



**Evaluating Attendance at UBC Varsity Sport Events Amongst
Students Living on Campus**

Group #19

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Executive Summary

UBC Athletics aims to increase attendance at UBC Varsity Sport Events. Previous data indicates that overall attendance remains low, especially for regular home games (UBC Athletics & Recreation, 2021- 2024). However, there has been little research into the reasons why students living on campus decide not to attend games. This study focuses on determining reasons for this low attendance, specifically among UBC students who live on campus, aiming to offer solutions to boost attendance as higher turnout benefits both students and athletes (Moore, 2018). Transportation and location were noted as obstacles, especially for off-campus students (Perrault, 2016), therefore the inclusion criteria for the study addressed students who live on campus to determine what factors other than geographical location impact attendance. Previous research has highlighted that the factors predicting non-attendance vary between students who have attended a game before and those who have never attended (Mayer et al., 2017). To explore this phenomenon, the sample was further specified to include only students who had never before attended a UBC Varsity event.

An online Qualtrics survey was used to explore the underlying factors contributing to the lack of attendance and propose effective strategies to boost participation. Participants were recruited through flyers posted around the UBC Vancouver campus and Instagram story posts. The inclusion criteria comprised UBC students (any year-level/faculty) who live on campus, and have never attended a UBC Varsity Sport Event before. Following this, data analysis was performed to understand the most common barriers to attendance, and potential ideas to increase attendance.

The qualtrics survey resulted in 84 responses with zero incomplete submissions. Most participants (99%) were UBC students and 71% of them lived on campus. 57% had never attended a UBC Varsity Festival Event and 52% to a regular season Varsity Sport Game. Participant demographics showed that most were in their 2nd, 3rd, or 4th year, with 73% being domestic students and 27% being international students. The primary reasons for non-attendance were found to be lack of time, being unaware of games, having conflicting school commitments and not having anyone to go with. Participants agreed that higher promotion of games and dates, interactions with the athletes, prizes, and incentives like rewards programs would increase attendance.

Findings align with previous literature on attendance barriers, emphasising the lack of awareness of event schedules. Limitations like a small sample size and lack of comparison groups might have constrained generalizability, and future research may benefit from adopting more inclusive criteria when recruiting participants to help increase external validity of the findings.

Recommendations to UBC Athletics to boost attendance at Varsity sport events encompass focusing on promotion efforts, establishing regular meeting spots for attendees to gather before games, creating opportunities for interaction with Varsity athletes, and providing incentives (i.e. rewards programs). Promotion should utilise posters in high-traffic areas and social media while interactions with athletes would include contests and meet-and-greets. Finally, organising regular meeting spots before games aims to address concerns about people not having anyone to go with.

Introduction

Recent data shows there is a noticeable lack of attendance at University of British Columbia (UBC) Varsity Sport Events amongst the student population. Although attendance is high for well-promoted festival game events such as the annual UBC Homecoming football game and UBC's Hockey Festival of the Year, Winter Classic, overall attendance remains low for regular home games (UBC Athletics & Recreation, 2021- 2024). This study aims to investigate the reasons behind low attendance, specifically among UBC students who live on campus. The purpose of this study is to identify factors contributing to one not attending these events, and ultimately offer valuable recommendations to UBC Athletics to boost attendance at Varsity Sport Events. Additionally, this study will explore the advantages of increased spectator attendance, which could potentially positively impact the athletes.

The presence of attendees at sporting events enhances the experience for both spectators and athletes, providing mutual benefits. The study conducted by Moore (2018) found that boosting attendance rates can yield several positive outcomes. These include generating additional revenue for the school, enhancing the atmosphere which can potentially improve team performance, and promoting the health and well-being of students (Moore, 2018). As a result, higher attendance rates not only boost school spirit but also have psychological benefits for both athletes and fans, influencing athlete performance. Moreover, when spectators attend sporting events it has been shown to increase one's sense of belonging (Inoue et al., 2020), defined as the feeling of personal engagement and integration within a social setting (Hagerty et al., 1992). Sport events offer a social setting where one can enhance social relationships as they share the same experience with others (Inoue et al., 2020). Furthermore, attending an event allows for the ability to connect with like-minded peers and individuals in the same local community (Inoue et al., 2020).

To boost attendance at UBC Varsity Sport Events, one effective strategy includes marketing and promotion. Utilizing social media is an effective strategy for reaching the targeted population of students, and it offers a cost-effective approach to promoting sports events while also enhancing engagement. Einsle et al (2023) suggested that advertising an event on social media effectively increases awareness and engagement, which leads to a rise in attendance. It was discovered that using social media during sporting events is an effective way to encourage interaction with fans and that engagement with content promotes future intention of attendance (Einsle et al., 2023). An additional strategy marketers may address is ticket price. Simmons and Popp (2018) noted that marketers may heavily rely on low ticket prices to promote attendance, but found ticket price to not be a limiting factor and that it may actually be beneficial to charge a small fee instead of no cost. Arkes & Blumer (1985) found charging for a ticket increases the likelihood of attendance (as cited in Simmons & Popp, 2018). Simmons and Popp (2018) also found that the high price of alcoholic beverages at sporting events acted as a substantial deterrent for student attendance, indicating that lowering these prices could potentially boost attendance. Essentially, providing more affordable prices will appeal to a large audience, ultimately increasing attendees.

Another strategy to potentially increase attendance is enhancing the overall game-day experience by creating a welcoming and high-energy atmosphere, incorporating various interactive activities and halftime shows to keep attendees engaged throughout the event. Laverie and Arnett (2000) suggested engaging sports marketers to attract people to games, promote lasting attendance, and form an attachment to the team. This can include involving the team and players' managers in the media and incorporating contests where fans have the opportunity to interact with players which can increase attachment (Laverie & Arnett, 2000). The likelihood of attendees returning to future events is higher if their experience is memorable, which aligns with the objective of this study to increase attendance. Ultimately,

the factors mentioned provide insight into the development of methods intended to boost attendance at student athletic events and matches.

