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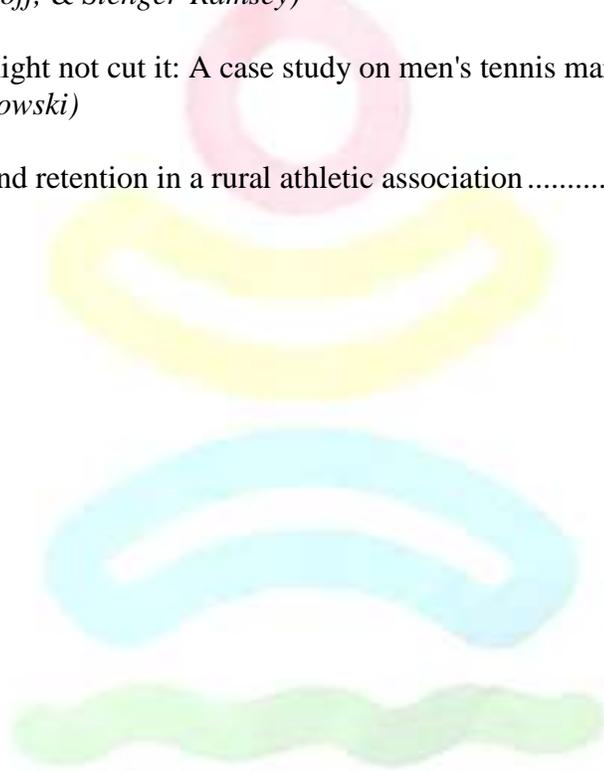
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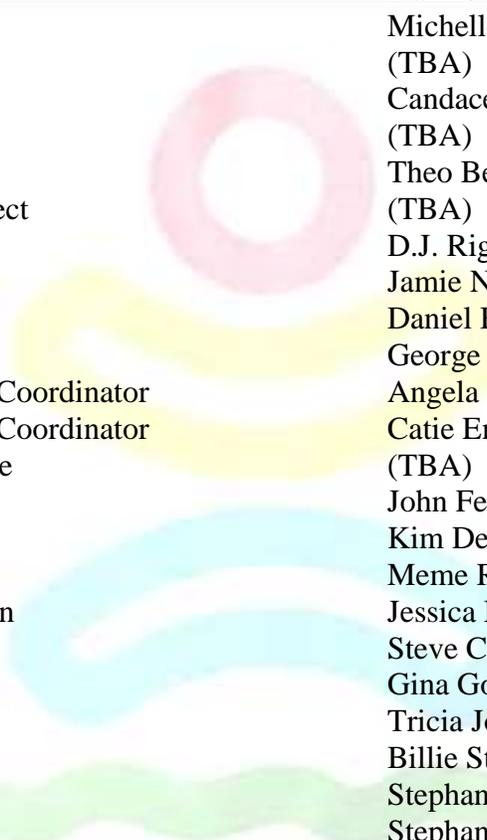
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A Message from the Kentucky SHAPE President

Greetings from your 2021-2022 KY-SHAPE President! I have had the pleasure of being involved with KY-SHAPE and previously KAHPERD since I was an undergraduate student over two decades ago. Throughout my academic and professional career, this great organization has supported the phenomenal teachers of the Commonwealth of Kentucky by providing exceptional professional development and training opportunities. The KY-SHAPE journal has been a great resource for students, P-12 teachers, and higher education faculty to access cutting edge research in the field of health and physical education, exercise science, and sports management. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Steve Chen, Dr. Tricia Jordan, and Dr. Gina Blunt-Gonzalez for serving as our KY-SHAPE Journal co-editors. Their dedication and commitment to this journal is the reason for its success. Additionally, I would like to thank all of researchers who submitted their work for this upcoming publication.

Best wishes,

Dr. Gavin Washington
2021-2022 KY-SHAPE President

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Acknowledgement

As the Editors of the Kentucky SHAPE Journal, we would like to show our appreciation to the following guest-reviewers for their assistance in reviewing this current issue.

Dr. Michelle Davis Gerken, Eastern Kentucky University; Dr. Dr. Shea Brgoch, Western Kentucky University; Dr. Michael Bradley, Arkansas Tech University; Dr. Maes Hu, St. Ambrose University; Dr. Gavin Washington, Kentucky State University; Dr. Ted Peetz, Belmont University; Dr. Carol O'Neal, University of Louisville; and Dr. Donovan Ross, Morehead State University

Sincerely,

Dr. Tricia Jordan, Kentucky SHAPE Co-Editor
Dr. Gina Blunt Gonzalez, Kentucky SHAPE Journal Co-Editor
Dr. Steve Chen, Kentucky SHAPE Journal Managing Editor

Kentucky SHAPE Journal Submission Guideline

SUBMISSION OF A PAPER

The *Kentucky SHAPE Journal* (formerly *KAHPERD Journal*) is published twice yearly (spring and fall) by the Kentucky SHAPE. The journal welcomes the submission of empirical research papers, articles/commentaries, best practices/strategies, interviews, research abstracts (spring issue only) and book reviews from academics and practitioners. Please read the information below about the aims and scope of the journal, the format and style for submitted material, and the submissions protocol. Your work will more likely to be published if you follow the guidelines thoroughly.

Articles are accepted via an electronic attachment (must be in Microsoft Word format, doc or docx) through e-mail to the editor before the deadline dates. Submissions should be sent to one of the co-editors below based on the topic (nature) and discipline of the study:

- For an article related to health and physical education, health promotion, exercise science and exercise physiology, please email the submission to Gina Gonzalez: g.gonzalez@moreheadstate.edu
- For an article related to recreation and sport management/administration, sport sociology, and sport coaching, please email the submission to Tricia Jordan (tricia.jordan@wku.edu)

Deadlines:

Spring issue—March 1

Fall issue—September 1

Estimated publishing time: Spring issue—Mid May & Fall issue—Late November

AIMS AND SCOPE

The main mission is to bring together academics and practitioners to further the knowledge and understanding of issues and topics related to health, physical education, sport administration and marketing, exercise science, sport coaching, dance, and recreation, etc. We encourage submissions relating to these topics from a variety of perspectives.

FORMAT AND STYLE

When preparing manuscripts for publication in the *Kentucky SHAPE Journal*, authors should follow the guidelines set forth in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, Seventh Edition, 2019. Manuscripts should not be submitted for publication elsewhere at the same time being reviewed by *Kentucky SHAPE Journal*. Authors are advised to proof the typing, and check references for accuracy. Articles should include an abstract of approximately 150 words including the rationale for the study, methods used, key findings and conclusions. Manuscripts should not exceed 20 double-spaced pages (not including references, tables, and figures).

The manuscript must be typed double-spaced, including the abstracts and references; please number each line. Tables, charts, pictures, diagrams, drawings and figures should be in black and white, placed on separate pages at the end of the manuscript. They must be submitted photo-ready and

reproduced to fit into a standard print column of 3.5 inches. Only one copy of each illustration is required, and captions and proper citations should be typed on the bottom of the table and diagrams; please clearly mark where the tables/figures belong in the text. Jargon should be reduced to a minimum, with technical language and acronyms clearly defined. The accuracy of any citations is the responsibility of the author(s).

For more specific style questions, please consult a recent edition of the journal.

CONTENT

All submissions should be written primarily to inform senior practitioners and academics involved in areas of health, physical education, recreation, and dance.

Research Manuscripts

Research articles should be well-grounded conceptually and theoretically, and be methodologically sound. Qualitative and quantitative pieces of research are equally appropriate.

Formatting suggestion: Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Results, & Discussion, Conclusion, and Implication.

Book Reviews

Reviews of books and/or reports are welcome (around 1000-2000 words). Information concerning the book/report must be sent to the editor. Interviews (it would be nice to discuss with the editor beforehand) and best practice/strategy papers of 1,500-3,000 words should be objective and informative rather than promotional and should follow the following format: Objective/Background/Discussion and Practical Implication.

Research Abstracts

Research abstracts (300 words or less) are welcome. The submitted abstracts should have been presented (either an oral or a poster presentation) in the KAHPERD annual conference in the previous year.

*The editors are keen to discuss and advise on proposed research projects, but this is no guarantee of publication.

Case Studies

The purpose of using case studies in learning environments is to stimulate critical thinking. Such thinking skills as problem-solving, decision-making, creative thinking, visualizing, knowing how to learn, and reasoning should be stimulated as your case is discussed in learning environments.

The guidelines found below provide authors guidance in writing case studies for publication in the *KAHPERD Journal*:

1. Use narrative form when writing your case(s). Consider telling a brief story about a controversial or problematic issue or incident in the field of discipline selected from the list of suggested subject areas, competencies, and educational levels. The story could, for example, illustrate principles or theories, describe events, and/or address problems or situations related to the topic(s) you choose. You may include data to be analyzed or illustrated. Include a key character with a

problem or dilemma to solve. Within the case, the key character may or may not attempt to solve the issue within the case.

For Example:

| Suggested Subject Area | Competencies | Focus | Educational Level |
|--|---|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Alcohol sponsorship and sales at collegiate venues | Diversity, ethics, decision making, social responsibility | Sport Management | Undergraduate, Graduate, or both |
| Class management | Leadership, strategic planning, communication | PE | Undergraduate, Graduate, or both |
| Design of fitness programs | Scientific training, First Aid training, sport psychology | Exercise science | Undergraduate, Graduate, or both |
| Tourism economic impact study | Economy, analytic skills, event planning | Recreation | Undergraduate, Graduate, or both |
| Developing a weight watching program | Nutrition, exercise knowledge, motivation.... | Health, and health promotion | Undergraduate, Graduate, or both |
| Preparing a dance gala | Strategic planning, event management, dance performance | Dance | Undergraduate, Graduate, or both |

2. The case can be based on reality or fictional scenario. It can also evolve from one’s own or others’ actual experience. It can be deeply personal and reflective, yet it should be written objectively. The case is intended to simulate real life; therefore, the case does not have to be unrealistically neat. Rather, the issue can be messy and complex.
3. Case authors should provide questions and solution ideas. Often, when writing and discussing case(s), it is advised to allow readers to discuss analyses and compromise, make their own interpretations, and draw their own inferences regarding solutions. Although solutions may not always extensively included, case authors are encouraged to cover detailed solutions that helps educators discuss the cases in a more informed and insightful way with students.
4. To provide an optimal learning opportunity through the case(s), four elements should be included in the case study submission:
 - a. Abstract and learning objectives: a summary of case and its purpose, learning outcomes and applications (75-150 words)

Fill in the following boxes

| Suggested Subject Area | Competencies | Focus | Educational Level |
|------------------------|--------------|-------|-------------------|
| | | | |

- b. Introduction of case: presentation of issues, challenges, problems, and various thoughts
- c. Teaching notes: addressing discussion questions, guidelines for discussions, and pros and cons of different solutions

d. References

SUBMISSIONS AND REVIEW PROTOCOL

Submission of a paper to the publication implies agreement of the author(s) that copyright rests with *Kentucky SHAPE Journal* when the paper is published. *Kentucky SHAPE Journal* will not accept any submissions that are under review with other publications. All manuscripts submitted will be peer-reviewed by 2 to 3 professionals/experts. Authors will normally receive a decision regarding publication within six to eight weeks. Rejected manuscripts will not be returned.



