

AN EXAMINATION OF VARIOUS FACTORS EFFECTING ATTENDANCE
LEVELS AT NCAA DIVISION I MEN'S SOCCER GAMES

by

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Thesis submitted to the faculty of the
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION

in

Health and Physical Education

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May, 1992
Blacksburg, Virginia

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(ABSTRACT)

The purpose of this research was to investigate various factors that contribute to attendance levels at NCAA Division I men's soccer games. A questionnaire was sent to all NCAA Division I men's soccer programs. The final response rate was 84.5 percent with 158 of 187 questionnaires returned. The questionnaire examined four areas: team success, field location, promotional activities and ticket price.

The data indicated that there is a significant relationship between average attendance levels and home soccer fields that are between .6 and 1 mile away from the dormitories. Off-campus fields and the existence of an admission fee were found to have significant relationships with attendance levels. The use of many promotional activities and materials were also found to have a relationship with average attendance levels.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Elyzabeth Holford for her help and encouragement throughout my graduate career. I also would like to thank Dr. Stratton and Dr. Driscoll for their time and effort. Thanks are also in order for the 158 men's soccer coaches who returned the questionnaire. The response was incredible.

Lastly, I need to thank my friend Susan Dobscha for providing me with a sounding board for both my ideas and problems. Without your support, my graduate career could have been very rough. Thanks again.

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Chapter One

Background of the Study

Introduction

Research on spectator involvement in sports has focused on either the four major professional sports leagues (football, baseball, basketball and hockey) or revenue producing college sports, primarily men's football and men's basketball. In addition to these "Big Time" collegiate sports, there are thousands of athletes who compete on teams that do not normally command the media attention or fan support of football and basketball.

Intercollegiate athletic teams "which do not bring in a sufficient amount of income to help offset their annual operating expenses" (Lindahl, 1989, p. 28) can be classified as non-revenue sports. The young men and women who play on these teams and put in long hours of practice every week are arguably entitled to the same kind of attention from spectators that revenue athletes enjoy.

Statement of the Problem

This study investigates the effect of team success, location of playing field, amount of admission fee and level of promotional activities on regular season attendance levels of one non-revenue sport, National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I men's soccer.

Delimitations

Distribution of the survey was limited to schools which sponsor Division I men's soccer programs. The questionnaire was only sent to the head men's soccer coach at each of these institutions.

Limitations

Analysis of data was restricted to the questionnaires returned by coaches. Also, exact attendance figures are not officially kept by many universities. Therefore, some responses may be based on the head men's soccer coach's estimates of actual attendance levels. Extraneous variables such as quality of opponent, school rivalries, weather, regional soccer enthusiasm and geographical location of the school may also effect attendance levels.

Assumptions

It was assumed that survey responses were accurate and the respondents had access to attendance figures and other related information. It was presumed that the head men's soccer coach is the main decision maker of the men's soccer program and has access to all necessary information concerning the men's soccer team. It was further assumed that the head coach had the means to access any needed information from the appropriate sources, such as the Sports Information Office of the institution.

Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis one maintains that there is a relationship between the success of a men's soccer team measured by the team's win/loss record and the team's average attendance levels at home games.

Hypothesis two is that there is a relationship between the amount of use and type of promotional materials and activities and average attendance levels at home men's soccer games.

Hypothesis three is that there is a relationship between the location of a university's home soccer field and average attendance levels at home men's soccer games.

Hypothesis four is that there is a relationship between the existence and amount of an admission fee and average attendance levels at home men's soccer games.

Summary

This study examines four variables; team record or team success, ticket price, field location and promotional activity. A nine question survey focusing on these four variables was sent to all Division I men's soccer coaches. Data from the completed and returned surveys was analyzed to test the research hypotheses.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

Sport plays a major role in American culture. Uehling (1983) stated that "seven in ten ... [Americans] fourteen years or older read about sports, watch TV sports, or discuss sports with friends every day" (p. 13). Almost every person, whether through direct participation or simple observance, has been affected in some fashion by sport. In today's society, knowledge of sport is required to fully take part in a large portion of social conversations.

Each year, professional football games claim over ten million spectators while the two baseball leagues claim attendance levels close to thirty-one million individuals (McPherson, 1975). With such large numbers, sport can easily be viewed as a business. Many of those involved in the business of sport are anxious to increase attendance and thus increase income. This desire has led to several studies of the factors that influence individuals to attend sport events.

This review of literature does not concentrate solely on how the issues of team success, field location, promotional activity and ticket price effect spectator attendance. In order to provide a broad view of the factors that effect soectator levels at sport events, various psychological

and sociological theories that influence individuals to become spectators of sport events are presented.

Need for Entertainment

Sloan (1989) determined one distinct factor affecting a person's decision to attend a sport event to be the desire for entertainment. According to Sloan, sport is considered an art form by both athletes and spectators. The skills required of athletes to excel at sports are comparable to the talents needed of a dancer. McPherson (1975) noted that fans see the athletes on the field as performers who have perfected a skill that the fan has only attempted in a recreational setting.

Reflection of Society's Values and Every Day Life

Sport was found by Edwards (1973) to exhibit many of society's values. A major function of sport for the fan is to reinforce the traditional societal values which govern behavior. In a team's struggle for victory on the field, many fans see their own struggle for achievement in their everyday lives. A positive outcome on the field may reinforce such societal values as "hard work, discipline, ... and the American way of life" (Edwards, 1973, p. 245).

Edwards (1973) noted that a team's loss can be experienced as a personal loss by a fan and a team's win could be considered a personal victory. Similarly, Sloan (1989) contended that fans experience pleasure and satisfaction when a team wins. This indicates that fans may attend sporting

events because they have the opportunity to experience a sense of achievement that may not be available in their everyday lives. Edwards (1973) and Chorbajian (1978) support Sloan's finding that sport serves as an extension of the fans' ego in the sense that the fan can actually gain a feeling of self worth and quality through the achievement of his/her team.

Team Achievement and Performance

The theory of "Basking in Reflected Glory" indicates that fans attempt to see themselves in a more positive light through association with a successful team (Sloan, 1989). Individuals were found to be more likely to wear clothing bearing a team's logo the day after a victory than after a team loss (Sloan, 1989). This desire for association with a winning team is mentioned as a factor not only by Sloan but also by Edwards (1973), Becker & Suls (1983) and Lamphear & Frankel (1990).

Becker & Suls (1983) conducted two studies of the effect of fans' perception of the performance levels of Major League baseball teams on the home game ticket sales of each team. Both studies found that when a team's performance level was perceived to be high by a fan, this individual was more likely to purchase tickets and attend the game.

Conversely, when the perceived performance level was low, the fan was less likely to purchase tickets. Also, Noll (1974) found a positive relationship between team winning

percentage and home attendance levels at professional football, basketball and hockey games.

The performance level of professional baseball teams and the likelihood of a championship season were identified by Whitney (1988) to positively affect attendance levels at home games. Whitney (1988) also identified the uncertainty of the outcome of a sporting event to be an underlying factor of attendance levels at professional team sport events. Speculation about the outcome of a game may increase spectator interest, which in turn can raise attendance levels. Attendance levels and ticket demand fluctuate depending on fans expectation levels of team performance.

The quality of the game, or the expertise of the teams competing can stimulate spectators interest and increase attendance. Zuber & Gandar (1988) identified the quality of the game to possibly have an impact on spectator no-show behavior at NFL football games.

Group Association and Social Support

Edwards (1973) determined that a fan's desire to belong to or associate with a group affects attendance at sport events. According to Edwards, affiliation with a sport team allows the fan to gain an identity or sense of belonging not available in other parts of the fan's life. This need to belong seems to have become more prevalent with the

urbanization of society and the breakdown of traditional group ties such as family. Sloan (1989) stated that this affiliation with a team is more likely when there are shared values and goals between the fan and the team.

In separate studies by Schurr, Wittig and Ruble (1988) and Schurr, Ruble and Ellen (1985), it was found that, through sport, fans receive a form of social support. In their studies, they found that less than five percent of one college's students were alone when obtaining tickets to that college's men's basketball games. Fans are in a sense a family bonded together by common interests and common "enemies", or opponents.

McPherson (1975) viewed sport as an opportunity for men and women to interact in a setting which is not binding in terms of sex roles. He concluded that, through this interaction, sport helps the "process of social integration". Edwards (1973) reports that sport gives the fan the opportunity to share strong feelings such as anger towards the opposing team, disappointment at the outcome of the game, joy over a successful game strategy, or disagreement with a coach's decision with others who are sympathetic and can relate.

Catharsis Effect

Chorbajian (1978), Edwards (1973), McPherson (1975) and Sloan (1989) agreed that one reason sport is attractive to fans is that it provides an opportunity of the release of frustration and strong feelings. Sport provides a socially approved outlet for behavior that would otherwise be considered unacceptable (Edwards, 1973). Aggressive energy is released through the observance of aggressive acts which are commonly found in contact sports such as professional football and hockey (Sloan, 1989).

Chorbajian (1978) contends that one reason so many more men attend sporting events than women is that men have a greater need for the release of harsh feelings. His theory contends that boys are socialized to be rough, tough, brave and daring, but when adulthood is reached, they find themselves with no means of demonstrating these characteristics. Major sporting events provide people, male and female alike with the arena to liberate their emotions "and escape from the frustrations of...everyday life" (Chorbajian, 1978, p. 174).

