THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MARKETING TECHNIQUES ON
INTRAMURAL SPORT PARTICIPATION

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ABSTRACT

RESEARCH PROJECT: The Effectiveness of Marketing Techniques on Intramural Participation

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A sample of 208 participants of intramural sports at a large Midwest university was surveyed during the spring semester of 2013 to identify the effectiveness of marketing techniques on intramural sport participation. Intramural sports exist to provide a form of competitive recreation for the participant, as well as a vital entity in the recruitment and retention of college students (Hums & MacLean, 2009). In fact, 31% of students reported the presence of intramural sport programming was important to their college decision, with an additional 37% indicating intramural programs influence their intention to return to their university (Hency, 2011). The popularity of intramural sports has subjected university recreational facilities to increase intramural opportunities, thus increasing marketing efforts. However, marketing strategies for intramural sports are not as refined as strategies found in college or professional sport, and certainly are not as researched (Schneider, Stier Jr., Kampf, Wilding, & Haines, 2007). This research identified what marketing techniques were the most effective among respondents, and if differences existed between demographics.

Results revealed promotional items ($\bar{M}=5.30$) as the most effective marketing technique. Between genders, only promotional display, $F (1, 206) = 7.07, p = .008$, and intramural sport
registration discount, $F(1, 206) = 8.96, p = .003$, were significantly different. Among factors influencing participation of intramural sport, fitness was significantly more important for women ($M = 5.83, SD = 1.32$) than it was for men ($M = 5.24, SD = 1.59$). There proved to be no significant difference in effectiveness of marketing techniques amongst class rank.
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Chapter I

Introduction

The growth of college recreational sport has come quite a ways from meager beginnings at Cornell University in the early 1900s. Today, programs have flourished to include a wide array of opportunities housed in multi-million dollar facilities. Recreation programs have grown at an exponential rate and include a variety of opportunities from pick-up games to organized national tournaments (Kaltenbaugh, Molnar, Bonadio, Divito, & Roeder, 2011; Lewis, Jones, Lamke, & Dunn, 1998). For students looking to find a competitive outlet, or a social form of exercise, intramural sport contains a wide range of talent, experience, and participation. While intramural sport provides a unique medium of fitness, schools have recently focused on its other benefits (Henchy 2011).

The quality of recreational programming has been shown to influence the choice of university among prospective students (Lindsey & Sessoms 2006). In fact, Intramural programs have been shown to greatly affect student retention rates by providing a sense of community and environment that is socially conducive for college students (Elkins, Forrester, & Noel-Elkins, 2011). Additionally, studies have supported the notion that student involvement in extra-curricular activities contributes to a higher overall GPA, and likeliness to graduate (Lindsey, Sessoms & Willis, 2009). Further research suggests intramural sports provide lessons that “go beyond the classroom” such as teambuilding and communicational skills (Elkins et al., 2011). Such skills have become essential in today’s highly volatile and fluid workforce. As a result, the potential to impact quality of education, along with student retention, has placed intramural
sports in the spotlight of many universities seeking to improve recruitment and establish
distinguishable advantages.

The increased exposure of intramural sports has subjected university recreational
facilities to a position of expected growth. Growth without effective marketing, however, is
difficult. Schneider, Stier Jr., Kampf, Wilding, and Haines (2007) identified marketing as a
perceived problem within campus recreation programs in North America. Specifically, a lack of
marketing research within intramural sports limits professionals to using traditional sport
marketing techniques that may not be as effective in the specialized realm of intramural sport.
Therefore, the call to expand the reach of intramural programming has been answered by the
addition of marketing professionals working with, or placed directly within, recreation
departments. These professionals may operate at a disadvantage due to the lack of evidence
regarding the effectiveness of intramural marketing. Intramural programs must find a way to
specifically target those who may have interest, and ultimately provide the incentive to register
and participate (Matthews, 1987). While an array of promotional techniques have been used,
researchers have not actively gauged the overall effectiveness or potential of chosen techniques
(Schneider et al., 2007). Intramural directors operating under budget constraints and increased
expectations must find ways to efficiently, and effectively improve intramural marketing efforts
(Kaltenbaugh et al., 2011).

Marketing research has been conducted within professional sports to a great extent, but
intramural sports have not received the same courtesy. Promotional tactics take time, personnel,
and money, thus re-affirming the notion that gauging effectiveness can have ramifications on the
success of an intramural program. The use of resources on ineffective techniques can handicap
a budget or hold back the full potential of other effective marketing methods. It is vital to
understand if patrons recognize a specific marketing strategy as the most effective. Even more, an organization must identify techniques that simply do not demonstrate effectiveness, and therefore lack a significant return on investment (Dick & Turner, 2007).

Statement of Purpose

The research consisted of two primary purposes. First, the research analyzed what techniques intramural sport participants find to be the most effective. Secondly, the research determined how intramural marketing effectiveness is different based on gender, educational level, and reasons for participation.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in this study:

1. Overall, tangible items will receive the highest effectiveness rating.

2. Social media will receive a higher effectiveness rating than other forms of mass digital communication.

3. Females will be more influenced to participate by fitness rather than competitiveness.

4. Females would be motivated more by fitness, social reasons, and fun than males.

5. Males would be motivated more by competitiveness than females.

6. Underclassmen will have a higher overall effectiveness rating of marketing techniques compared to upperclassmen.

Significance of Study

While studies have examined the effectiveness of marketing techniques in various industries, none have been specifically focused on a college intramural setting. This study provides an opportunity to gain a greater understanding regarding the impact of marketing in a growing industry that is attempting to attract a wide range of the student population. The
research could allow for intramural coordinators to have a better utilization of their resources for marketing, and avoid erroneous spending on less effective methods.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made for the purpose of the study:

1. The respondents have registered and expect to participate in an intramural sport.
2. The instrument used was valid, reliable, and correlated directly with the proposed purpose.
3. All participants responded truthfully.
4. Marketing exposure outside of the study was not considered substantial enough to affect the research.

Limitations

The following limitations applied to the study:

1. The intramural sport participants will be surveyed only in the beginning of the spring semester, omitting fall and summer intramural sport programs.
2. The study cannot control for outside marketing exposure that has the potential the influence results. Those factors might include regional tournaments, past experience, other university marketing, and intramural promotion outside the recreation department (e.g., through student groups who have regular teams).
3. This study utilized an instrument that is a variation of the instrument used by Dick and Turner (2007). Validity and reliability have not been established for the revised instrument.

Delimitations

1. Students participating in the study attended a large mid-western university.
2. The sports examined were (a) indoor soccer; (b) flag football; (c) basketball; (d) indoor volleyball; (f) singles ping pong.

3. Marketing techniques consisted of:
   1. Recreation center TV monitor advertisements
   2. Facebook
   3. Twitter
   4. Ball State University recreation website
   5. Campus e-mail notifications
   6. Word of mouth
   7. Promotional posters
   8. Promotional Display
   9. Intramural sport registration discount
   10. Promotional item handout

**Definition of Terms**

**Social Media Marketing**

Social media marketing is use of marketing techniques in an online platform that enables direct communication between the originator and viewer of the content (Zarrella, 2010). This study uses both Twitter, and Facebook as social media marketing techniques.

**Promotional Poster**

Promotional posters are 11x17 inch print advertisements created for each intramural sport. The posters are displayed at informational tables, and areas of campus where print advertisement can be displayed.

**Promotional Display**
Informational tables set in high traffic areas, such as a cafeteria or high traffic walkway. The tables may be staffed with a recreation center employee to answer questions, and contain promotional posters, handouts, and a demonstration of the intramural sport.

**Promotional Item Handout**

A tangible item, branded with the recreation center’s logo, given to the participant of an intramural event. Common forms of promotional item include intramural championship t-shirts, or branded coffee mugs.

**Digital Signage**

Promotional signs made specifically to be displayed on digital monitors located throughout the recreation center. The images are also used as advertisement banners on the recreation website homepage.