(Peer Reviewed Article)**Understanding the Influence of COVID-19 Restrictions on Recreation Behavior in Western Kentucky**

Allie McCreary, Western Kentucky University
Eric Knackmuhs, Western Kentucky University
Raymond Poff, Western Kentucky University
Tammie Stenger-Ramsey,

Abstract

This paper explores how individuals' recreation and leisure time in western Kentucky was influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic and associated shifts in individuals' lifestyles. The objectives of this study were to: (a) assess individuals' recreation behaviors before and during lockdown; (b) evaluate individuals' COVID-19 risk perceptions; and (c) explore whether risk perceptions or other individual attributes influenced changes in individual recreation behaviors during the lockdown. A survey was administered electronically to a convenience sample of Western Kentucky University students and community members in April and May 2020 (n=349). Resulting data analyses illustrate key areas of change in activity participation due to the transmission-reduction measures, the influence of individuals' risk perceptions, and personal attributes on these changes. Based on these findings, recommendations are presented for recreation service provision amid external challenges.

Keywords: (5) pandemic, risk, individual, survey, leisure

Introduction

The unprecedented COVID-19 global pandemic affected human populations worldwide, influencing how nearly all individuals in affected areas navigated their day-to-day lives. Some primary responses, prior to vaccinations, to slow the spread of the virus including face coverings, quarantines (a period of isolation after infection or exposure) and physical distancing (gathering in groups of less than ten and with a six-foot space between one another) were prescribed to entire countries and states beginning in February and March 2020.

Additionally, as part of the quarantine/physical-distancing approach, schools moved to an online format for all students from elementary to higher education institutions, "non-essential" professionals worked remotely from their homes, and "essential" professionals (e.g., healthcare, agricultural/food service, mail and package delivery, water, sanitation, and energy providers) shifted how they approached their work. Aside from the 'work' component of individuals' lives, the quarantine and physical distancing measures dramatically altered the 'leisure' component. Many gyms, state parks, sport leagues, faith spaces, shopping areas, beaches, and other recreation-oriented businesses and areas ceased or heavily modified in-person traditional service delivery.

Quarantine and physical distancing measures were and, at the time of writing, continue to be used to help reduce the negative impacts of COVID-19. This study explored the secondary effects of these

transmission-reduction measures. Specifically, through survey-based research, the researchers assessed how recreation and leisure time in the western Kentucky region was influenced by COVID-19, for example the Kentucky Governor's "#HealthyAtHome" orders, park and recreation organization responses, and associated shifts in individuals' lifestyles. The objectives of this study were three-fold:

1. Assess the differences in individuals' recreation behaviors before and during the COVID-19 quarantine.
2. Understand the recreation-related challenges and opportunities presented to individuals during the COVID-19 quarantine.
3. Evaluate how individuals' (a) risk perceptions regarding the pandemic and (b) demographic attributes such as employment status, income level, and political ideology, may be associated with reported changes in recreation behaviors.

Outcomes of this study include descriptive and explanatory contributions to the basic understanding of how a global pandemic, and subsequent suppression mechanisms, influence recreation and leisure behaviors. Results allow for an understanding of how individuals' recreation preferences, motivations, and self-reported behaviors were modified due to quarantine-related changes in their lives. Some applied outcomes emerge, such as guidance for recreation professionals who continue remote service delivery as many #HealthyAtHome and #HealthyAtWork policies and practices continue.

Kentucky's #HealthyAtHome Orders

Beginning on March 11, 2020 Kentucky Governor, Andy Beshear, began advising and recommending specific strategies to minimize the spread of COVID-19 (Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear, 2020). Some of these strategies directly affected recreation programs, services, and the ability of citizens to participate in leisure outside their home. For example, the first order was the cancellation or postponement of all community gatherings. Over the next five days, the governor recommended that K-12 schools cease in-person classes, childcare centers close, and that senior center programs suspend operations except drive-through pick-up and delivery of meals (Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear, 2020).

The following week all mass-gatherings were prohibited including faith-based events, sports, parades, concerts, festivals, conventions, and fundraisers. Shortly thereafter, non-life sustaining in-person retail businesses were closed, which included entertainment, sporting goods and bookstores. On March 26, mayors and county judge-executives were asked to start monitoring parks for public gatherings and stop people who were not following physical distancing practices (Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear, 2020). Subsequently, many municipal parks such as those in Bowling Green and Warren County, Owensboro, and Paducah (as well as those in other portions of the state, e.g., Covington and Louisville) officially closed all or parts of their facilities because they couldn't enforce COVID-19 mitigation guidelines (Bowling Green, 2020; City of Covington, 2020; Musgrave, 2020; Pickens, 2020). At the end of the month, out-of-state travel was restricted except for work, groceries, health care, or by court order (Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear, 2020).

April brought new additional challenges for recreation including a ban on out-of-state visitors and the closure of Kentucky State Parks campgrounds, hotels, and cabins. On April 9, two of Kentucky's most popular state parks, Natural Bridge and Cumberland Falls were closed (Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear, 2020).

In May, Kentucky began loosening restrictions on out-of-state travel and issued guidelines for the reopening of restaurants and houses of worship. One of the most important recreation-related announcements was that people could begin gathering in groups of 10 or fewer on May 22. June marked the reopening of recreation opportunities with restrictions such as movie theaters, fitness centers, house of worship activities, horseracing, campgrounds, childcare and low-touch youth sports and public pools. State owned or operated outdoor recreation such as the Salato Wildlife Education Center, tourism attractions such as Kentucky Kingdom amusement park, and state park recreational areas, campgrounds, and cabins, reopened. With four exceptions, lodges at state resort parks also reopened (Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear, 2020).

Review of Literature

The pandemic resulted in a response from scholars to record the impacts of this novel event and its impact on multiple industries including leisure, sport, tourism, and recreation. One reflective manuscript, synthesizing observations from leisure scholars around the world (Sivan, 2020), identified seven areas of impact from COVID-19 to leisure: (a) shift to home-based activities, (b) proliferation of online offering and use, (c) growing need for connectivity, (d) accentuated inequality, (e) survival of the leisure industry, (f) increased demand for psychological support, and (g) enhanced acts of helping hands and voluntarism. Another reflective manuscript documenting observations from the United States in particular, established four similar, somewhat overlapping areas of COVID-19 impact to leisure: (a) a need for social connection, (b) a need to minimize boredom and anxiety, (c) a need for physical activity and/or the occupation of one's time, and (d) a need for spiritual fulfillment and a sense of community (Anderson, 2020).

Studies were conducted to assess how such restrictions impacted recreation behavior in the early days of the pandemic. For example, Rice and colleagues (2020a) undertook a 3-phase assessment of how the COVID-19 pandemic was changing outdoor recreation behaviors in April and May 2020. They reported decreases in the number of days participating in outdoor recreation with significant decreases in backpacking, camping, RVing, outdoor climbing, and downhill winter sports. Other activities such as birdwatching, wildlife viewing, gardening, and outdoor running increased slightly. The primary reason given for changes to outdoor recreation behaviors were adhering to physical distancing guidelines, followed by site closure, and a hesitancy to risk exposure to COVID-19. Distance traveled to participate in outdoor recreation also dropped significantly with almost 50% of participants included in that study remaining within two miles of home.

The decision to participate in outdoor recreation was motivated primarily by benefits to physical and mental health (Rice et al., 2020a). Most respondents reported they planned to return to their preferred outdoor recreation behaviors after the pandemic. In fact, by May 2020, respondents' participation in outdoor recreation was already starting to increase in terms of frequency and distance traveled (Rice et al., 2020c). Participants started returning to public lands after earlier shifting to neighborhood and

city streets. However, closed areas and fear of exposure to COVID-19 remained prominent barriers to participation in outdoor recreation. One-third of respondents reported the COVID-19 pandemic would have long-term impacts on their recreation behavior: greater use of public lands and increasing outdoor recreation, particularly fitness-based outdoor recreation (Rice et al., 2020a).

Still, in July 2020, Landry, et al. (2021) reported a 26% decrease in outdoor recreation trips compared to before the pandemic. Urban outdoor enthusiasts were most impacted by stay-at-home orders and physical distancing practices as the frequency of outdoor recreation participation and distance traveled decreased more than for rural outdoor enthusiasts.

Diminished participation in outdoor recreation may result in significant impact to physical, mental, and emotional health. Adolescents reported participating in fewer outdoor activities during the pandemic than before and reported a corresponding decrease in subjective well-being (Jackson et al., 2021). However, those who were active in the outdoors reported smaller declines in subjective well-being. Approximately two-thirds of college students at four large universities limited their outdoor activity during the first two months of the pandemic with 54% reducing their park use (Larson et al., 2021). Reasons for declining park use included closures, “lockdowns”, concern about contracting COVID-19, and negative emotions. Emotional distress among students surveyed was widespread. However, students that maintained a pre-pandemic level of park use improved their mental and physical health.

Other studies explored the impacts of COVID-19 through the lens of age. For example, Etekal and Agans (2020) identified techniques for adapting recreation programs that lead to positive youth development in ways that would align with pandemic-era restrictions. Rivera-Torres and others (2021) explored how older adults pursued recreation and leisure activities to enhance mental well-being during the pandemic such as through engagement in physical activity and the use of technology. Other literature published during the pandemic also provided commentary on the role of technology, such as ‘viral’ videos and musical parodies in alleviating boredom, alienation, and anxiety, and perhaps promoting well-being (e.g., Lehman, 2021).

These studies emphasize the importance of parks to physical, mental, and emotional health particularly in times of distress such as a pandemic. Globally, Fang, et al. (2021) used data from 131 countries to assess the impact of public health policies on leisure and recreation behavior. While stricter policies resulted in sharp and immediate decreases in participation, they also recovered more quickly and rebounded closer to pre-pandemic levels than areas that did not actively intervene.

This study was designed to examine the impacts of COVID-19 on a specific community of individuals: those residing in western Kentucky during the early months of the pandemic (spring 2020). Rather than make global or national observations, the intent of this study was to assess regional impacts of COVID-19. And, unlike studies focusing on a particular type of recreation, sport, leisure, or tourism, this study sought to understand changes in general recreation behaviors within this community.

Methodology

To explore the impact of COVID-19 and #HealthyAtHome policies on recreation and leisure behaviors of individuals in western Kentucky, a survey-based methodology was employed. Due to the nature of the sampling time frame (May 1-31, 2020) when many individuals were not gathering in community spaces or interacting face-to-face with those outside their household, an electronic (i.e., online, web-based) survey questionnaire was used to collect data. A non-probability sampling approach (i.e., convenience and chain-referral sampling) was utilized to recruit participants for this exploratory study. Three eligibility requirements were acknowledged by participants before they accessed the questionnaire; participants were required to be (a) 18 years of age or older; (b) participating voluntarily; and (c) residing, working, or studying within the following counties for at least eight months of the year: Warren, Butler, Edmonson, Barren, Allen, Simpson, Logan. The survey questionnaire and recruitment protocol were approved by the Western Kentucky University (WKU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to participant recruitment and data collection.

Participant Recruitment

Participant recruitment utilized a convenience sampling technique and chain-referral sampling. The survey was advertised in the Bowling Green Daily Newspaper (Sunday edition) on May 10, 17, 24, and 31, 2020; in the WKU Herald electronic newsletter on May 8; and was sent to the WKU 'all students' listserv on May 4. Further, participants were prompted to share the survey link with others in their networks. To encourage participation, individuals who completed the survey were offered an entry to win one of twenty, \$25 gift cards for a local recreation-related business. From those who entered the drawing, twenty names/email addresses were randomly selected using online randomization software and gift cards were distributed in June, following the sampling period.