This problem is compounded by the fact that anger and other strong feelings are not considered appropriate in most social settings. As a result, males must suppress the very feelings and attitudes for which they were socialized as children. The resulting frustration must be vented and sport

events provide this opportunity. At sporting events, "the rules of everyday life are suspended and [feelings such as] joy, disappointment [and] anger...can be freely expressed" (Chorbajian, 1978, p. 171).

Zillmann, Bryant & Sapolsky (1978) have stated, conversely to the findings of Sloan, Edwards, McPherson and Chorbajian, that "there is no cause to perpetuate beliefs in symbolic catharsis" (p. 249). They maintain that spectators receive no cathartic effect from sporting events and that these events may not offer fans any worthwhile qualities.

Proximity

Schurr, Ruble and Ellen (1985) and Schurr, Wittig and Ruble (1988) found that college students whose hometowns were further away from the school were most likely to attend men's basketball games because of their need to identify with the university and other students. They also concluded that in a collegiate environment, convenience was a factor that affected attendance levels. Students who resided in the dormitories were more apt to purchase tickets and attend men's basketball games than those students who lived off campus. The closer individuals live to an coliseum or stadium, the more likely they are to attend games (Schurr et al., 1985).

Admission Price

Combs (1984) notes that attendance levels at women's basketball games at universities that charged an admission

price were generally higher than those at school's that did not charge admission. This situation could exist because spectators view an admission price as adding value to an event. The University of Evansville raised baseball ticket prices based on the theory that higher prices indicate a higher level of play (Eisen, 1989). People may be willing to pay for a game they consider worthy.

Contrary to women's basketball, attendance levels at NCAA Division I AA track meets, football and baseball games drop off substantially when an admission fee is charged (Combs, 1984). This indicates, at least with "non-revenue" sports, that price sensitivity among fans may vary from sport to sport.

Promotions

Simply stated, promotions are activities that are designed "to reach the desired consumers and persuade them to act" (Mandell & Rosenberg, 1981, p. 447). Collegiate athletic departments and professional sport teams are constantly trying creative methods to persuade individuals to consume their product, the game.

Eisen (1989), Hardekopf (1989), Lamphear & Frankel (1990) and Lindahl (1989) have all identified promotions as an important function of a collegiate athletic departments efforts to attract more fans to their home games. Promotional activities need to be imaginative, innovative, exciting and

fun in order to consistently attract spectators over the long stretch of a season.

Stadium or Facilities

The condition of a stadium, field or complex where a team plays its home games can affect attendance levels (Noll, 1974). The comfort of the seats or bleachers or the overall cleanliness of the facility can have a definite impact on the fans perception of the team.

The time of day at which games are scheduled affects attendance. At college games, students are constrained by class schedules to attend mid-afternoon weekday games in any sport. Eisen (1989) indicates that the best times of the week for baseball games are on the weekends and weeknights.

Weather

Noll (1974) reported that while poor weather may deter fans from attending sport events, fans that live in areas with relatively good year round weather also attend games less frequently because of the increased opportunity to pursue other outdoor activities. Former Baseball Commissioner Bowie Kuhn expected regions of the country with consistently poor weather conditions to possibly have higher attendance levels than areas with more sunshine (Noll, 1974).

In 1988, Zuber & Gandar employed weather quality variables in their research on the effect of television blackouts on no-shows at NFL games. Television blackouts ban

the local telecast of a non sold-out game and no-shows are considered to be fans who buy tickets for a particular game and for some reason choose not to attend. The weather quality variables of Zuber & Gandar's research included precipitation, temperature, playing surface, snow and domed stadiums. This research found that when local television blackouts were removed, no-shows would increase thus lowering concession and parking profits for the football team. It was also found that precipitation and temperature did not have a significant relationship with no-shows.

Gender

According to Gonzales (1988b), professional sport events draw more than eighty million spectators per year of which the fan attends an average of eight different events a year. Gonzales (1988a), McPherson (1975) and Schurr, Ruble and Wittig (1988) have indicated that men are more likely to attend sport events on a regular basis than women.

Not only do men attend and watch sporting events more than women, but these men generally watch with greater "interest...and emotional involvement" (Chorbajian, 1978, p. 165). Another reason why males generally have greater interest in sporting events than females is because there is a higher percentage of male teams than female teams (Schurr et al., 1988). These circumstances may make it easier for men to identify with sports.

Even though women represent more than half of the total United States population, they only make up forty-six percent of sport fans (Gonzales, 1988b). These figures coincide with Waldrop's (1988) findings that women comprise forty-six percent of the audience at high school football games. These secondary school figures reflect the common appearance of mothers and female high school students at the games rooting on their sons and classmates.

Women find some sports more attractive than others. Fifty-five percent of the crowds at professional tennis matches are comprised of women while only fourteen percent of the audience at boxing matches is female (Gonzales, 1988b). Females are also more likely to attend special events such as the Super Bowl, World Series or Olympics than regular season games (McPherson, 1975).

Age

Sport events are attractive to all age categories. Spectators twenty-one and younger are only twenty-eight percent of the population but comprise thirty-three percent of sport fans (Gonzales, 1988b). The largest group of sport consumers are fans under age thirty-five with spectators age fifty and over the next largest (McPherson, 1975). The group of spectators between age thirty-five and forty-nine is the smallest group "because of career and family commitments" (McPherson, 1975, p. 248).

The number of Americans age forty-five to sixty-four is steadily increasing while the number of people age eighteen to twenty four is declining (Fost, 1990). Single people are also more likely to attend games more than married individuals (McPherson, 1975). One explanation for this is that unmarried people have more disposable income and are less constricted by family ties.

Summary

Literature indicates that sport serves numerous psychological and sociological functions for the spectator. The most obvious is entertainment, but there are other functions. Fans find sports attractive because it reinforces social values. Spectators may also see themselves in the athlete. As a result, the fan gains a sense of self-worth when their favorite team performs well. Sport provides the fan with the opportunity to gain group affiliation and receive social support. Sports also serve as an outlet for frustration and aggressiveness for many individuals.

Administrative factors such as location and condition of the playing facility, promotional activities, cost of admission and scheduled game time all affect the decision process that spectators go through when considering attending a game. Weather can play a large role in achieving significant attendance levels at athletic events. These psychological, sociological and physical factors are many of

the reasons that single men under the age of thirty-five are most likely to attend sporting events.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes the methods used in this study to determine the extent of the relationships between spectator attendance levels at Division I men's soccer games and the factors of home field location, ticket price, team success and promotions.

Subjects

The total population used as subjects for this research study was 187 colleges and universities that sponsor NCAA Division I men's soccer programs. These institutions are located in every region of the United States and have diverse student populations, ranging from undergraduate enrollments below 10,000 to enrollments above 40,000.

These schools were identified through materials published by the NCAA. A mailing list containing the addresses and names of each institution's head men's soccer coach was obtained through the soccer office of the University of Connecticut. This list can be obtained by writing UConn's soccer office at: The University of Connecticut, Division of Athletics U-78, 2111 Hillside Rd., Storrs, CT 06269-3078. These addresses were cross-referenced and updated using The 1991-92 National Directory of College Athletics.

Instrumentation

The data collection tool was a questionnaire designed by the researcher solely for this study (Appendix A). This instrument contained nine questions to gather data to analyze the relationships between various factors and attendance levels at NCAA Division I men's soccer games. All questionnaires were coded to permit identification of respondents and nonrespondents.

The questionnaire focused on four areas believed to have an effect on attendance levels: 1) team record/success 2) location and proximity of home field to campus 3) level of admission fee and 4) type and amount of promotional materials and activities.

Procedure

After the conclusion of the 1991 fall soccer season, the 187 men's head soccer coaches from the NCAA Division I institutions that sponsor men's soccer programs were mailed the questionnaire in February of 1992. All subjects received an initial mailing, consisting of a cover letter (Appendix B), a questionnaire and a self-addressed return envelope.

There were two cases where an institution did not currently employ a head men's soccer coach. In one situation, the initial mailing was sent to the assistant men's soccer coach. In the other situation, the initial mailing was sent to the school's athletic director because there was no full-

time assistant. Follow-up procedures were implemented to enhance response rate. Dillman (1978) suggests a three step follow-up procedure for successful follow-up mailings. These three steps are 1) a reminder postcard (Appendix C) sent one week after the initial mailing, 2) a second mailing containing a revised cover letter (Appendix D), a replacement questionnaire and a return envelope sent three weeks after the original mailing and 3) a third mailing, sent by certified mail and seven weeks after the first mailing. The time and financial constraints of this study only allowed for the implementation of the first two steps of Dillman's follow-up process. The FAX number of the Virginia Tech Athletic Department was provided on both the original cover letter and the follow-up letter to allow respondents to reply more quickly.

To increase the credibility of the study, both the initial cover letter and the follow up letter were printed on Virginia Tech Athletic Department letterhead. The envelopes of both mailings and the reminder postcard carried the Virginia Tech logo. The cover letter was co-signed by the Thesis Committee Chairperson.

Analysis of Data

The data from returned questionnaires were tabulated as received. Data corresponding to question three of the survey were transformed into winning percentage and rounded to three decimal places. All data were recorded and analyzed using the Number Cruncher statistical package. Chi-square coefficients were calculated to determine the magnitude of relationship between the variables being studied.

Questions one, two and nine were designed to ascertain information on attendance levels at home soccer games. Question one aids in determining the size of an institution's student population and question two helps establish the number of students living in on-campus housing. The results of these questions are exhibited in graph form.

Question three's data was used to test hypothesis one. The degree of relationship between the data from question three and question nine was calculated using Chi-square.