Literature review and gaps in existing research

Previous literature has highlighted various reasons for the lack of attendance at varsity sporting events. This includes things such as lack of promotion, not having enough time, and lack of interest. Rochefort (2023) highlighted the trends and attendance since the 2012/2013 season of UBC Varsity Sporting Events including sports such as basketball, football, hockey, soccer, and volleyball. Rochefort (2023) proposed that the increased spike of attendance in the 2014/2015 football season was due to the Thunderbirds' success in the Vanier Cup, a college football championship game used to determine the national champion in U Sports football. The subsequent seasons also saw a rising trend in the number of attendees before decreasing again due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Rochefort, 2023). During the pandemic it was seen that there was a greater attendance in soccer due to the Jump Start Game, where as part of their orientation week, first-year students were brought to a women's soccer game. Furthermore, this same increase is seen in volleyball where it was most likely due to their previous season of winning the national title (Rochefort, 2023). The number of spectators for men's hockey is far more than that of women's hockey. Early start times may have an impact on the amount of women's hockey attendees because many of these possible supporters might still be in school or at work (Rochefort, 2023). It was also seen that people are more likely to attend varsity team yearly events like Homecoming (football), Pride Night at War Memorial (volleyball), the Courtside Hoops Festival (basketball), and the Winter Classic (hockey) than they do regular games (Rochefort, 2023). Furthermore, ticket data collected by partners at UBC Athletics & Recreation (2021-2024) reveal that the most number of tickets sold are represented by events such as Homecoming, Winter Classic, Home Openers, Courtside, and Pride Night. The findings of this dataset further demonstrate similarities of the results seen by

Rochefort (2023), where it was found that the barriers of attendance included lack of promotion, not having enough time, and lack of interest.

These trends are in line with research conducted by Perrault (2016), whose findings revealed that when comparing students who had never attended a football game, those who said they had attended one said they were more aware of the dates and times of the games. In the case of basketball, individuals who had gone to a game reported having more knowledge about the dates and times of the games than those who had never gone (Perrault, 2016). A study conducted by Kim and Trail (2010) explored the internal constraints preventing attendance at sporting events, revealing results consistent with those of Perrault (2016), who identified a prevalent barrier: lack of knowledge of event schedules. The influence of social media presence when promoting these popular games also determined the greater game attendance. This allowed individuals to have direct interaction with teams, athletes, and coaches; perhaps sharing information about game times and ticket availability with followers (Perrault, 2016). It was further noted that the most frequently mentioned reasons for not attending were due to lack of enjoyment/interest for the sport, lack of time, and social influence (Perrault, 2016). Another study by Havard and Dwyer (2012) highlighted and recognized lack of interest as a common constraint for attendance at sporting events. Moreover, Wood and Danylchuk (2012) found that social and peer influence could be an implication due to differences in interest. In addition to exploring constraints for attendance at student sporting events, Perrault (2016) also sought to identify factors that could boost student attendance. These include social influence (whether more people attended or their friends wanted to go), greater team spirit (i.e. "If people in the stands cheered more"), and more promotions to attend (i.e. "Chances to win free things") (Perrault, 2016). A comprehensive understanding of these factors could inform the development of strategies aiming to increase attendance at student athletic events and games.

In addition, Perrault (2016) found that not having transportation to the game or the location being too far away was commonly cited for not going to home football games. Common responses from the undergraduate student study sample include “Too far from campus”, and “Too far from apartment” (Perrault, 2016). Students living off-campus may find it more challenging to participate in events due to geographical constraints, potentially resulting in a lower attendance rate (Perrault, 2016). Conversely, as suggested in the study by Havard and Dwyer (2012), it is arguable that students living on campus face fewer barriers related to location, thus increasing the probability of their attendance at such events. Despite this factor, it was interesting to find that even within this demographic, there were obstacles hindering attendance at home basketball games, including a lack of interest and bad weather conditions (Havard & Dwyer, 2012). Therefore, it is imperative to consider that there are other factors other than location that need to be considered when examining attendance to Varsity athletic events. Furthermore, as suggested by Mayer et al (2017), the factors predicting non-attendance of those who had never attended a sports event/game (i.e. lack of knowledge and no interest from others) were different than those of students who had previously attended a sports event/game (i.e lack of success by the team). It is evident that location (living on campus or not) as well as having never previously attended a game, are likely both factors determining attendance/non-attendance at home sports events and games. However, there is a notable gap in research focusing on populations encompassing both of these factors, particularly among students living on campus who have never attended a Varsity Sports Event.

Purpose statement and Research Question

Given the existing gaps in research, the purpose of this study was to examine the attendance of students living on campus with a specific focus on those who have never previously attended a Varsity Sport Event. The findings of this study did not only provide

transparency between student and staff regarding factors that influence sport attendance at UBC, but also allow for practical recommendations to UBC Athletics on how to increase attendance to varsity events for this population. The research questions this study investigated are as follows: To what extent do UBC students living on campus attend or don't attend varsity sport events? What factors influence attendance of varsity sports events for students living on campus who have never before attended a UBC varsity event? What are practical ways to increase the attendance to sport events for students living on campus?

Target Population

The target population for this study included all students living on UBC Vancouver campus who do not attend UBC Varsity Sport Events. As suggested by Havard and Dwyer (2012) and Mayer et al (2017), it was evident that location (living on campus or not) as well as having never previously attended a game, were likely both factors determining attendance/non-attendance at home sports events and games. However, there is a gap in research focusing on samples encompassing both of these factors. This study's sample included students from all faculties, regardless of year level and whether they were a graduate or undergraduate student. Sampling from all faculties and year levels helps to increase the representativeness of the sample to the target population, thus increasing the generalisability of the findings to the population of interest (Christensen, 2001 as cited in Ferguson, 2004, p. 17). For example, as suggested by Fenzel (2001), establishing a sense of connection with their institution is crucial for first-year students. This makes it more likely for first-year students to attend events as part of their university experience (Fenzel, 2001). Sampling only from this group could therefore elicit biased results not representative of the whole target population, introducing a threat to external validity (Ferguson, 2004). Similarly, sampling just one faculty would likely elicit similar limitations including biased results toward one subset of the UBC student population (Hammer et al., 2009).

