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**ATTITUDE OF BOTHO UNIVERSITY SPORTS MANAGEMENT STUDENTS  
TOWARDS THE SPORTS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME: A CRITICAL  
ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The narrative on attitudes of students and how these attitudes shape and define how students behave in a learning situation has been a subject of heightened discussion in many academic fora. Studies show that how people react or respond to something is more often than not motivated by their attitude towards it. Literature is also abound with information related to attitudes of students towards sport and physical activity but very little if any of such literature captures issues of attitudes of university students towards Sports Management. This study therefore examined the attitudes of Botho University (BU) Sports Management students towards their sport management programme and causative factors to such attitudes. All students (N = 33) in the department of Sports Management were selected to participate in the study. A structured questionnaire that employed a 5-point Likert scale was used for data collection. Data collected was analysed using SPSS version 22. Results of the study showed that Sports Management students had very positive attitudes towards their programme and this was due to among others, state of the art resources they used for learning, a conducive learning environment at the university with technology that supports learning.*

**KEYWORDS:** Attitude, Sports Management, Students, Programme, Botho University

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Studies show that sport offers a multiplicity of benefits to people that include physical fitness, good health, opportunities for social interaction, a source of employment among others (Bernstein, Phillips & Silverman, 2011; Dorak, 2011; Clement, Brooks & Wilmoth, 2009) yet despite these benefits people continue to have negative attitudes towards sport and sport programmes such as Sports Management continue to be viewed as low status programmes in society. To compound the above issue, studies also show that there is currently limited empirical evidence on university students' attitudes towards Sports Management as a programme. According to Guan, McBride and Xiang (2005), the attitudes of students towards Sport Management and its teaching depends on several factors among which are the structure of the

Sports Management curriculum, context in which the programme is taught, and the way it is taught. It is against this background that this study therefore examined the attitudes of sports management students at Botho University (BU) towards the Sports Management programme and the causative factors to such attitudes. Attitudes are defined as the mental, emotional and behavioural pre-re-reaction tendencies to respond to something, self, object or social issue as a result of experience, knowledge, emotion and/or incentives (Inceoglu, 2014). An attitude therefore is an attribute that is learned and that changes with time and circumstances (Levent & Umuzdas, 2013). Studies show that participation levels in sport-related subjects of students with low levels of interest (negative attitudes) tend to decrease their commitment to the subjects (Gullu & Guchu, 2009; Ekici et al, 2011; Eraslan, 2015).

In the context of Botswana where appropriately trained and qualified human resources in the sport industry is scarce, courses such as Sports Management are deemed to be very crucial in reducing the resource burden and in improving participation in sport. According to the National Sport and Recreation Policy for Botswana (2001), “The government and people of Botswana accept the premise that participation in sport and physical recreation can significantly contribute to the improvement of quality of life, economic development as well as the reputation of the country”. The policy further states that for a long time now, “Individuals and the government at large have often expressed dissatisfaction regarding the development and promotion of sport as well as with the low levels and standard of performance of various national teams representing the country in international competitions”. Among a number of major issues identified as causing this dissatisfaction and affecting the development of sport in Botswana were the following (The National Policy on Sport and Recreation, 2001): (a) Low level of a culture of sport and (b) inadequacy of trained sport personnel. The Botho University Sport Management programme has become increasingly important due to several reasons that are currently inherent within the sport and leisure industry in Botswana and globally and which reasons should be motivation enough for changing the perception of people including students towards the programme..

The first reason is that the sport industry has become increasing competitive, both in terms of the number of organisations within the industry and also in terms of the job opportunities offered by those organisations([http://www.hlst.ltsn.ac.uk/resources/sport\\_leisure\\_mgt.html](http://www.hlst.ltsn.ac.uk/resources/sport_leisure_mgt.html)). Competition in the sport industry is now more global than ever before. Ability by many of these sporting clubs and organisations in generating a worldwide market share and also in creating job opportunities has been seen in big way, as a product of the quality of management in those clubs (<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk>).

The second reason according to (<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk>) is that people in charge of sport organisations now face a myriad of problems due to rising customer expectations about the quality of services in the sport industry. As a result of increasing competition, a greater awareness of consumer rights and improvements in service quality, customer expectations of sport and leisure services are in danger of spiraling out of control requiring managers with superior management skills to move the industry forward to (<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk>). Indeed, the ability to effectively manage customer expectations in the sport industry is a skill that has become increasingly essential for those who manage the industry hence the need for sports management programmes to equip the managers with relevant technical and management skills.

Third, the funding and accounting arrangements in the sport industry have become more sophisticated than ever before. For example, besides receiving funds from local government budgets, membership fees, public sector organisations are able to attract commercial sector investment, sponsorship and charge fees ([http://www.hlst.ltsn.ac.uk/sport\\_leisure\\_mgt.html](http://www.hlst.ltsn.ac.uk/sport_leisure_mgt.html)). Thus, the financial skills required of contemporary sport and leisure managers go beyond simply budgeting or financial reporting to sport managers being now required to have the skills to first, identify appropriate sources of funding beyond the traditional ones, second, access funds from these sources and third, manage the funds in an appropriate and accountable manner that gives confidence to the sponsors that their monies are being well used ([http://www.hlst.ltsn.ac.uk/resources/sport\\_leisure\\_mgt.html](http://www.hlst.ltsn.ac.uk/resources/sport_leisure_mgt.html)).