Survey Measures

To achieve the study objectives, the electronic survey questionnaire was developed and distributed to measure the following variables of interest. There were three sections of the questionnaire measuring items related to the study objectives:

1. Reported changes in recreation engagement during the COVID-19 #HealthyAtHome shutdown period.
2. Risk perceptions of COVID-19 (using a modified form of the Risk Perception Index developed by Leiserowitz, 2006).
3. Demographic attributes: employment status, income level, and self-identified political ideology.

Three variables represented risk perceptions: concern, worry, and perceived seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic. These variables were modified from a previous study assessing climate change risk perceptions (Leiserowitz, 2010) and included asking participants to rate their level of concern about COVID-19, their level of worry about COVID-19, and how serious they perceived the impacts of COVID-19 to be. The assessment was on a Likert-type scale that was binned into three categories: (1) not at all concerned/worried/serious; (2) somewhat concerned/worried/serious; and (3) extremely concerned/worried/serious. Three variables represented personal, demographic, attributes: income level, employment status, and political ideology.

Analysis

Data analysis began in June 2020. All data were analyzed for disengaged and incomplete responses; those cases were removed from further analyses. Descriptive statistics were then computed to understand the remaining survey sample's composition and frequency distributions for key variables. Inferential analyses were aimed at exploring relationships between changes in recreation behaviors during the shutdown period and (a) COVID-19 risk perceptions and (b) demographic attributes (employment status, income level, political ideology). Pearson chi-square testing was used to assess significant associations (Vaske, 2008) between reported changes in recreation behaviors and respondents risk perceptions and personal attributes.

Results

A total of 722 people accessed the survey link during the sampling time frame and answered at least some of the questions. However, 370 cases were removed due to incompleteness (failure to complete 75% or more of the survey items). Three additional cases were removed due to 'unengaged response' (determined by running a standard deviation of each set of measures and checking for STD=0 in two or more sets of measures, indicating that the respondent was 'clicking through' the questionnaire). This resulted in 349 usable responses (i.e., retained 48% of the original data set for analysis). While the survey instrument and protocols did not require a response for any survey item (i.e., forced response-type items are unallowable per IRB approval), the 349 cases retained for analysis had provided responses to 26% or more of the questionnaire items. However, in some cases, percentages for items may not total 100 where missing data occurred due to this function of the survey design. On average, it took 23 minutes for participants to complete the questionnaire.

Sample Population Demographic Attributes

The majority of respondents were 18-24 years of age (76%) with another 14% of respondents reporting 25-34 years of age. Few reported an age over 35 (3% 35-44, 3% 45-54, 4% 55-64, and 1% 65-74). Most respondents described their marital status as single (80%) with fewer identifying as married (17%) or divorced (3%). The sample was predominantly white (82%) with fewer participants identifying as Black (3%), Asian, Hispanic, Indian/native, or other (all 1% each). Nearly a third of the sample described themselves as employed either full or part time (32%) while a minority reported that they were unemployed and actively seeking employment (13%). Many participants (40%) reported an income at or below \$49,999 annually, an almost equal proportion (42%) reported an income above that threshold. A quarter of the sample (25%) self-identified as conservative, politically, while over a third (36%) identified as liberal.

In terms of the psychological variables included in this study, most participants (79%) were worried about the negative impacts of COVID-19. The majority of respondents felt concerned about the spread of the virus (77%) and many in the sample reported they were taking the pandemic somewhat to extremely seriously (83%). See Table 1 for a profile of the descriptive statistics describing the sample population for this study.

Table 1. Sample Population Profile (n=349)

| Characteristic | % of Sample |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Age | |
| 18-24 | 76% |
| 25-34 | 14% |
| 35-44 | 3% |
| 45-54 | 3% |
| 55-64 | 4% |
| 65-74 | <1% |
| Marital status | |
| Single | 80% |
| Married | 17% |
| Divorced | 3% |
| Race/ethnicity | |
| Black | 3% |
| White | 82% |
| Indian/native | 1% |
| Asian | 1% |
| Other | 1% |
| Hispanic | 1% |
| Income | |
| <= \$49,999 | 40% |
| >= \$50,000 | 42% |
| Employment | |
| Employed full or part time | 32% |
| Unemployed, looking for work | 13% |
| Political ideology | |
| More conservative | 25% |
| More liberal | 36% |
| Worry about COVID-19 | |
| Unlikely to have negative impacts | 19% |
| Likely to have negative impacts | 79% |
| Concern | |
| Little to no concern | 20% |
| Moderate to great amount of concern | 77% |
| Seriousness | |
| Mild to not serious | 13% |
| Somewhat to extremely serious | 83% |

Note: Where totals do not equal 100%, remainder totals the percentage of individuals who did not respond.

Recreation Participation

Typical recreation participation was assessed by asking participants about their activity frequency prior to COVID-19 and the subsequent Healthy at Home policies. The most frequently reported activities prior to the #HealthyAtHome order included: jogging/running, scenic driving, watching TV, listening to music, talking on the phone, reading, shopping, going to the movies, attending concerts, visiting museums or zoos, completing puzzles or playing games (including video games), and attending social gatherings (see Table 2). The least frequently reported activities prior to COVID-

19 were music lessons, working on collections, gardening, camping, boating, fishing, horseback riding, and golfing.

Table 2. Activity Participation Percentages Before and During the #HealthyAtHome Orders

| Activity | Before | Same/Increased | Decreased/Stopped |
|--|--------|----------------|-------------------|
| Bicycling | 75% | 41% | 32% |
| Jogging/running | 88% | 57% | 15% |
| Swimming | 97% | 27% | 51% |
| Walking/hiking | 81% | 74% | 22% |
| Golf | 60% | 22% | 36% |
| Gym | 80% | 15% | 64% |
| Team sports | 66% | 16% | 49% |
| Camping | 71% | 25% | 43% |
| Canoeing, kayaking, motorized boating | 71% | 30% | 39% |
| Fishing | 66% | 35% | 29% |
| Horseback riding | 57% | 19% | 37% |
| Hunting | 53% | 22% | 30% |
| Scenic driving | 81% | 58% | 22% |
| ATV/OHV use | 55% | 24% | 29% |
| Watching TV | 95% | 86% | 8% |
| Listening to music | 95% | 89% | 6% |
| Talking on the phone | 97% | 88% | 8% |
| Reading for pleasure | 91% | 77% | 12% |
| Gardening | 71% | 51% | 19% |
| Shopping | 89% | 32% | 55% |
| Going to the movies | 85% | 5% | 77% |
| Attending festivals, concerts, events | 84% | 5% | 77% |
| Visiting museums, zoos | 83% | 6% | 73% |
| Playing cards, puzzles, other games | 86% | 66% | 19% |
| Playing computer or video games | 81% | 64% | 14% |
| Working on collections | 61% | 30% | 29% |
| Creating arts or crafts | 77% | 59% | 14% |
| Dance lessons | 53% | 20% | 31% |
| Music lessons | 53% | 21% | 31% |
| Attending library programs | 55% | 15% | 38% |
| Attending a family member's performance | 72% | 11% | 59% |
| Unstructured play time with family at home | 78% | 51% | 24% |
| Hosting/attending social gatherings w/family/friends | 88% | 8% | 67% |

In response to COVID-19 and #HealthyAtHome policies, respondents reported whether their previous participation either (a) increased or stayed the same; or (b) decreased or stopped. Less

frequent participation was most common among those activities such as shopping, going to the movies, attending festivals, concerts, museums, or zoos, or other general social gatherings, and decreased participation in going to the gym, participating in team sports, swimming, golfing and camping. During COVID-19, respondents reported they were more frequently engaging in activities such as jogging/running, walking/hiking, watching TV, listening to music, spending time on the phone, playing video games and engaging in unstructured play at home.

Risk Perceptions

Overall, participants were concerned about COVID-19 (21% a great deal, 22% a lot, and 34% a moderate amount). However, respondents felt that worldwide standard of living decreases and worldwide disease increases were the most likely impacts of COVID-19 while decreases to their own personal standard of living and increases to their own personal chance of disease was less likely. Still, most (43% extremely, 40% somewhat) participants considered COVID-19 to be a serious threat.

Relationships between Risk Perceptions and Demographic Attributes & Recreation Behaviors

To address the final research question, cross tabulation statistics (chi-square tests) were computed to test for significant associations between changes in recreation behavior during #HealthyAtHome and six independent variables. The three variables representing risk perceptions were more strongly associated with changes in recreation behaviors than the variables representing personal attributes. For risk perceptions: (a) seriousness was associated with changes in ten recreation activities; (b) concern associated with changes in seven activities; and (c) and worry associated with changes in four activities (see Table 3). In terms of the personal attribute variables: (a) political ideology was associated with four activities; (b) income associated with two, and (c) employment was not significantly associated to any of the recreation activities included in the study (see Table 4).

Table 3. Significant Associations Between Changes in Recreation Activity and Respondent Risk Perception

| Activity | Risk Perceptions | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|-------|
| | Concern | Seriousness | Worry |
| Gardening | p=.037 $\chi^2=4.347$ $\phi_c=.135$ | | |
| Going to the movies | p=.049 $\chi^2=3.869$ $\phi_c=.118$ | | |
| Walking/hiking | p=.005 $\chi^2=7.993$ $\phi_c=.157$ | | |
| Canoeing, kayaking, motorized boating | p=.016 $\chi^2=5.754$ $\phi_c=.157$ | p=.009 $\chi^2=6.841$ $\phi_c=.173$ | |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Hosting or attending social gatherings with family, friends | p<.001 $\chi^2=20.319$ $\phi_c=.265$ | p=.001 $\chi^2=10.244$ $\phi_c=.190$ | |
| Scenic driving | p=.003 $\chi^2=9.086$ $\phi_c=.183$ | p=.029 $\chi^2=4.782$ $\phi_c=.135$ | |
| Playing computer or video games | p=.019 $\chi^2=5.547$ $\phi_c=.145$ | | |
| Attending a family member's performance | p<.001 $\chi^2=12.805$ $\phi_c=.232$ | | p=.004 $\chi^2=8.439$ $\phi_c=.188$ |
| Golf | | p=.033 $\chi^2=4.546$ $\phi_c=.153$ | |
| Camping | | p=.043 $\chi^2=4.100$ $\phi_c=.134$ | |
| Fishing | | p=.012 $\chi^2=6.375$ $\phi_c=.174$ | |
| Hunting | | p=.006 $\chi^2=7.524$ $\phi_c=.208$ | |
| ATV/OHV use | | p=.024 $\chi^2=5.112$ $\phi_c=.170$ | |
| Dance lessons | | p=.043 $\chi^2=4.114$ $\phi_c=.155$ | |
| Reading for pleasure | | p=.022 $\chi^2=5.212$ $\phi_c=.133$ | p=.050 $\chi^2=73.836$ $\phi_c=.113$ |
| Working on collections | | | p=.037 $\chi^2=4.372$ $\phi_c=.148$ |
| Visiting museums and zoos | | | p=.032 $\chi^2=4.610$ $\phi_c=.131$ |

Note: p-value (p), chi-square statistic (χ^2), and Cramer's V value (ϕ_c).

Table 4. Significant Associations between Changes in Recreation Activity and Personal Attributes

| Activity | Personal, Demographic, Attributes | |
|----------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| | Income | Political ideology |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Scenic driving | | p=.012 $\chi^2=6.267$ $\phi_c=.191$ |
| Playing computer or video games | | p=.007 $\chi^2=7.371$ $\phi_c=.210$ |
| Team sports | | p=.021 $\chi^2=5.355$ $\phi_c=.203$ |
| Talking on the phone | | p=.011 $\chi^2=6.522$ $\phi_c=.178$ |
| Playing cards, puzzles, other games | p=.021 $\chi^2=5.351$ $\phi_c=.150$ | |
| Unstructured play time with family at home | p=.015 $\chi^2=5.937$ $\phi_c=.166$ | |

Note: p-value (p), chi-square statistic (χ^2), and Cramer's V value (ϕ_c).