Research design

All students living on UBC Vancouver campus who do not attend UBC Varsity Sport Events were recruited through the use of an online qualtrics survey. While there is previous research on reasons why students who live off campus do not attend Varsity Sport Events, there is a gap in understanding of why students living on campus (specifically those who have never been to a Varsity event before) do not attend such events, as distance to the game venue would not be a barrier (Perrault, 2016). Hence, the goal of this study was to identify the underlying factors that could influence their decision not to attend games, and discover ways to increase attendance.

To recruit students for this study, flyers were posted around campus, such as in UBC residences and the UBC Student Nest, on bulletin boards, doors, and elevators (see Appendix B). According to Kerr et al. (2001), it is beneficial to place recruitment materials in areas where the target population is commonly found. Areas like UBC residences are more likely to contain students who fit our inclusion criteria, specifically students living on campus. Perks (2013) also suggest that flyers can be used as an effective promotional tool for recruitment, specifically flyers linked to receiving a benefit or prize. Moreover, the recruitment flyer was also posted on social media such as Instagram, due to its prevalence as a social media platform among university students. Additionally, UBC Kin was contacted via email to promote the recruitment flyer on their social media to reach a greater number of students (see Appendix D). Research has shown that using social media to promote an event can effectively raise awareness and engagement, which in turn boosts attendance (Einsle et al., 2023). Data was collected before upcoming or during games, as this allowed for a clearer understanding of the reasons for non-attendance and any underlying factors that have affected the decision of the population.

Students participating in the study were required to fill out the survey that starts with the questions: “Do you live on campus?”, and “Have you been to a game before?”, to ensure the specified sample as the intended target population. These questions ensured that all the participants in our study were part of our inclusion criteria, having been a UBC student that lives on campus and has never attended a Varsity sport event. The survey was intended to take five to ten minutes and no names or identifiable information were collected in the survey to ensure student anonymity, as outlined in the informed consent. (see Appendix A). The survey closed on April 2nd, 2024 and the goal was to recruit a minimum of 40 responses as research shows that a greater response rate leads to greater external validity (Johnson & Wislar, 2012).

Data collection and data analysis

In order to gather data, this study used a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions in a Qualtrics survey (see Appendix A). These were in the form of multiple choice, multiple select, Likert scale and open-text response. The multiple-choice questions consisted of selecting one answer or multiple answers. Further, there was the ability to select ‘other’ where a text-box entry allowed the user to input their desired response. The Likert scale-type questions consisted of five options, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The topics the survey covered were inclusion criteria, demographics, barriers to attending Varsity Sport Event and ways to increase attendance (see Appendix A). The survey quantitatively (multiple select, multiple choice, Likert scale) and qualitatively (open-text response) identified barriers that hinder student attendance at these events. Furthermore, it provided ideas for potential strategies to enhance attendance among on-campus residents. After the study participant completed the survey, they were redirected to another survey for the chance to win a Lululemon yoga mat or a UBC Athletics Prize Pack.

Following the survey's completion, data analysis involved a combination of descriptive statistics and qualitative descriptive analysis as both quantitative and qualitative information were collected. The study used descriptive statistics to analyse and present the responses to the quantitative questions. This includes responses from the multiple choice, multiple select, and Likert scale questions that focused on demographics, and both barriers and facilitators for attendance. These were presented in tables and figures (see Appendix C, Figures 1-6) using the 'Report' function in Qualtrics. Furthermore, this study also used qualitative descriptive analysis to analyse the open-ended text response questions, such as factors that would enhance individual turn-out to UBC Varsity Sport Events. This was presented in a qualitative summary (see Appendix C, Figure 7). To identify trends in the data as well as common themes and produce a thorough summary, the individual responses were gathered, contrasted, and compared. Analysing and summarising the trends in the data (i.e. graphs) and themes in the open-ended responses allowed for a greater understanding of providing recommendations for increased attendance at UBC Varsity Sport games.

Results/Findings

The survey had a total of 84 responses and no incomplete submissions. Out of the 84 total responses, 83 responded 'yes' (99%) and 1 responded 'no' (1%) to being a UBC Student. When asked about living on the UBC Vancouver Campus, 60 responded 'yes' (71%) and 23 responded 'no' (29%). Furthermore, 48 responded 'no' (57%) and 36 responded 'yes' (43%) to having been to a UBC Varsity Festival Event, which is defined as an elevated home game with promotional activities and ticket fees are charged for UBC Students. Festival events are Homecoming, Thunderstruck, Winter Classic, Courtside, and Pride. Moreover, 44 responded 'no' (52%) and 40 responded 'yes' (48%) to having been to a regular season UBC Varsity Sport Game (free tickets for students at gated events, free attendance at non-gated events). These following survey questions helped to determine which of the responses would

be eligible for the inclusion criteria, which is defined as being a UBC Student who lives on campus and has never attended a UBC Varsity Sporting Event.

After determining eligibility for the inclusion criteria, questions related to participant demographics were asked. According to Figure 1, most of the participants were in their 2nd, 3rd, or 4th year of study at UBC. Furthermore, 73% of the participants were domestic students and 27% of the participants were international students (Figure 2). Next, the survey asked about the participants' faculty of study and it was found that a vast majority were in Applied Sciences, Arts, and Education (Figure 3).