Information received from question four of the survey was used to test hypothesis four. Chi-square statistics were used to analyze the varying levels of admission price with the attendance data from question nine. Ticket prices charged by the responding soccer program for each group of spectators indicated in the survey are presented in graph form.

Question five's information was used to test hypothesis three. The distance data from question five are illustrated

by frequency graphs. Chi-square statistics were run between the distance data from question five and the attendance level data from question nine. Question six was included in the survey to determine whether or not institutions provided seating for fans. The relationship of the results from this question and question nine were analyzed with a Chi-square coefficient.

Information received from questions seven and eight, examining promotional activities, test hypothesis two. The relationships between the results of these two questions and the results from question nine were calculated using Chi-square. The data from questions seven eight are represented by frequency graphs.

Pre-test

To determine the effectiveness of the questionnaire, several questionnaires were distributed to non-Division I soccer coaches, collegiate athletic administrators and academic personnel. These various educational and occupational backgrounds were selected to gather new and diverse opinions about the instrument's design and potential effectiveness. These individuals were asked to fill out and comment on the format and question design of the survey. This input was utilized to make necessary changes to confusing questions and the overall survey layout.

Summary

This chapter addressed the use of the entire target population in the study, the purpose of the questionnaire and the data collection procedure. The data collected using these procedures was utilized to test the research hypotheses of this study.

Chapter Four

Results

Introduction

This chapter is utilized to report results gathered from the returned questionnaires. The results of eight of the nine questions of the survey are displayed in frequency graphs. Chi-square statistics were run on the received data and the probability levels associated with these tests are presented to show the relationships between certain questions.

Soccer coaches returned 158 of the 187 surveys for a response rate of 84.5%. A few returned surveys were not completely filled out but all of the data from every returned questionnaire were used because of the small amount of missing data. Descriptive statistics in the form of frequency tables are presented first in this chapter followed by a section that reports the Chi-square statistics. Some of the data presented in percentage form does not equal 100% because of rounding of the results by the researcher.

Descriptive Statistics

The first two questions of the survey were designed to gather data on the each institution's total student enrollment and the school's on-campus student dormitory population. A total enrollment level of under 5000 students was reported by 32% (51 of 158) of the institutions, 17% (27 of 158) were

between 5001 and 10000, 16.5% (26 of 158) were between 10001 and 15000 while the other 34% (54 of 158) of the schools had total student populations of over 15000 students (Figure 1). Results from question two indicate that 28.5% (45 of 158) of the schools had on-campus housing student populations under 2000, 46.2% (73 of 158) were between 2001 and 5000, 17.7% (28 of 158) were between 5001 and 10000 and 7.6% (12 of 158) were over 10000 (Figure 2).

Question three was devised to collect data of win/loss records from the 1991 soccer season. These records were converted into winning percentages that ranged from a low of .071% to a high of .810%. The average winning percentage was .495%. Question four was designed to collect information on the existence and level of admission fees at home soccer games. An admission fee was charged at home soccer games by 56% (89 of 158) of the soccer programs while 43.7% (69 of 158) did not charge admission (Figure 3).

Question four was also designed to ask the amount of admission fee charged to various groups of spectators. An admission fee was charged to a school's own students by 8% (13 of 158) of the soccer programs. Of these programs, 53% (7 of 13) charged under \$2, 38.5% (5 of 13) charged between \$2 and \$2.99 and 7.7% (1 of 13) charged \$3 or more (Figure 4).