**Intramural Sport**

A program housed within college recreational services that includes “all organized recreational and physical activities for students and other participants” (Byl, 2002, p. 5).

**Marketing**

Marketing is, per the American Marketing Association, “the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customer, clients, partners, and society at large” (Gundlach, & Wilkie, 2009, p. 1). In this study, intramural sport marketing efforts are represented by the ten techniques listed in the questionnaire.

**Varsity Athletics**

Varsity athletics are defined as “a voluntary program that offers highly formalized between-school competitions that are oriented towards winning” (Byl, 2002, p. 6). In
contrast to intramural sport, varsity athletics places a higher emphasis on winning and great emphasis on player skill level (Byl, 2002).
Introduction

Intramural sports have become woven into the social community of many universities only to be met with increasing demand and expectations. Once scattered and loosely defined, intramural sports have now grown to become a mainstay of almost every collegiate campus, developing into an industry that employs thousands of staff each year (Byl, 2002). According to Lindsay and Sessoms (2006) 31% of college students reported that the presence of intramural sport programming was important to deciding on a college, with an additional 37% stating its importance in continuing at said college. Intramural sports, in a college setting, now equal or better the size and operating budget of most public options such as YMCAs (Milton, Roth, & Fisher, 2011). Expansion of employment and development throughout the United States has been enormous, leading to the formation of organizations such as National Intramural Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA). The continued development of intramural sport is evident in the ongoing construction of multi-million dollar facilities and national tournaments held for a wide-range of sporting events (Milton, Roth, & Fisher, 2011).

At the center of college recreation programs are intramural sports. Colleges are placing greater emphasis on the development of intramural programs, most notably for their ability to aid in student retention, provide a sense of community, and potentially impart valuable life skills (e.g., teamwork; Henchy, 2011). However, as these programs increase in size and importance, their sustainability and patron participation goals will rely more heavily on marketing (Masmanidis, Gargalianos, & Kosta, 2009). It is important for collegiate intramural sport
programs to have a grasp of what their target audience wants, and is most responsive to. Schools are turning to marketing, in an effort to provide a better product by improving the intramural sport experience (McChesney, 1997). However, increased expansion of recreational sport development and marketing efforts has not coincided with increased research (Haines & Fortman, 2007). Intramural marketing professionals must identify methods to better understand the student population, and improve the visibility of marketing efforts. The evaluation of existing marketing techniques, and their effectiveness among their target audience could provide a greater understanding of ways to provide a better product (Dick & Turner, 2007).

**Intramural Sports**

Universities use intramural sport to define a broad amount of activities, which can lead to difficulty in defining the term (Byl, 2002). However, breaking down the word allows a greater understanding, as ‘intramural” separates into the Latin words intra, signifying within, and murus, meaning wall. The amount of options offered within university walls is quite large, and not always associated with sport in general (Lewis, Jones, Lamke, & Dunn, 1998). Intramural sport exists to provide a form of recreational outlet for the participant. A variety of patrons are served, from the ultra-competitive to the casual student seeking exercise or social interaction.

Although the beginning of organized intramural sport in America can be traced to the early 1800s, the transition to a modern setting did not occur until the early 1900s (Byl, 2002). Intramural sport’s meager beginnings can be traced to schools such as Princeton, Yale, and the University of Minnesota. Princeton’s recreational beginnings took form in 1857, when the freshman class challenged the sophomore class to a game of baseball. Evidence of structured recreational play also surfaced at Yale in 1859, where boating clubs participated in interclass competition. In 1878, the University of Minnesota’s students competed in a football game
between the freshman and sophomore classes (Mueller & Reznik, 1985). However, it was not until 1913, when both Michigan and Ohio State created departments for intramural athletics, that modern collegiate intramural structure began to take shape (Byl, 2002). Intramural sports gained momentum soon after as World War I developed a large scale interest in athletic programs due to the prominent position of sport-like conditioning within the military. Coincidentally, intramural sports also appealed to women, who were discouraged from participating in varsity athletics at the time, but encouraged to engage in physical activity (Mueller & Reznik, 1985).

NIRSA, or the National Intramural Recreational Sports Association, is considered the leading organization for recreational activities. The organization did not begin to take form until the 1950’s, when Dr. Wasson, a professor at Dillard University, conveyed a group of 20 African-American intramural directors to create the National Intramural Association. By the 1970’s, the NIA had extended its membership to females. Shortly thereafter the organization evolved into NIRSA to reflect its expanded member reach (Byl, 2002; Clarke, 1978).

Intramural sports are built upon three basic components, namely (a) the facility; (b) the equipment; (c) program structure. All three components play a direct role in the type of sports offered, and the actual duration of the sport (Byl, 2002). The facility and equipment in a university dictate what types of sport will be possible. More specifically, games such as flag football require a field of some sort, just as basketball would obviously require a basketball court. Size of the facility may also determine how many games can occur at one time, and the size of each team. Recreational soccer, and football are examples of sports that can be scaled depending on the size of space available. Intramural directors also develop non-traditional sports that creatively use the equipment and facility (Byl, 2002; Mueller & Reznik, 1985). Program structure is the framework of each individual sport offered. The most popular forms of
intramural sports structure are tournaments, or leagues. Tournaments represent an event that only lasts a couple of days, and is structured as a bracket where the winning teams advance toward a championship. Leagues are longer lasting, averaging anywhere from a week to a whole semester. The two types of structures allow the recreation center to accommodate multiple events at different time slots, and availabilities within the facility (Byl, 2002).

Intramural sports can be further distinguished from professional or varsity-level sport. At face value, an intramural sport participant is more focused on the experience itself, in addition to the enjoyment gained from participating in the activity. While competition still remains a relatively large part of the overall intramural experience, greater emphasis is placed on general fitness, education, and enjoyment of the activity (Lewis et al., 1998; Martindale, Devlin, & Vyse, 1990).

Differences are also evident in the level of athlete involved in each respective area. Intramural sports do not require athletes of the highest caliber. Rather, the focus is shifted towards the “physically active pursuit” (Lewis et al., 1998, p. 2). Essentially, anyone can play an intramural sport regardless of athletic pedigree. Unlike a professional sporting event, where winning is considered a crucial factor in product enjoyment, intramural sport can be enjoyed by those seeking fitness or social interaction (Lewis et al., 1998; McChesney, 1997; Trail, 2009).

Intramural sports, in a college setting, provide a unique set of benefits to the participant in comparison to other university activities. One benefit can be described as an increased sense of community to the intramural team, and the university itself (Cheng, 2004; Lindsey et al., 2009). Elkins, Forrester, and Noel-Elkins (2011) defined community as “the binding together of individuals toward a common cause or experience” (p. 25). The effects of participating in an intramural sport go beyond structured recreational play. Cheng (2004) identified a student’s
sense of community as the value one possesses as an individual, along with acceptance as part of the social group. On the opposite spectrum, feelings of loneliness are attributed to the negative effects of community, or absence of community itself. In Elkins et al. (2011) research investigating intramural sports correlation to sense of campus community, the authors present the notion “the greater the opportunity for students to participate in a range of activities, the more likely they are to feel a part of their community and to become productive contributors” (p.26). Intramural sports provide ample opportunity through a wide range of activities to allow for continued involvement, in addition to options for participants disinterested in conventional sports (Lewis et al., 1998). Cheng (2004) goes on to explain the leading detracting factor of students enjoying their living situation on college campuses is loneliness. According to Cheng, students who had participated in intramural sports experienced a significant decrease in loneliness and overall stress. Furthermore, intramural sports could provide a sense of belonging and overall community attachment to new and existing students (Henchy, 2011). Students could feel a greater attachment to an institution where they have genuine interactions among diverse populations, further solidifying intramural sport’s role in community development (Elkins et al., 2011). More specifically, students participating in intramural sports are introduced to many other students during their play, encouraging a level of interaction that may have not been previously considered. This interaction allows the participant to develop new relationships, including those with students of different backgrounds and cultures. Through intramural sport, an opportunity to bond and encourage community interaction among the campus population is achieved (Elkins et al., 2011).