Upon looking at the primary reasons for lack of attendance at Varsity Sport Events for UBC students living on campus, it was found that the most popular answers were “Lack of Time,” “Unaware of games,” “I often have conflicting school/study commitments,” and “I don’t have anyone to go with” (Figure 4). Next, a Likert Scale was used to measure the participant’s opinions and attitudes towards certain topics related to attendance facilitators and barriers. According to Figure 5, most of the participants agreed that incorporating contests where fans have the opportunity to interact with players and seeing promotions of athletes on campus would make them more likely to attend. Additionally, it was found that the cost of food and drinks at non-varsity sporting events served as a barrier for attendance (Figure 5). Most of the participants also agreed that having more time and if they were better informed of the dates and times of games would make them more likely to attend (Figure 5). Lastly, having people to go with would increase the likelihood of attendance (e.g. the resident assistant in UBC residences organises a meeting spot for attendees to gather before the game) (Figure 5). Participants were also asked if they would feel more incentivized to go to multiple games a season if there was a reward at the end of the school year (i.e. a rewards program or loyalty stamp card for rewards for more games attended). The results indicate that 78% of the participants responded ‘yes’ (Figure 6). Furthermore, they were also asked for an open-text

response regarding things that would motivate or encourage them to attend UBC Varsity Events. Some of the facilitators mentioned included things such as prizes/merch, higher promotion, a sense of community or celebration, and interactions with the athletes (Figure 7).

Discussion

The findings suggest that for UBC students living on campus who have never attended a Varsity event before, the main barriers to attendance were unawareness of games, lack of time, lack of having someone to go with, and conflicting school/studying commitments. Participants also agreed that higher promotion of athletes and game dates, more fan-player interactions, cheaper food and drinks, having more time, and having people to go with would all increase their attendance. Of particular interest, 78% of participants agreed they would feel more incentivized to attend multiple games per season if there was a rewards program or loyalty stamp card with prizes at the end of the school year for those attending the highest number of games.

The main findings of this study are largely consistent with existing literature. Specifically, the predominant barrier identified was 'lack of awareness of games,' which is in line with Perrault's (2016) discovery that students who had never attended a Varsity football game tended to be less aware of game dates and times. Furthermore, these findings are consistent with Mayer et al (2017) and Kim and Trail (2010) also finding “lack of knowledge of Varsity games/event schedules” to be a prominent barrier for students living on campus. Notably, our study exclusively focused on students who had never previously attended a Varsity game, further supporting Perrault’s (2016) and Mayer et al’s (2017) findings about differences between students who have/have not been to a Varsity game before. While Perrault (2016) identified lack of interest as one of the biggest barriers, this study did not find this to be the most prominent one. In terms of strategies to boost student attendance, these findings are similar to Perrault (2016) in that social influence (having friends to go to the

games with), and more promotions/incentives to attend (i.e. loyalty rewards card) could both support increased attendance. Perrault (2016) also found “greater team spirit” (i.e. more cheering in the stands) could boost attendance. While this study did not examine “team spirit” per se, it did find that increasing opportunities for interaction with athletes would increase attendance, which may have implications for the importance of “team spirit”.

The findings mentioned above connect to the problem presented by the partner by contributing to increased knowledge and understanding of the factors that influence UBC students living on campus to attend or not attend Varsity sports events. Currently, our partner has identified that they are interested in increasing attendance at UBC Varsity Sports Events, yet there is little knowledge surrounding what factors influence student attendance and non-attendance to varsity sports events. Our study offers valuable insights as to the major barriers to the lack of attendance at varsity games amongst UBC students, especially those living on campus. The two top barriers identified were identified include ‘unaware of games’ (n=28), and ‘not having anyone to go with’ (n=25), and these factors redirect the focus of our recommendations to UBC athletics, highlighting strategies such as promotion, incentives, and social interactions such as pre-game gatherings and post-game fan-athlete interaction to increase student attendance.

Several limitations were encountered including small sample size, lack of comparison groups, reliance on self-reported/subjective data, and difficulties in recruiting participants due to highly specific inclusion criteria. The survey only received a total of 84 responses which does not nearly represent the broader population of ~13,000 UBC students living on campus (“Prospective Students”, n.d.). This could have limited the generalizability of the findings since a small sample size might not adequately represent the diversity within the UBC student population of about 60,863 students and that future research at a larger scale is needed (“UBC Overview and Facts”, 2023-2024). Additionally, most respondents were domestic students

(73%), making it difficult to generalise the findings to the broader UBC student body as UBC is a highly international school with 17,019 students across Vancouver campus being international (“UBC Overview and Facts”, 2023-2024). The lack of a comparison group also limited our ability to assess the relative impact of different factors on student attendance. For example, as Mayer et al. (2017) suggested, the predictors of non-attendance for students who had never attended a sports event/game might differ from those of students who had previously attended. Since our study did not directly compare students who had attended a game with those who hadn't, we cannot definitively state that the identified barriers are specific to students who had never attended a game before. Future research might benefit from including multiple comparison groups (i.e. UBC students living on-campus vs off-campus and/or UBC students who have been to a Varsity game before vs who have not attended one before) to better identify factors that are specific to certain groups, and what might account for these differences. Additionally, having such specific inclusion criteria made it challenging to recruit participants, potentially accounting for the small sample size. Future research could benefit from adopting more inclusive criteria (i.e. UBC students living on and off campus) when recruiting participants from the UBC student body. By casting a wider net, researchers can increase sample size and enhance external validity. Given that the primary goal of UBC Athletics was to boost attendance at UBC Varsity games, broadening the sample would likely not compromise the identification of barriers or recommendations. Another limitation is that the variable of interest was a measure of the self-assessed likelihood of attending the sports event if certain activities or programs (like a rewards program) were in place. Thus, response bias may occur when answers are self-reported as there can be a tendency for participants to respond with answers they believe are the most appropriate or expected, rather than to be honest. For instance, respondents may overstate their likelihood of attending a sports game because they perceive it as socially desirable

behaviour contributing to school culture or team spirit. Moreover, response shift bias may also occur as survey respondents' internal standards or frames of reference (e.g., likelihood of attending) is being measured in the study (Drennan, J., 2008). For example, if respondents initially underestimate their likelihood of attending as they identified themselves as not attending a sports game before but then adjust their expectations based on survey questions related to potential incentives for attending (e.g., rewards program), their responses may become biased towards overestimation. Future research should examine actual behaviour, tracking whether students do or do not attend campus sporting events after implementing activities such as rewards programs and evaluating whether there is an increase or decrease in sport game attendance, and what factors impact actual attendance behaviour. Moreover, future studies can develop experimental designs and/or secondary data analyses to derive to what extent each barrier for attendance such as 'lack of interest', 'having no one to go with', 'ticket price' can deter attendance and for which student demographic (e.g., male or female, domestic or international student). For example: if a student has someone to go with to the Varsity games but the ticket and food prices are high, how likely is it they would still attend? This new research can then inform future recommendations for UBC athletics, especially for individuals facing unique socio-economic circumstances.