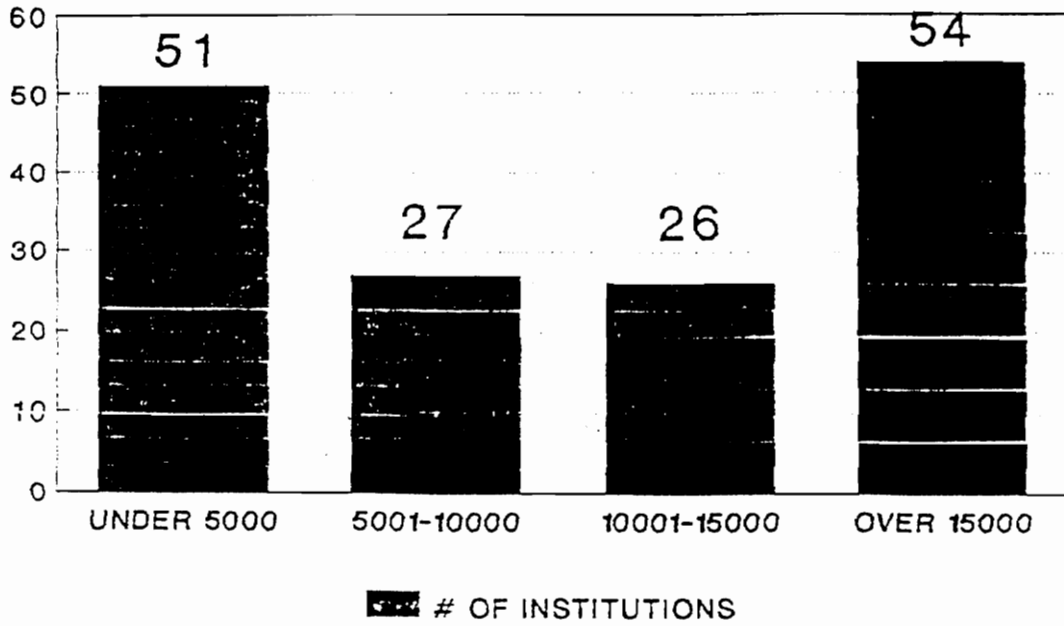


FIGURE 1
TOTAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT

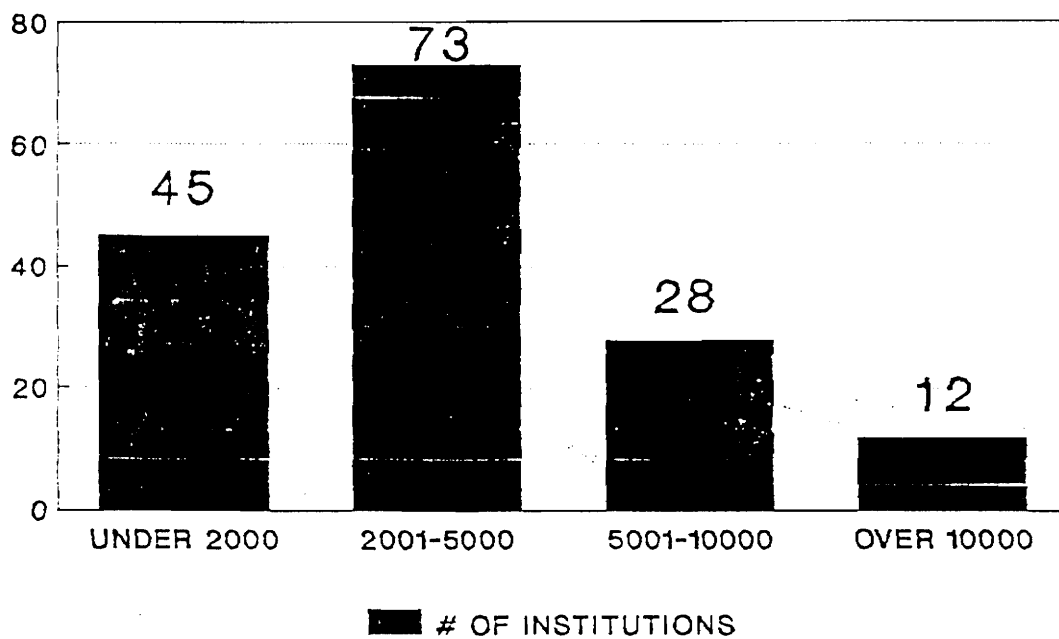


FIGURE 2
DORMITORY POPULATION

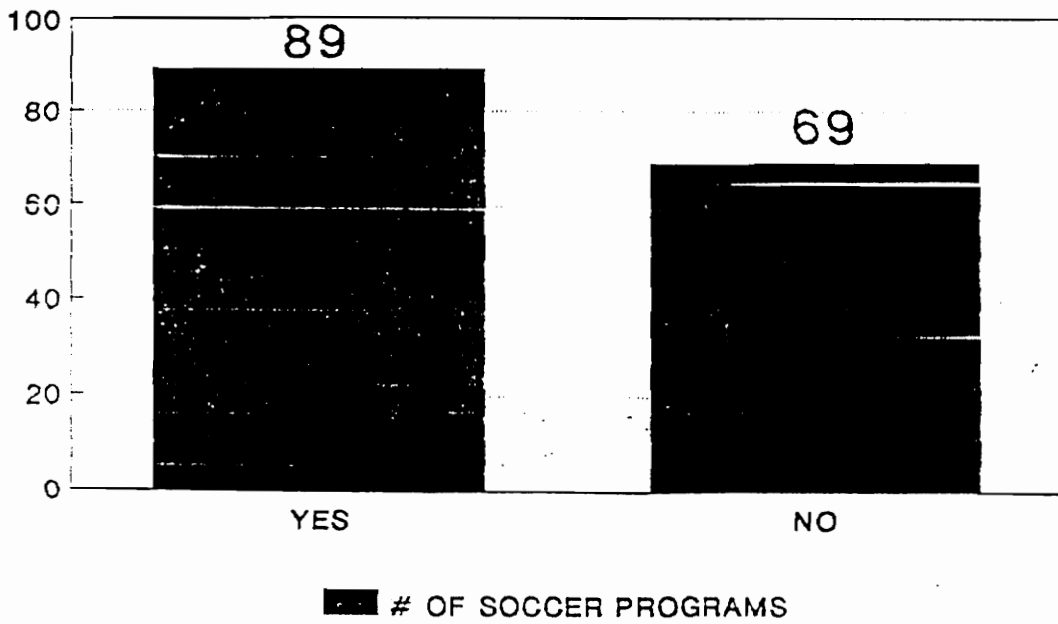


FIGURE 3
CHARGE OF ADMISSION FEE

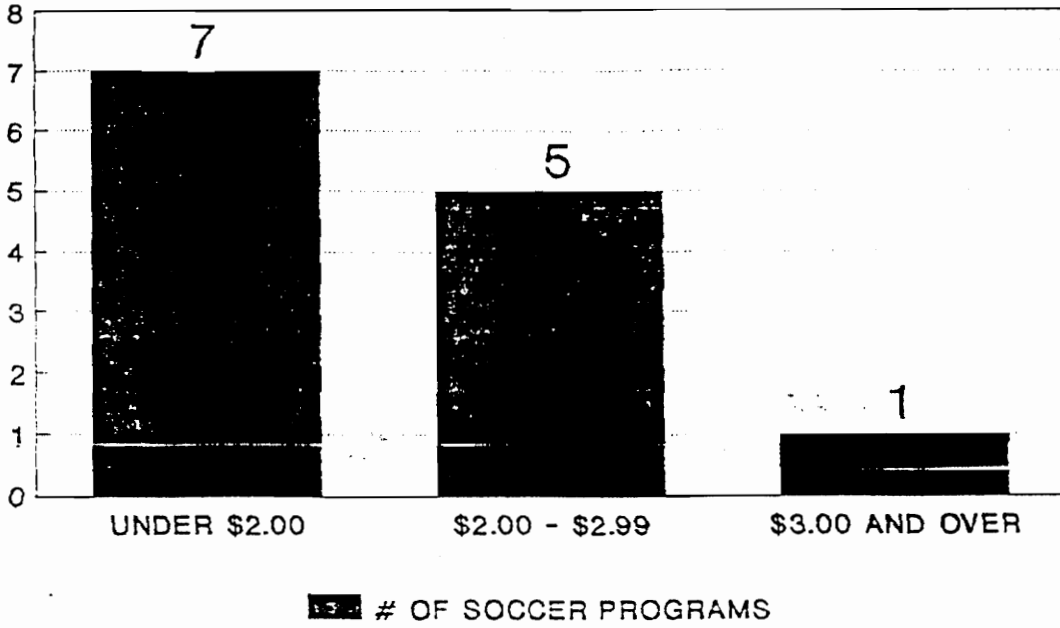


FIGURE 4
LEVEL OF ADMISSION FEE FOR OWN STUDENTS

Admission was charged to the opposing team's students by 52% (83 of 158) of the programs. These visiting students were charged under \$2 by 14% (12 of 83) of the soccer programs, 41% (34 of 83) charged between \$2 and \$2.99 and 44.6% (37 of 83) charged \$3 or more (Figure 5).

Children under the age of 18 were charged admission by 52% (82 of 158) of the respondents. Children were charged under \$2 by 46% (38 of 82) of the soccer programs, 37.8% (31 of 82) charged between \$2 and \$2.99 and 15.9% (13 of 82) charged \$3 or more (Figure 6). Adults over age 18 were charged admission by 54% (85 of 158) of the soccer programs. Adults were charged under \$2 by 1% (1 of 85) of the programs, 20.9% (18 of 85) charged between \$2 and \$2.99 and 76.7% (66 of 85) charged \$3 or more (Figure 7).

Various admission fees were charged to groups other than those indicated on the survey by nine schools. These groups include senior citizens, faculty/staff, families and youth soccer teams. Children under age 12 were admitted free by three schools. Season ticket packages were offered by two soccer programs.

Question five was designed to obtain information on the location of the school's home men's soccer field and the distance of the field from the school's undergraduate dormitories. Soccer fields were located on-campus at 87% (138 of 158) of the schools while only 12.7% (20 of 158) were located off-campus (Figure 8). Of these fields, 66% (105 of

