The Presence of Underrepresented Populations in Outdoor Recreation: An Analysis of Collegiate Recreation Advertisements

Jennifer Pecoraro, Georgia State University
Brenda Pitts (Advisor), Georgia State University

Marketing - Diversity (Other)  Saturday, June 9, 2018
Poster  9:20 AM
Abstract 2018-296  Room: Halifax

Review of Literature
Research has consistently demonstrated that people of color and females participate in outdoor recreational activities at lower levels than their white and male counterparts (Outdoor Foundation Participation Report, 2013; Lee, et al., 2001; Manning, 1999). These underrepresented populations miss out on the positive gains achieved through participation in outdoor recreation; this includes an improved self-esteem, increased belongingness, academic success, and physical benefits (Brock et al, 2015; Hinkle Smith, 2016; Todd et al, 2009; Randall et al, 2009). In the continued pursuit of providing means of attaining wellbeing for all members of the campus community, collegiate recreation professional organizations encourage member institutes to recognize the inequities influencing underrepresentation and make conscious, strategic actions towards alleviation. NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation calls for its member institutions to “be prepared to address the environmental factors that influence performance and affect overall wellbeing” through the strategic value of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (“NIRSA's Strategic Values,” 2017). This value emphasizes the need to address the underrepresentation of target markets within collegiate recreation programming. To accomplish this, research lines of inquiry have explored barriers and constraints of participation among underrepresented groups in outdoor recreation. These barriers include fear of racism, sexism, isolationism, and other historical disadvantages related to their identity as a minority (Carr and Williams, 1993; Culp, 1998; Henderson et al., 1996; Kilgour 2007; Kilgour and Parker, 2013). From these findings, suggested methods to address barriers and constraints to participation emerge. These suggested methods include employing strategic marketing decisions that directly address barriers and constraints through inclusive imagery (McNeil et al., 2012; Schwartz and Corkery, 2011; Whissell and McCall, 1997). By utilizing strategic marketing methods and endorsement theory, collegiate outdoor recreation programs may adhere to university inclusion policies and meet expectations of associated professional organizations.

Purpose
The purpose of this study is to investigate to what extent collegiate outdoor recreation programs are employing inclusive marketing strategies to address barriers and constraints of participation among underrepresented populations.

Method
This qualitative, image content analysis explores the representation of people of color and females in collegiate outdoor recreation program print advertisements. This study examines a 40% sampling of NIRSA Institutional Member recreation program guides: 238 from the American Regions (Region I, n=54; Region II, n=58; Region III, n=50; Region IV, n=44; Region V, n=21; Region VI, n=31) and 6 from Region Canada (n=6). One researcher will review each program guide and code the people of color and female inclusion content for presence, placement, counterparts, role, and image feature. These categories note the presence and extent of which people of color and females are represented in collegiate outdoor recreation advertising. Additional categories will be established if applicable during data analysis. This method allows the study to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: To what extent are people of color represented in collegiate outdoor recreation print advertisements?
RQ2: To what extent are females represented in collegiate outdoor recreation print advertisements?
RQ3: In what ways are people of color represented in collegiate outdoor recreation print advertisements?
RQ4: In what ways are females represented in collegiate outdoor recreation print advertisements?

Implications
The findings of this research will aid in establishing to what extent collegiate recreation programs are addressing barriers and constraints to participation among underrepresented populations through inclusive imagery in advertisements. This study fills a gap in the related literature by exploring how people of color and females are represented, if at all, in collegiate outdoor recreation advertising; future research may further examine the implied themes of these images and the effectiveness of utilizing inclusive marketing strategies for participation.