Recommendations

From previous research and findings from the survey, four recommendations have been identified to help increase student attendance at UBC Varsity sports events and address the factors that limit attendance to these events for students living on campus. Some immediate actionable recommendations identified were related to increasing student awareness and motivation through promotional materials and incentives. Moreover, we also provided considerations for long-term recommendations such as creating social opportunities such as implementing a regular meet-up space before the game and implementing fan-to-

athlete interactions during half-time and post-game. Each of these recommendations is further discussed below.

Offering incentives: Rewards program and prizes

The first recommendation is to offer incentives to encourage student attendance, such as rewards programs and loyalty stamp cards (i.e. with a prize at the end of the school year), complimentary merchandise, gift cards, food bundle deals, complimentary beverages, or entry into raffles for prizes. Findings from the open-response question in the survey revealed that ‘incentives/prizes’ as one of the major factors students consider in their decision to attend varsity sports games, which may come in multiple forms such as free food, merchandise, raffle draw (Appendix C, Figure 7). Additionally, when asked if they would likely go to multiple games a season if there was a reward at the end of the year (i.e., rewards program), 78% of the respondents voted ‘yes’ (Appendix C, Figure 6). An example of how this can be implemented includes students with the most stamps on their loyalty card receiving a prize at the end of the school year for having attended a high number of games. Studies have shown that loyalty and rewards programs have benefited many institutions by generating higher levels of continued engagement from their users or fans than on average (Hofman-Kohlmeier, 2016; Yun, et al., 2021). This same strategy can be applied to increase the frequency and number of UBC students attending varsity sports games throughout different game seasons.

Prioritise Promotion: Social media and other channels

The second recommendation is to increase promotion initiatives through multiple mediums such as social media platforms (e.g., Instagram), and distributing or projecting promotional materials (i.e., event posters) in high-traffic areas such as ‘Nest’ and ‘UBC Life’. Results from the survey indicated ‘unawareness of games’ as the top-voted barrier for not attending games for students living on campus who have never attended a game before

(Appendix C, Figure 4). Moreover, based on the open-ended questions, multiple students (n=6) indicated that 'more promotion' would motivate or encourage them to attend sports games (Appendix C, Figure 7). Studies have mentioned that the increased spread of information across multiple channels allows for sustained interest in the event being promoted (Pang, A., 2013). Similarly, when promotional material such as posters is spread across multiple locations, as opposed to one location, this increases the effectiveness of using this promotional tool (Jose et al., 2013). Apart from promoting promotional materials across multiple platforms, consistent messaging of the media across all platforms is an important factor in enhancing public engagement (Jose et al., 2013). Thus, to increase awareness of sports games being held across campus, distributing, or projecting the poster on a TV screen about upcoming sports games across different areas of the campus enhances sustained attention regarding the sports events being hosted as this reinforces the message in the poster that they have previously seen online or in other areas across campus. Apart from the place and content of these promotional materials, the date and time these sports event promotions are introduced is also important (Jose et al., 2013; Nour, et al., 2020). Promoting in advance increases airtime and message exposure. This allows students to plan their schedules accordingly for the sports games they are attending, as motivated by internal or external factors such as having peers to go with or incentives. This can involve posting preview content on Sunday of all Varsity games to look forward to the following week, in addition to posting the event posters. Constant exposure to marketing and promotional activities could also enhance engagement in creating online or in-person word-of-mouth behaviours (Yun, et al., 2021).

Create opportunities for fans to interact with athletes

The third recommendation is to implement half-time or post-game interactions such as contests and meet-and-greets with the Varsity players. Results from the survey suggest that

the majority of the students agree that incorporating opportunities or contests where fans can interact with athletes, increases their likelihood of attending the sports event (Appendix C, figure 5). Moreover, based on the open response question, ‘more welcoming events with varsity athletes’ was mentioned as a factor contributing to the attendance of sports games (Appendix C, figure 7). For instance, nominate a “fan of the game” for each UBC Varsity game, and the winner gets posted and recognized on the team’s social media. Adopting this type of fan-centric marketing strategy attempts to attract new attendees to the games while also encouraging existing fans to attend more often, cultivating stronger team-fan relationships (Yun, et al., 2021). As fans experience greater appreciation, it amplifies their sense of connection with the team, reinforces their commitment to attending sports events, and boosts overall school team spirit (Yun, et al., 2021).

Create a regular meeting spot for attendees before the game

The fourth recommendation is to increase opportunities for students who have the same interest in attending a Varsity game to meet and mingle before the event. This can include organising regular meeting spots for attendees to gather before the game, to ensure students have a group to attend the game with. Results of the survey showed ‘I don’t have anyone to go with’ (n=26) as one of the major factors impacting student attendance at varsity sports games (Appendix C, figure 4). Similarly, based on the open-ended questions, multiple students mentioned ‘having people to go with’ as one of the motivators for them to attend a varsity sports game. This includes organising regular meeting spots for attendees to gather before the game, to ensure students have a group to attend the game with. Previous studies suggest that creating hospitality areas where students can socialise is regarded as an effective budgetary decision to drive student attendance (Simmons et al., 2021). For example, for students living on campus, the Resident Assistant (RA) in UBC residences could organise a meeting spot for attendees of the same residence or floor to gather before the game, which

fosters companionship, and a sense of community leading to the game event. The greater the opportunity for students to participate in school activities, the more likely they are to feel a part of their community and become productive contributors to enhancing school team spirit and culture and improve social perceptions surrounding attending sport games (Elkins et al., 2011).

