students the need and desire for professional organization participation.

Literature addressing perceptions of professional organizational participation is scant, if nonexistent, among both students and professionals. Research in a related area of professional development, however, has recently focused on professionals' perceptions of continuing professional education (CPE) among therapeutic recreation professionals. Langsner (1993, 1994) explored reasons for and deterrents to participation in CPE among therapeutic recreation professionals. A stratified sample of National Therapeutic Recreation Society (NTRS) members responded to a survey on reasons for participation and deterrents to participation in CPE. The most important reasons for CPE participation focused on three factors: professional service, professional improvement and development, and collegial learning and interaction. Of the factors deterring CPE participation, the most important ones were cost and work obligations that minimized perceived available time. Although this study was limited to therapeutic recreation professional's perceptions of CPE, by extension, the results may shed some light on student perceptions of professional involvement. Furthermore, this study suggests that exploring relationships between academic emphasis area and professional involvement may be of interest.

Other research concerning perceptions of student professional involvement outside the park and recreation field is also relatively sparse. In a study on involvement in college student organizations, Cooper, Healy and Simpson (1994) found significantly greater involvement exhibited by upper-division versus lower-division students. Burgess (1971) studied the perceived benefits or reasons for participating in adult educational activities and found that adult students participated for a variety of reasons. Similarly, Ratcliff and Killingbeck (1989) studied participation deterrents to continuing legal education and found multiple deterrents existed.

Methods

Initiated by the state Parks and Recreation Association, the purpose of this study was to learn more about student attitudes and perceptions toward the state organization. This study was conducted among undergraduate students enrolled in select recreation courses at three major universities and one community college in the 1996 spring semes-

ter. Eight classes were sampled, by convenience, across the four campuses. A self-administered questionnaire was completed in class, voluntarily and with complete anonymity, by 211 recreation majors enrolled in both introductory and senior-level core recreation courses at the academic institutions. All surveys received were usable and no students refused to participate.

Measures

A three-page questionnaire and cover letter were developed jointly by the researchers and state association. The questionnaire included sections focused on involvement with the state affiliate of the NRPA, current student status and demographic information. Organizational involvement focused on the student's familiarity with and interest in the professional organizations (familiarity with both the NRPA and the state affiliate were measured) as well as perceived benefits and deterrents to involvement. Familiarity with, interest in, and the extent to which the organization met student needs were assessed with single, five-point Likert-type scaled items. The familiarity scale ranged from unfamiliar to familiar, the organizational-interest scale ranged from very low to very high, and the met-needs scale measured the degree to which the state association would meet professional needs ranging from very well to not at all.

Due to the paucity of information available on student perception of benefits and deterrents of professional organization involvement, a list of survey items were developed through open-ended questions posed to a group of recreation students earlier in the spring and guided by past professional involvement literature. Similar themes emerged from respondents resulting in a list of eleven perceived benefits and twelve deterrents to organizational involvement. On the survey, respondents indicated the importance of the benefits on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from unimportant to important. Analysis indicated high reliability for each scale ($r = .83$ for benefits and $r = .79$ for constraints). Additionally, respondents indicated to what degree they agreed that the twelve listed deterrents were actually a barrier to their involvement. Each list also contained an open-ended opportunity for the respondent to add a benefit or deterrent not listed.

Finally, students responded to general questions about their professional and personal profiles. This section included questions about their major, year in school, age, gender and marital status. In addition, the numbers of hours spent studying and working outside school were assessed.

Analysis

Since the primary focus of this study was to assess (1) student familiarity and interest in professional recreation organizations as well as (2) perceived benefits of and deterrents to participation, descriptive analyses were performed. Differences in familiarity with and interest in professional organizations among class levels (senior versus other) were examined with t-tests. ANOVA with least squared differences as a post-hoc test, adjusted for unequal group sizes, compared differences in familiarity and interest among academic interests.

A second research focus of this study was to determine if a common structure existed among the perceived benefits and deterrents to organizational involvement and thus, factor analysis was performed on the those items developed for this study. To explore this issue, principal components analysis, with varimax rotation, was performed separately on the benefit and the deterrent variables. Factors with eigenvalues over 1.0, explaining at least five percent of the variance and interpreted as meaningful, were retained (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989). Resultant factors were examined for reliability analysis with Cronbach's alpha.

Results

Sample

The mean age of the sample was 24.52 years. The typical recreation student was single and had no children. Mirroring the national sample of recreation students (Bialeschki, 1992), 58.3 % of the sample were female. Sixty percent of the sample were seniors and 23.2% were juniors. Because there is a strong community-college system in this state and many students transfer into the recreation major with an Associates degree (two year, community college degree), this distribution was perceived as relatively representative of the overall university student population at the colleges represented.