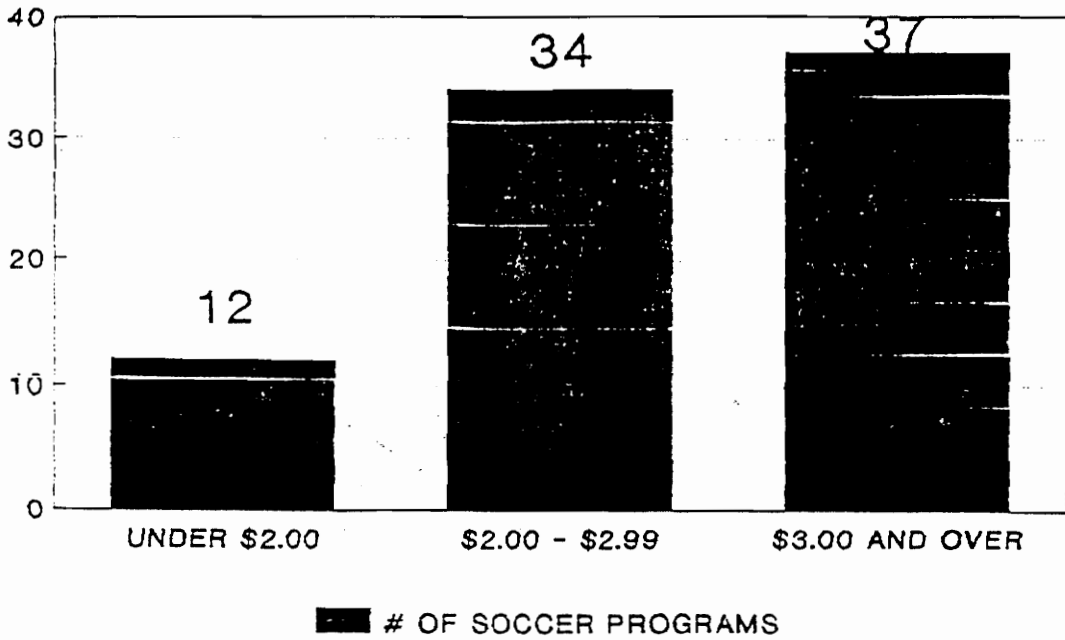


FIGURE 5
ADMISSION FEE FOR OTHER COLLEGE STUDENTS

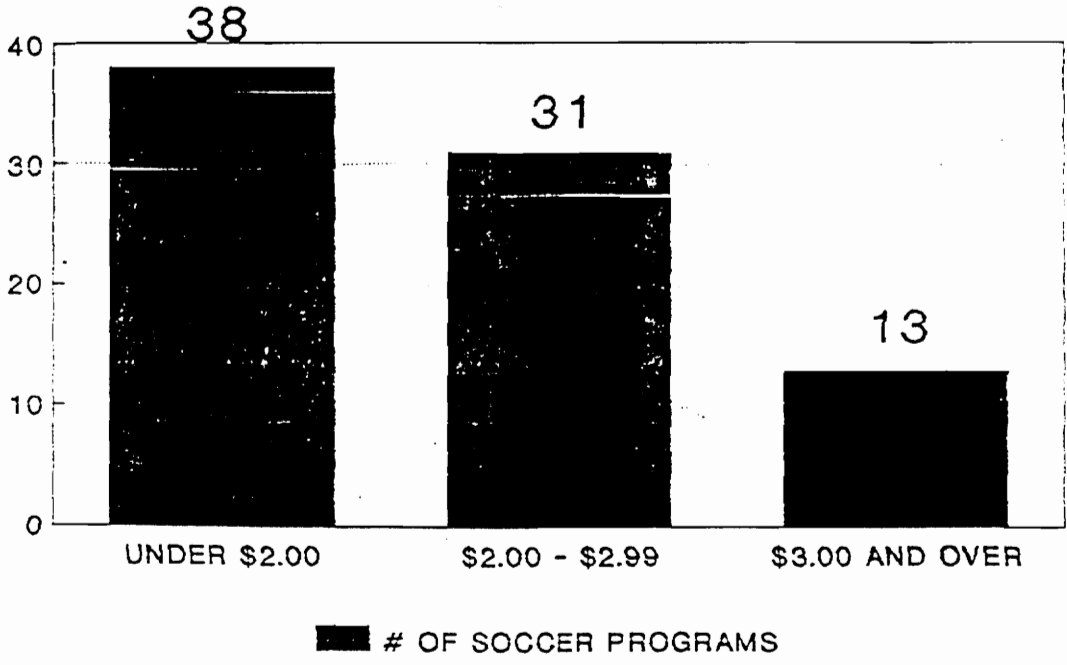


FIGURE 6
LEVEL OF ADMISSION FOR CHILDREN UNDER 18

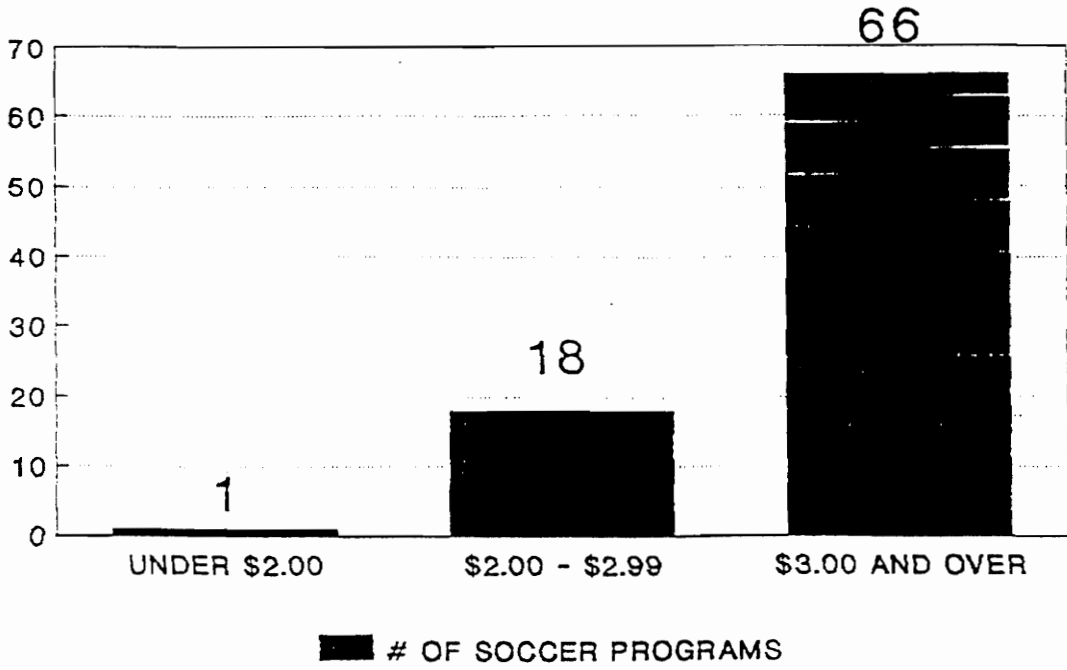


FIGURE 7
ADMISSION FEE FOR ADULTS (OVER AGE 18)

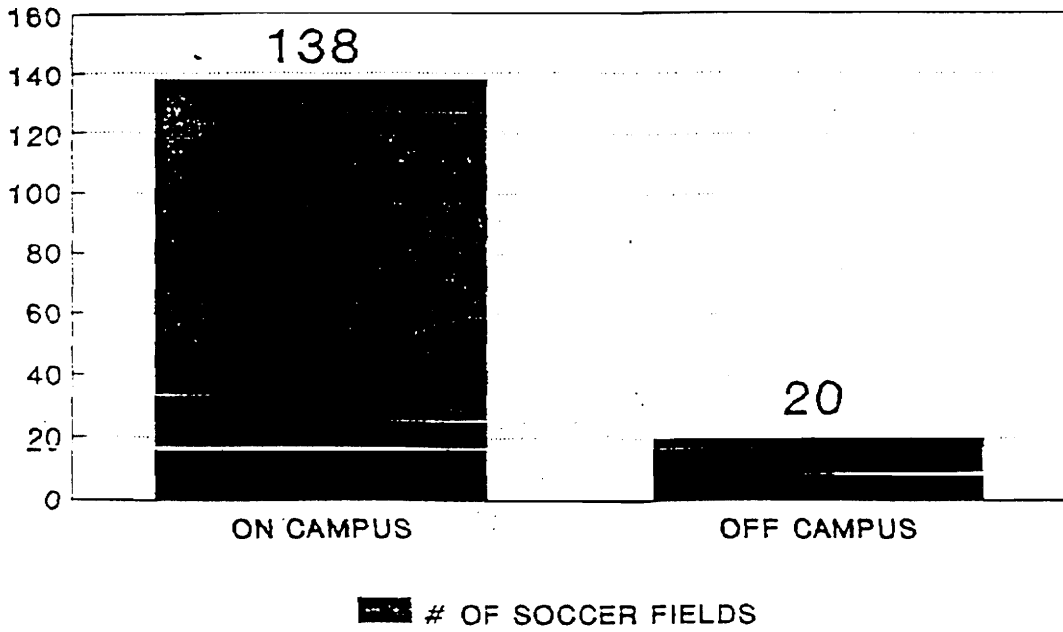


FIGURE 8
SOCCER FIELD LOCATION

158) of the fields were located less than one half mile from the dormitories while 22% (35 of 158) were between .6 and 1 mile, 4.4% (7 of 158) were between 1.1 and 2 miles and 7% (11 of 158) were located over two miles from the dormitories (Figure 9).

On-campus fields were located within one half mile from the dormitories at 75% (104 of 138) of the schools while 21% (29 of 138) were located between .6 and 1 mile, 2.9% (4 of 138) were between 1.1 and 2 miles and .7% (1 of 138) were located over two miles from the dorms (Figure 10). Of the 20 off-campus fields, 5% (1 of 20) were located under one half mile from the dormitories, 30% (6 of 20) were between .6 and 1 mile, 15% (3 of 20) were between 1.1 and 2 miles and 50% (10 of 20) were located over two miles from the dormitories (Figure 11).

Question six was devised to gather information on the existence of bleachers or other types of seating at the soccer field. Some type of seating was provided at 96% (153 of 158) of the fields, on or off-campus while only 3.2% (5 of 158) offered none (Figure 12).

Question seven was designed to obtain information on the amount of money budgeted for the promotion of the men's soccer program. No money was budgeted for soccer promotions at 21% (33 of 157) of the schools. Budgets between \$1 and \$500 were indicated by 29% (45 of 157) of the programs, 25.5% (40 of