Conclusion

The study aimed to analyse why UBC Vancouver students living on campus, who have never attended a UBC Varsity Sport Event, choose not to attend such events. After conducting an online Qualtrics survey, we gathered quantitative and qualitative data from 84 participants. The results disclosed the factors that impact student attendance at University of British Columbia (UBC) Varsity Sport Events. The main factors contributing to the lack of attendance include: being “unaware of games” followed by, “I don’t have anyone to go with”, and “lack of time”. To address these challenges and enhance attendance, recommendations were proposed, such as prioritising promotion, organising regular meeting spots for attendees to gather before an event to attend the game together, implementing ways to interact with Varsity athletes, and offering incentives. Although there may have been additional factors influencing the results and our limited research timeframe, we have presented these recommendations to our partners in hopes of potentially boosting attendance as well as increasing awareness.

Appendix A

Survey link: https://ubc.yu11.qualtrics.com/jfe/preview/previewId/8df115fd-c20b-488f-8fd8-f4acd568354f/SV_3CnfiutsjWj8f6S?Q_CHL=preview&Q_SurveyVersionID=current

Appendix B



ARE YOU A UBC STUDENT LIVING ON CAMPUS WHO HAS NOT ATTENDED A UBC VARSITY SPORTS GAME BEFORE?

WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

AS PART OF THE COURSE-BASED RESEARCH PROJECT (KIN 464), WE ARE CONDUCTING A STUDY ON STUDENT ATTENDANCE OF UBC VARSITY SPORTS EVENTS

FOR MORE INFORMATION, ABOUT THIS PROJECT, FOLLOW THE LINK AND QR CODE OR CONTACT (IABRIGO@STUDENT.UBC.CA)

SURVEY RESPONDENTS WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENTER A DRAW TO WIN ONE OF THE FOLLOWING PRIZES: (2 LULULEMON YOGA MATS & 4 UBC ATHLETICS PRIZE PACKS)



Project ID: H17-03560-A017 (Group 19)
The Principal Investigator on this project is Dr. Andrea Bundon (andrea.bundon@ubc.ca)