TABLE 1

Differences in Familiarity with and Interest in Professional Organizations Between Seniors and Other Students

	Familiar with NRPA[1]	Familiar with state recreation organization[1]	Interest in state organization[2]
Seniors (n=127)			
Mean	2.95	2.96	2.93
S.D.	1.25	1.31	0.87
Other students (n=67)			
Mean	2.54	2.21	2.99
S.D.	1.28	1.23	2.93
t-value	-2.18*	-3.88***	0.44

[1] measured on a scale where 1=somewhat unfamiliar, 2=unfamiliar, 3=neutral, 4=somewhat familiar
[2] measured on a scale where 1=very low, 2=low, 3=medium, 4=high and 5=very high.
*indicates significant at p <.05; **indicates significant at p < .01; *** indicates significant at p < .001

Participation in and Perceptions of Professional Recreation Organizations

Overall, students were relatively unfamiliar with and only moderately interested in both national and state associations (Table 1). Less than one-half of the students (44%) belonged to a professional organization. Overall, the students were not very familiar with NRPA or the state organization ($\underline{M}$= 2.79 and 2.70, respectively). In general, recreation students expressed a moderate level of interest in the state association.

Differences in familiarity and interest by both class levels and areas of emphasis were examined. For the state organization, class level was significantly related to familiarity. Lower class levels (freshman through juniors) were significantly less familiar with the state professional recreation organizations than seniors. Outdoor recreation majors were the most familiar with both state and national organizations (Table 2). Community-recreation majors were the most interested in the state organization, followed by outdoor-recreation majors.

TABLE 2

Differences in Familiarity with and Interest in
Professional Organizations Among Emphasis Areas

	Familiar with NRPA[1]	Familiar with state recreation organization[1]	Interest in state organization[2]
Outdoor (n=37)			
Mean	3.51[ac]	3.49[acd]	3.22[a]
S.D.	1.04	1.17	0.67
Travel Tourism (n=62)			
Mean	2.41[bc]	2.03[b]	2.72[b]
S.D.	1.31	1.15	0.76
Community (n=21)			
Mean	2.76[b]	2.62[bcd]	3.38[a]
S.D.	1.30	1.24	0.86
Therapeutic (n=22)			
Mean	2.77[bc]	2.68[bd]	2.68[b]
S.D.	1.19	1.25	0.89
Humanics (n=16)			
Mean	3.12[ac]	2.94[abc]	3.00[ab]
S.D.	1.36	1.34	0.93
F-value	4.82***	8.72***	4.54**

[1]measured on a scale where 1=somewhat unfamiliar, 2=unfamiliar, 3=neutral, 4=somewhat familiar and 5=familiar.
[2]measured on a scale where 1=very low, 2=low, 3=medium, 4=high and 5=very high.
Means with different superscripts represent statistically significant differences.
*indicates significant at $p < .05$; **indicates significant at $p < .01$; *** indicates significant at $p < .001$

Perceived Benefits of and Deterrents to Professional Organizational Involvement

Respondents indicated a number of benefits and deterrents to state organizational professional involvement. Eight of the eleven benefits were rated as at least somewhat important (Table 3). The benefits perceived as most important to organizational involvement were career advancement and fun. The least important benefit to organizational involvement at the student level was a tax write-off, which was actually perceived as slightly unimportant. Recreation students in this sample indicated that the three strongest

deterrents to involvement in the state recreation professional organization were: a lack of information on how to be involved ($\underline{M}$=3.86, $\underline{SD}$=1.061); other responsibilities (3.80) and not enough time (3.80). Students disagreed that a lack of response from the organization ($\underline{M}$=2.44) or its size ($\underline{M}$=2.63) deterred their professional organization involvement.

TABLE 3

Perceived Benefits of and Deterrents to Student Involvement in State Recreation Organization (n=209)

Benefit[a]	Mean	S.D.
Career advancement	4.55	0.746
Fun	4.52	0.728
Build my resume	4.30	0.859
Self-fulfillment	4.28	0.957
Travel	4.22	0.900
Social networking	4.20	0.864
New skill acquisition	4.16	0.914
Mentoring opportunities	3.98	0.906
Recognition at school	3.59	1.048
Attending state conference	3.42	1.095
Tax write-off	2.86	1.164
Deterrent[b]	Mean	S.D.
Lack of information on how to be involved	3.86	1.061
Other responsibilities	3.80	1.005
Not enough time	3.80	0.971
Expense	3.24	0.873
Distance to travel for meetings	3.19	0.940
Lack of recognition at school	3.04	1.004
Feeling you do not belong with this group	2.87	1.026
Lack of peer support at school	2.86	1.036
Irrelevance	2.79	0.906
Unenjoyable	2.64	0.824
Organization is too big	2.63	0.833
Lack of response: I tried but no one called me back	2.44	0.982

[a]measured on a scale where 1=unimportant, 2=somewhat unimportant, 3=neutral, 4=somewhat important and 5=important.
[b]measured on a scale where1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree,3=neutral, 4=agree and 5=strongly agree.