Intramural sports are a substantial contributing force in retaining students for the course of their college career. Studies indicate that intramurals play a role in the probability of a student
initially choosing, and ultimately returning to a school after their first year (Lindsey, & Sessoms, 2006). Lindsey and Sessoms (2006) conducted a study in a small southeastern university regarding intramural sport participation. The data detailed that approximately 94% of respondents stated they would like to participate in intramural sports programming each week. While not all of those respondents actually did participate, it does signify a widespread interest. Additionally, Lindsey and Sessoms (2006) provided a similar figure indicating that 31% of students held recreational facilities and programming in high respect while choosing a college. Perhaps more importantly, the research identified that 37% of the student population felt intramural sports were important in their decision to continue attending their respective school. These results demonstrate how relevant intramural sport can be in the life of a college student (Henchy, 2011).

Schools have begun to realize the significance of intramural and recreation centers, and responded with an influx of spending on renovated facilities and enlarged programming. According to Dreyfuss (2002), of all 725 universities under the NIRSA membership umbrella, almost half have built new recreation centers since 1995. Additionally, 25% of the 725 universities’ recreational facilities have been built after the year 2000 (Dreyfuss, 2002). Some of the newly created facilities have cost upwards of $100 million (Milton et al., 2011). Schools are displaying their willingness to provide the adequate space for intramural sport activities, and accommodate the rising demand.

Marketing

Marketing is “the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customer, clients, partners, and society at large” (Gundlach, & Wilkie, 2009, p. 1). Marketing is an overreaching concept that directly
affects a business throughout every branch, and essentially represents the “link” between a business and a prospective consumer. In fact, the definition of marketing has evolved while coming under scrutiny for the better part of 50 years (Gamble, Gilmore, McCartan-Quinn, & Durkan, 2011). As technology changes the way humans interact, businesses change their approach. As businesses have grown from a brick and mortar local store to global corporations, the definitions of customer service have grown so great that they have become vague due to the incorporation of so many concepts (Wilkie & Moore, 2012).

The importance of marketing can become easily overlooked because it does not represent a function that is attributed to essential business operation. More specifically, a company could exist and theoretically thrive without marketing. However, that same theoretical company could have been operating with unrealized potential (Levitt, 1977). Since the 1980’s, research and application of marketing has intensified. Companies were expanding their search for new, innovative ways to disseminate information about their product in existing and expanding markets. Likewise, the world of academia showed great expansion. From 1980 to 1984, the amount of research focused marketing journals went from 7 to 15. The increase in published material was not only a result of increased research within marketing, but also a global increase in business education. As businesses began to operate globally, the demand for knowledge of business systems became increasingly important. Additionally, with the innovation of the internet came a completely new form of interacting, coinciding with a new need for communication. Marketing became more important, and its benefits became apparent (Gamble et al., 2011).

Theodore Levitt (1977) explained for a business to function under the theory that a company operated solely to make profit was careless. Levitt explained business in an analogical
sense, claiming the profit-business relationship to be similar to the purpose of life if humans only focused on eating. However, profits, like food, were claimed to be “requisites” rather than the purpose. A business survives on profit, but its sole purpose should not be to simply survive or exist by making profit. When marketing is injected into the direction of a business, its purpose becomes to “create and keep a customer” (Levitt, 1977, p. 2). The inclusion of marketing into an organizational purpose evolves all business strategy through perspective. Corporate strategy through a marketing perspective is inherently different than one through a purely profit prospective. Levitt describes that when a consumer purchases a product, he/she buys expectations rather than an actual item. Therefore, a company is more than a tangible product. It is a representation of their values and set of perceived expectations from a customer (Levitt, 1977). Research has indicated that brand knowledge is not simply what the brand is, but the thoughts, perceptions, and emotions that are linked to the specific brand. As marketers, the purpose is to create a positive identity by linking the brand with the desired associations within a consumer’s mind (Keller, 2009).

Developing an identity, otherwise known as branding, is a principal concept within marketing. Not all businesses can focus their processes on the marketing concept due to the variability of the targeted consumer, or the type of product that is being produced (Keller 2009). However, branding is a manner in which the company can align desired perceptions or specific connotations with a recognizable image. Imagine a businessperson traveling, in an unfamiliar area, looking for a place to get coffee after a long drive. He/she has many options regarding choice of store, but may chose a Starbucks coffee shop based solely upon his familiarity and satisfaction with the brand. Starbucks’ powerful brand allows it to draw in consumers, and even further, the organization is able to charge a premium for their product because of brand
reputation. Branding not only increases the perception of quality regarding a company’s product, it also increases the reception of marketing. A consumer’s absorption of marketing material may very well lie in their perception regarding a brand (Fischer, Volckner & Sattler, 2010). When Nike launched a new line of basketball sneakers endorsed by LeBron James, a popular and talented athlete, the consumer reaction was very positive. Nike already had an established brand in the specific market, specifically Michael Jordan’s sneaker line, so they utilized their existing brand and success to aid in the public embrace of the new product. On the contrary, a less established brand would likely have to devote resources to bolster the acceptance of their product in a market in which they have not previously invested. Hence, Nike’s success in the sport market is an example of how important branding can be to future growth, and development of product lines (Fischer et al., 2010; Keller, 2009).

The basic purpose of marketing is to stimulate a response from an audience, spreading the message and amplifying interest in the offered product (Schultz & Tannenbaum, 1996). Promotion is only a part of the marketing whole, representing advertising (Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2007). Batra, Aaker and Myers (1995), have discussed the process by which a promotional message can be deconstructed into five parts consisting of:

1. The source, or the creator of the message, is usually the company that has created the promotion for the product.
2. The message is both the actual content being conveyed, and the actual execution of that content.
3. The channel represents the medium of dissemination for the message. A channel can be a wide variety of media such as billboards, magazines, television and much more.
4. The receiver refers to the target audience of the message whom usually consist of common demographic or psychographic characteristics.

5. The destination is the progress of the message after it has reached the source. Research has shown that a receiver may spread the message further to other prospective consumers through word of mouth.

Despite all of the different avenues to which a company may approach the integration of marketing, there are basic techniques that are universally fundamental. Developing a marketing plan is the general framework a company will follow throughout the implementation of its marketing strategies. One of the most basic concepts of a marketing plan is the “marketing mix” which consists of four main elements (a) product; (b) price; (c) place; (d) promotion. The marketing mix is a foundation through which marketing can be coordinated consistently within the organization. The four elements of the mix each address a specific purpose that greatly affects the end result of the company’s success. Again, while the methods used within each category may vary, the overall design of the marketing mix remains intact, and consistent (Keller, 2001, 2009). Deciding the core concepts of a marketing plan is dependent on integral components that will aide in choice of strategy regarding pricing, product distribution, and forms of promotion. Specifically, an organization must narrow in on the type of consumer, or target market, in which the company hopes to do business. Factors such as social class, race, and gender all play a role in the receptiveness of the target market to the product, and marketing strategies (Batra et al., 1995). Research suggests when marketing reaches an audience that is not within the target market, there is potential for wasted circulation. Wasted circulation happens with all forms of promotion, but it is crucial to make sure the intended audience is viewing
material tailored for them; otherwise the promotion may have had no real influence (Hayden, 1996).

