SPORTS LAW: STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE RELEVANCE OF LEARNING LEGAL ASPECTS IN SPORTS AND RECREATION AMONGST SPORT STUDENTS IN UITM NEGERI SEMBILAN, SEREMBAN CAMPUS

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Abstract

Sports constitute an important cultural phenomenon and in modern day sports now have its own complex rules, are highly organized and may involve various areas of law. These laws affecting sports and recreation management include liability for sporting injury and damage, sports and media law, professional athletes' contract of employment, and the issue of doping involving performance-enhancing drugs. Having said that, in Malaysia, generally, there is still little awareness of how law affects sports and recreation management not only among the public, but also the athletes. The Faculty of Sports Science and Recreation (FSR) of UiTM in acknowledging the importance of these areas of law in sports, designed their programs' curriculum to include "Legal Aspects in Sports and Recreation" and "Law Relating to Sports and Recreation", as compulsory subjects for students enrolled in their Diploma in Sport Studies and Degree in Sports Management. This research is conducted to ascertain the students' perception on the relevance of learning these subjects towards enhancing the knowledge on sports law in their related field of works. The paper presents the findings of the students' perceptions on the relevance of learning these subjects in their respective programs at the FSR in UiTM, Seremban Campus.

Keywords: *Sports Law, Perception, Legal Education, Non-law students, Factor Analysis.*

1. Introduction

Over the years, sports have come to play an increasingly prominent role in our society and daily life. The passion for sports is not just held by the players and fans, but also extends to institutions and corporations. Not surprisingly, the field of sports law has developed rapidly (John T. Wendt, 2013). Sports law is a multidiscipline area, the forms of which are continuing to expand. Sports law topics run the range of legal issues to include contracts, tort law, criminal law, agency, employment law, antitrust, labor law, and international property rights. For example, contracts play an important role in every aspect of the sport industry as they are the foundation in the creation of sponsorships, construction of venues, and employment relationships. Meanwhile, negligence in high contact sports is an area that has become important in recent times such as issues when balls, hockey sticks, or car wheels fly into the stands and injure spectators (Champion, W. T, 2004). Other issue is when the use of an athlete's image or a team's logo involves intellectual property concerns.

Nowadays, legal education no longer exists solely for law students who wish to enter the legal profession. Increasingly, law components are found in many other degree programmes. From students' module evaluation forms and general feedback, it seems that students generally struggle with law subjects (Poon, J. K. L., & Kong, M. M, 2014). They feel overwhelmed by the amount of reading required and are often not sure how to study the subject. It triggers the questions as to whether our existing non-law students now understand the importance of studying the sports law and their relevancy of learning the legal aspects in sports and recreation. In answering this question, this study is conducted in order to determine the students' perceptions of the relevance of learning these subjects in the students' respective programs at the Faculty of Sports Science and Recreation in Universiti Teknologi MARA, Seremban Campus.

2. Literature Review

The evolving law of sports is having and will continue to have a significant influence on, and implications for, the development of broader international and national laws (e.g., intellectual property and human rights laws) and provides a rich source of substantive legal doctrine for analysis from a comparative law perspective (Mitten, M. J., & Opie, H, 2010) and they suggested that awareness of and participation in sports law debates and developments has become an unavoidable dimension to the pursuit of scholarship in a growing number of other fields.

However, in Malaysia, the development of the law indicates that sport was not acknowledged to serve any significant internal or external function. National policy to restore social injustices had a largely consequential effect on sport. Sport was deemed to be little more than another social institution subject to affirmative action policies. (John O'Leary & Teng Guan Khoo, 2013)

We believe that the best way to educate the public in understanding the importance of sports law in Malaysia's sports industry should start at the university level, inclusive to non-law students. However, students from other disciplines often find law uninteresting and difficult. It appears that the study of law is not a popular choice for students coming from other disciplinary backgrounds. It has to be agreed that in engaging students so that their learning is rich, enjoyable and thought-provoking can be a challenge in any subject (Susan Fitzpatrick, 2009). In law subjects designed for non-law students, particularly with the mind setting formed on the difficulties of law subjects can be magnified. In fact, non-law students often find the obligatory study of law to be a daunting and perhaps unwelcome experience (Khancana & Hang Y L, 2014). They feel overwhelmed by the amount of reading required (Allen 2007) and often struggle to understand the broad legal principles and terminology.