Structure of Benefits and Deterrents to Involvement in Professional Organizations

A second research focus was to determine if a common structure existed among the perceived benefits and deterrents to organizational involvement. When factor analyzed, three factors emerged from the eleven perceived organizational involvement ben-

efits and explained 60.2% of the variance (Table 4). The first factor, professional focus, included items such as attending the state conference, mentoring opportunities and adding to their resume. The first factor explained 38.8% of the overall variance and was moderatey reliable (M = 4.06, SD = 0.700, a = .76; Lipsey, 1990). The second factor, self-enhancement, explained 11.5% of the variance (M= 4.06, SD = .667) . This factor included items such as self-fulfillment, recognition and skill acquisition (a= .65). The third factor, enjoyment, which included just two items, fun and travel, had acceptable reliability (M = 4.37, SD = .710, a = .67).

When deterrents to state professional recreation organization involvement were factor analyzed, two items (lack of enjoyment and lack of response) did not load on a factor in a meaningful or significant manner and dropped out of the analysis. Subsequent factor analysis resulted in three factors that explained 61.9% of the variance (Table 5). The first factor, alienation, included items such as feelings of irrelevance and not belonging (M = 2.96, SD = .718, a= .65). The second factor, time availability, included a lack of time and other responsibilities (M = 3.88, SD = 1.43, a= .93). The third factor, organizational barriers, included lack of information, feeling the organization was too big, distance to meetings, and a lack of recognition among peers (M = 3.14, SD = .790, a=.71).

TABLE 4
Factor Structure of Perceived Benefits to Professional Organization Involvement (n=209)

Benefit	Factor loading	Eigen value	% variance explained	α
Factor 1: Professional focus		4.27	38.8	0.76
Build my resume	.821			
Career advancement	.642			
Attend state conference	.589			
Mentoring opportunities	.504			
Factor 2: Self-enhancement		1.26	11.5	0.76
Social networking	.765			
New skill acquisition	.764			
Recognition at school	.501			
Self-fulfillment	.483			
Factor 3: Fun		1.09	9.9	0.67
Fun	.831			
Travel	.594			

TABLE 5

Factor Structure of Perceived Deterrents to
Professional Organizational Involvement (n=209)

Deterrent	Factor Loading	Eigen value	% variance explained	α
Factor 1: Alienation		3.80	31.7	0.65
Irrelevance	.752			
Feeling I do not belong with this group	.726			
Expense	.683			
Factor 2: Time		1.74	14.5	0.93
Other responsibilities:				
I have too much work to do	.945			
Time	.930			
Factor 3: Organizational barriers		1.07	9.0	0.71
Lack of information	.778			
Lack of peer support at school	.686			
Distance	.580			
Feeling the organization is too big	.523			
Lack of recognition at school	.506			

Discussion

Results indicated a lack of familiarity with national and state professional recreation organizations among undergraduate-recreation students. While familiarity should not be confused with awareness, these results suggest a certain ambiguity on the part of students concerning these organizations. Consistent differences emerged when familiarity and interest was compared by class and emphasis area. The results for the analyses between class level and among undergraduate-emphasis areas raise some issues that may be important for both academic and professional organizations to consider.

Senior students indicated greater familiarity with both NRPA and state associations than other students. This makes intuitive sense in that seniors have more exposure and are in a position to pay more attention to professional issues as they will soon seek internships and positions. While interest in the state organization was not significantly different across class level, it is interesting to note that the highest level of interest was among the lower class students. One question that emerges is why does professional organization interest not increase with familiarity? While this study does not directly address that issue, one possible explanation is that increased familiarity (and knowledge) with NRPA and the state association may not be perceived as relevant to a student's own career goals. In other words, the question is not whether this professional organization is relevant, but whether it is personally relevant to these students and their career aspirations. Of course, other explanations may account for these phenomena.