As Levitt (1977) described, a consumer purchases a product for the expectation. The creation of that expectation is done through marketing. One of the best executors of creating products purchased for expectations is Apple, notably their line of iPads, iPods, and MacBook personal computers. While competing technology companies may produce a product that satiates the actual need of the consumer just as well as Apple, the difference is not just within the product, but the expectation. According to a recent study done in 2010, under a magnetic-resonance-imaging scanner the brain imaging of devoted Apple consumers were almost identical to those who were highly religious (Manjoo, 2010). Apple’s marketing efforts are devoted to creating a product experience based upon its brand identity. Essentially, the consumer is operating under the expectation that they are purchasing something more than a computer. The purchaser feels they are buying something elite, elegant, and high-quality, all because of a name and iconic logo on the packaging. Unlike Dell, Apple abstained from creating a product based around the marketing concept. Rather than give the consumer the option to customize a product they want to purchase, Apple created a brand so revered that consumers felt it was best to trust the company’s offerings. Instead of gaining the consumer through sheer variety, they attracted buyers through simplicity and specialty. Steve Jobs was very fond to point his critics, who believed in building what the consumer wanted, to a famous Henry Ford quote of, “If I’d have asked customer what they wanted, they would have told me, ‘A faster horse!’” (Majoo, 2010, p. 8;). The take away from two different companies, with two completely different business models, is just how contrasting the path to a successful brand can be. Researchers have noted there are various avenues a company can have success through the implementation of marketing
strategies (Houston, 1986). Oliver (1993) found that the two most prevalent factors affecting satisfaction were interest, and joy; with joy being the only factor that was directly related to satisfaction. However, it is important to have a measurable objective to better comprehend the product-target market relationship. How can an organization gauge the effectiveness of their product’s message and overall execution? The most commonly used method to gauge perception, based upon existing data and success, has been the surveying of a population through the development of a questionnaire usually supported by a type of weight-scale system. (Oliver, 1993).

**Types of Marketing**

Identifying the type of medium to encase a message in is one of the more pivotal choices an organization must make when creating promotional material. While there are numerous amounts of choices, each carries a distinct set of advantages and disadvantages. Signage is considered one of the most commonly used forms of conveying a message. Signage can take many forms such as posters, billboards, digital displays, or even scoreboards at a sporting event (Bernstein, 1998). While signage is effective, it must also combat the numerous amount of other signage that consumers see daily. Due to the high volume, and subsequent exposure of advertising signage, consumers can have a “tune-out” effect. Therefore, the placement of signage can be as important as the effectiveness of the design (Stotler & Johnson, 1989).

Electronic media, encompassing radio and television, represent the more traditional forms of advertising, or promotion. Radio is still widely used specifically for its relatively low cost, but long length of advertising air time. Despite the perception that radio advertising is not effective, it still offers certain notable advantages among specific uses (Lu Hsu, Shuen-An, & Li-Chang, 2007; Mullin et al., 2007). Radio advertising shines when used as a local medium of
advertisement, with research indicating listeners have a higher likelihood of purchasing a product after hearing it on their favorite radio talk show. Additionally, the United States Hispanic population exceeds the general population in radio usage. Companies that wish to target the Hispanic demographic have found that radio provides excellent results. A recent study done by Univision, a popular Hispanic media organization, has shown that over a million users have downloaded applications to their phones that enable the user to take the Univision radio broadcast to wherever they have a mobile data connection (Hanley, 2012). Television still represents the most connected, and expensive, medium for promotion currently available. The availability of national events, sporting events, prominent television programming, and national sport networks all lead to an enormous amount of viewers, and raw advertising potential. Programming such as the Olympics, or national sporting events like the Super Bowl can command millions of dollars for short advertising space, however national companies still find it a crucial part of their campaign. Television allows for the telling of a detailed story, through visual and auditory stimulation. The combination of the audio and video allow for a range of promotional concepts and ideas. However, television, much like signage, can have its advertising tuned-out by viewers who are not interested, or simply immune to the volume of advertising on national networks (Batra et al., 1995).

The Internet has provided an advertising opportunity that is as revolutionizing as much as it is misunderstood. The possibilities for promotional concepts on the interest are vast, providing use to almost every industry or organization. The internet allows a company to provide information that may have not been readily available, or easily coordinated, directly to the end user. Advertising space on highly visited sites such as Yahoo, Facebook, or YouTube can result in millions of views to a diverse audience. However, the advertising power the internet provides
must be utilized efficiently to avoid erroneous spending on an audience that may not be receptive. Much like signage and television, there is the capacity for consumers who have been overexposed to tune out the promotional message (Edelman, 2010). Industries that provide an experience are able to build consumer interest, and loyalty, through detailed history, photography, video, and even testimonials about their product right to the consumer’s internet enabled device. Advertising space on highly visited sites such as Yahoo, Facebook, or YouTube can result in millions of views to a diverse audience. Additionally, consumers are not able to view the same content from their mobile devices, which not only increases the number of visitors to a website, but provides the user with an easier way to access the same page. Essentially, the increase in mobile devices means users are consuming more content, and therefore, have more chances of viewing advertisements (Edelman, 2010; Shintaro & Barwise, 2011). The introduction of social media has contributed to the power marketing tool the internet already provides. Social media websites, such as Facebook, allow a company to actively engage with consumers, and offer them the option to become a fan or follower of the company’s specific page. The benefit may not lie directly with first time buyer creation, but more so with customer retention (Lapointe, 2012).

Modern day marketing has brought about new concerns and advantages for businesses looking to distinguish their brand. The advent and rapid absorption of social media among the consumer market has only increased the significance of building a reputable brand image (Keller, 2009). Organizations now possess an easy, and cost effective, method of tapping directly into their consumer base. Instant response to corporate strategy and product reception via social media has allowed companies to embrace the marketing concept with more efficiency (Barwise & Meehan, 2010). The marketing concept, although loosely defined, is essentially aligning the
processes of a business to fit the expressed desires of the target market. Ideally, if the organization is able to align its product closer to the desire of the consumer, then the company should have better sales and even better subsequent purchases. Instead of creating a product and using marketing to convince the consumer that the benefits could fulfill their desire, a company could instead create a product and use marketing to simply spread the word. While the marketing concept is unobtainable in the purest sense because every consumer’s need could not fit into one product, the theory represents a shift from product-oriented business to consumer-oriented business (Houston, 1986).

For example, a creative marketing concept was successfully utilized by Dell computers during their rise in the personal computer industry. Dell removed brick and mortar stores from their supply chain, delivering a completely new way to purchase a computer. Instead of visiting a computer store, or major electronics chain, one could purchase a PC via telephone or online. The business strategy allowed Dell to save resources that would be used for inventory storage, mass shipping, and surplus construction of computers. Instead, Dell would make the product, exactly to the customer’s specifications, after the order had been placed, and ship it directly to the purchaser. Essentially, the consumer was able to purchase a highly customized PC at a lower than competing product cost. Meanwhile, Dell was able to save on storage, production, and shipping costs (Serwer & Boorstin, 2002). Dell established a clear and successful message of customization and value, which could easily be communicated through various forms of marketing. The creation of business processes with a market mindset gave way to Michael Dell’s revolutionary manufacturing model (Greco, 2000).

Sport Marketing
The sporting industry is inherently different because it combines so many services, concepts, and experiences packaged in one product. Marketing sport cannot be approached the same way one would market a laptop computer (Mullin et al., 2007). Peter Bavasi, a baseball executive, once said “Marketing baseball isn’t the same as selling soap or bread. You’re selling a memory, an illusion” (Stavro, 1985, p.70). A sports fan may be an avid NFL fan, but absolutely detest half of the teams. The capacity for fragmentation due to intense rivalries, and loyalty within a singular product are unique. Additionally, it is impossible to create a consistent product offering for consumers. An organization cannot have absolute control over the team’s performance, the weather, interactions within the stadium experience, and much more.

Essentially, from a marketing standpoint, there is little that marketers can do to regulate the quality of the product. Therefore, marketers must find a way to encapsulate what consumers enjoy about sport. In addition, the fact that a consumer has no way of taking home a baseball game has given way to merchandise sales, collector item souvenirs, and other tangible offerings.