Finally, transformations in social trends in the sport industry now require more systematic, effective and efficient means of managing sport. Equally so in schools, colleges and universities where these institutions now see sport as an important marketing tool, a lot of investment poured into the discipline (<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk>).

There have been a number of studies that have provided evidence on why students tend to have certain types of attitudes towards sport programmes. A study by Luke and Sinclair (1991) in Li et al (2014) found that the main attitude dimensions that influenced students' attitudes either against or for sports programmes such as Sports Management included curriculum content, teacher behaviour, class atmosphere, students' self-perception of their mental and physical abilities, and quality of facilities and equipment. Another study by Al-Liheibi (2008) found that the following dimensions also impacted students' attitudes towards sport-related programmes such as sports Management: personal satisfaction with the subject, quality of lectures, the programme curriculum, availability of adequate and appropriate facilities and equipment. The curriculum is viewed as the number one dimension that moderates students' attitudes towards sport-related programmes (Rikard & Banville, 2006). Stelzer et al (2004) in their study also found that attitudes of students towards a sport related programme tend to be positive if they perceive that the programme's content meets their future employment needs.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Participants**

A quantitative approach that employed a descriptive survey strategy was used in the study. Respondents (N = 33) were selected for the study using the nonprobability census sampling strategy. As a result all the 33 students in the Sports Management programme were included in the study.

### **Instrumentation**

A structured questionnaire that employed a 5-point Likert scale from strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2) and strongly Disagree (1) was used in the study for data collection. The sum of the weights were divided by 5 to get a criterion mean of 3 so that responses with mean scores of less than 3 were not accepted and those with mean scores of 3 to 5 were accepted as representing marginal to very high frequency on the attitudes of students towards the sport management programme at BU. Before administration, the questionnaire was subjected to reliability and validity testing. With regards to reliability, the structured questionnaire was tested for internal consistency reliability using the Cronbach alpha coefficient,  $\alpha$ . Reliability results test showed  $\alpha = 0.81$  which showed that the questionnaire was reliable enough to be used in the study. With regards to validity testing, the questionnaire was tested for content validity by being subjected to expert opinion. Responses of the experts were incorporated into the final questionnaire. With regards to the administration, the questionnaire was hand-delivered to students during lecture times with the concurrence of respective lectures. Students took an average of 20 minutes to complete answering the questionnaire and return it to me. 33 questionnaires were distributed and all of them were returned making a return rate of 100%.

## Data analysis

Collected data was analysed using SPSS version 21. Descriptive statistics tools were used for data analysis. Descriptive tools included use of statistical tables for the purpose of summarizing data on the attitudes of Sports Management students towards the sports management programme.

## RESULTS

### Descriptive statistics

The biographic variables explored in this study are gender and age of students involved in the study. The data for the two biographical variables of Sports Management department students are shown on Table 1.

**Table 1: Biographical data (N = 33)**

	BIOGRAPHICAL DATA	Actual Numbers	Responses %
<b>1</b>	<b>Age:</b>		
	18-20yrs	12	36.4
	21-25yrs	15	45.5
	26-30yrs	4	12.1
	More than 30yrs	2	6
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Gender:</b>		
	Male	18	54.5
	Female	15	45.5
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100</b>

Results in Table 1 shows that there were more students (81.9%) under the age of 30 years (young adults) with the biggest portion being those aged between 21 years and 25 years. Older students comprise 28.7% of the department student population. This shows that the Sports Management department is comprised of students who are still in their prime to participate in sport. Table 1 also shows that the department has more male students (57%) than female students (43%).

**Table 1: Behavioural Component of students' attitudes (N = 33)**

Item	M	Std. Dev.
I enjoy sport management lessons	4.05	1.1
Studying sport management increases my interest in a career in sport	4.12	0.7
I consider sport management as being as important if not more important than any other subject I learn at BU	4.18	1.0
Sport management prepares me to make practical decisions about my future sport career choices	3.57	1.2
I am happy to have a student in sport management at BU	3.43	1.1
I consider sport management a desirable career option	4.29	1.0

The university encourages students to pursue sport management as a career option	3.08	0.9
The university provides sport management opportunities that help me to meet and interact with people with highly talented sport personalities in other tertiary institutions	3.26	1.2
My institution helped me to meet successful sportsman and sportswomen who have changed my attitude towards sport management to be more positive	4.17	0.7
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.79</b>	<b>1.0</b>

(M = Mean Score)

Results in Table 2 show that there is a willingness and acceptance by most of the students ( $3 < M \leq 5$ ) that sport management is a desirable programme and possible career option and that sport management is important in preparing them for a sporting career. The mean of mean score of 3.79 also indicates that for most students their behavioural attitude towards sport management is positive. Of the 9 items measuring behavioural attitude towards sport, 4 items have mean scores of attitude of students of score  $3 \leq M < 4$  which show that students have a fairly high positive attitude towards sport management. Out of 9 items Table 2 also shows that in 5 of the items the attitude of students towards sport management is rated ( $4 \leq M \leq 5$ ) which is well above the average (mean of mean score of 3.79) which shows that most students have a very positive behavioural attitude towards sport. None of the 9 do students show a negative behavioural intention sport management as the criterion mean of student attitudes to sport is 3.0.