Concern & Recreation

In general, the relationship between concern about COVID-19 and recreation behaviors was negative. For most activities where a significant relationship emerged, as concern decreased, recreation activity increased. This was true of seven different activities. Those who maintained or increased their activity level of (a) walking; (b) scenic driving; (c) boating; (d) gardening; (e) going to the movies; (f) unstructured play time with family at home; and (g) attending social gatherings were less likely to be concerned about COVID-19. A significant, positive relationship emerged for one activity: an increase or maintenance in the frequency of playing video games was associated with an increased concern about COVID-19.

Seriousness & Recreation

A similar pattern emerged in terms of seriousness and recreation behaviors. A negative relationship emerged between seriousness and nine different activities. As participation in (a) golfing, (b) camping; (c) boating; (d) fishing; (e) hunting; (f) scenic driving; (g) ATV/OHV use; (h) dance lessons; and (i) attending social gathering continued or increased, the perceived seriousness of COVID-19 decreased. Again, one significant, positive relationship emerged: an increase in reading for pleasure was positively associated with perceiving COVID-19 as more serious.

Worry & Recreation

Reading was also positively associated with worry; those who increased their reading activity were more worried about the potential negative impacts of COVID-19. The remaining three significant associations with worry were all negative. A maintenance or increase in activity related to (a) visiting

zoos and museums; (b) working on personal collections; and (c) spending time with family were all associated with less worry about COVID-19.

Income & Recreation

Higher income was positively associated with two activities. A maintenance or increase in playing games such as card games and puzzles in the home and an increase in the level of playing outside at home during the lockdown period were both associated with a level of income at or above \$50,000 annually.

Political ideology & Recreation

Finally, there were four significant relationships between political ideology and recreation behaviors. Those who maintained or increased their involvement in team sports and those who increased their video game play activity were associated with identifying as conservative. Those who increased scenic driving and those who increased their time spent talking on the telephone were associated with identifying as liberals

Discussion, Conclusion, & Implications

Overall, our findings reveal that activities that did not require access to recreation facilities and direct connection to service providers were most likely to increase (e.g., running, walking, hiking, watching TV, listening to music, unstructured play at home). Conversely, activities that did require facilities and in-person interaction (e.g., shopping, going to the movies, attending festivals, concerts, museums, zoos, or other general social gatherings) were most likely to decrease. For activity participation, risk perceptions were found to influence behaviors in some instances. For example, individuals who perceive COVID-19 as less risky were more likely to engage in active recreation such as going to the movies and visiting museums and for individuals who perceive COVID-19 as riskier were more likely to report an increase in passive recreation opportunities such as playing video games and reading.

Due to the exploratory nature of this study, including the utilization of a convenience sample, generalizability of these findings is limited. A random sample may have provided for more generalizable results. The results here may be viewed as a single case study, allowing recreation managers and researchers to consider other context-specific impacts of COVID-19 to individuals' leisure time during the pandemic and compare their own findings to these results.

Management Implications

While it is unclear how long COVID-19 will continue to impact everyday life, including recreation and leisure, today's recreation and leisure service providers will most likely be addressing its direct and indirect impacts for the foreseeable future. Questions and hopes regarding getting back to, or finding, 'normalcy' pervades conversations. Likely, even when this pandemic concludes, professional practices won't completely return to the 'normal' which existed prior to the pandemic. Talented professionals will desire to learn from their pandemic-induced experiences and search out the best parts that have current and future value. Just like professionals systematically engaging in

ongoing evaluations of their work (programs, facilities, etc.), keen professionals will evaluate how COVID-19 has shaped their operations and those they serve. As part of these evaluative processes, purposive decisions will shape the way forward. Some key aspects for professionals to consider include: (a) service provision amid external challenges; (b) re-examining the audiences we serve and how to meet their needs; (c) identifying and evaluating trends prompted by the pandemic; and (d) continued research.

Service Provision amid External Challenges

The research presented in this paper was prompted by the global COVID-19 pandemic, a sudden and significant external challenge. It is easy to only see this pandemic and its related impacts on service provision because of its current influence. Do professionals need to step back for a moment and consider the broader implications and lessons gained from current experiences and consider operating strategies for other kinds of service disruptions? Besides widespread disease, what other external challenges might impact our communities and necessitate different strategies? These challenges might include: (a) natural disasters such as tornadoes, hurricanes, or floods; or perhaps (b) economic difficulties caused by the closure of manufacturing facilities, or other widespread employment disruptions. These two categories of challenges may impact entire communities at the same time or only parts of a community. How can the pandemic shape future planning and preparedness for such challenges? How do you provide services in such scenarios?

Re-examining the Audiences We Serve

Effective leaders actively assess the needs of the diverse populations they serve and assist their organizations to responsively plan for those varied needs. That should be a normal part of recreation and leisure service provision. Chances are likely the pandemic has made many in our profession aware of previously unseen, or maybe overlooked, audiences and/or needs. The pandemic highlighted disparities in access to key resources such as healthcare, transportation, internet, and financial stability. These are ongoing challenges most professionals are quite aware of, but perhaps the pandemic reminded/forced them to look beyond what they had been doing. The pandemic challenged families with children as they attempted to help supervise their education at home, while perhaps trying to work as well. Was there an opportunity for recreation and leisure providers to assist families? This global event has highlighted the needs of many with various physical or mental health concerns. While the pandemic forced much of the world at some point to physically distance, wear masks, or avoid large gatherings, do our communities include populations who are isolated (without a pandemic) and would benefit from other service delivery approaches?

Identifying and Evaluating Trends Prompted by the Pandemic

No one would likely state they have enjoyed the pandemic and wished it would stay long-term. In spite of the challenges, creative and popular/preferable service provision options emerged. Embracing and retaining some of these new opportunities could serve individuals and communities, while strengthening the role of recreation and leisure. Professionals may see the value in continuing to offer preferred options such as online classes (baking, yoga, photography, etc.). Perhaps other options/events that are self-paced, family-friendly, and available to a variety of schedules should find

a permanent home in recreation agencies (story walks, scavenger hunts). One trend with potential value is the need to plan programs and events that can be physically distanced or be viable under low-density participation rates. Keeping in mind, not everyone likes to be around many people or to be extremely social even without a pandemic, thoughtful programming may create opportunities for those individuals to find meaningful and comfortable opportunities to participate. Holding programs outdoors permitted many pandemic period opportunities. A thoughtful use of outdoor spaces for programs may facilitate additional opportunities and provide additional benefits to participants from being outside. While the world is ready to move on and stop dealing with the pandemic, it would be a shame to abandon the good discoveries, which could benefit communities and agencies.

Continued Research

Finally, it is important that researchers and practitioners continue to monitor the pandemic's impacts. The profession needs to understand the impacts on all segments of communities, but especially on the underserved/isolated. Are recreation providers taking care of those they serve? Additional research efforts may assess the effectiveness of implementing/continuing newly discovered and preferred programming options. The questions posed here, along with other research and writing on the topic (e.g., Bhatt, 2021), will hopefully encourage recreation professionals to reflect on lessons learned during the pandemic and use this reflection to improve facilities and services in the future.



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(Peer-Reviewed Article)**Cookie Cutter Marketing Might Not Cut It: A Case Study on Men's Tennis Marketing**

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Abstract

There has been little to no research conducted to understand the barriers and challenges of generating awareness for the team. Utilizing a case study approach, this study explores the best target market and exposure techniques for a Division I Power Five men's tennis program in the southeastern United States. This study used the planned behavior theory and the social identity theory as the theoretical lenses to better understand how university students and booster club members identify as a social group and the relation to team identity. The planned behavior theory is used in relation to sport spectators, as the subjective norms of relationships influence are significant in sport settings. Team identification has been aligned with social identity theory, a psychological theory that describes a person's identity based on the relationship between the person and the groups they belong to. Four distinct themes emerged from the data, including *communication, social interaction, connection, and hospitality*. The findings suggested booster club members are the primary fans and help the team generate greater fan interest through events, such as a booster club barbeque. The importance of sociability was clear, and the implications for target marketing and team exposure to acquire fans are discussed within.

Key words: athletic giving, donor intentions, booster club, revenue generation, planned behavior theory

Introduction

Consider the following scenario: It is one of the biggest collegiate tennis matches of the season, and a small crowd gathered to watch court one. Meanwhile, a few other people scattered behind courts two and three, the player on court four had family attending for support, yet only a couple of fans have wondered to watch courts five and six. While players do not compete on the same court every match, this is the typical breakdown of spectatorship. When the home team wins a point, one can hear the player's name followed by words of encouragement. This suggests that while the team might not have a large fan base, they have a loyal and caring one.

At the Power Five level, the vast majority of marketing efforts target the highly visible, revenue-generating programs, such as football and men's basketball. While the university's sport marketing department typically uses such high-profile sports to cross-promote other teams, the men's tennis team is rarely mentioned, even if it is the only team with an event the next day. The purpose of this

study was to examine the challenges associated with marketing a non-revenue generating sport and ultimately to understand the best way to connect with the larger target market for a men's tennis team that finished in the lower half of an NCAA Division I Power Five Conference.

Review of Literature

Sport marketing is used to encourage fan interest by linking sport products with fan behavior (Ratten, 2011). Effective sport marketing techniques include directed communication and the allocation of resources toward the best target market (Ratten, 2016). Sport marketers must maintain innovative strategies explicit to the target market and potential consumers in order to be efficient and effective (Benedek, 2021). Within college athletics, community interaction may encourage giving (i.e., sponsorships, donations, booster club fees). Further, purposeful interaction between a team and its fanbase is an essential part of relationship marketing, which includes the marketing strategies directed at establishing, developing, and maintaining successful relationships between an organization and its consumers (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Sport organizations rely on social media to maintain relationships with primary stakeholders (Dixon & Martinez, 2015). Non-revenue generating sports rely on social media to raise event awareness, the key to ultimate attendance intentions. In the sport marketing context, awareness describes the knowledge of team existence, characterized by low levels of involvement and a lack of psychological connection (Funk & James, 2001).

Motivation

Athletic event attendance is a primary sport fandom consumption behavior (Melnick & Wann, 2011). Yim and Byon (2018) found service satisfaction impacted consumer attendance intention. According to attribution theory (Weiner, 1985; Weiner, 2000), consumers disconnected from game satisfaction after a loss and used service related satisfaction to make future consumption decisions (Yim & Byon, 2018). For this reason, Yim and Byon (2018) suggested sport marketers designate increased time and resources to customer service related strategies.

Psychological intentions, such as escape, family needs, entertainment, and social interaction, have been shown to motivate sport consumption (Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995, etc.). Earnhardt (2010) found uncommitted observation was a primary motivation for sport spectator event attendance. Spectators expressed higher interest in quality, competitive games with teams of similar abilities (Trail et al., 2003). Sport fans, conversely, indicated a persistent desire for connection to a team, player, or sport as the primary motivation for athletic event attendance (Hunt et al., 1999; Toder-Alon et al., 2018). Sport fans can be described as consumption driven (Bodet & Bernache-Asollant, 2011); they have experienced sport fandom through social and emotional value resulting from group affiliation (Toder-Alon et al., 2018). Understanding motives for different fan groups enables sport marketers to create strategies tailored for the specific target market of a particular team.