The use of tangible items is to attach something real to an experience, allowing the consumer to express loyalty, and take home a memory of the experience. Marketers also look to develop a social acceptance regarding brand loyalty. An example of brand loyalty is apparel sales, specifically the purchase of baseball jerseys to support one’s favorite player during games (Mullin et al., 2007). One of the oldest, but most effective ways sport marketers have encapsulated sport loyalty has been the use of association. Endorsements are especially popular with product placement, which associate intangible traits such as greatness, or recognition with their offering (Mullin et al., 2007). For example, Rayovac, a battery company, revealed in 1995 they intended to use Michael Jordan as a celebrity endorser for their new battery. The product, an alkaline, had the longest lifespan of any other battery on the market, but despite technical
advantages they still felt it necessary to use a highly recognized celebrity to promote the item. Rayovac’s purpose was to draw comparisons of greatness between the two products. Although a battery and a highly successful basketball player are worlds apart, the attempt is to draw symbolic comparisons between the two, in an effort to influence consumers’ opinions of quality (Hebel 1993, Mullin et al., 2007). Athletes have been a significant source of celebrity endorsers due to their immense popularity, and intangible traits that can be attached to products such as reliability, speed, or power (Charbonneau & Garland, 2005).

The sport product, in its most basic state, is composed of the game, players, equipment, and venue. Regardless of level, professional or recreational, and type of sport, the main four components are always relevant. From a promotional standpoint, it is vital to understand the differentiation, or type of target audience. Each sport consists of very different fans that are influenced by distinct promotional strategies. For example, the fan experience within a PGA tour event would be genuinely different from an NFL game. Attendees of a PGA event are actually following the players throughout their play of the course, and are located very close to the player, increasing the likelihood of interaction. Conversely, an NFL game is much more of a spectating event, located in large stadiums where the venue itself may provide just as much entertainment as the actual game. Additionally, the fan involvement is more focused upon crowd unity, rather than direct interaction with the players. Based upon these intrinsic differences, the promotional content must be altered to relate with the experience (Hiestand, 1997; Mullin et al., 2007).

In a case study focusing on the effects of advertising on satisfaction after a loss, Trail et al. (2009) attempted to find how effective marketing could alter the patron’s enjoyment of a college basketball game. The results concluded that if the team won, advertising had no effect
on their decision to attend, but if they lost, advertising’s effect was much more noticeable. According to the study, roughly 91% of spectator satisfaction with attending a game was related to factors other than outcome. However, the more advertising was a factor in the decision to attend, the lower the patron’s overall satisfaction with their choice to attend the game. Therefore, advertising’s role would be to create an enjoyable experience to those who would not be among the winning group. Essentially, marketing is designed to supplement the event itself in an effort to provide a greater overall satisfaction.

Sport’s unique nature places an emphasis on brand development and promotion as a primary purpose of the marketing department. As previously stated, the actual play of the team is not controllable. Therefore the team must associate itself with positive concepts to establish a brand image that is welcoming and exciting regardless of the outcome. Afterwards, marketing’s function is to make the product attractive, and create awareness (Mullin et al., 2007). Creating an attractive product that retains the loyalty of the target market is important for any industry, but even more so for professional sport. Sport teams rely heavily on attendance for a large source of revenue, and must ensure a consistent stream of ticket sales. It would be very difficult for an organization to stay in business, especially one reliant on ticket sales, without repeat customers. Hence, the emphasis on promotion techniques within the sport industry is to encourage repeat purchasing (Deighton, Henderson, & Nelsin, 1994). A sport organization is constantly in competition with other entertainment options, and even more so with other types of sport in the surrounding area, making it imperative to stay relevant in the minds of the target audience (Hiestand, 1997). Losing loyal consumers can result in a substantial increase in promotional spending, simply to regain the ones lost. Therefore, it is in the best interest of sport
organizations to create promotional material that is effective in creating awareness and interest in the organization, but also is cost-effective.

Dick and Turner (2007) provide insight into the divide between an organization and its customer base. Their study provides a ranking of what consumers consider the most effective 20 marketing techniques, in comparison to the rankings completed by NBA marketing directors. The results show the marketing directors were not on the same page with their customer base. Despite a budget upwards of one million dollars, money was being squandered on promotional techniques that did not provide an adequate return on investment. In some instances, the directors confused mass marketing techniques, such as cold calling, to be effective forms of promotion simply because the calls could be tracked and quantified. However, respondents indicated a heavy distaste in cold calling, so much so that some mentioned it would have a negative effect upon their perception of the team. Marketing directors shied away from expensive, although extremely successful, forms of promotion such as giveaway items. Consumers had ranked promotional premium or door give away items as number one, while the marketing directors had placed it as thirteenth. This is important because unlike like cold calling to sell tickets, there is no hard data on the immediate effects of a promotional give away. If one was simply looking at the resources spent between the two, it is logical to understand cold calling would be a viable method of promotion. However, in this case the fans are clearly indicating a promotional technique they find valuable to their experience, despite its inability to be quantified directly. It should be noted that the research suggested money be saved by eliminating, or lessening, techniques that do not incite positive reactions from the participants, and shifting those resources to the techniques that do. Increasing the budget for promotional
give away items, NBA star player promotion, or group sale discounts could lead to an overall higher value perception of the NBA product by the attendants.

Measuring technique effectiveness is essential to an efficient and sound organization. However, certain limitations within the respondent data must be taken into account. In the NBA study from Dick and Turner (2007), the authors questioned whether participants chose certain techniques as ineffective, such as cold-calling, because they found them annoying, regardless of their effectiveness. The misleading method of ranking was also considered suspect when observing other techniques such as giveaways. Ticket holders may choose to only attend games where there are giveaway items, forcing the organization into a continuous cycle of expectancy from the consumer base. Essentially, while the truth may be that the respondents would still attend games and have the same value perception of the NBA without promotional give away items or group sale discounts, they simply wanted those techniques. Additionally, for other leagues that may not command such a high promotional budget, techniques such as group sales and promotional items may be out of the question (Dick & Turner 2007).

Similarly, Lachowetz, Dees, Todd, and Ryan (2009) conducted an observation of a local minor league baseball team’s effort to increase attendance through the use of marketing and promotional material. Due to the lower quality of play, promotional techniques served as a vital resource to draw attendance and attract the specific target market of small families, consisting of parents between the ages of 20-40. The minor league team promoted the experience of attending equally, if not more, than the game. The franchise enhanced their promotional strategies through the implementation of giveaway items during games, in-game events, and local event appearances. The promotional techniques not only increased general awareness of the team, but also increased the experience for those attending. In-game events are suited towards members of
the families that may not necessarily enjoy the game of baseball, but enjoy entertainment, or attending events. Additionally, give away items are appreciated by the loyal fans, along with children who may hang on to the item, in turn creating a long-term loyal fan base. The club owner also noted that the enhancements to the venue resulted in a direct increase in attendance. The Lexington Legends founder stated, “We realize that not only are we in the baseball business but in the entertainment business by giving them that warm feeling from not only seeing a baseball game, but laughing and enjoying a Saturday or Sunday afternoon” (Lachowetz et al., 2009, p.1).

In college athletics, the emphasis is less on making a profit, and more on providing the student-athlete with a positive experience while supplying student population with a winning team. Ticket sales are vital to providing teams with items outside of a regular athletic budget, such as stadium or equipment upgrades. The use of marketing is mainly to create awareness about the team, and encourage students, and alumni to purchase game tickets. Among techniques that are specific to a college population are pep rallies or student attendance incentive programs. College, otherwise known as varsity athletics, is also known to include themed game days to attract customers that would not regularly attend. Themed games could include youth programs, or certain colors. Varsity athletics contains by far the most variance in regards to athletic marketing purpose, and budget (Sutton 1987). While top-tier division I programs are entitled to revenue via television contracts, most do not have such a luxury. Regardless, the purpose of marketing is to create as much awareness of the team, and the game times as possible. Varsity athletics uses a heavy amount of signage in the form of calendars, season schedule cards, and posters to convey the message. Additionally, most schools will employ the services of local newspapers and radio stations, while still keeping advertising costs relatively low. Most
universities evaluate the viability and usefulness of their marketing strategies more so than professional sports, because budgets are generally more limited (Sutton 1987).