**Table 3: Cognitive component of students' Attitudes (N = 33)**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
Due to sport management I am now have knowledge of responsibilities of sports management at local, regional and international levels	3.95	1.0
Due to sport management I can now coach and officiate in a number of sport codes	4.09	1.1
Due to sport management I can successfully develop lead others	4.74	0.9
Due to sport management I can now effectively handle issue of sport accounts	4.65	1.3
The curriculum of the programme is very good and meets my future employment needs	4.54	1.3
Overall I am very happy and satisfied with how the sport management programme has changed my perception of sport and life	4.51	1.1
<b>Average</b>	<b>4.41</b>	<b>1.1</b>

Table 3 shows that most of the students believe that sport management developed knowledge and skills for them to effectively participate in future sport management activities. This is shown by the mean scores  $3 \leq M \leq 5$  where in 6 out of 6 items measuring the cognitive component

of students attitudes towards sport management, students showed positive cognitive intentions. Out of the 6 items where students showed high cognitive intentions towards sport management, in 5 items students showed very high positive intentions ( $4 \leq M \leq 5$ ) and in 1 out of the 6 items, students showed fairly high sport management intentions ( $3 \leq M < 4$ ). There is no item 11 where students showed very low sport management intentions ( $M < 3$ ). A mean of mean scores of  $M = 4.41$ ,  $SD = 1.1$  shows that overall students had a very positive cognitive intention towards sport management and view it as important in their lives.

**Table 4: Affective component of students' attitudes (N = 33)**

Item	Mean	Std. Dev.
I want to continue participate in sport management after completing school as there are more benefits to be got from being a sport manager	4.94	1.1
The idea participating in sport management is very appealing to me	4.17	1.0
I consider sport management as very important course	4.18	.91
My personal satisfaction with sport management is very high	3.98	1.0
The university sport programme programme effectively prepares me for a possible sport career	2.15	.94
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.88</b>	<b>0.99</b>

Table 4 shows that the general feeling and emotional disposition of students towards sport management is positive as in 4 out of 5 items measuring the affective component of students' attitudes towards sport management the mean score is above 3, that is ( $3 \leq M \leq 5$ ). In 3 items where  $M \geq 4$ , students showed a very high positive attitude towards sport management while in 1 item where  $3 < M \leq 4$ , the attitude was generally satisfactory. The mean of mean scores of  $M = 3.88$ ,  $SD = 0.99$  shows that overall the affective intentions of students towards sport management is positive.

**Table 6: Overall measurement**

Students attitude component	Mean	Std. Dev.
Cognitive component	4.41	1.1
Affective component	3.88	0.99
Behavioural component	3.79	1.0
<b>Mean of means score</b>	<b>4.03</b>	<b>1.0</b>

Table 6 shows the overall measurement of students' attitude towards sport management. Results show that the  $M = 4.03$ ,  $SD = 1.0$  which shows that the attitude of students towards sport management is very positive. This also implies that there is positive recognition of sport management by students as being very important both as a source of knowledge on sport and also for employment purposes.



## DISCUSSION

Results of the study show that the overall attitude of students towards the sports management has a mean score of  $M = 4.03$ ,  $SD = 1.0$  which shows a very positive attitude towards the programme. Studies show a number of factors that motivate students to have positive attitudes towards a sport-related programme such as Sports Management. Luke and Sinclair (1991) in Li et al (2014) in their study found that the main attitude dimensions that influenced students' attitudes either against or for sports programmes such as Sports Management included curriculum content, teacher behaviour, class atmosphere, students' self-perception of their mental and physical abilities, and quality of facilities and equipment. Extending the above argument, Al-Liheibi (2008) in their study found that the following dimensions also impacted students' attitudes towards sport-related programmes such as sports Management: personal satisfaction with the subject, quality of lectures, the programme curriculum, availability of adequate and appropriate facilities and equipment. According to Rikard & Banville, (2006), out of the dimensions of students attitudes towards a subject, curriculum is viewed as the number one dimension that moderates students' attitudes towards sport-related programmes.

The above therefore means that since students posted a mean score  $M = 4.03$  in their responses with an  $SD = 1.0$ , there is general agreement that they all have a positive attitude towards the Sports Management programme at BU. This could mean that the Sports Management at BU has a curriculum they view as useful to their future career lives, the quality of resources used in the programme is very good or that they feel competent and capable in their performance of the requirements of the programme being offered at Botho University

## CONCLUSIONS

From the above results, a number of conclusions were made. First, students' view the sports Management programme is very positive. Secondly, most students believe the programme is well taught and they are immensely benefiting from it. Third, most students in the programme believe that Sports Management is a good career option once they finish their schooling. Fourth, most students believe that the curriculum of the Sports Management programme is meaningful and meets their future job requirements.

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