



Understanding motivations of potential partners to develop a public outdoor recreation center in an urban area



Christine Carmichael ^{a,*}, Dan McCole ^b

^a Michigan State University, Department of Forestry, 480 Wilson Road, Room 126, East Lansing, MI 48824, USA

^b Michigan State University, Department of Community Sustainability, 480 Wilson Road, Room 131, East Lansing, MI 48824 USA

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 21 August 2014

Received in revised form

9 September 2014

Accepted 15 September 2014

Keywords:

Collaboration motivations

Expectancy Theory

Social Exchange Theory

Urban outdoor recreation

ABSTRACT

Participation in traditional outdoor activities has declined in recent decades, causing concern for agencies involved in managing areas where citizens can pursue these activities. With limited resources to address this complex challenge, collaboration among several stakeholders seems to provide a win-win solution. An outdoor center that offers activities such as fishing, hunting, trapping and canoeing is one collaborative option. The purpose of this study is to better understand the motivations of organizations to collaborate in the development and operation of an outdoor center in the U.S. state of Michigan. Expectancy theory and social exchange theory provided a unique approach to understanding potential partners' expectations regarding positive outcomes and costs of collaboration. Through semi-structured interviews with potential partners, researchers found that a prevalent expected benefit of collaboration is the presence of a venue near diverse, urban populations at which to conduct outdoor programming. In addition, patterns emerged in the anticipated benefits from (and contributions to) the partnership based on the types of organizations interviewed. Insights into organizations' motivations to collaborate, based on these two theoretical frameworks, will aid recreation providers in creating appropriate selection criteria for partners and strategies for engaging them in collaborative projects to enhance outdoor recreation participation.

MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

When planning a new recreation center, it is important to identify potential collaborating organizations, and to integrate and coordinate the expectations of those organizations as early as possible. In order to balance the varying interests, it is helpful for managers:

- To categorize potential collaborators based on the nature of their relationship with the initiating organization (e.g., participant-focused, activity-focused, education-focused, manufacturers/retailers), as these classifications are typically characterized by different motivations and expectations;
- To understand individual preferences and agendas of each of the respective future partners;
- To emphasize the increasing efficiencies associated with cooperation;
- To increase their awareness of both benefits and costs anticipated by the potential partners; and
- To consider the various types of potential contributions, beyond financial support, that partners can provide. These may include: equipment, experts, participants and volunteers.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Outdoor recreation participation: Trends and implications

Outdoor recreation helps boost physical fitness, reduce stress, and enhance interpersonal relationships (California State Parks, 2005;

Maller et al., 2009; Williams, Vogelsong, Green, & Cordell, 2004). Outdoor activities also enhance public support of conservation endeavors (Berns and Simpson, 2009; Teisl and O'Brien, 2003; Theodori, Luloff, & Willits, 1998). In 2011, anglers and hunters contributed \$3 billion to on-the-ground conservation and restoration efforts in the U. S. (Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, 2012). Additionally, hunting and fishing-related spending in the U.S. exceeded \$90 billion that year (Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, 2012).

* Corresponding author. Tel: +1 517 281 0295.

E-mail address: carmich7@msu.edu (C. Carmichael).

One important category of outdoor recreation is “heritage sports,” which include activities such as fishing, hunting, trapping, and canoeing. To increase participation in these activities in the U.S., many leaders believe that inroads must be made to attract people from traditionally less engaged demographic groups. Southeast Michigan is one of the most diverse regions in the state in terms of race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and age (SEMCOG, 2013). However, current trends in outdoor recreation do not reflect this diversity. Over 75 percent of current outdoor recreation participants are Caucasian. Women, youth and older adults have low participation rates as well (The Outdoor Foundation, 2012). Public parks and recreation agencies can help introduce an increasingly diverse population concentrated near U.S. urban areas (Cohn, 2011; Nowak et al., 2010) to many outdoor activities. However, this complex issue cannot be comprehensively addressed by one agency due to limited resources (Wollenburg, Mowatt, Ross, & Renneisen, 2013).

Many municipalities have successfully partnered with other stakeholders to introduce more participants to a range of outdoor activities (LeSage, McMillan, & Hepburn, 2008; National Recreation and Park Association, 2013; Wondollock & Yaffee, 2000). Collaboration can substantially increase participation in outdoor recreation given the unique skills, expertise, and resources each partner can contribute to achieve this shared goal (Henderson et al., 2001; Selin, 1999; Wollenburg et al., 2013). Yet so far little research has been conducted on organizations' motivations to participate in partnerships (McCreary, Seekamp, Cervený, & Carver, 2012).