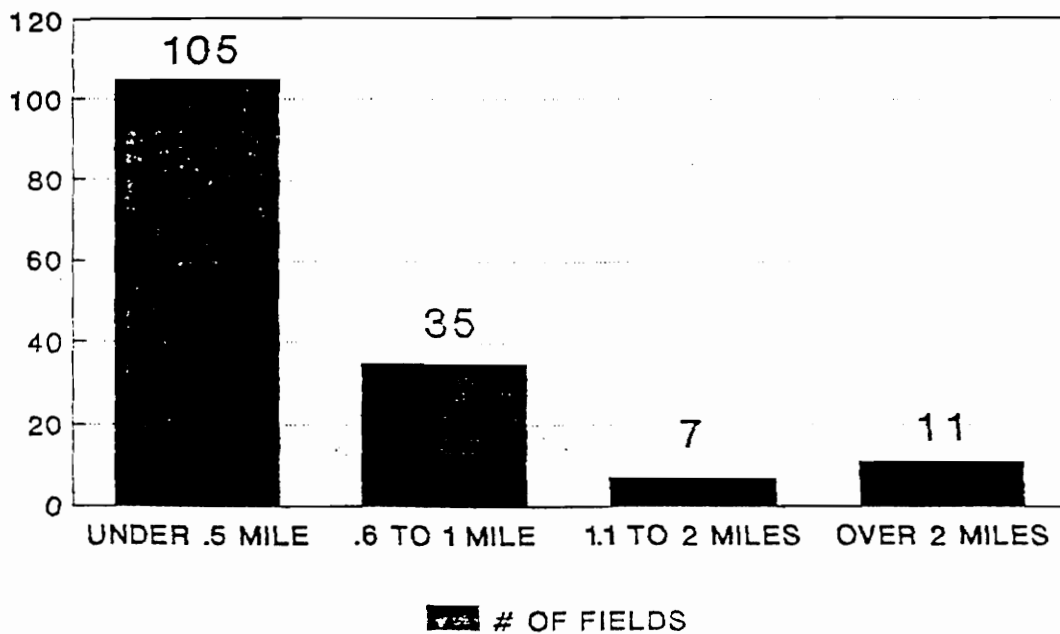


FIGURE 9
DISTANCE FROM DORMS FOR ALL FIELDS

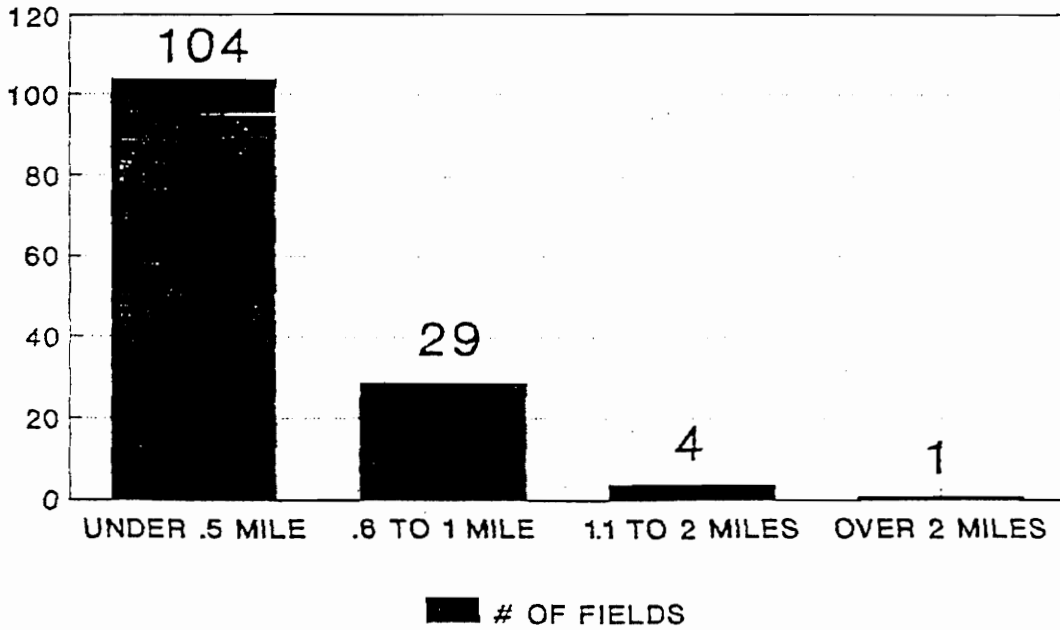


FIGURE 10
DISTANCE OF ON-CAMPUS FIELDS TO DORMS

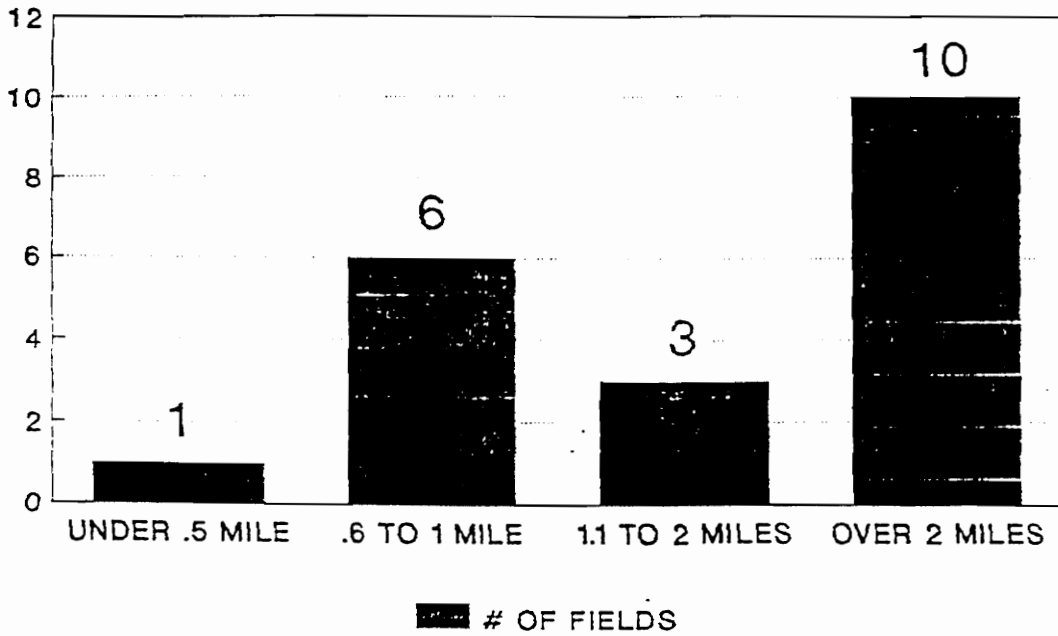


FIGURE 11
DISTANCE OF OFF-CAMPUS FIELDS TO DORMS

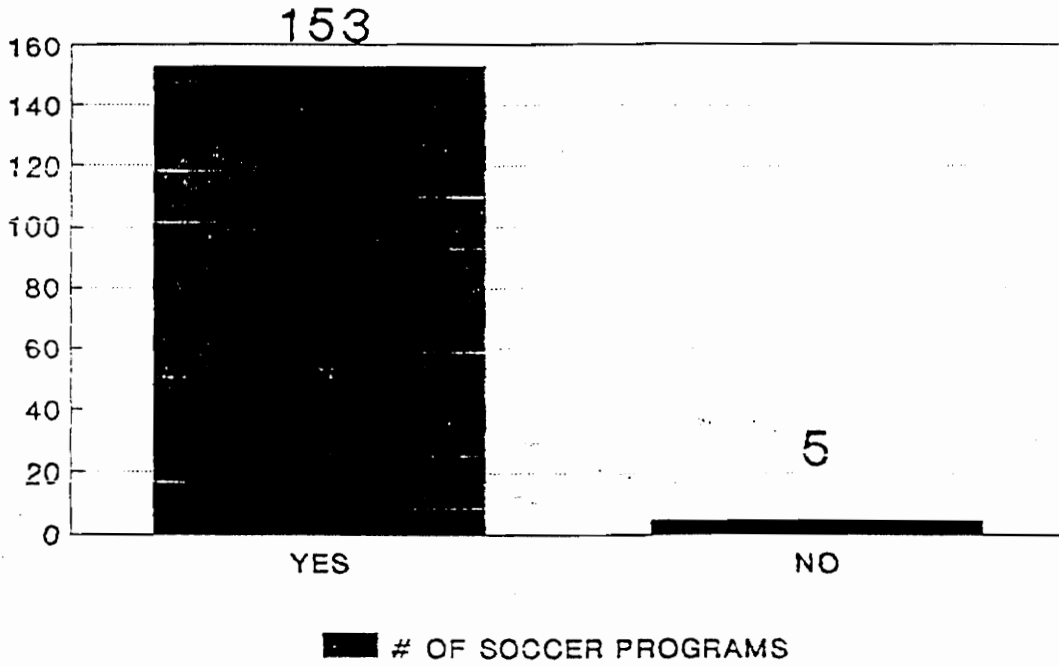


FIGURE 12
PRESENCE OF BLEACHERS AT SOCCER FIELD

157) were between \$501 and \$1000 and 24.8% (39 of 157) had budgets over \$1000 (Figure 13).

Question eight was designed to gather information on the types and levels of promotional activities used by the soccer programs. Halftime contest usage data indicated that "never" was marked on the survey by 49% (77 of 157) of the respondents, "seldom" by 14.6% (23 of 157), "sometimes" by 12.7% (20 of 157), "often" by 14% (22 of 157) and "always" by 9.6% (15 of 157) (Figure 14).

Pre-game promotional giveaway usage data indicated that "never" was checked on the survey by 61.8% (97 of 157) of the coaches, "seldom" by 12.7% (20 of 157), "sometimes" by 17.2% (27 of 157), "often" by 6.4% (10 of 157) and "always" by 1.9% (3 of 157) (Figure 15). Promotional game flier usage data indicated that "never" was marked on the survey by 24.8% (39 of 157) of the respondents, "seldom" by 13.4% (21 of 157), "sometimes" by 25.5% (40 of 157), "often" by 16.6% (26 of 157) and "always" by 19.7% (31 of 157) (Figure 16).

Radio advertising usage data indicated that "never" was marked on the survey by 63.1% (99 of 157) of the programs, "seldom" by 14.6% (23 of 157), "sometimes" by 12.1% (19 of 157), "often" by 7% (11 of 157) and "always" by 3.2% (5 of 157) (Figure 17). Newspaper ad usage data indicated that "never" was checked by 53.2% (84 of 158) of the respondents, "seldom" by 15.2% (24 of 158), "sometimes" by 18.4% (29 of