It is suggested that one particular approach that has already generated quite an extensive body of literature in legal education is the contextual or environmental approach (Byles & Soetendorp 2002). It is generally regarded as the most appropriate way of teaching students from non-law disciplines by designing a context-based approach that relates to their own subject area. Following factors in relation to designing a programme for non-law students have been suggested (Byles and Soetendorp 2002, p 145):

- Knowing your own values and experiences – 'where you are coming from';
- Understanding the relevant of law to the discipline that you are working on;
- Identifying strategies for supporting student learning that focus on context rather than content.

3. Methodology

The research described here is clearly reflects an exploratory and explanatory research for a problem that has not been clearly defined yet which the results are enough in making a conceptual distinction in positing an explanatory relationship. In achieving the objective of discovering students' perceptions on the relevance of learning legal aspects in Sports and Recreation among tertiary Sport Science undergraduates, a statistical tool of questionnaire was chosen because it is a cost effective and time efficient way of collecting qualitative and quantitative data primarily from students' responses to the written questions which reflect their own perceptions. The questionnaire was designed into four separate sections which each of them represented different area of interests. The first section was designed with the aim of obtaining the demographic information of the sample used in this research through the process of descriptive analysis. It was decided that the significance of factors other than gender, age and CGPA were beyond the scope of this study and of lesser interest. The second section focused more on the students' responses towards 16 statements describing the relevance of learning legal aspects in Sports and Recreation based on five-point Likert Scale ranging from 1="Strongly Disagree" to 5="Strongly Agree" where one of the statements (dependent variable) is directly referring to their perception. This section was designed with the aim of identifying the factors influenced students' perceptions by using factor analysis and regression analysis methodology which are having a strong statistical tool in describing variability among observed and correlated variables. Hence, the relationship between factors was then determined by using

multivariate regression. The third section focused on the students' opinions on the level of relevancy of each topic taught in the course of law relating to Sports and Recreation towards their program outcomes based on a scale ranging from 1="Lowest" to 5="Highest". The last section focused on the students' opinions towards the important skills needed in learning legal aspects in Sports and Recreation. The sum score analysis was conducted for these last two sections in order to rank each element in each section.

4. Findings and Analysis

4.1 Demographics

The students in this study formed a diverse group in terms of their age, gender and CGPA. 49 Sport Science undergraduate students have voluntarily participated in this research with age ranged between 21 and 26. 83.7% of the respondents were male and 14.3% have CGPA more than 3.00.

Table 1: Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	41	83.7	83.7	83.7
	Female	8	16.3	16.3	100.0
	Total	49	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Current CGPA

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2.00 - 2.50	8	16.3	16.3	16.3
	2.51 - 3.00	34	69.4	69.4	85.7
	3.01 - 3.50	7	14.3	14.3	100.0
	Total	49	100.0	100.0	

4.2 Factor Analysis and Regression Analysis

The main applications of factor analysis are to reduce the number of variables and to detect structure in the relationships between variables. For this study, the analysis was done in order to reduce the 15 statements (excluding the statement referring to the dependent variables) into different groups which at the end will be identified as factors influencing students' perceptions on the relevance of learning legal aspects in Sports and Recreation. The first thing to do when conducting factor analysis is to look at the inter-correlation between variables by determining the value of determinant. The determinant for these data is 0.001 which is greater than the necessary value of 0.00001, indicating that multicollinearity is not a problem for these data hence there is no need to consider eliminating any questions at this stage. Based on Table 3, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value for these data is 0.751 (good) which indicating the patterns of correlations are relatively compact thus factor analysis should yield distinct and reliable factor.

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.751
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	304.740
	df	105
	Sig.	.000

The rotation process was done in improving the interpretability of the factors thus maximizing the loading of each variable on one of the extracted factors while minimizing the loading on all other factors. Since theoretically the factors were believed to be correlated, the orthogonal rotation of Varimax has been used. Based on Table 4, the factor analysis was able to extract four factors.