Team Identity

Focusing on psychological aspects within marketing enables effective sport marketing techniques (Chalip, 1992). The understanding of consumer identification allows for effective marketing (Ratten, 2011). For example, fans with high team identification exhibit team support regardless of game

outcome (Yim & Byon, 2018). For long-term success, sport marketers should increase team identification (Avourdiadour & Theodorakis, 2014; Yim & Byon, 2018). However, for fans with low team identity, sport marketers focus on meeting consumer expectations within their control (signage, promotional activities, customer service, etc.), as satisfaction is key to future consumption (Yim & Byon, 2018). There are many people and experiences that comprise the meaning of the term team (Delia & James, 2018). The meaning of team evolves as the components of a team change (i.e., coaches leave, players graduate). Researchers have suggested fans may identify with a team, players, coaches, and even the community (Trail et al., 2003). Delia and James (2018) suggested attachment to players, coaches, and community are included in the meaning of team.

Social Identity

Athletic event attendance allows for more than simple entertainment; it permits spectators to engage in social activity and, in turn, enrich their social and psychological lives (Melnick, 1993). Team identification has been aligned with social identity theory (Lock & Heere, 2017), a psychological theory that describes a person's identity based on the relationship between the person and the groups they belong to (Delia & James, 2018; Heere & James, 2007; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Alumni, a group predisposed to higher interest in booster membership, have been known to form social identification through an appreciation for team history (Boyle & Magnusson, 2007). Social identity groups might consist of players, coaches, and other fans (Lock & Heere, 2017). Boyle and Magnusson (2007) found social identity positively impacts brand loyalty and equity in college athletics. Tajfel (1982) described social identity as the self-concept the individual derives from the knowledge of and emotional value placed on group membership. Related to social identity is the concept of sociability, which is defined by Melnick (1993) as a need for group contact and refers to a casual, frequently unexpected social interaction. Social identity theory enriched data interpretation of team identity and the interaction between the team and their fans.

Planned Behavior Theory

Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior is one of the most cited psychological models used to predict human social behavior (Ajzen, 2011); it has been used to predict behavior in diverse fields, including exercise, leisure, and marketing (Cunningham & Kwon, 2003). The planned behavior theory used attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control to predict the intention to participate in an activity (Choi, 2016; Cunningham & Kwon, 2003). Cunningham and Kwon (2003) defined attitude as the extent to which a person views a behavior as favorable or not, the subjective norm as the social expectations a person has to engage, or not engage, in a given activity, and perceived behavioral control as the concept of perception of difficulty in engaging in an activity (see also Choi, 2016).

Cunningham and Kwon (2003) found reason to support previous behavior, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control to positively relate to a person's intentions to attend an athletic event. Similar to Ajzen (1991), the participant's attitudes and subjective norms were found to be of higher importance in predicting consumption intentions over perceived behavioral control. It was noted that the findings could be specific to sport spectators, as the subjective norms of relationship influence is significant in sport settings (Cunningham & Kwon, 2003). For this reason,

Cunningham and Kwon (2003) suggested social clubs, booster clubs, and other efforts should be made to encourage a social atmosphere at sporting events. The planned behavior theory guided the development of semi-structured interviews and open-ended questionnaires.

Athletic Donors

College athletics in the Power Five have multimillion-dollar budgets generated from multiple sources, including booster donations (Ko et al., 2014); athletic departments have become dependent on such donations (Stinson & Howard, 2004). Koesters et al. (2015) mentioned athletic departments are continuously looking for new ways to generate revenue, as outside income is a large part of collegiate athletics (Outside income, 2010). Stinson and Howard (2004) found over half of the examined university donors contributed financially to athletic departments. Athletic departments rely on booster club members for their financial donations to intercollegiate athletics. However, booster clubs provide more than financial services to intercollegiate teams and athletic departments; they have been used to generate excitement for upcoming athletic events or athletic seasons (Vilona, 2013) and provide emotional support to athletic programs during the competition season (Gladden et al., 2005).

Prince and File (1994) identified seven types of donors: communitarians, devout, investors, socialites, altruists, repayers, and dynasts. The Athletics Contributions Questionnaire outlined four broad donor motivations: Social, philanthropic, success, and benefits (Billing et al., 1985). Gladden et al. (2005) found donors' motives included: supporting and improving the athletic program, support of the local community, tangible benefits, philanthropy, personal entertainment, and commitment. While booster clubs and athletic donors appear well documented in the literature, little to no prior research is allocated to booster clubs in non-revenue generating athletic teams.

Purpose of the Study

Informed by Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior, the purpose of this study was to examine the challenges associated with marketing a non-revenue generating sport and ultimately to understand the best way to connect with the target market for the men's tennis team at University X. This study is driven by two primary research questions:

- RQ1. What are the challenges to effective marketing for men's tennis at an NCAA Division I Power Five institution in the southeastern United States?
- RQ2. What challenges do a men's tennis team at an NCAA Division I Power Five institution in the southeastern United States face in their fans' team identity?

Methodology

Qualitative inquiry strives to provide exhaustive insight into the topic studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As the present study sought to examine marketing a non-revenue sport (tennis), at one institution, case study methodology was appropriate. According to Merriam (1998):

“a case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in the process rather than the outcomes, in

context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation. Insights gleaned from case studies can directly influence policy, practice, and future research.” (p. 19)

As the current efforts directed to promote this team's matches were targeted toward university students and current fans, understanding student awareness, booster motives, and coach observations may allow the team's staff and marketing department to better recruit and serve potential new fans.

Participants

Thirty-nine individuals participated in this study. Eight participants were current booster club members for the tennis team and aged between 42 and 81 years old (see Table 1). Of these eight participants, three identified as male, the other five identified as female, and all eight identified as either White or Caucasian through an open ended-question regarding race. Boosters selected their own pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality to the extent of the law. The booster participants of the study indicated household incomes over \$150,000 on average. This demographic data indicates that the sample is homogeneous. One participant was the head coach of the team. Thirty university students, aging between 18 and 30, with 15 identifying as male and 14 identifying as female, participated in the study. Specifically, direct quotes were derived from one male, John (22), and three females, Anne (19), Emma (20), and Sophie (23). Pseudonyms for student participants were assigned randomly.

Table 1. Booster Participant Demographics

| Pseudonym | Age | Gender |
|------------|-----|--------|
| Mrs. Marla | 81 | Female |
| PM | 42 | Male |
| Ken | 55 | Male |
| Tracy | 55 | Female |
| Mary Lou | 59 | Female |
| Kathryn | 60 | Female |
| Carrie | 66 | Female |
| Alan | 67 | Male |

Researcher Reflexivity

The primary researcher grew up with tennis, beginning competitive play in middle school, where she ultimately advanced to a top 10 ranking in the state and top 150 in the South before committing to a Division II university for a tennis scholarship. Throughout her masters education, the primary researcher worked as an intern for the university's athletic marketing department as well as a tennis manager for a Division I men's team. She is a certified tennis official. These personal experiences influenced how the primary researcher interpreted the interviews with participants and the meaning attributed to each transcript. In order to minimize the impact of personal biases, the researcher not only utilized self-check through reflexive memoing and engaged in peer debriefing with the research team throughout the research process.

Data Collection

After receiving institutional review board approval to conduct the study, the head coach was contacted to initiate participant selection. There were three different groups of participants chosen based on combination sampling, which is common within case studies as they use multiple forms of data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The coaches and boosters were recruited through homogenous purposeful sampling to focus the study, while students were recruited through convenience sampling to allow most of the time the researcher was in the area to be focused on the booster club members. The researcher explained the risks and benefits of participation, the voluntary nature of the research, and confidentiality and its limits. Each interview participant signed an informed consent document. Student participants filling out the open-ended questionnaires verbally consented to participation in the study.

Coach interviews

The first group included coaches, a head coach and an assistant coach were recruited from a Division I FBS institution in a Power Five Conference; only the head coach participated. The focus of the coach's interviews was on their perceptions of awareness levels and promotional marketing techniques' effectiveness at recruiting match viewership. For example, the coach was asked to explain what he would like to see happen in marketing, what he liked about the current marketing of tennis, and what he believed should be done to improve the current marketing strategies.

Booster club interviews

The focus of the booster club interviews was on the participants' opinions on the level of awareness of tennis matches. The researcher inquired about the promotional marketing techniques that helped to drive the desire for attendance. For example, one interview question inquired about an ideal tennis experience from the participants' perspective with potential probing questions regarding marketing strategies and social experiences.

Student questionnaires

The focus of the student questionnaires was on student levels of awareness of tennis matches and the promotions that created interest in attending a tennis match. For example, the students were asked if they had attended tennis matches and what they liked or did not like. If the students had not attended any tennis matches, the questionnaire inquired if they were interested in attending one in the future and asked what could be done to make tennis a more attractive sporting event.

The primary tool for data collection was a semi-structured interview guide. This allowed the interviews to remain fluid in a conversational manner while ensuring the interviews covered the same general information. The interview questions for the different participant groups were created with the primary research questions in mind. The nine interviews were conducted in person at the university tennis courts unless a location was requested by the participant. Some participants requested coffee houses and others preferred the interviews be held in their homes. The interviews were audio-recorded and lasted between 30 minutes to one hour. A transcription of their interview

was returned to participants for member checking. Casual follow-up communication allowed for additional information or clarification. A questionnaire used to describe the sample's major characteristics such as age, ethnicity, education level, and socioeconomic status was included. Finally, the researchers surveyed 30 university students with an open-ended questionnaire. All participants were at least 18 years old.

Establishing Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was demonstrated through thorough documentation of the data collection process. Data were portrayed without distortion through descriptive validity, peer debriefing, triangulation, and member checks (Maxwell, 2013). Documentation of data collection and analysis, descriptive accounts of the participants' experiences, and a clear framework of researcher biases and assumptions help to certify the credibility of the data. Once the data had been accurately described, it was important to interpret the data correctly. The researchers showed this through research team discussions and theoretical validity. The theoretical frameworks of this study are the social identity theory and the theory of planned behavior.

Analytical theoretical triangulation, the understanding of the back and forth between theory and data (Ravitch & Mittenfelner-Carl, 2016), was used by the researchers through the two theoretical lenses and data gathered from the three groups of participants. The researchers also engaged in conversations about the data while maintaining the amenity required with peers who were not on the research team.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process began with organizing the data (Ravitch & Mittenfelner-Carl, 2016). The primary researcher took notes of interesting, important, and repetitive responses while conducting the interviews. The primary researcher documented her experience through journaling. The digital recordings of interviews were transcribed verbatim utilizing a transcription service.

Coding, the process of showing meaning in the data (Ravitch & Mittenfelner-Carl, 2016), began with categorizing the data based on similarity. Next, the codes were connected to develop major themes. As expressed above, moving from one coding strategy to the next will enrich the research findings (Maxwell, 2013). Deductive coding was utilized by the research team. Deductive coding allows researchers to use literature, research, and prior experience as a way to read the data in a way to look for something specific (Ravitch & Mittenfelner-Carl, 2016).

Findings

The findings emerged into four distinct themes driven by the research questions about increasing fan awareness and team loyalty. Under the first research question asking about challenges to increase fan awareness, the themes of *communication* and *social interaction* emerged. For the second research question addressing challenges to team identity, two more themes emerged: *connection* and *hospitality*.

Awareness and communication

Booster club members desire communication that brings them closer to the team, including newsletters and customizable information, and more of a personal touch. Students expressed a lack of knowledge of men's tennis matches and a desire to be informed through email, word of mouth, social media, and fliers/posters. Students and boosters noted social media was a preferred way to market the matches. One booster club member, Mary Lou, stated she liked Instagram because "it's not pushy."