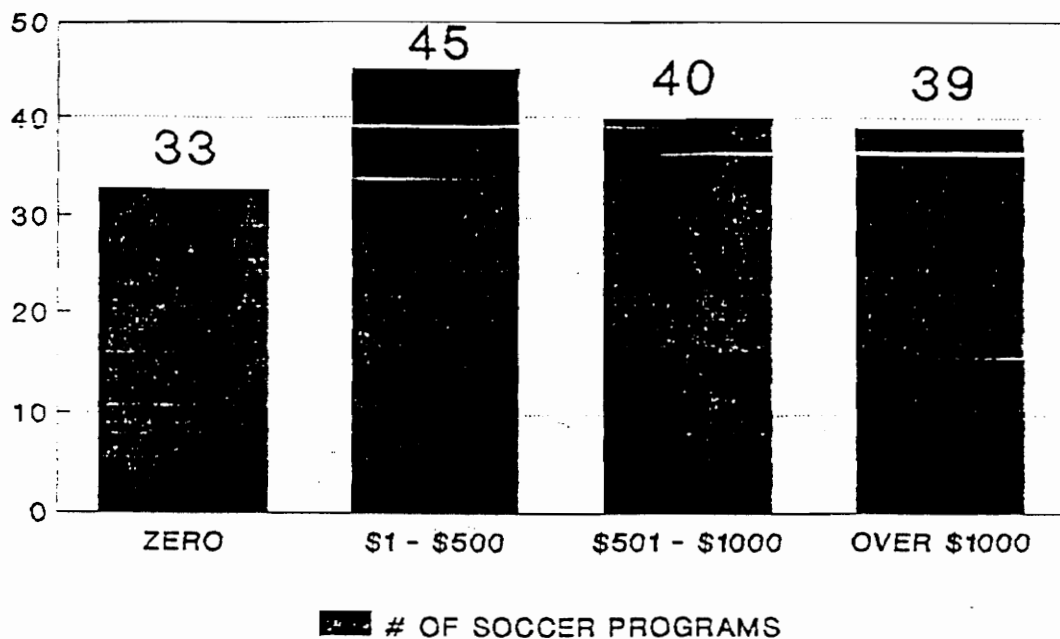


FIGURE 13
PROMOTIONAL DOLLARS BUDGETED FOR SOCCER

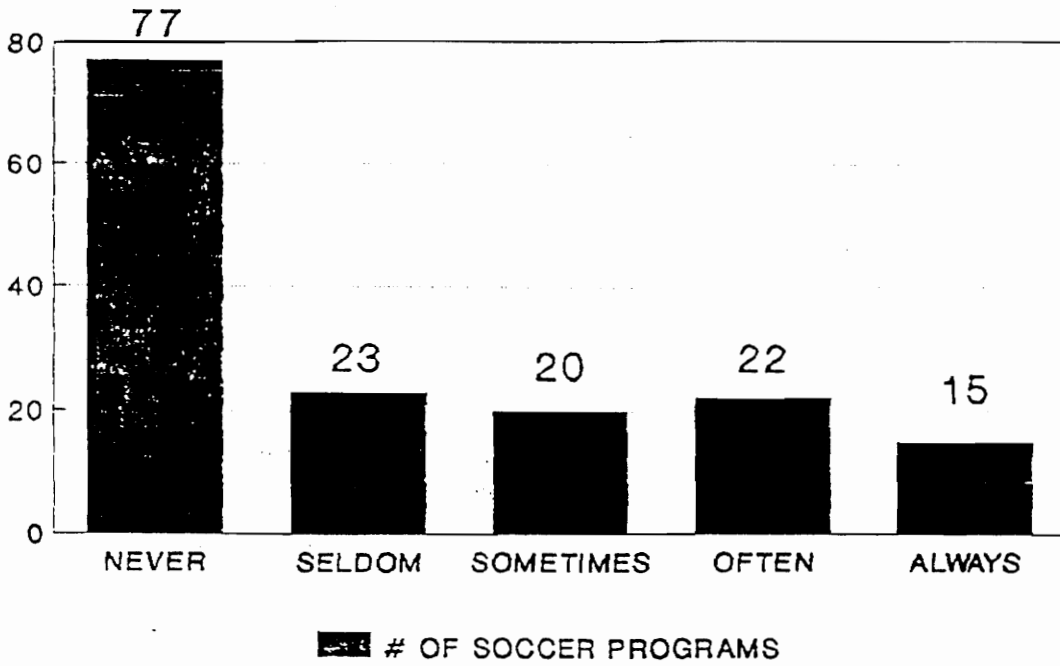


FIGURE 14
SOCCER PROGRAMS USING HALFTIME CONTESTS

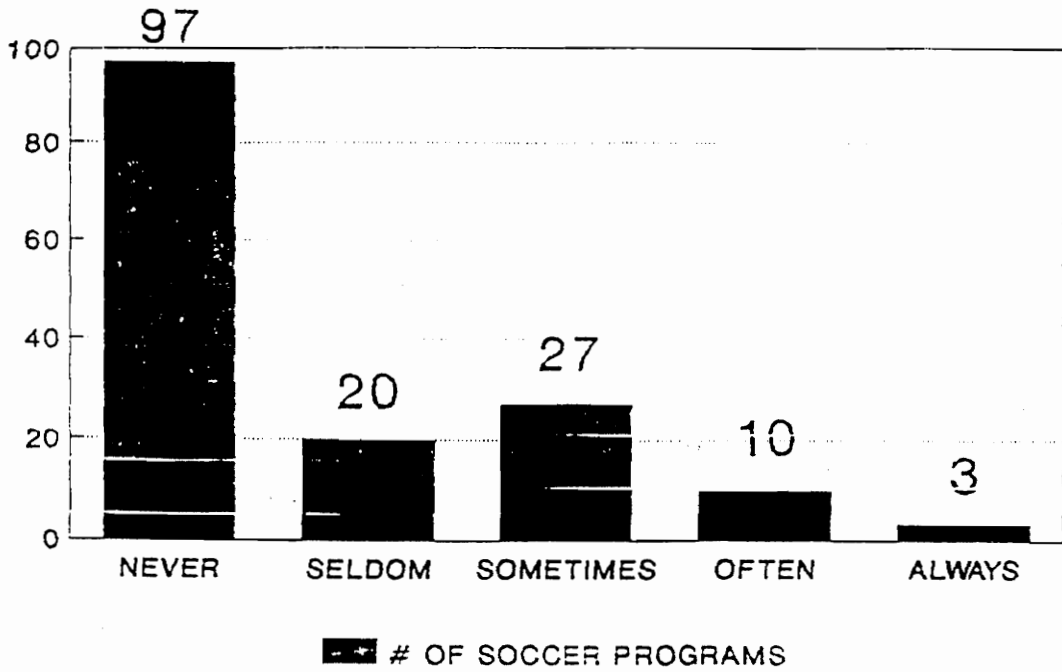


FIGURE 15
SOCCER PROGRAMS USING PRE-GAME GIVEAWAYS

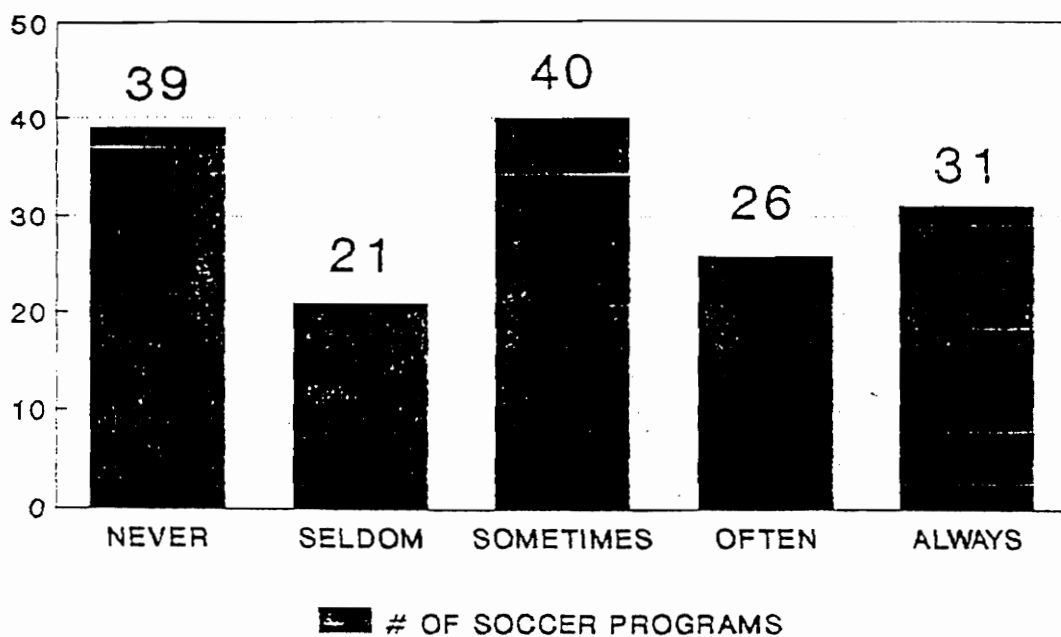


FIGURE 16
SOCCER PROGRAMS USING GAME FLIERS

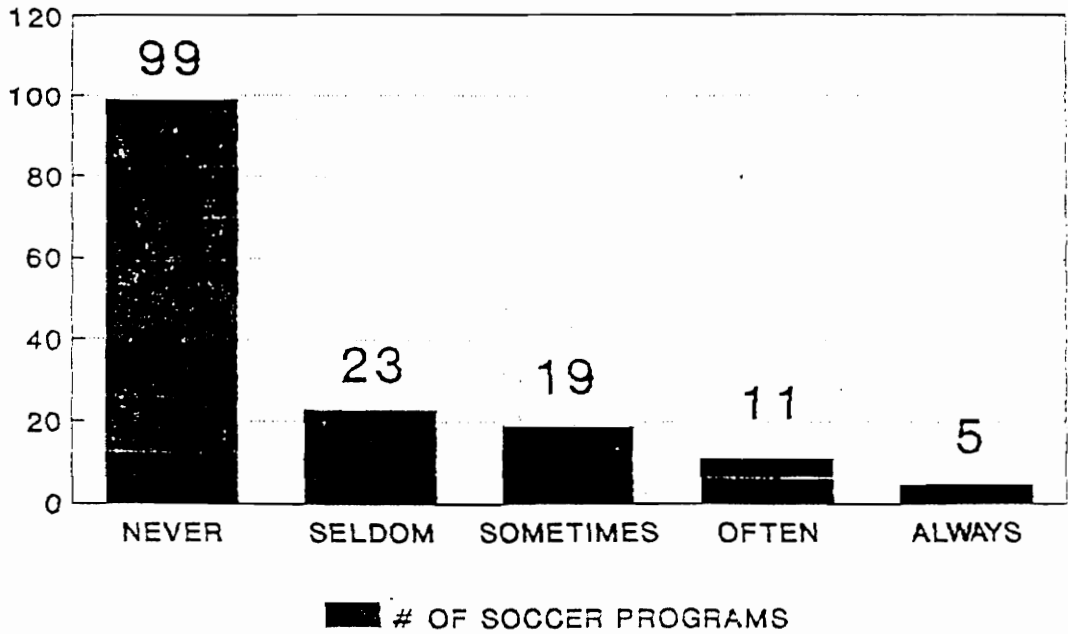


FIGURE 17
SOCCER PROGRAMS USING RADIO ADS

158), "often" by 9.5% (15 of 158) and "always" by 3.8% (6 of 158) (Figure 18). Television ad usage data indicated that "never" was marked by 86% (135 of 157) of the programs, "seldom" by 8.9% (14 of 157), "sometimes" by 1.9% (3 of 157), "often" by 1.3% (2 of 157) and "always" by 1.9% (3 of 157) (Figure 19). Figure 20 displays various types of other promotional activities used by soccer programs of which pre-game clinics were the most common used promotion.

Question nine was designed to ask respondents to indicate their average home attendance level per game during the 1991 season. Average attendance levels of below 250 spectators per home game were indicated by 22% (35 of 158) of the soccer programs, 36.7% (58 of 158) were between 251 and 500, 24.1% (38 of 158) were between 501 and 1000, 13.3% (21 of 158) were between 1001 and 2500 and 3.8% (6 of 158) averaged over 2500 (Figure 21).