There was considerable divergence between the five emphasis areas in both familiarity and interest among the undergraduate students. The greatest interest in the state recreation professional association was indicated by outdoor and community recreation majors, the least by tourism and therapeutic-recreation students. Like other state park and recreation associations, this organization is traditionally somewhat more focused on community- and public-sector recreation issues (as is the NRPA tradition) and organizations. However therapeutic recreation, as in other states, has created its own professional association that more directly addresses clinical-related therapeutic-recreation issues. Tourism issues are also not as central to the association and tourism students have likely discovered that there are other associations (e.g., meeting and convention planners, hospitality and hotel associations) which are as, if not more, relevant to their professional development. To the extent that academic institutions and professional associations expect that all students will be served equally by one type of professional association (e.g., NRPA), they may be insensitive to the professional diversity and career markets that have emerged in our profession(s) since the 1980s. The narrow employment target of a 1970 recreation major who desired a job in a community, state or federal park and recreation agency in the public sector has given way to a wide variety of career goals and academic emphases. Current students are also much more likely to be entering the private sector, an arena for which our traditional professional associations are not well equipped.

The most frequently cited professional membership benefits were career advancement and fun. These are rather salient goals and could be relevant marketing features capitalized on by almost any professional organization. Barriers to state organization involvement were a lack of information, other responsibilities and a lack of time. A lack of information is a fairly straightforward barrier for an organization to overcome. In our emerging electronic era, the information barrier is particularly easy to overcome. The other two primary barriers, other responsibilities and not enough time, are quite common problems in leisure-constraint research (Jackson, 1993). Neither of these barriers can effectively be alleviated by professional organizations. One consideration, however, is to have "virtual meetings" on-line or conference-call meetings to eliminate travel time to meetings.

A secondary purpose of this study was to assess how the underlying factors of perceived benefits and constraints were structured. The eleven professional-involvement-perceived benefits reduced to three factors: professional advancement, self-enhancement and enjoyment. Thus, professional leaders and faculty may want to stress these professional development values to students. As the social aspects were also quite important, organizational leaders could focus on marketing the combination of professional advancement as well as the social benefits (e.g., networking, socializing, fun). These factors are similar to reasons therapeutic-recreation professionals identified as important in participating in CPE (Langsner, 1993). Thus, as initially suggested, professionals' reasons for participation in and deterrents to professional education are similar to student-involvement perceptions.

Similarly, the deterrents reduced to three factors. The first factor, alienation, is a theme that has some bearing to the earlier discourse regarding the personal relevance of this organization to undergraduate students. While this factor was probably not the most agreed to by the students, it did account for the greatest amount of variability. The other two, organizational barriers and time availability, are similar to professionals' deterrents to CPE participation (Langsner, 1994). As a first attempt to explore student perceptions of professional involvement, the factor reliabilities and content appear acceptable as all three had alphas of .65 or above. Additional testing is necessary to validate or further explore the factor structure of both the benefits and deterrents.

Conclusions and Future Recommendations

The original goal of this study was to better understand the relationship between undergraduate students and their professional park and recreation associations. The general lack of familiarity with professional organizations, combined with the expressed interest, indicates that better marketing efforts are needed to communicate the role and importance of professional organizations. When making decisions regarding participation in professional organizations, students need information about the organization. Decision models indicate that with low involvement and knowledge, very limited problem solving will emerge with the end goal simply to meet a function. However, with more extensive knowledge comes the consideration of several alternatives and more effortful decision making processes. Knowledge of professional organizations come from at least two sources: educators and the organizations themselves. Educators can play a key role in initiating student involvement by alerting students to these organizations' existence and the opportunities for student participation. Hall (1993) suggests academic incentives as a main avenue for educators to improve student-organizational involvement. The incentives may range from extra credit for participation to inclusion as required projects or other facets of a class like field trips or speakers from a professional organization.

However, academic leaders do not bear the sole responsibility of socializing students into these organizations. Professional organizations also have a responsibility and interest in promoting student involvement in their organizations. Today's students are tomorrow's professionals, a critical source of new members and leadership for the professional park and recreation organizations. Professional organizations can facilitate student involvement through increased access to the organization and marketing efforts that strategically reach students while they are still in the university or college setting. Professional organizations can increase students' motivation to participate in professional activities by offering incentives (e.g., subsidized member fees and conference registrations), consulting on meetings, meeting affiliation needs, and developing group cohesiveness. A clear message from this study is that career and professional advancement and the lighter "fun" side of professional organizations are attractive professional involvement benefits to students. Highlighting these attributes in relation to professional

organizations will increase and intensify positive student expectations about the choice to be involved and thus, make the choice to be involved more attractive.