Appendix C

Figure 1



Figure 2

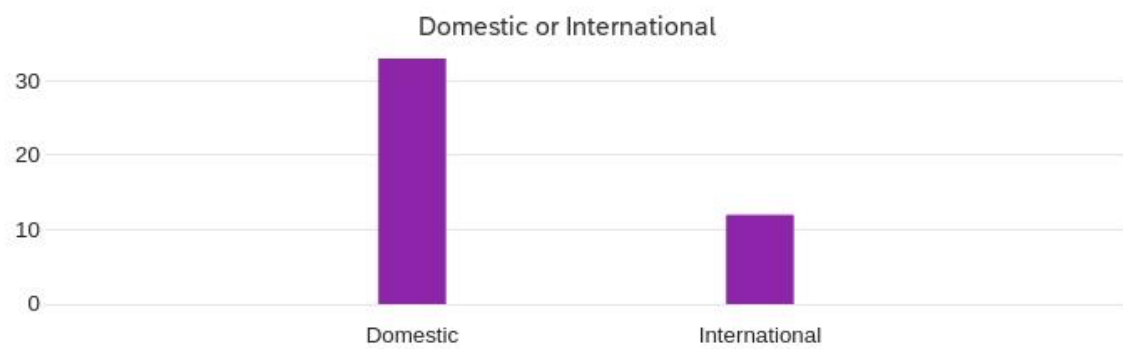


Figure 3

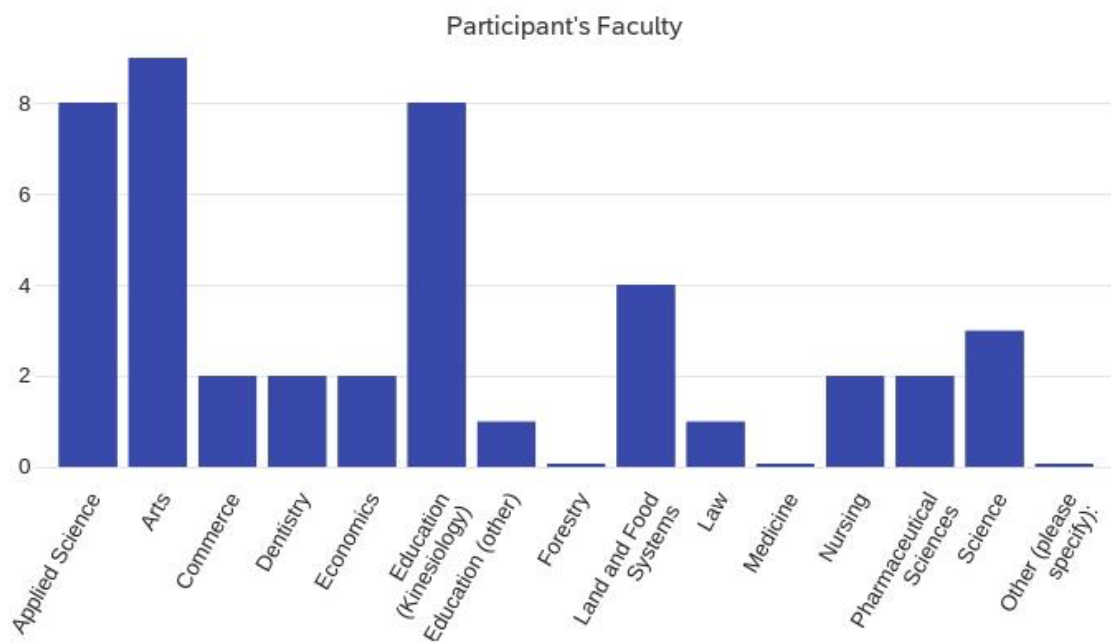


Figure 4

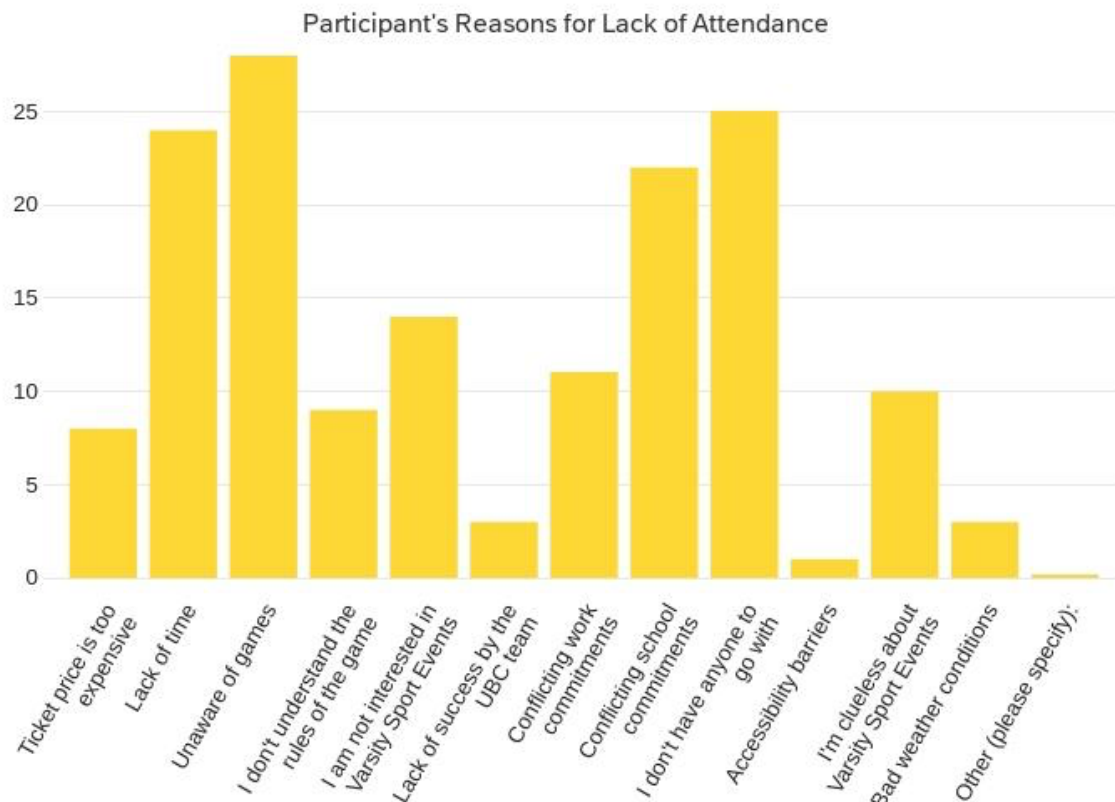


Figure 5

Field	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Incorporating contests where fans have the opportunity to interact with players would make me more likely to attend an event.	5	6	12	14	5
Seeing promotions of athletes on campus would make me more likely to attend an event. For example, social media and posters.	5	2	9	20	6
At other sporting events (not a varsity event) you've previously attended, did you find the cost of food/drinks a barrier?	3	4	12	17	6
If I had more time, it would make me more likely to attend an event.	1	3	4	25	8
If I was better informed of the dates and times of games, it would make me more likely to attend an event.	1	2	6	21	11
Having people to attend with would increase the likelihood of attending an event (for example, the Resident Assistant (RA) in UBC residences organizes a meeting spot for attendees to gather before the game).	0	2	5	20	14

Figure 6

Would you feel more incentivized to go to multiple games a season if there was a reward at the end of the school year? (Like a rewards program or loyalty stamp card for rewards for more games attended)

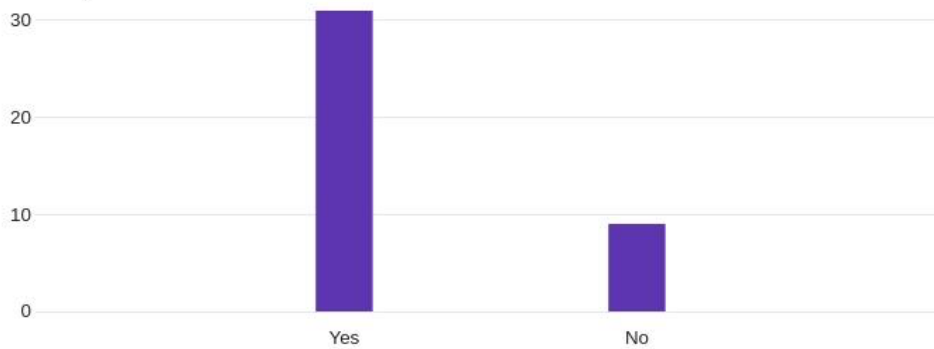


Figure 7

What is something that would motivate you or encourage you to attend UBC Varsity Events?

What is something that would motivate you or encourage you to attend UBC Varsity Events?

You'd have to pay me. Jk but I just don't really care about sports.

Free food/ free things

Free tickets

Having someone to go with

n/a

Games and merch

I find that the varsity athletes are quite exclusive. It's a lot less motivating to attend when I have not had great interactions with a lot of varsity athletes I have met. I think if you made more welcoming social events with the varsity athletes that would be better for overcoming that

In terms of incentive/prize: maybe some merch, useful (not a sticker or smth like that). And all ideas mentioned before were great

I'm not a fan of the promotion of varsity events as they often do not benefit my academic motivations

People to attend with, prizes for attending, better times around schooling and work schedule, free tickets for students

If i knew people participating or attending

Better promotion, more diverse events (not just football and hockey)

Incentives

Sense of community or celebration

More representation of team spirit on campus

more promotion and interaction

I'm very much unaware and scared of going to these events by myself

School pride

More advertising

Knowing people in the team

Appendix D

464 Research Project Survey ▶ Inbox x



Marielle Muller <mariellemuller02@gmail.com>
to kin.communications@ubc.ca, andrea.bundon ▾

Thu, Mar 21, 8:23 PM



Hello,

I hope this email finds you well! I'm a student in KIN 464, and my group member, Luai, sent a dm to the UBC Kin Instagram account today about posting our research project survey on UBC Kin Instagram stories. They directed us to send our poster with survey QR code to this email address (and CC our supervisor - I have CC'd Professor Bundon who is the Principal Investigator). I've attached the poster below! Thank you so much again for your help in promoting our survey! We really appreciate it.