Carrie pointed out how she loved to receive reminders from the team about upcoming matches. She said,

I love it when somebody from the team or a secretary or somebody sends out a quick little reminder on Wednesday saying, "Don't forget the match on Friday and Sunday. The men are playing [a conference team]. It's going to be a great match. [They are ranked top 20]. Should be a great match. We have a chance to really improve our ranking."

Ken commented on the difficulty of finding match information, not knowing how he or his family would have known about the matches to begin with. He stated,

I know that if I'm looking at another sport that I just want to go see or something, I have to dig and find out where it is, so I really can't remember specifically how we learned about it. My wife might have looked it up.

Tracy, similar to Ken, did not know anything about tennis at University X. She described a method commonly known as word of mouth communication as her primary source of information about men's tennis on campus. She said,

The only way I know anything about tennis is through [a tennis club in town] or if I have a personal friend who is on the board, and again I can't remember who it was or at the time who the President was that said, "join the booster club."

Alan, unlike Ken and Tracy, expressed very little issue in finding information about upcoming men's tennis matches at University X. He stated, "I've got a schedule in my office that I look at every day."

Social Interaction

Tennis matches were described as social, family, and community events. Both boosters and students expressed a desire for a social environment. Sophie said "a student section [or] hype [area] for the team" would increase her interest in attending a men's tennis match at University X. There is a clear preference for active promotions, such as kids' activities and t-shirt throws, versus passive promotions, such as t-shirts given at the entrance. Emma expressed an interest in an interactive social experience through naming promotions she enjoys, including "[the school mascot], music, [and] games with the crowd."

PM spoke of the importance of personalized promotions. How changing one aspect of one promotion could change it from something passive and impersonal to something interactive. He said,

This is just top of my head thinking right now. But I wonder, rather than doing t-shirt toss, do like a marked ball toss. And then go to the booth, because one, whenever you get to the booth, now you get

to exchange it for your gift of choice, whatever t-shirt of your size, but you also make sure you give them the magnets, the schedule, the letters and so on. And it's an opportunity to connect face-to-face.

Ken agreed with PM's importance of a social atmosphere saying, "I think that anything that we can do that can promptly promote that social community, family kinds of things, I think it would be really, really good." He also brought up the importance of including team-fan engagement and acknowledged an understanding for weighing fan interaction desires with player needs. Ken explicitly stated,

I know some teams and stuff have, like, an after the match greeting and stuff. Well I know it's tough out there. They just worked their rear ends off, and it's a big victory, they want to celebrate. It's a tough loss, they want to kind of just go lick their wounds, if you will, so I understand that. And I know they do some kind of events with the players, but for the casual fan, they're not going to those special events or coming out. And I know that in the past there's been certain player days where there's a button or information about them. I think that could be really kind of taken up a level, if you will, where you have matches that are about certain players, more information pushed out, and maybe somehow communicating more information. Have that player, maybe, just somehow interact with the fans before or after in some fashion.

Team Identity and Connection

Booster club members want a relationship with the team. Students and boosters alike indicated the importance of connecting with the team. For example, Anne, who has never attended a men's tennis match at University X, would be more interested in attending one "if [she] knew the person playing.'

Alan revealed team involvement or "getting involved with the team and getting to know them personally" was one way he supports the tennis team. He also expressed the importance of connection and its consistency. Specifically, he said,

I think there are times when the men do a great job, but it's not consistent. That's what we need, we need consistency. At first, it's gonna be chipping at the block. At first you're gonna get a little off, then more, and then more, and then more. But I think involvement with the tennis community is paramount. You have to have it. As I said before, this is not a top sport in the United States. It's considered a country club sport for the most part. We're trying to break down those walls and get more people to realize that anybody can play this sport, and we have great public facilities, and you can get out and use them. But its still, football is the number one sport ... American football, not even the real football. But American football, the number one sport in America. Soccer, number one sport in the world. And the number two sport is basketball, believe it or not, in the world. And then I forget what's number three, but number four as far as people following it and participating, is tennis. But in the United States, it doesn't make the top 10. So, I think involvement with the community is paramount, and that's something that the girls had tried to do on a consistent basis for so many years. So, the guys do it one season, don't do it the next season. Do it one season, don't do it the next season. Consistency is what we need to have in that respect.

Mrs. Marla talked about the difficulties of connecting with tennis in a place that prefers football. She stated, "We seem to be more football oriented as a state." Tracy discussed challenges as a female connecting with a men's team. Tracy did not feel a strong connection to the men's tennis team. She

said, "The men I've never really connected with or I don't even ... I don't know if I've been to that many of the men's matches ... Maybe a couple." Specifically stating, I mean, I think I sometimes feel like I have a stronger connection to my nieces than I do my own boys. Because you just ... it's just different ... I don't think they're doing anything wrong. I don't think they're doing anything right. It's just the way it is and I don't know who would connect. I don't know, you know?

Katheryn further addressed the importance boosters placed on getting to know the team and expressed a clear desire to have a personal connection with the players. She said, "The nice thing about the tennis teams are the teams are small enough that you can get to know the players." She went on to compare the differences she perceived in tennis booster club membership to other sports. She said, The basketball team has a huge booster organization. Even softball has a really big booster organization. So it's harder as an individual to get to know the players, but we get to interact with the players in mixers and events. They come to our Meet, Greet, and Eat every year, so it's just a nice way to know the people who are playing for the team.

Hospitality

Booster members repeatedly mentioned that they were a part of the booster club to help the players. Carrie notes how the players express gratitude for the hospitality the booster club members show the team. She said,

You know, for a long time I think the girls did a better job of that, but the guys have gotten so much better at that. I don't know if George is coaching them, but after a match they'll come up to you and they'll tell you that now. It's really sweet to see that. Yeah, they do. They express that. I'll get notes in the mail, "Thank you for your snacks. Thank you for coming." So, they do express that.

Ken, similar to Carrie, mentioned "making sure the college athletes feel like there are people in their corner" as a major reason for being a booster club member. Mary Lou talked about how the staff is always helpful and welcoming, making volunteering an important aspect of her membership. She further stated,

Honestly, the staff of the tennis courts ... the tennis programs, they work hard. Both the men's and the women's and so just being a volunteer for them ... It just made me want to work harder for them because they work so hard. [We] have been through a lot of different coaches and all of them have been so encouraging and fun.

Katheryn talked about a yearly event for members of a local tennis association, known as "TTA Day," where members "would come out and somebody from the board would do the first serve." The first serve is a popular tennis promotion at University X and is similar to the first pitch often seen in baseball. Katheryn felt this welcomed the TTA and acknowledged their effort to grow tennis in the area. She further explained the event saying,

That was incredibly popular. We had more TTA members come out for that because they could have beer and a glass of wine and some snacks and have a meal. I mean, I was really surprised at how much people wanted to come out...

Similarly, John attended a match for an engineering night. He said, "I thought it was fun and fast paced, but I had a difficult time knowing where I should focus my attention." This suggests people without tennis backgrounds might require guidance from either seasoned fans or team staff to maximize their experience.

Discussion

This research examined fan awareness and team loyalty challenges associated with marketing a non-revenue generating men's tennis team within the NCAA Division I Power Five Conference. The findings help illustrate that communication and social interaction are required to raise awareness. Further, the opportunity to provide connection and hospitality increased team identity within the current fanbase. This section discusses communication, social interaction, connection, and hospitality, along with their practical implications in greater detail.

Through increased communication, the men's team has the ability to bring more spectators to the stands. Existing fans are willing to proactively look up match information because they already have a connection with the players and coach. However, as expected, potential fans need more direct marketing. This study found the best way to reach or communicate with potential new fans is through email, word of mouth, social media, and fliers/posters. Students mentioned the importance of word-of-mouth marketing, the marketing tactic where those who are interested in the event share with friends. Word of mouth is directly tied to the subjective norms or social expectations a person has to attend the tennis matches. This supports previous research on the theory of planned behavior and perceived behavioral control, the perception of difficulty in performing a behavior (Choi, 2016; Cunningham & Kwon, 2003). Without proper marketing of tennis matches, students are required to look up the information on their own, limiting awareness and providing a reason to accept a perceived difficulty of match attendance. Through the utilization of social media to attract potential fans to matches, even more fans will choose to attend the matches.

The desire for a social, interactive experience was expressed by booster club members and students. A major emphasis was placed on active promotions where fans must compete with one another for prizes over passive promotions such as freebies given at the entrance. The active promotions allow for increased sociability in the stands. This finding is consistent with Melnick's (1993) findings that the promotion of social possibilities helps satisfy society's desire for sociability. Creating community and family events leads to more people in the stands. The social interactions allowed by these events relate to social identity research. According to Lock and Heere (2017), individuals seek group membership with others who are consistent with their self-concept. Community and family-friendly events are deemed as positive by the booster club members. This is consistent with Tsotsou (2007), where intangible motives exceed tangible motives in athletic donation or booster club membership.

Booster club members expressed a clear interest in emotionally connecting with the team, showing an investment in their social identity. They have ongoing relationships with the team. This is consistent with prior research on relationship marketing, promoting the retention of consumers through long-term mutual satisfaction (Abeza et al., 2013). The importance of relationship marketing for athletic donors is also expressed by Tsotsou (2007), suggesting athletic marketers must motivate donors, build trust, enhance loyalty, and increase donor involvement. Athletic donors give the

required monetary amount to receive tangible benefits (Stinson & Howard, 2010). Relationship marketing can be used as a tool to increase athletic donations; as one study found (Stinson & Howard, 2010), the donors contributing more money have preexisting relationships with teams and institutions.

Booster club members wanted to be hospitably and make the team feel welcome in the community. Tennis teams at Division I Power Five institutions often include players from multiple countries, and the booster club at University X wanted the college athletes who may be far from home to know they have support in the area. Each booster participant had a different way of making the college athletes feel welcome, but they all expressed the importance of hospitality. Booster club members stated that the main reason for joining the club was to support the team, shown both physically and emotionally. Physically, all boosters donate money each year. Some bake the team goodies, while others practice with the team. Emotionally, the boosters attend the majority of matches throughout the season, learn the players' names and nicknames, and cheer for them from the stands. Ko et al. (2014) found growth was a strong psychometric property of donor motivation. Growth includes philanthropy, illustrated in the current study through providing hospitality to the team.

Implications

The current marketing plan for the men's tennis team is similar to the majority of teams that do not generate revenue at the university. There has been little to no research conducted to understand the challenges of generating awareness for the team. While the marketing strategy is currently passive, however, to attract new fans, the marketing must be active.

The booster club members are the primary fans of the tennis team. The booster club helps the team generate fan interest through events such as the booster club barbeque. In order to keep events like this happening, it is important to continue to grow the booster club. The promotion of the booster club must be active, which is similar to attracting potential new fans, and provide opportunities to connect with the team and other booster members.

Students are not attending matches because they do not know about them, limiting the behavioral control held by students. Even when students do come once, they do not continue attending. The stands need to be socially active and exciting. Students stated interest in interactive competitions instead of freebies by the entrance. As such, applying Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior, student attitudes would likely show a positive interest in attending the matches. There have been a decent amount of freebies at the gate but limited opportunities for interactive competition. This can be adjusted to allow students a desire to come back to win something, rather than everyone receiving it at the gate.