Table 4: Rotated Component Matrix

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Q2		.601		
Q3		.609		
Q4		.655		
Q5		.790		
Q6		.589		
Q7		.658		
Q8				.904
Q9			.522	.544
Q10	.509		.558	
Q11	.717			
Q12	.848			
Q13	.855			
Q14			.802	
Q15	.786			
Q16			.640	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

From the results in Table 4, each statement was rearranged into their respective groups as seen in Table 5 where each group representing one factor. By referring to the statements, it could be concluded that the factors which influencing students' perceptions are their awareness on the importance of Sports Law, easy access to information on Sports Law, their satisfaction when learning Sports Law during classes and their prejudgment on the Sports Law subject.

Table 5: Extracted Factors

x1 "Awareness on the Importance of Sports Law"	x2 "Easy Access to Information on Sports Law"	x3 "Satisfaction on Learning Sports Subjects"	x4 "Prejudgment of Sports Subjects"
Q2 Q3 Q4 Q5 Q6 Q7	Q11 Q12 Q13 Q15	Q10 Q14 Q16	Q8 Q9

Table 6: Regression Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.431	.576		2.482	.017
	x1	.005	.090	.008	.056	.956
	x2	.693	.162	.615	4.266	.000
	x3	.032	.127	.037	.250	.803
	x4	-.070	.105	-.082	-.666	.509

a. Dependent Variable: Q1

The factors obtained from the factor analysis were then defined as the independent variables in determining the students' perception. Through regression analysis, the relationship between each factor and the students' perception (dependent variable) was determined. Table 6 shows the results of the regression analysis. The R-squared value for the data is 0.739 which means that 73.9% of the variation in dependent variable is able to be explained by the independent variables. Based on Table 6, we can see that x1, x2 and x3 showed a positive relationship which indicating that as their awareness increasing, access to sports information becoming easier and their satisfaction in learning this subject increasing, therefore their perception is becoming more positive.

4.3   **Mean Score and Sum Score Analysis**

In the last two sections, mean score and sum score analysis was done in order to determine the students' opinions on the level of relevancy of each topic taught in the course of law relating to Sports and Recreation towards their program outcomes and to rank the important skills needed in learning law related subjects.

Table 7: Relevancy of Topics in Sports Law Subject

Topic	Mean Score	Level of Relevancy
Introductions of Sports Law	3.65	High
Introduction of the Laws of Malaysia	3.49	Neutral/ High
The legislation and the Legislation Process in Malaysia	3.14	Neutral/ High
The Administration of Justice in Malaysia	3.22	Neutral/ High
The Law of Contract and Sports Persons	3.78	High
The Law of Torts	4.22	High
The Nature of Meeting	3.53	High
The Sports Development Acts 1997	3.61	High

Based on Table 7, the patterns of students' opinions can be determined. On average, all topics were considered as having high level of relevancy towards their program outcomes where The Law of Torts has the highest mean score. This is believed to be because of the contents of this topic such as negligence, trespass to person and defamation is considered to be practical to their everyday activities.

Table 8: Ranking of Important Skills

Skills	Sum Score	Rank
Verbal Communication	52	1
Analysing and Investigating	52	1
Creative and Innovative	53	3
Teamwork	55	4
Self-Motivation	56	5
Written Communication	57	6
Conceptual	58	7
Good English Proficiency	60	8
Independent Learning	61	9
Hands On Learning	63	10

Table 8 shows the results of sum score analysis on the important skill needed in learning legal aspects in Sports and Recreation. Based on the results, Verbal Communication and Analyzing and Investigating are ranked as the most needed skills. Hence, lecturers should nurture and nourish these skills in ensuring a better understanding among students.

5. Discussion & Conclusion

Based on the above finding, it can thus be suggested that as the level of students' awareness on the importance of sports law is increasing, access to sports information and resources are becoming easier and their satisfaction in learning this subject is increasing, therefore their perception on the relevancy of learning sports law is becoming more affirmative and positive. As teaching the sports law is an ambitious undertaking, it requires serious preparation to cover the wide topics of the subjects. Thus the results of this study indicate that to attract the interest of the non-law students in understanding the relevancy of this sport law to their related field can be seen through several mechanism. For example, the law lecturers have to keeping up with the knowledge in sports in relation to the new reports, legal decisions and other relevant topics. This research also proposes that the idea of a wide-ranging combination of teaching techniques, learning resources, flexible curricula, and assessment tasks, type of feedback, organisation and control of the learning environment can be considered as an effective tools in motivating the non-law students to appreciate the subjects thus their perceptions on the relevancy of learning sports law are becoming more affirmative and positive.

Acknowledgements

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