Risk Management of Outdoor Sports Clubs in Universities

Yi-Tian ZHOU¹,a, Zhao-Hong WANG¹,* and Wei HOU²,b

¹School of Physical Education and Sports, Beijing Normal University, Beijing, China
²The second high school attached to Beijing Normal University, Beijing, China

Keywords: Outdoor sports; University club; Risk management.

Abstract. Because college outdoor sports clubs still have a series of problems, especially in terms of risk aversion measures, this paper classifies the risks of college outdoor sports clubs from six aspects, include decision risk, guide risk, student participant risk, equipment risk, environmental risk, school and parental risk. Finally, based on these six risks, reasonable suggestions were put forward for the risk management of college outdoor sports clubs.

Introduction

Due to the rapid development of outdoor sports in recent years, in addition to the retired people in small cities who like outdoor sports, some young groups in colleges and universities have begun to pursue sports that are closer to nature. The groups that do outdoor sports in universities are mainly divided into three categories. One is to travel with their peers. The other two main modes of travel are to follow outdoor clubs, including outdoor clubs in the society and outdoor clubs in universities. College students are different from those who have already worked. College students must take on more risks in outdoor sports. Both parents and schools may undertake a large part of the responsibility. Therefore, the risk management of college outdoor clubs is particularly important.

According to the 2017 report of the China Mountaineering Association, there were 289 accidents in 2017. The total number of participants in all events were 2,346, and the total number of accidents was 1,007. There were 35 fatal accidents and 41 deaths, including 2 mass deaths, 7 deaths, 7 missing accidents and 8 missing persons. [1] There are many reasons for this, both for the participants themselves and for the organizers. Therefore, we must start to control the risks of college outdoor clubs from various aspects.

Outdoor Sports and Risk Management Concept

The term outdoor sports was introduced to China from Western countries in the 1980s. The definition of outdoor sports includes a broad one and narrow one. During this period, many scholars defined this concept. In 2004, Zhang Zhijian who worked in China Mountaineering Management Center defined outdoor sports as a group of adventure sports on the natural environment (non-dedicated space), including air, water, and land these three categories. [2]

As a system of management science, risk management plays an important role in various fields along with the development of society. Risk management refers to the scientific management method that achieves maximum security through risk identification and risk assessment, and effectively controls risks based on this, and uses the most economic and reasonable methods to comprehensively deal with risks. [3]

Classification of Risks of Outdoor Sports Clubs in Universities

Decision Risk

Nowadays, the outdoor sports clubs of universities are relatively mature. There are usually many outdoor sports forms, among which the riskiest form is alpine adventure sports. Every year, college outdoor sports clubs select some capable backbone members from the ordinary members of the club...
to form mountain climbing team. The team conducts ice climbing training during the winter vacation and mountain climbing activities in the summer. Most of the members each year are made up of new members. The news may take less than a year to contact with mountaineering, even no experience of collective mountaineering, but some of them always keep their own opinions on collective activities. The annual captain of the mountaineering team is generally selected from the outstanding members of the mountaineering team in the previous year, and the experience of leading the team is not rich enough.

The management of college outdoor clubs is generally composed of the board of directors, the president, the league branch secretary, the secretary-general and the ministers of various departments (including the equipment department, propaganda department, data department, etc.). The climbing goal chosen by the mountaineering team is depends on vote, but the proportion of management voting is much larger than that of rank and file. In most cases, there are differences in the choice of mountain peaks between the climbers. Because the emotional control of the student group is not strong enough, the first two factors are likely to lead to impulsive decision-making. The conflict between management and climbers is likely to cause the mountaineering schedule cannot carry out in proper time and ways. Conflicts between members are likely to cause some physically strong members to ignore the advice of vulnerable members and choose riskier climbing targets (such as mountains over 6,000 meters).

From the perspective of general hiking activities, college outdoor sports clubs have low restrictions on members, and many members do not have any outdoor sports experience. Therefore, the hiking plan formulated by the club cannot be realized under certain circumstances. The first is the unreasonable time schedule, including the speed of the team and the length of the rest time do not meet the requirements of the team members. The second is that the choice of the camping site is subject to the environment. If the hiking program is not completed within the specified time, there is likely to be no good camping location.

Other outdoor sports such as rock climbing, ice climbing, etc., the decision of the captain and team members will affect the safety and completion of the sport to some extent.

Guide Risk

A good team leader or guide is very important for collective activities such as outdoor sports. Xue Kezhan divides the risk of the leader into several categories in the Outdoor Hiking Accident Statistics and Security Risk Assessment Study: poor risk identification, unskilled rescue techniques, uncorrected errors, poor ability to respond to incidents, lack of responsibility, incomplete mastery of skills, and unreasonable planning of activities. [4]

In college groups, student leaders get more risk on technical problems, especially in daily walking activities. Most college leaders are better in physical fitness, but lack technical training. They are not skilled enough in the techniques of knotting, GPS, and rescue. There will be a great safety hazard for the whole team.

The guide's ability to identify risks is also crucial. The guide must not only be able to identify safe locations but also can identify other natural risks such as weather, beasts, and wild food. Occasionally there are some sudden natural disasters in outdoor sports, and the leader must be able to lead members to take refuge before the disaster.