College athletics also have the dilemma of promoting multiple sports. Universities not only have a wide variety of sports, but also options for both male and female athletes. Within Division I athletics, only a small amount of schools actually make a profit from their top sports of football or basketball. In fact, during 2010-2011, just twenty two Division I schools recorded a profit within their athletic department (Fulks, 2012). With varsity athletics rarely recouping their expenses, marketing programs are looking for ways to drive attendance to less recognized athletic events (Fink, Trail, & Anderson 2002). Research has shown the amount of women attending spectator sports is on the rise, representing a potential market for universities looking to increase the spectators to women athletic events. The growth is so substantial, that analysts have touted women’s collegiate basketball as an untapped source of revenue for athletic departments (McCarthy, 2001). However, substantial research has not been conducted to distinguish what collegiate athletic marketing programs can implement to reach a wider demographic. In a study by Fink, Trail, and Anderson (2002), the researchers attempted to find the difference in sport consumption behavior between the sexes. Results indicated there were actually more differences in the responses between fans of men’s and women’s basketball than the actual gender. What did become clear was that women were less likely to become responsive to print material and information heavily based upon statistics. Based on the lack of interest in statistical sport data, the research suggested retaining the female fan through use of association with school spirit, and community forms of promotion.

Much like varsity athletics, collegiate intramural sports are usually supported financially in some capacity by the university (Byl, 2002). Some universities provide intramural sports free
of charge, while others require fees so that the program can be funded. There are multiple ways in which intramural sports can be funded. Student fees, which are charged with tuition, are funds that go directly to school programs, usually based in student involvement. The money from student fees would enable a fixed budget for the intramural program, and allow the director to offer the product for free. Therefore, the intramural director’s main incentive for promotional strategies would be to increase attendance so that the program enjoys a greater amount of success. Some schools charge participation fees, which vary from sport to sport, to account for costs not covered in the budget, or creation of additional revenue (Byl, 2002). Depending on the payment structure of the intramural program, the priorities of promotional material may be different.

Currently, within recreation centers the existing forms of marketing are rooted in promotional concepts. Recreation centers use promotional material to raise awareness of their products to the collective whole, rather than targeting specific groups. Commonly used promotional items consist of posters, tangible items, informational tables, and various forms of signage. Recreational marketing departments have embraced electronic mediums such as Facebook, Twitter, and campus wide email newsletters. Recreation centers have also found it useful to create their own universal logo to be used on all promotional material, in an effort to distinguish themselves from the general university promotions (Byl, 2002; Kaltenbaugh, Molnar, Bonadio, Divito, & Roaeder, 2011).

In a study conducted by Scheider, Stier, Kampf, Wilding, and Haines (2007), the most common negative issues affecting intramural sports, according to 269 surveyed recreation directors, were the following: a) Lack of storage area for equipment, b) Sparse availability of parking, c) Conflict of facility availability with other departments, d) Lack of marketing and
promotional efforts. Each negative issue could potentially handicap the positive experience a patron receives from an intramural event. Space related issues, such as equipment storage and parking, may be too expensive to fix in a relatively short amount of time, however, improvement of marketing could result in an immediate growth in product awareness (Scheider et al., 2007). The issue isn’t necessarily the lack of marketing material, more so a general lack of guidance. Existing research of marketing within intramural sports has consisted of customer service gauging, and employee competency. In Haines and Farrell’s (2006) review of research within campus recreation, the study expressed the need for continued research regarding the effects of campus recreation upon the student population. Even further, Schneider, Steir, Kampf, Wilding, and Haines (2007) highlighted the weakness of marketing efforts within intramural sports, and that recreation centers had a duty to improve upon its current state. Furthermore, the use of marketing, as described by Kaltenbaugh et al., (2011) “is not a ‘hit or miss’ process, but a course of action which requires systematic planning” (p. 93). Without the development of a cohesive marketing plan, there is no coordinated effort between the marketing techniques and maximizing the effectiveness of the promotional material. Lastly, without research to benchmark the effectiveness of each technique, the marketing department has no way to prove it is actually serving a purpose (Byl, 2002; Kaltenbaugh et al., 2011).

Conclusion

The role of marketing in intramural sports is designed to be that of a catalyst, or driving force. However, is it difficult to structure marketing efforts if there is no evidence of their success in an intramural sport environment. Currently, there is an absence of substantial research concerning marketing within intramural sports. Therefore, comparable experiences, such as that of college and professional athletics, can be analyzed to form a clearer image of marketing’s
role. Professional and intercollegiate varsity sporting events rely heavily on consumer experience. Teams that are in lower NCAA divisions or minor league must focus on other ways to draw attendance besides winning (Lachowetz, 2009). The focus on overall experience provides a comparable perspective of how marketing can serve intramurals.

The significance of the research is to fill the gap in marketing literature knowledge regarding intramural sport. It is imperative for marketers within recreational departments to understand the effectiveness of promotional techniques within their respective setting. Not only could it aide in the more effective use of the marketing techniques, but also a more efficient use of valuable resources.
Chapter 3

Methodology

Method

The purpose of this study was to determine what marketing techniques participants of intramural sports perceive to be the most effective. Secondly, the research intended to determine if intramural marketing effectiveness is different based on gender, educational level, and reasons for participation. The following will provide information regarding the participants, instrumentation, procedures, and data analysis.

Participants

The estimated sample of intramural participants was 150 intramural sport participants, with an expected range of 17-25 years of age. A convenience sample of the teams was used under the restriction that each team had completely registered for their respective intramural events.

The study consisted of participants from a wide range of intramural sporting events. Specifically, the sports surveyed in this research were (a) indoor soccer; (b) flag football; (c) basketball; (d) indoor volleyball; (f) singles ping pong.

Instrumentation

The questionnaire used in this survey consisted of 2 sections aimed to satisfy the proposed research questions. First, to assess the effectiveness of each individual marketing technique a modified version of Dick and Turner’s (2007) marketing technique scale was used. The scale retained the use of a 7-point Likert scale asking respondents to rate each technique from least effective to most effective. However, adjustments were made to the
list of marketing techniques to better represent the intramural marketing environment. Therefore, the marketing effectiveness section provides 10 techniques used during the promotional period before each intramural sport season started, and asks the participant to provide a value from 1-7, rating the effectiveness of each individual strategy. Second, the demographics section consisted of five questions which addressed educational level, gender, age, and reason for competition (i.e., fun/recreation, fitness, spending time with friends, and competitiveness).

**Procedures.**

Approval from the Associate Director of Recreation Services, the Graduate Assistant of Competitive Sports, and the Institutional Review Board was sought before beginning the study. After approval was granted, teams were asked to have each member fill out the stated questionnaire before they participated in their first game of the tournament.

Each technique listed on the questionnaire represented an individual marketing procedure, with the exception of word of mouth. Marketing techniques began a maximum of two weeks prior to the registration deadline of each intramural sport. Two weeks prior to the registration deadline, the following marketing techniques were implemented until the registration deadline: recreation center monitor advertisement, Facebook, Twitter, recreation center website advertisement, campus e-mail notifications, promotional posters, promotional displays, intramural sport registration discount, promotional item handout.

The recreation center contains sixty digital televisions located throughout the facility. The televisions displayed an image advertisement for each intramural sport for thirty seconds. The design for all sports remained consistent and followed a template. The digital advertisements used on the televisions in the recreation center were also formatted
for the recreation center’s website. The images were displayed on the main page, and contained the same thirty second transition time for each image.

Facebook and Twitter both represented the social media marketing techniques. The recreation center’s social media webpages engaged with members via trivia questions, and informative facts pertaining to each upcoming intramural sport. Additionally, social media was utilized to remind patrons of the deadlines for each sport.

In addition to mass-online communication, the university’s e-mail notification system e-mailed all current students of the upcoming intramural sports. The message contained the registration deadline information of each sport, in addition to a brief overview of how each intramural sport is played. Recipients were provided additional contact information for any further questions.