Future Research and Conclusions

This study is limited to one university, one booster club, one coach, and 30 students. Apart from the one booster club, the participants in the study were highly homogenous and only represented boosters that were highly involved with the team. As such, this limits the transferability of the findings. All booster club members invest financially; however, only members with higher levels of involvement

invest time. Future research should include all levels of involvement in booster club membership, with only financial investment being the lowest level of involvement. Furthermore, further research should be done to compare boosters of a women's tennis team and team loyalty after a successful season to the findings from this study. Future studies should examine a larger participant pool, including tennis booster clubs and students from a large sample of universities. Additional work should be done to examine race within booster clubs of non-revenue generating teams. A quantitative study on booster club membership would be beneficial to allow a generalizable understanding of booster club membership. A future follow-up study should be completed at the same university to analyze if the recommended changes are successful.

Research should be conducted that is solely interested in student attendance in non-revenue generating sports, such as tennis. Students are an inherent part of college campuses. However, this research showed the lack of awareness surrounding tennis among the student participants. As such, future research should be conducted to examine awareness and motivation to attend tennis matches within a larger sample of the student body. These studies would help raise academic understanding of non-revenue generating sports fandom and a practical purpose for sport marketers in the field.

When marketing for the men's tennis team at University X, one must remember the importance of communication through email, social media, word of mouth, and posters/flyers around campus. Social interaction helps create positive attitudes and subjective norms to increase attendance from the target market. Boosters desire a connection to the team, and based on the social identity theory, a stronger connection with the players will create a stronger bond to the team. The importance of hospitality shows boosters want to help the players. The boosters identify as the team's booster club, and they show it through giving back to the players.

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(Peer Reviewed Article)**Sport Official Motivation and Retention in a Rural Athletic Association**

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Abstract

Sport officials play an important role in both the quality of sport programming and competition level. To help identify potential areas high school athletic associations could emphasize as part of recruitment and retention efforts, the current investigation sought to understand the level of satisfaction of individuals certified to officiate high school athletics. Three-hundred ninety-four officials completed an online survey composed of items from the Referee Retention Scale (RRS) and the Michigan Organization Assessment Questionnaire Job Satisfaction Subscale (MOAQ-JJS). Research findings indicated the officials were motivated intrinsically to officiate because of a love of sports and competition. Renumeration was not a primary driver of their desire to officiate as the money earned was mainly seen as extra income. Mentoring is an important component of recruitment and retention efforts as results suggest individuals we encourage to officiate by a friend or mentor. Overall, officials felt the association considered their needs but agreed that favoritism or politics played in a role in game assignments. Based on the findings of the study, associations should consider emphasizing those aspect of officiating that intrinsically motivate potential officials. Additionally, associations should work to engage current officials in both recruitment and retention efforts as peer mentors. Finally, the results indicate the recruitment of more female officials may help with current official shortages.

Key Words: Officiating, Motivation, Retention, Recruitment, Shortage.

Introduction

In the spring of 2020, the National Association of Sports Officials (NASO) released the findings of an industry wide survey giving over 17,000 sport officials an opportunity to share their thoughts (Referee, 2020). Female officials made up only 6.43% of respondents whose average age was 53.29. Those respondents officiating track & field, tennis, and swimming reported the highest average age at 58.74, 58.04, and 57.87 respectively. The lowest average age by sport was hockey where respondents average age was reported as 48.41. Of those officials participating in the survey, 57.02% believe sportsmanship is getting worse while 15.89% believe it is getting better and the remaining 27.09% do not believe it has changed. Respondents noted parents, followed by coaches, were associated with most of the sportsmanship problems (Referee, 2020).

By the fall of 2021, several states were reporting a shortage of sport officials. Keilman (2021) reported sport officials in the Chicago area reported a combination of the COVID-19 pandemic concerns, lack of appreciation, behavior officials encountered as part of their role, pay, and the toll officiating takes on a body were leading officials to quit. As a result, both high school associations and youth sport programs were struggling to find qualified officials. Like its counterparts in Illinois, the Kentucky High School Athletic Association (KHSAA) shared they faced a shortage of 100-125

football officials and 75 soccer referees that fall (Austin, 2021). Similarly, contributing factors leading to the shortage included an aging official pool who sought retirement and the abuse experienced by those officiating. The reported official shortages are not a new phenomenon (Steers, 2018; Theisen, 2017; Mathison, 2017). Sport officials play an integral role in the quality of programming and competition at every level in sport (Cuskelly & Hoye, 2013). As a result, when sport administrators struggle in recruitment, training, and retention of quality officials', researchers began to investigate factors that motivate individuals to officiate (Jordan et al, 2019, Fowler et al., 2019; Hancock et al., 2015; Ridinger, 2015; Phillips & Fairley, 2014; Warner et al. 2013; Bernal & Nix, 2012), stressors (Voight, 2009; Dorsche & Paskevich, 2006, Folkesson et al., 2002; Rainey, 1994; Rainey, 1995; Rainey & Hardy, 1999), abuse of officials (Kellett & Shilbury, 2007; Folkesson et al., 2002), strategies for coping with stress (Warner et al., 2013; Voight, 2009; Wolfson & Neave, 2007), and retention (Jordan et al., 2019; Forbes & Livingston, 2013; Gray & Wilson, 2008; Sabaini 2001). In practice, this research potentially serves to help sport administrators address potential concerns with an eye toward official recruitment and retention. The current investigation sought to understand the level of satisfaction of individuals certified to officiate high school athletics. The insights gained from the investigation could aid those working at state associations, local high schools, and officials in the field recruit and retain certified officials.

Review of Literature

Motivation to Officiate

Understanding what motivates an individual to begin officiating a sport may aid sport officials in their efforts to recruit new officials for their programs. Bernal and Fix (2012) found those officiating sought their roles and continued officiating because of their passion for sports and love of the game. Warner et al. (2013) concurred that a strong desire to continue being part of sports, competition, and the challenge motivated individuals to officiate. The researchers' also found officials were motivated by the social experiences of officiating. Ridinger (2015) confirmed social aspects, continued involvement and love of sport contributed to an individual's involvement in youth sports. Ridinger also found that support given through training, mentoring, and administrators also aided continued involvement as a youth sport official.

Seeking to further our understanding, Hancock et al. (2015) wanted to know if the characteristic of the contest impacted and individual's desire to officiate. Specially, does the level of interaction with contestants and number of contest cues officials' monitor and react to, as part of their role, impact the desire to begin and continue officiating? The results indicate that, regardless of activities involved in officiating, those who began, and continued, to officiate shared common motivation (Hancock et al., 2015). Individuals began officiating their selected sport for intrinsic reasons. Hancock et al. confirmed findings of earlier research results (Phillips & Fairley, 2014; Gray & Wilson, 2008) indicating that the social interactions associated with officiating were important to individuals continuing their role as an official. Hancock et al. also found the difference in reasons to stop officiating was found based on activities associated with officiating. In sports that required individuals to monitor more contests cues and required more interactions with contestants', officials cited "disrespect or lack of respect" as a reason to stop more often than their counterparts' officiating sports that did not require the same level of each activity (Hancock et al.,2015).

Jordan et al. (2019) found that, in addition to continued involvement with sport, rural official's desire to give back to the sport they loved while helping younger athletes learn the game motivated individuals to officiate. Hasko (2021) confirmed the desire to stay affiliated with sports along with a desire to give back (e.g., act of service) and physical benefits officiating soccer provided. While Fowler et al. (2019) found a family connection to officiating lead individuals to officiate. Specifically, hockey officials began officiating because a family member had officiated. This factor also kept the individual officiating. The researchers also uncovered a desire to participate in the game from a new perspective. In this instance a former player or coach sought to officiate. Research findings also confirming what other researchers noted as the social aspect of officiating motivated individuals to officiate. Within many of the investigations, remuneration received for officiating was seen as an extra source of income (Hasko, 2021; Jordan et al., 2019; Ridinger, 2015; Kellett, & Warner, 2011).

Stress of Officiating

Across a wide variety of sports researchers began to examine the reasons why officials discontinued their involvement with sports. These researchers focused on those factors that lead to burnout and intention to continue in baseball and softball (Rainey, 1994; Rainey 1995), rugby (Rainey & Hardy, 1999), basketball (Rainey & Carrol, 1999), volleyball (Stewart & Ellery, 1998); U.S. soccer (Voight, 2009), and hockey (Dorsche & Paskevich, 2007). With an increase in reported violence directed at sport officials this work also examined incidents of abuse of sport officials (Kellett & Shilbury, 2007; Folkesson et al., 2002). Across sports, officials reported little to moderate amounts of stress associated with their role (Rainey, 1994; Rainey 1995, Rainey & Hardy, 1999; Rainey & Carroll, 1999). Factors behind the stress experienced by officials included such things as fear of failure, performance concerns, fear of potential physical harm, time pressure, and interpersonal conflict (Dorsche & Paskevich, 2007; Rainey & Hardy, 1999; Rainey & Carroll, 1999; Stewart & Ellery, 1998; Rainey, 1995).

Relationships found among stress, burnout, and intention to quit (Rainey & Carrol, 1999; Raney & Hardy, 1999) lead to the examination of how officials cope with the stress associated with their role (Warner et al., 2013; Kellett & Warner, 2011; Voight, 2009; Wolfson & Neave, 2007). Research findings indicate one of the predominate reasons for continuing to officiate, a sense of community or comradery, also provides a means to help officials deal with the stressors or abuse experiences (Jordan et al., 2019; Warner et al., 2013; Kellett & Warner, 2011; Voight, 2009; Wolfson & Neave, 2007). Across a variety of sports researchers found the community of fellow officials provides those officiating with an opportunity to share experiences, seek constructive advice, and develop skills essential to an official's role (Warner et al., 2013; Kellett & Warner, 2011; Voight, 2009; Wolfson & Neave, 2007). While the community of officials provides beneficial support, Voight (2009) also found that the associations that train and certify officials may also play a role in coping with stress. Specifically, these associations could provide the tools to help officials deal with stressors proactively using reframing, self-talk, and other techniques to help build an officials mental coping skill.

The relationships among stress, burnout, and intention to stop officiating also lead to recommendations to help sport official retention (Jordan et al., 2019; Forbes & Livingston, 2013; Gray & Wilson, 2008; Sabaini 2001). Ideas to aid retention of officials ranged from developing

standardized certification and licensure processes (Warner et al., 2013) to acknowledging the importance of recognizing and rewarding officials (Forbes & Livingston, 2013). The emphasis officials place on the intrinsic value of their role lead Hancock et al. (2015) to suggest recruitment activities highlighting the intrinsic rewards of officiating. While the reported sense of community and social aspects that lead individuals to continue officiate lead Phillips and Fairley (2014) to conclude that the social aspects of officiating were important to learning and support for officials. While Tingle et al. (2014) found this lack of social support provided through access to a mentor, or role model, was a key factor in the shortage of female sport officials. To further support officials and build community Jordan et al. (2019) suggested the use of peer mentoring programs.

Ridinger et al. (2017) later compiled the factors found within research associated with sport official satisfaction into a referee retention scale (RRS). This instrument serves as a valuable tool to aid in understanding the factors that potentially retain sport officials. Ridinger et al. (2017) suggest the data garnered from utilization of the RRS will help sport administrators better manage sport officials by highlighting areas needing improvement and strengthening areas that aid retention. The current investigation uses the RRS to examine the satisfaction of sport officials for the purpose of aiding those working at state associations, local high schools, and officials in the field recruit and retain certified officials

Methods

Participants

Officials certified by a state athletic association were the focus of this investigation. Using a convenience sample, the researcher recruited potential participants with permission of the association's commissioner. Potential participants included both male and female officials certified to officiate either one or multiple sports. These sports included baseball, softball, boys & girls basketball, volleyball, football, archery, and track. Individuals may have been newly certified or have years of officiating experiences.