The guide is the core of a team. There are always some minor misunderstandings between members. The coordination ability of the team leader can prevent the team from contradictions to a certain extent, thus reducing the risk of bad emotions.

Student Participant Risk

If students have a certain understanding of outdoor sports and have enough experience, they can avoid the leader risk to a certain extent. Participants’ risks are mainly reflected in three aspects: First, psychological risk. If members have a negative attitude toward outdoor sports, but participate in outdoor sports for social needs, psychological fear and suspicion may result in great risks. The relationship between the members and the team leader can also affects the emotion of the member to some extent. If there is any misunderstanding between members and leader, it may lead to
improper operation, which will eventually lead to the accident. The second is physiological risks. Physical risks include physical discomfort of members and accidents during sports, such as slipped down. Physical discomfort is manifested in many aspects. It may be due to cold, temperature loss, etc., or it may be due to insufficient physical strength to cause physical exhaustion. It may also be due to changes in the external environment leading to allergies or other rare diseases. The third is man-made external risks. The most common risk is the team member's trampling on the equipment without attention. When the rope is damaged by external forces for a long time, it will be broken or loss elasticity. There are also members who have other improper operations on the equipment, which may pose a fatal risk. The artificial external risk is more obvious in alpine expeditions.

**Equipment Risk**

If the equipment is used in accordance with normal inspection and operating procedures, the equipment will generally not pose a significant risk. Zhang Xiaozhe classified the risks of equipment in the *Research on Outdoor Sports Risk Prevention in Liaoning Outdoor Club* as follows: risk accidents caused by unqualified equipment, unreasonable equipment design and poor equipment performance, equipment selection does not meet requirements, equipment is old and not checked or updated in time. [5]

Public equipment commonly used in college clubs is generally provided by sponsors. The quality of products provided by sponsors is relatively high (such Kailas). It includes technical equipment and living equipment. The technical equipment is generally made of metal. If it is improperly maintained or used illegally, it may cause fatal danger. Life equipment is like tents, sleeping bags, pots and other equipment. If you do not take protective measures, such as scratches or water, it may have a great impact on users, and may even lead to serious diseases such as altitude sickness.

Since the equipment purchased by the students is generally expensive, personal equipment can be better protected in most cases, so there is little risk.

**Environmental Risk**

Outdoor sports are generally played in the natural environment, so they are greatly affected by the environment. However, environmental risks are highly variable and uncertain. Outdoor sports in hot environments are likely to be at risk of sunburn, heat stroke, dehydration, etc. Outdoor sports in a cold environment are at risk of slipping, frostbite, and temperature loss. Depending on the venue for outdoor sports (such as wild mountains, rivers, deserts, etc.), the environmental risks are different.

In addition to the risks brought by the weather and the site, animals in the natural environment also bring a lot of risks. Mosquito bites are a common phenomenon in outdoor sports. Preventing them in advance can reduce the occurrence of such risks to some extent. Players also must avoid attacks from other wild animals, each place has different species, and such risks are highly uncontrollable. Early preventive measures and first aid plan after being attacked are particularly important.

**School and Parental Risk**

The biggest difference between college outdoor sports clubs and social outdoor sports clubs is reflected in the risks of schools and parents. Club members in society generally have their own decision-making power, but students are limited to some extent. From a school perspective, each school has different policies for student mountaineering groups. Some schools have a positive attitude toward outdoor sports, and some schools have strong opposition to some items in outdoor sports. Schools with a positive attitude will give more support on college clubs, and even set special teachers to guide and participate in student activities. Schools with negative attitudes will limit the development of outdoor sports clubs. The specific forms of expression include not providing venues for storing public equipment, not providing training place, etc. This has led many students to organize activities privately and take on greater risks.
From the perspective of parents, there are two types of risks. One is economic risk, the personal equipment for students to do outdoor sports must have reliable quality. The better the quality, the higher the price of the equipment. But the members are all from schools and do not have stable income. If their family does not support them, there is no way to continue. The other one is that if students have an accident at the event, there will be a big contradiction between parents and team members, even the school, and other members of the team will face great risks, both morally and legally.

Suggestions on Risk Management of Outdoor Sports Clubs in Universities

Develop a Risk Management Plan

Establishing a complete outdoor sports club risk management plan consists of three steps: 1. Identify risks, 2. Classify risks, 3. Choose the way to deal with risks. [6] On the basis of classification of risk on the above, each university outdoor sports clubs must develop appropriate risk management plans in actual conditions.

Strengthen Personnel Training

Both the guide and the team members must establish a complete knowledge system of outdoor sports. There must be a standardized training process before each trip, including technical training and psychological counseling for team members. For school management and parents, it is necessary to let them understand the advantages and risks of outdoor sports, but also to develop a comprehensive disclaimer to reduce moral hazard.

Standardize Regulation

For college outdoor clubs, the management system should be regularly improved, and the management student group should regularly conduct technical and management assessments and replace personnel when necessary. For schools, it is necessary to establish a sound club rules, strengthen teachers’ guidance to students, and fundamentally reduce risks. For the government, it is necessary to formulate laws and regulations for college outdoor sports clubs, on the one hand to strengthen the local rescue system, and on the other hand to reduce the risk of public opinion in society.

Acknowledgement

This research was financially supported by the National Social Science Foundation (CLA130195)

References