Print material was distributed in the form of promotional posters, and intramural sport registration discounts. The promotional posters, printed on eleven by seventeen inch paper, consisted of a reformatted image used on the recreation center’s televisions. The promotional posters allowed for the same advertisement to be displayed in other areas of campus, and promotional displays, where televisions were not available. Intramural sport registration discounts also used the same graphic as the promotional posters, although the discount cards were the size of a standard business card. The back of the registration discount card notified the holder its value of five dollars off an intramural registration cost.

Promotional displays consisted of informational tables set in high traffic areas, such as a cafeteria or a high traffic walkway on campus. The tables, staffed with a recreation center employee to answer questions, contained promotional posters, handouts, and a demonstration of the intramural sport. Additionally, participants had the chance to win a promotional item by
completing a designated task, such as a sport obstacle or providing the correct answer to a trivia question. The promotional item was either a recreation center branded t-shirt, or recreation center branded coffee mug.

During the opening games for each intramural sport the researcher approached teams to complete a questionnaire. The teams were approached directly after all players have signed-in with the intramural supervisor, while players waited for their game to start. Teams were approached at a minimum of 15 minutes before the start of their game. All respondents were approached individually, and all information was collected via paper questionnaire. Upon receiving a completed questionnaire, the researcher deposited the respondent's paper into a locked container.

**Statistical Design and Analysis**

IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20, and Microsoft Excel was used to perform all statistical analyses throughout the course of research. Excel was used for general record holding, while SPSS was employed for all statistical analysis. Descriptive information in the form of frequencies, means, and standard deviations was used to display a list of the most effective marketing techniques.

Additionally, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to determine any significant differences in gender among rated level of effectiveness for marketing techniques. Follow-up analyses of variances (ANOVA) was used to examine potential differences between individual techniques. A MANOVA was also conducted to determine significant differences of the marketing technique effectiveness for educational status, followed by an ANOVAs. Lastly, an independent-sample $t$-test was conducted to evaluate factors affecting the decision to participate between genders.
Chapter 4

Results

The purposes of this study were to identify what marketing techniques intramural sport participants found the most effective and how perceived intramural marketing effectiveness differs based on gender, educational level, and reasons for participation. Table 1 shows the amount of respondents for the study separated by demographical categories. The results of this study are correlated to the six hypotheses stated in chapter one, which are: (1) tangible items will receive the highest effectiveness rating, (2) social media will receive a higher effectiveness rating than other forms of mass digital communication, (3) females will be more influenced to participate by fitness rather than competitiveness, (4) females would be motivated more by fitness, social reasons, and fun than males, (5) Males would be motivated more by competitiveness than females, (6) underclassmen will have a higher overall effectiveness rating of marketing techniques compared to upperclassmen.

Table 2 displays the means and standard deviations of the participants rating for the effectiveness of each marketing technique. The data confirmed the hypothesis that tangible items will receive the highest effectiveness rating, with promotional item handout receiving the highest mean score of 5.30 ($SD = 1.97$). The second hypotheses stated that social media will receive a higher effectiveness rating than other forms of mass digital communication. This hypothesis was not confirmed. Social media, specifically Twitter ($M = 3.86, SD = 1.77$) and Facebook ($M = 3.92, SD = 1.58$), received mean scores lower than all other forms of mass digital communication such as campus e-mail, the recreation website, and television display advertisements.
The hypothesis that females would be more influenced to participate for fitness rather than competitiveness was confirmed. Table 4 shows females were influenced by competitiveness the least ($M = 5.29, SD = 1.56$), compared to fitness, ($M = 5.83, SD = 1.32$). An independent-sample $t$-test was conducted to evaluate factors affecting the decision to participate between genders. The results indicated that fitness scores for women ($M = 5.83, SD = 1.32$) were significantly higher than fitness scores for men ($M = 5.24, SD = 1.59$), which indicated fitness was more of a reason women participated than men.

The hypothesis that females would be motivated more by fitness, social reasons, and fun than males was not confirmed. Table 4 does show slight differences in the mean scores among both genders. Women chose fun ($M = 6.31, SD = 1.20$), social ($M = 5.96, SD = 1.15$), and fitness ($M = 5.83, SD = 1.32$) factors as their top three choices. However, the results of the $t$-tests indicate that no significant differences between genders were found, other than fitness, for reasons to participate (i.e., fun, social, and competitiveness). The fifth hypothesis presumed that males would be motivated more by competitiveness than females was also not confirmed. Men chose fun ($M = 5.99, SD = 1.36$), social ($M = 5.74, SD = 1.15$), and competitiveness ($M = 5.63, SD = 1.50$) factors as their top three choices. Although, as previously stated, the results of the $t$-test found no significance between genders for competitiveness.

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine significant differences between genders based on effectiveness of marketing techniques. There was significance between males and females regarding rated level of effectiveness, Wilks’ Lambda $= .893$, $F (10,197) = 2.36, p = .012$. Table 3 contains the means and the standard deviations on the dependent variables for the two groups.
Analyses of variances (ANOVA) on the dependent variables were conducted as follow-up tests to the MANOVA. Only the ANOVA on promotional display, $F (1, 206) = 7.07, p = .008$, and intramural sport registration discount, $F (1, 206) = 8.96, p = .003$, were significant. More specifically, males ($M = 4.67, SD = 1.36$) were significantly higher than females ($M = 4.10, SD = 1.67$) in their ratings of promotional display, and males ($M = 5.07, SD = 1.72$) were significantly higher than females ($M = 4.26, SD = 2.08$) in their ratings of a sport registration discount. Thus, for all marketing techniques except promotional display and registration discount, males and females reported similar levels of effectiveness.

For the final hypothesis it was predicted that underclassmen would have a higher overall effectiveness rating of marketing techniques compared to upperclassmen. A MANOVA revealed no significant differences between underclassmen and upperclassmen on rated marketing technique effectiveness, Wilks’ Lambda = .78, $F (50,883) = .98, p = .499$, thus refuting the hypothesis. This result indicates there are no differences in marketing techniques based on academic level. Table 5 contains the means and the standard deviations on the dependent variables.
The purpose of this study was to determine what marketing techniques intramural participants found to be the most effective, and identify possible differences of marketing technique effectiveness based upon demographical information. This chapter contains discussion regarding the findings, a conclusion, and suggestions for future research.

The first hypothesis proposed tangible items would receive the highest effectiveness rating of all marketing techniques. The results confirm the hypothesis, as the marketing technique promotional item handout received the highest mean score of all techniques. Promotional item was rated the most effective amongst males and second most effective amongst females, confirming the effectiveness of the marketing technique regardless of gender. While promotional items are an effective form of marketing, there may be a few concerns regarding the use of this marketing technique.

In a study from the NBA, Dick and Turner (2007) questioned whether participants chose certain techniques as ineffective, such as cold-calling, because they found them annoying, regardless of their effectiveness. The misleading method of ranking was also considered when observing other techniques such as giveaways. Respondents may have ranked giveaway items higher based on their desire to receive a free item for attending the game, rather than genuine effectiveness. Researchers also cautioned the notion ticket holders may choose to only attend games where there are giveaway items, forcing the organization into a continuous cycle of expectancy from the consumer base. Essentially, while the respondents would still attend games and have the same value perception of an NBA game without promotional give away items, they
wanted that specific technique (Dick & Turner 2007). The same sort of logic could be applied to marketing techniques within an intramural sport setting. Participants may participate in intramural sports regardless of whether they receive a promotional item or not. However, the questionnaire respondents may have rated the effectiveness of promotional items based upon their individual desire to receive an item, rather than the actual effectiveness of the technique. In comparison, an equally high rated technique such as campus e-mail would cost the recreation center no money or additional resources.

While promotional items are no doubt effective, Dick and Turner’s (2007) research is important in order to explain the results of this study. The researchers acknowledge that marketing techniques, like promotional items, can be expensive and constitute a large amount of the marketing budget. Intramural sport programs come in different sizes, with different budgets, directly affecting the practicality of distributing promotional items. Marketing professionals must keep in mind the rate of return when enacting high cost techniques in hopes of increasing event participation. Ideally, the increase in marketing spending should be outweighed by the increase in intramural sport participation (Byl, 2002; Dick & Turner, 2007).