Instrument

An electronic survey was created using two existing scales. The first, the Referee Retention Scale (RRS) was developed to predict referee satisfaction and intention to continue (Ridinger et al., 2017). The scale measures sport official satisfaction using seven factors predicted to contribute to an official's satisfaction and intention to continue officiating (Ridinger et al., 2017). A 4-point Likert scale measures satisfaction within each factor. For instance, one question assessing administration consideration is "administrators in my official's association are considerate of my needs" (Ridinger et al., 2017, p. 519). Cronbach Coefficients for the seven factors ranged from .72 to .90. All Cronbach's Coefficient alphas for the factors associated with the RRS were all above acceptable levels (Administration Consideration $\alpha = .911$, Intrinsic Motivation $\alpha = .855$, Mentoring $\alpha = .907$, Remuneration $\alpha = .734$, Sense of Community $\alpha = .907$, Lack of Stress $\alpha = .783$, and Continuing Education $\alpha = .816$).

The second, the Michigan Organization Assessment Questionnaire Job Satisfaction Subscale (MOAQ-JJS) uses three questions to assess job satisfaction. Questions include “All in all I am satisfied with my job”, “In general, I don’t like my job (r)”, and “In general, I like working here” (Cammann et al., 1983; Bowling & Hammond, 2008, p. 64). The scale uses a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree (Allen, 2001). For this sample the Cronbach’s Coefficient alpha for the factors were all above acceptable levels (MOAQ-JJS $\alpha = .838$).

Procedures

Upon Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, the electronic survey was distributed using Qualtrics (Qualtrics, 2022). To recruit participants an email was sent to Assigning Sectaries for each sport across the state. This email contained a request to share the attached survey with those officials they assigned within their respective sports. Assigning sectaries then forwarded the Qualtrics survey link to their officials via email. Data collection occurred at two times during 2019. The first was conducted in May-June 2019 and the second in November-December 2019. Each time the survey was available for 6 weeks. To increase participation, reminder emails were sent at week three and the final week of the survey. Additionally, those who completed the survey were given the opportunity to opt into a drawing for a gift certificate.

Data was analyzed first to evaluate participant engagement. Of the 566 completed responses, 172 were removed due to several missing responses and 394 cases were retained for full analysis. Descriptive statistics for quantitative items were calculated using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.

Results

Only 9.8 % of those completing the survey were female officials. Fifty-one percent (51%) of participants had 11 or more years of officiating experience, 30.1% of the sample had 2-10 years of officiating experience, and 7% of participants were in their first year of officiating. The top five sports, among officials completing the survey, included girls’ basketball (47.1%), boys’ basketball (44.6%), softball (32.59%), volleyball (31.5%), and football (27.9%). Archery, bowling, bass fishing, competitive cheer, swimming/diving, and tennis did not have representation in the sample. Most officials completing the survey indicated they would continue officiating (93.9%).

Officials participating in the investigation were satisfied with their referee positions. Table 1 summarizes the results of participant satisfaction within the seven areas constructs of the referee retention scale.

Table 1. Referee Retention Scale (RRS) Question Results

| Construct | Mean | SD |
|--|------|------|
| <i>Administrative Consideration</i> | | |
| Administration in my officials’ association are considerate of my needs. | 3.12 | .88 |
| Decisions related to game assignment are fair. | 2.81 | .97 |
| Game assignments are distributed based on “who you know.” (r) | 2.53 | 1.03 |
| Officiating assignments are based on favoritism and politics. (r) | 2.55 | 1.07 |

| | | |
|--|------|------|
| Administrators in my officials' association show favoritism. (r) | 2.59 | 1.05 |
| <i>Intrinsic Motivation</i> | | |
| I officiate as a way to stay involved with the sport. | 3.61 | .65 |
| I enjoy officiating because it allows me to stay connected to my sport. | 3.58 | .67 |
| I love the competitive nature of sports. | 3.77 | .46 |
| I like that officiating allows me to be part of competitive events. | 3.68 | .56 |
| I like the challenge of officiating. | 3.71 | .53 |
| Officiating allows me to give back to the sport. | 3.65 | .63 |
| <i>Mentoring</i> | | |
| A mentor assisted my integration into the officiating community. | 2.89 | 1.07 |
| Having a mentor to support me as an official was an initial attraction to the role. | 2.56 | 1.09 |
| A mentor helped me to feel welcome in the officiating community. | 2.91 | 1.04 |
| A mentor or friend encouraged me to officiate. | 3.01 | 1.05 |
| <i>Remuneration</i> | | |
| My main motivation for officiating is financial reward. | 1.90 | .87 |
| Pay was an important factor in my decision to start officiating. | 2.14 | 1.00 |
| Officiating is a good source of supplementary income. | 3.13 | .87 |
| Money is not the primary reason I officiate. (r) | 1.75 | .95 |
| <i>Sense of Community</i> | | |
| A strong sense of community among officials exists for me. | 3.17 | .82 |
| I feel included in the officiating community. | 3.24 | .80 |
| I belong to a strong officiating community. | 3.21 | .84 |
| <i>Lack of Stress</i> | | |
| I often feel abuse while officiating. (r) | 2.70 | .99 |
| I often encounter hostile interactions with coaches and/or spectators while officiating. (r) | 2.66 | .97 |
| I often feel a lot of stress while officiating. (r) | 2.92 | .87 |
| <i>Continuing Education</i> | | |
| I received adequate training each year to stay current on officiating mechanics and rules of the game. | 3.33 | .80 |
| Because of the continuing education provided by my association, I feel prepared to officiate my sport. | 3.30 | .82 |
| Training prepared me for interactions with coaches, players, and fans. | 2.85 | .98 |

N = 394

Officials participating in the investigation reported a high level of satisfaction associated with their work as an official. Table 2 provides the mean score and standard deviation for MOAQ-JJS questions.

Table 2. Overall Sport Official Job Satisfaction

| Question | Mean | SD |
|---|------|-----|
| All in all, I am satisfied with my job. | 4.12 | .83 |
| In general, I like working here. | 4.17 | .78 |
| In general, I don't like my job. (r) | 4.27 | .90 |

N = 394

Discussion

Supporting the works of others seeking to understand what motivates individuals to officiate (Jordan et al, 2019, Fowler et al., 2019; Hancock et al., 2015; Ridigner, 2015; Bernal & Nix, 2012), the results indicated that officials were intrinsically motivated to officiate their sports. Respondents shared this as a love of the competitive nature of sports, the challenge associated with officiating, being part of competitive events, and a way to stay involved in sports. A sense of community is another important component to the officiating culture. Respondents reported they felt included and belonged to a strong culture supporting the importance of building community (Jordan et al., 2019; Ridigner 2015; Hancock et al., 2015; Phillips & Fairley,2014; Warner et al. 2013; Gray & Wilson, 2008). Finally, in this investigation remuneration was seen as a good source of supplemental income. However, financial reward was not the main reason individuals officiated. This is also consistent with findings from other investigations of sport official motivation and intention to continue (Jordan et al., 2019; Ridinger, 2015; Kellett, & Warner, 2011).

Overall, officials believe the association's administration is considerate of an individual's needs and decisions are made fairly. However, there is some concern associated with whether favoritism or politics plays into assignments. Officials believe they receive adequate training to begin each year and they feel prepared to officiate their sport. Mentoring is occurring providing and a feeling of being welcomed and supported as an official. This finding supports Ridigner's (2015) finding that support of association, or league administration, is a contributing factor to an individual's participation in youth sports as an official. The findings also confirm other researchers' findings that careful scheduling decisions, training, and evaluation of officials is an important administrative consideration (Jordan et al., 2019).

Questions focusing on the respondents' feelings of stress associated with abuse from spectators or coaches were reverse coded. Means for the three questions ranged from 2.66 to 2.92. The question, "*I often feel a lot of stress while officiating*", had the highest mean of 2.92. The question, "*I feel abuse while officiating*", had a mean of 2.70. This would suggest the officials do feel some stress associated with officiating. They also agreed this stress came from coaches and spectators as the question, "*I often encounter hostile interactions with coaches and/or spectators while officiating*", had a mean of 2.66. These results confirm earlier findings that officials experience little to moderate stress while fulfilling their roles with the contests they officiate (Rainey, 1994; Rainey 1995, Rainey & Hardy, 1999; Rainey & Carroll, 1999).

Recommendations for Retention

Demographic results indicate the association should focus recruitment effort on increasing the number of female officials and new officials overall. First, only 8.9% of the officials completing the survey were female. This result is consistent with NASO sport officials' survey participation of only 6.43% female and 53.29% male (Referee, 2020). The small percentage of female officials provides a potential pool to recruit and potentially retain new officials. A focus on recruiting female officials could help aid opportunities for former athletes to stay connected with their sports while helping to address the fact that only 7% of the officials participating in this investigation reported being a first-year official. Additionally, increasing the number of first year officials the association should be part

of the association's overall recruitment efforts. These efforts could focus on recent high school or college graduates. This recruitment could emphasize an opportunity to stay connected with a sport the individuals loved, and love of the competitive nature of sport while earning extra money. Understanding that mentoring opportunities are important for all officials it would be important to ensure new officials are mentored during the first few years they officiate.

In addition to a lack of new officials, the association is facing the challenge of officials retiring as 51% of the study reported officiating 11 or more years and 30.1% reported officiating 2-10 years. Within the next 5-10 years if there are not more individuals becoming certified officials the association will continue face a shortage. This would not only negatively impact those assigning officials to competitions it would also negatively impact junior and senior high school student athletes. Increasing overall recruitment efforts would help a potential loss of officials associated with retirement.

Because social connections play an important part of a sport officials desire to continue, officiating recruitment and retention efforts should involve current officials. This could involve current officials recruiting individuals they know and then serving as mentors during the first few years the new officials officiate. This mentoring process would not only build social connections but provide an opportunity for new officials to build skills that will aid in coping with the stressors associated with officiating.

Finally, as respondents shared administrative considerations related to favoritism or politics played a role in assigning games. The association should clearly explain to new and current officials the process associated with game assignment. This would be important for all games but perhaps be even more important as officials sought to move from different competition levels or sought opportunities to officiate high stake games such as district, regional, or state championship contests. This information may be equally important when officiating a contest requires extensive travel distance since officiating provided a source of supplemental income.

Limitations and Future Research

The current investigation is not without limitations. The use of a convenience sample of officials from one state associations provides important information for the state's association but limits generalizability to other athletic associations. Additionally, a sample consisting of officials who are 93.5% of those are returning to officiating provides valuable insight into the reason those officials continue it is also important to understand why officials leave. Finally, the questionnaire sought participant's age but did not seek participant's ethnicity. Future research could provide opportunities for officials who discontinue officiating to share their experiences. This information may provide additional ideas to aid recruitment activities, resolve potential administrative concerns, or provide opportunities to address additional challenges or concerns keeping some from officiating or causing others to stop officiating. Since female officials only represented 9.8 % of those participating in the study, researchers may seek to identify more effective ways to encourage former female athletes to become certified officials. Future research could focus on ways to continue to address stress associated with officiating. Finally, future research could replicate the study to see if COVID-19 impacted current findings. Overall, officials who participated in the investigation agreed with

statements associated with stress experienced while officiating. This stress stemmed from abuse felt from coaches and fans. Future research could investigate ways to help officials manage this stress and encourage a more respectful behavior from coaches and fans.



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