Academic and professional organizations might consider that more information is needed and desired by undergraduate students in this state, and possibly others. One step is to identify and market the professional organizations most relevant to the careers of today's students and their career paths. Traditional professional associations, such as the NRPA, need to reexamine, differentiate and communicate the types of professional careers that serve as its primary professional audience, especially in today's evolving leisure-employment market. Academic programs need to diversify beyond the "one professional-organization model" and expose students to alternative professional organizations that have relevance to their career aspirations in the public, nonprofit and private sectors (e.g., nonprofit leadership, meeting and convention planners, tourism trade associations, recreation resource planning, commercial recreation and tourism).

The following recommendations are provided to guide future research to improve understanding about the relationship between students and professional involvement. For better understanding of student involvement, the barrier and benefit scales utilized in this study should be tested with other populations. Also, there is a need to complete trend studies to examine the long-term benefits of professional involvement (especially when begun in college) and its impact on job placement and professional development. Beyond the students, information on the attitudes, beliefs, preferences and behavior of faculty toward their own and student involvement in professional organizations is of interest. Also, how effectively professional organizations (and their accrediting bodies) examine, change and reposition themselves to keep pace with emerging nontraditional leisure careers trends and college curriculum changes is compelling. Similarly, evaluate the effectiveness of marketing mechanisms and incentives used by colleges and professional organizations to facilitate student professional involvement.

In summary, this study provides insight into student involvement in professional organizations, but also raises a number questions. The students in this study were somewhat unfamiliar with their state and national organizations, but their interest was moderately high: this reflects a gap between current level of knowledge and interest. Merging this gap is the joint responsibility of professionals, educators and the profession as a whole.

References

Bialeschki, D. M (1992). The state of parks, recreation and leisure studies curricular. Parks & Recreation, 27 (7), 72, 76–95.

Burgess, P. (1971). Reasons for adult participation in group educational activities. Adult Education, 22 (1), 3–29.

Burton, T. L. (1991). A model curriculum for a baccalaureate in recreation and leisure. Schole, 6, 80–93.

Clark, D. E. (1995). A new code of ethics. Parks & Recreation, 30, (8), 38–43.

Cooper, D. L, Healy, M. A., & Simpson, J. (1994). Student development through involvement: Specific changes over time. Journal of College Student Development, 35 (2), 98-102

Hall, E. (1993). Increasing student involvement in professional organizations. Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 64 (9), 33–35.

Henderson, K. A., & Bedini, L. A. (1989). Teaching ethics and social responsibility in leisure studies curricula. Schole, 4, 3–13.

Jackson, E. L. (1993) Recognizing patterns of leisure constraints: Results from alternative analysis. Journal of Leisure Research, 25, (2), 129–149.

Langsner, S. J. (1993). Reasons for participation in continuing professional education: A survey of the NTRS. Therapeutic Recreation Journal, 27 (4), 262–273.

Langsner, S. J. (1994). Deterrents to participation in continuing professional education: A survey of the NTRS. Therapeutic Recreation Journal, 28 (3), 147–162.

Laudie, D. (1995). Accredited: To be or not to be? Parks & Recreation, 30 (2), 67–71.

Lipsey, M.W. (1990). Design Sensitivity: Statistical Power for Experimental Research. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

McLellan, G. K., & McLellan, R. M. (1990). Honor the past-prefer the future. Schole, 5, 107–119.

National Recreation and Parks Association. (1990). Standards and evaluation criteria for recreation, park resources, and leisure services baccalaureate programs. Arlington, VA: Author.

Nutter, R. E., & Adkinson, J. (1989). A matrix model for assessing the continuing education needs of the professional practitioner. Continuing Higher Education Review, 53 (2), 61–67.

Peterson, J. P. & Olson, J. C. (1999). Consumer Behavior and Marketing Strategy. Boston: Irwin McGraw-Hill.

Pezoldt, C. W. (1977). A code to work by. Parks & Recreation, 12 (1) 32–34, 68.

Ratcliff, S. A., & Killingbeck, M. H. (1989). Deterrents to participation in continuing legal education. Journal of Professional Legal Education, 7 (2), 176–187.

Searle, M. S., & Harper, J. A. (1989). Practitioner involvement in recreation and park professional preparation and programs: A case example and theoretical framework. Schole, 4, 51–64.

Sessoms, D. (1990). On becoming a profession: Requirements and strategies. Journal of Park and Recreation Administration,8 (4), 33–42.

Shapiro, I. (1970). A history of the professionalization of recreation administration. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. (1989). Using multivariate statistics (2nd edition). Northridge, CA: Harper Collins Publishers.

Vroom, V. H. (1964). Work and motivation. New York: Wiley.