The second hypothesis proposed social media would receive a higher effectiveness rating than other forms of mass digital communication. The results of the study, , do not confirm the hypothesis. The results could be considered surprising, as social media has become a popular form of digital marketing. However, other forms of mass digital communication, such as the recreation website and email, received significantly higher effectiveness ratings regardless of gender.

The low effectiveness rating of social media is interesting, especially when compared to e-mail. Dick and Turner’s (2007) research showed a low ranking for mass communication tools
such as cold calling in comparison to other marketing techniques, which could be considered similar to mass e-mail notifications. Additionally, Baek and Morimoto’s (2012) research suggests that e-mail, direct mail, telemarketing, and text messaging can increase skepticism or even avoidance of marketing material. Unsolicited direct marketing can be considered unwanted and intrusive to the recipient, resulting in negative reactions from the recipient toward the creator of the marketing. On the other hand, the research goes on to explain that as advertisements are more personalized to the intended audience, the chance for skepticism and avoidance decrease. In fact, college students are suggested to be more receptive to online advertisements, and personal advertising in general (Baek & Morimoto, 2012). Based upon this logic, social media would appear to be an excellent fit when considering a marketing technique for the intended market. Social media websites allow organizations to run highly customized marketing operations that target specific audiences (Zarrella, 2010). However, the issue may not be the receptiveness of the target audience to social media marketing, rather the visibility of the message. In a 2013 Herald Sun article, data suggests that Australian’s are suffering from fatigue of social media (Starke, 2013). The social media fatigue is noted to be occurring worldwide and results in social media users visiting websites such as Facebook less frequently. Websites such as Twitter and Facebook display messages that are current at the time a user is on the webpage. If users are visiting the websites less frequently, then there is a smaller probability that an organizations marketing will be current at the time a user logs on (Starke, 2013; Zarrella, 2010). Essentially, respondents may have rated Facebook and Twitter lower simply because they never viewed any marketing material during their time on social media. Conversely, e-mail may have been rated more effective because users have to actively delete the e-mail received, thus acknowledging it.
Regarding gender differences for marketing technique effectiveness, the only significant differences were higher ratings of promotional displays, and sport registration discount for males. One possible explanation for high male ratings of promotional displays would be the competitive nature of the display. More specifically, the promotional displays were accompanied by a sport demonstration or competitive drill that required the participant to accomplish a task for a chance to compete against others and receive a t-shirt. As an example, the intramural basketball promotional display was accompanied by a half-court shot competition. Participants who made three out of five half-court shots were given a t-shirt. In addition, the promotional display for intramural football compared the speed of participants’ forty yard sprint. Fink et al., (2002) provided similar research by identifying males to be more receptive to sport marketing presented in a competitive manner. The nature of competing against others for a prize, especially in a heavily male dominated flag football league, may have been appealing to males and off-putting to some females. The rating for intramural sport registration discount is interesting because of all intramural sport participants, during the period of this research, only 2 participants redeemed their discount card. The high rating of registration discounts could again be attributed to participant wants rather than actual ratings of effectiveness, as previously discussed in Dick and Turner’s (2007) research.

The third hypothesis made the assumption females would be more influenced to participate in intramural sports because of fitness, rather than competitiveness. The hypothesis was confirmed, as females indicated a higher preference for fitness over competitiveness, while males were the opposite. The results are consistent with research which suggests females are motivated to participate in intramural sports for social interaction and fitness more than males (Cooper, Schuett & Phillips, 2012; Ruan, 1993). The remaining two hypotheses regarding
gender differences were not confirmed. Hypotheses four suggested females would be motivated more by fitness, social reasons, and fun that males. Surprisingly, both genders valued fun/recreation and social factors as the top two reasons for participation in intramural sport. The differences arise when analyzing the bottom two factors of participation. Male respondents indicated competitiveness as third, and fitness as the least influential factor of participation. Conversely, female respondents rated fitness as third followed by competitiveness. Hypothesis five presumed males would be motivated more by competitiveness than females. The results of the study were not consistent with studies indicating that males are much more motivated to participate in intramural sport for competitive purposes (Cooper et al., 2012; Fink et al., 2002; Ruan, 1993). A reason that hypotheses four and five were not confirmed may be the limited number of surveyed respondents. It should be noted marketing techniques that contained innately competitive aspects, such as promotional displays, did show a significant difference between genders. More respondents might have revealed a greater differential between genders that did not show in the data. Therefore, future research could benefit from a questionnaire that contains more measurement of effectiveness for innately competitive techniques, and factors of participation.

The results, in addition to the research, are useful to intramural program directors when creating promotional material for upcoming sports. If both genders indicate interest in having fun while spending time with others then the marketing material should be developed to reflect those sentiments. Furthermore, it is equally important to understand the least influential concepts among genders, so that they can be avoided when developing targeted marketing material. As an example, employees promoting an upcoming intramural sport should understand
that promoting the competitiveness of a sport to females may not be as effective as discussing social interaction or fun.

The sixth hypothesis stated underclassmen will have a higher overall effectiveness rating of marketing techniques compared to upperclassmen. Results from the MANOVA revealed no significant differences between upperclassmen and underclassmen regarding effectiveness ratings of marketing techniques, thus not confirming the hypothesis. The results are consistent with Cooper et al. (2012) research, which also found no significant differences between class rank and motivation to participate in intramural sports. The study goes on to suggest that motivation to participate in intramural sports is relative to all college students. More specifically, the desire to be fit, spend social time with friends, compete against others, and have fun is identified in some capacity within every class rank. Significant differences in reasons to participate only come about when comparing genders. Despite no significant differences among class rank, the results are still important because marketing techniques did not lose effectiveness to students that have been exposed to intramural sports marketing through the course of their careers. Research has suggested that advertisements can lose effectiveness to those that have experienced them numerous times, similar to ignoring commercials on a television network. However, students have expressed the motivation to participate in intramural sports, which could reduce the likelihood of marketing being ignored. The primary focus of intramural sport marketing should be awareness because a high amount of desire to participate already exists within the student population. Therefore it is important for marketing directors to pay attention as to what techniques students find the most effective (Baek & Morimoto, 2012; Cooper et al., 2012). Baek and Morimoto (2012) caution “advertisers need to take consumers’ marketing resistance into account in their execution of high personalized advertising” (p. 13). Intramural
sport programs should regularly survey their participants to find the most effective way of promoting their product. Further research of the topic would be useful at universities in which upperclassmen live farther from campus, and may spend less time on campus.

**Conclusion**

The results of this study did provide insight into the overall effectiveness of intramural sport marketing techniques, and demographical significances. The data identified techniques such as e-mail to be more effective than originally predicted, while social media was less effective than research might suggest. Additionally, analysis of the results provided speculation that respondents may have rated certain marketing techniques based upon desire, rather than genuine effectiveness. The significant differences amongst demographical categories were not as prevalent as previous research suggested. This information could provide beneficial from a budgetary standpoint so that marketers can save costs and time through the use of uniform marketing plans.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

The following suggestions should be made for future research.

1. Replication of the study with a larger, more diverse population at different universities. The study could have used a larger pool of respondents to further analyze any significant differences in responses based upon demographical categories (e.g. gender, class rank).

2. Collection of more background information. Future studies could develop more data regarding previous sport experience, and reasons for participation. Factors could include student groups such as fraternities, sororities, and dormitory teams.
3. Larger respondent collection period. Schools offer many different types of intramural sports throughout the year that may attract different types of students. Additionally, there may be a difference in motivation to participate in areas where the weather may affect recreational activities.

4. Distribute questionnaires upon registration of intramural sport team. Distributing the questionnaires directly after a team registers may lead to truer responses. Additionally, by avoiding distributing the questionnaire directly before an intramural game the researcher does not run the risk of the respondent answering in haste.
References


### Table 1
**Demographic Characteristics**

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Table 4  
*Gender Differences Among Factors of Participation*

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<td>Sophomore SD</td>
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