The purpose of this study is to better understand the motivations of potential stakeholders to collaborate on the development of a heritage sports outdoor recreation center aimed at introducing a diverse, urban population to activities like fishing, hunting, and canoeing. The context for this study involves efforts by a municipal parks and recreation agency in southeast Michigan. Previous studies have identified broad motivators to collaborate (McCreary et al., 2012; Schuett, Selin, & Carr, 2001), and the present study builds on this knowledge by investigating the specific motivations and barriers to collaboration experienced by different types of outdoor recreation stakeholders.

2. Literature review

This qualitative study used two theoretical frameworks, social exchange theory and expectancy theory. These theories feature many of the same assumptions found in rational choice theory, including the idea that people estimate likely costs and benefits of actions before making a decision about which action to take (Scott, 2000). Numerous studies have examined the benefits and costs of collaboration among stakeholders in contexts such as promoting active lifestyles in a community (Casey, Payne, Brown, & Eime, 2009) and achieving sustainable development and tourism goals (Fadeeva, 2005; Jamal & Getz, 1995; Selin & Chavez, 1994; Selin, 1999; Waayers, Lee, & Newsome, 2012). The following review outlines common themes across this body of literature on collaboration, as well as applications of expectancy theory and social exchange theory, to demonstrate the utility of these frameworks in examining motivations to collaborate on the development of an outdoor recreation center.

2.1. Collaboration

Collaboration involves the resolution of a problem or advancement of a vision shared by multiple stakeholders (Bronstein, 2003; Dollahite, Nelson, Frongillo, & Griffin, 2005; Jamal & Getz, 1995). Stakeholders who collaborate to achieve a common goal can often

experience positive benefits. Partners share information and ideas, as well as the costs associated with the design and implementation of new programs (e.g. time, money, personnel). This joint responsibility for costs is often necessary for organizations to achieve their individual missions and goals (Andereck, 1997; Fadeeva, 2005; Selin, 1999). Gazley and Brudney (2007) find that organizations are motivated to partner based on a desire to gain resources they consider scarce (e.g. expertise for government, funding for non-profits). Collins and Brown (2007) state that the U.S. Forest Service needs assistance from those with special resources to educate recreation users and maintain resources such as trails.

Collaboration can help build support for municipal parks and recreation agencies that rely on funds primarily from taxes (Wollenburg et al., 2013). Partnerships can also provide leverage to obtain funding for a project. As stated on the U.S. Forest Service's Collaboration Toolbox webpage, many funders prefer or even require projects involving partnerships (USFS, 2013). Additionally, collaboration ensures that services are not duplicated by several entities (Byrne & Hansberry, 2007), and partners can work simultaneously on different aspects of the project (Fadeeva, 2005).

McCreary et al. (2012) classified the motivations of U.S. Forest Service personnel to collaborate into three categories: Interpersonal, intrapersonal and institutional. According to the authors, interpersonal motivation occurs when the personnel is motivated to collaborate to develop and maintain relationships with partners. Intrapersonal motivations, on the other hand, form within a person and stem from a sense of accomplishment of things that could not be done without partners. Institutional motivations address the needs of the organizations that the personnel represent.

One challenge for successful collaboration is the sharing of decision-making power. Since partnerships require consensus on most important decisions, stakeholders may need to compromise on a mutually acceptable approach (Casey et al., 2009; James, 1999). A balance of power can be difficult to attain with distinct groups and interests that may differ significantly in the values, missions and resources brought to the partnership (Byrne & Hansberry, 2007). Collaboration also contradicts many traditional management styles in many organizations that may be concerned about protecting their “turf” and want to avoid the loss of control involved in partnering (Selin, 1999). Given these challenges, collaborative efforts will rarely be successful when partners are not sufficiently motivated to overcome challenges.

2.2. Social exchange theory

Much of the literature on motivations to collaborate has focused on stakeholders' desire to realize certain benefits (Section 2.1) (Bresnen & Marshall, 2000; McCreary et al., 2012). While receiving benefits may be an incentive to collaborate, some theories of motivation suggest that the relationships between benefits and costs, as well as alternatives to achieving benefits, play an important role in encouraging collaborative relationships.

Social exchange theory argues that a person's behavior results from reinforcement (Homans, 1958). Behavior that led to rewards previously will lead to a continuation of the exchange relationship, whereas if the exchange becomes too costly for any of the parties, the relationship will cease (Auld & Case, 1997; Kayat, 2002). The more valuable one perceives one's resources or skills to be, the more benefit one will anticipate in return for their contributions to the partnership (Barcelona & Bocarro, 2004). As with individuals, organizations have limited resources to invest, forcing a choice among alternative actions by assessing perceived costs and benefits of each option (Bryant & Napier, 1981). Organizations that engage in a partnership expect that their benefits will exceed their costs, and will be better than the alternatives available (Nunkoo &

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/92398>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/92398>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)