Kindest regards,
Marielle Muller 48650832



Kinesiology Communications
to me ▾

Fri, Mar 22, 2:52 PM



Posted, thanks! It will also be included in the March 28th newsletter.

Clarice Yeung
Communications & Events Coordinator
Faculty of Education | School of Kinesiology
The University of British Columbia | Musqueam Traditional Territory
210 - 6081 University Boulevard | Vancouver, BC | V6T 1Z1
clarice.yeung@ubc.ca | kin.communications@ubc.ca
(604) 827-1652 | <http://www.kin.educ.ubc.ca>

Working remotely on Mondays and Fridays

Appendix E

CLASS PROJECT: Health Promotion and Physical Activity (KIN 464)

Participant Consent Form [Evaluating Attendance at UBC Varsity Sport Events Amongst Students Living on Campus] [GROUP 19]

Project ID: H17-03560-A017

Principal Investigator: Dr. Andrea Bundon (Assistant Professor, School of Kinesiology, Faculty of Education)

The purpose of the class project: To collect insights and expertise from community members regarding factors influencing attendance at UBC Varsity Sport Events among students living on campus. Following this, recommendations will be provided to UBC Athletics on potential strategies to enhance attendance at varsity events. These recommendations may encompass areas such as marketing, promotions, communication, and related aspects.

Study Procedures: With your permission, we are asking you to participate in a survey. You may only complete each survey once. With the information gathered, students will critically examine how different individuals understand or engage in health promoting activities or health promotion initiatives.

Project outcomes: The information gathered will be part of a written report for the class project. The written report will be shared with campus partners involved with the project.

Summaries of findings will also be posted on the following websites. UBC SEEDS Program Library:

<https://sustain.ubc.ca/courses-degrees/alternative-credit-options/seeds-sustainability-program/seeds-sustainability-library> No personal information/information that could identify participants will be included in these reports or shared with campus partners.

Potential benefits of class project: There are no explicit benefits to you by taking part in this class project. However, the survey will provide you with the opportunity to voice your opinion on your experiences with health promoting activities or initiatives in a broad sense and will provide the students with an opportunity to learn from your experiences. Confidentiality: Maintaining the confidentiality of the participants involved in the research is paramount, and no names of participants will be linked to the data collected. At the completion of the course, all data (i.e. notes) and signed consent forms will be stored on a secure electronic drive by Dr. Bundon. All data and consent forms will be destroyed 1 year after completion of the course.

Risks: The risks associated with participating in this research are minimal. There are no known physical, economic, or social risks associated with participation in this study. You should know that your participation is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study and there will not be negative impacts related to your withdrawal. If you withdraw from the study, all of the information you have shared up until that point will be destroyed.

Contact for information about the study: If you have any questions about this class project, you can contact Andrea Bundon by email at andrea.bundon@ubc.ca

Research ethics complaints: If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Ethics at 604-822-8598 or e-mail RSIL@ors.ubc.ca . or call toll free 1-877-822-8598.

Consent: Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time.

By proceeding with this survey, I am confirming I have read the above information and agree to participate in this research project.

Are you a UBC student?

- Yes
 No

Do you live on the UBC Vancouver campus?

- Yes
- No

Have you attended a UBC Varsity Festival Event – A festival event is defined as an elevated home game with promotional activities and ticket fees are charged for UBC Students. Festival events are: Homecoming, Thunderstruck, Winter Classic, Courtside, and Pride.

- Yes
- No

Have you attended a regular season Varsity Sport Game (free tickets for students at gated events, free attendance at non-gated events)

- Yes
- No

Are you a domestic or international student?

- Domestic
- International

What year level are you in?

- 1st year
- 2nd year
- 3rd year
- 4th year
- 5+ years
- Graduate student

What faculty are you in?

- Applied Science
- Arts
- Commerce
- Dentistry
- Economics
- Education (Kinesiology)
- Education (other)
- Forestry
- Land and Food Systems
- Law
- Medicine
- Nursing
- Pharmaceutical Sciences
- Science
- Other (please specify):

What stops you from attending UBC Varsity Sport Events? (Select all that apply)

- Ticket price is too expensive
- Lack of time
- Unaware of games
- I don't understand the rules of the game
- I am not interested in Varsity Sport Events
- Lack of success by the UBC team
- I often have conflicting work commitments
- I often have conflicting school/studying commitments
- I don't have anyone to go with
- Accessibility barriers
- I have no clue what Varsity Sport Events are
- Bad weather conditions
- Other (please specify):

Please share your thoughts on the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Incorporating contests where fans have the opportunity to interact with players would make me more likely to attend an event.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seeing promotions of athletes on campus would make me more likely to attend an event. For example, social media and posters.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At other sporting events (not a varsity event) you've previously attended, did you find the cost of food/drinks a barrier ?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I had more time, it would make me more likely to attend an event.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I was better informed of the dates and times of games, it would make me more likely to attend an event.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having people to attend with would increase the likelihood of attending an event (for example, the Resident Assistant (RA) in UBC residences organizes a meeting spot for attendees to gather before the game).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Would you feel more incentivized to go to multiple games a season if there was a reward at the end of the school year? (Like a rewards program or loyalty stamp card for rewards for more games attended)

- Yes
 No

What is something that would motivate you or encourage you to attend UBC Varsity Events?

Thank you for completing the survey. The following link will redirect you to a new survey where you can enter the draw for prizes (2 lululemon yoga mats and 4 UBC Athletics Prize Packs).

You will need our group number to enter the draw - **GROUP 19**

http://ubc.ca/qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3DhHlrkV4SCKcTA

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