Chi-square Statistics

Chi-square statistics were computed at an alpha level of .05. All tests were run with Question 9, average game attendance level, as the dependent variable. Chi-square statistics were calculated to test the hypotheses of the study.

A Chi-square probability level of .284 was computed when the teams' winning percentages were compared with attendance

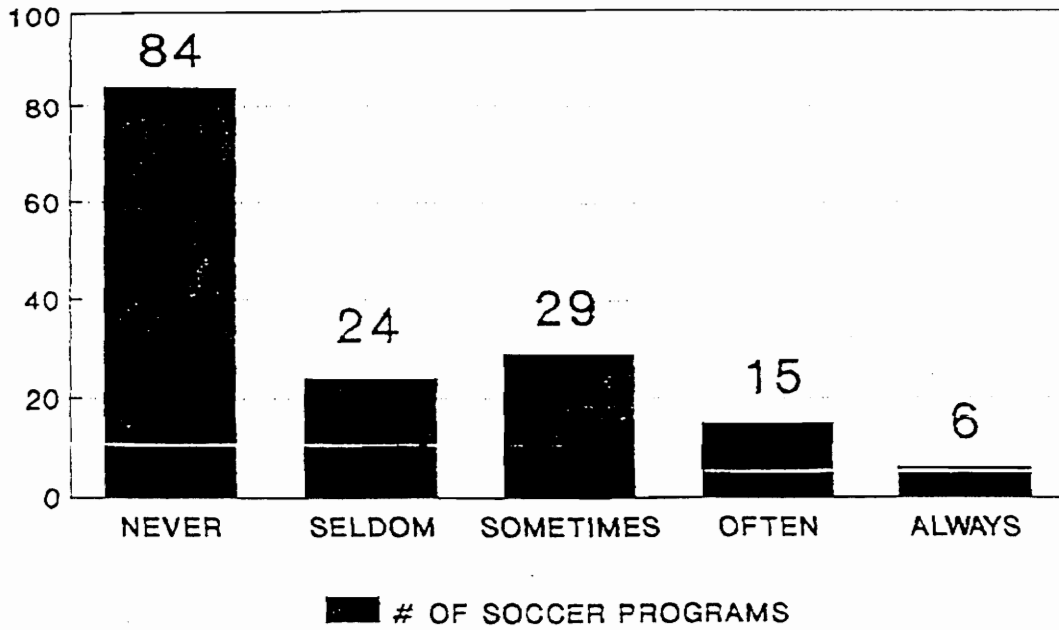


FIGURE 18
SOCCER PROGRAMS USING NEWSPAPER ADS

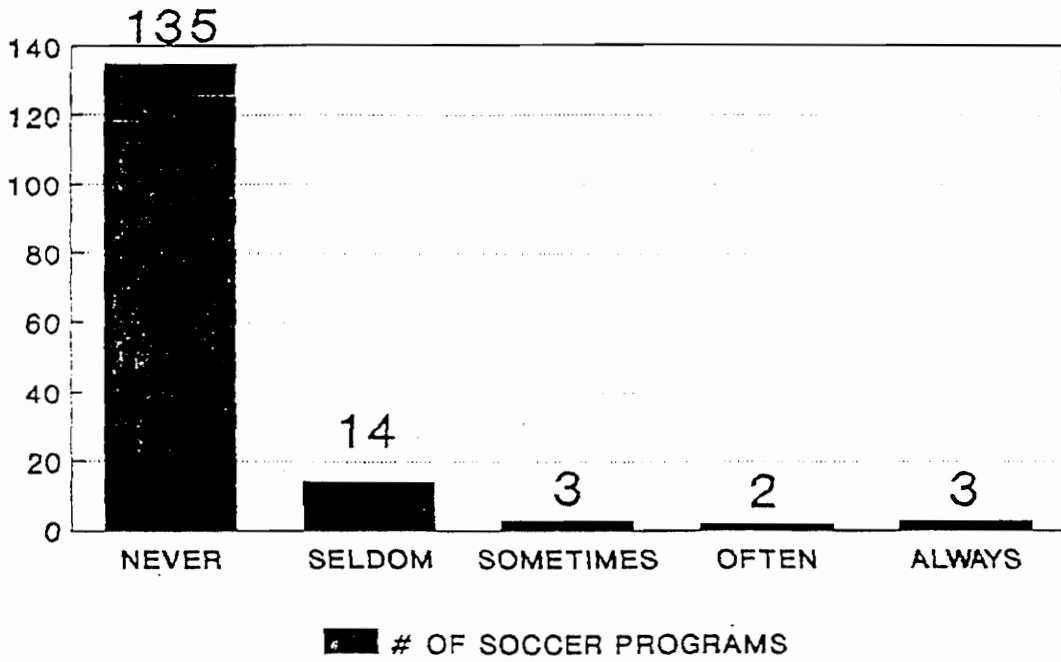


FIGURE 19
SOCCER PROGRAMS USING TELEVISION ADS

- PRE-GAME CLINICS
- PRE-GAME CONTESTS
- PRELIMINARY YOUTH GAMES
- POCKET SCHEDULES
- THEME NIGHTS
- BILLBOARDS
- DIRECT MAIL
- GAME ROSTERS
- SOCCER BROCHURES

FIGURE 20
OTHER PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES USED BY PROGRAMS

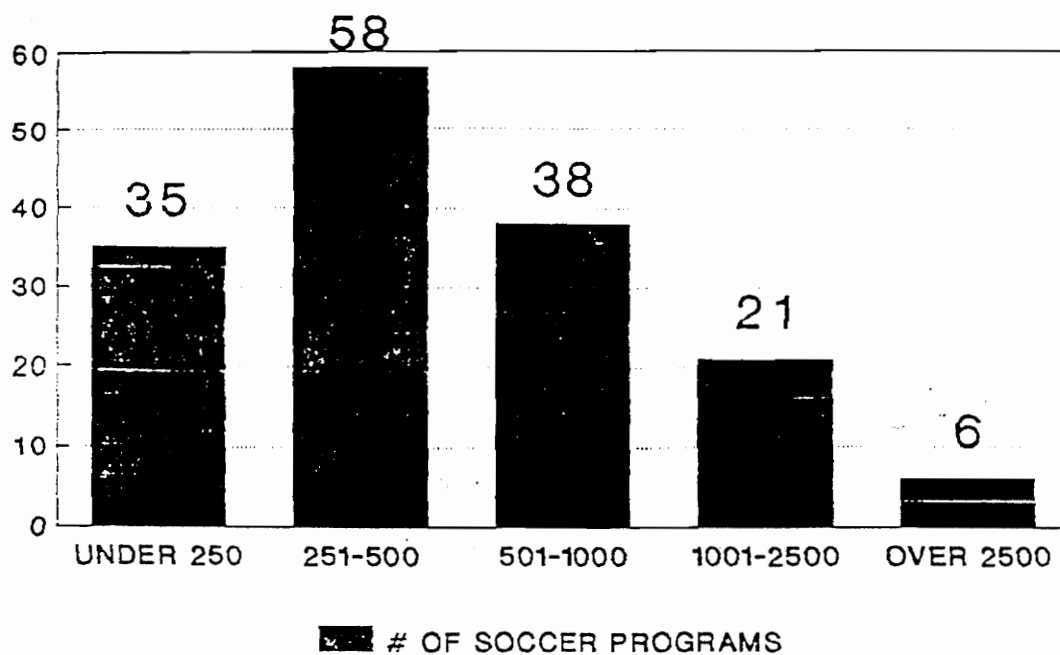


FIGURE 21
AVERAGE GAME ATTENDANCE

levels. This figure is greater than .05 therefore hypothesis one is not supported.

Existence of an admission fee data was analyzed with attendance data and yielded a significant probability level which supports hypothesis four (Table 1). Admission fee group data was also analyzed with average game attendance levels using Chi-square statistics. Probability levels for these five groups were all greater than .05 (Table 1) therefore these results do not support hypothesis four.

Chi-square statistics were conducted between field location and distance data and average game attendance data. First, on-campus/off-campus housing data was tested with average attendance data. This test was run using each of the four possible distance data responses as filter variables (Table 2). One set of variables, distance between .6 and 1 mile and average game attendance, yielded a statistically significant probability level which supports hypothesis three (Table 2).

Chi-square statistics were also calculated between the distance from dormitory data and the average attendance data using total enrollment, dormitory population, presence of seating and field location data as filter variables (Table 3). Significant probability levels were found with the filter variables of field location off-campus and total student

<u>ADMISSION VARIABLES</u>	<u>PROBABILITY LEVEL</u>	<u>SIGNIFICANT*</u>
EXISTENCE OF FEE	P=.0000	YES
OWN STUDENTS	P=.1806	NO
OTHER STUDENTS	P=.3727	NO
CHILDREN UNDER 18	P=.1351	NO
ADULTS OVER 18	P=.0891	NO
OTHER	P=.6767	NO

* ALPHA = .05

TABLE 1
ADMISSION FEE AND ATTENDANCE

<u>FILTER VARIABLES</u>	<u>PROBABILITY LEVEL</u>	<u>SIGNIFICANT</u>
-	P=.2604	NO
UNDER .5 MILE	P=.6187	NO
.6 AND 1 MILE	P=.0451	YES
1.1 AND 2 MILES	P=.2330	NO
OVER 2 MILES	P=.5169	NO

• ALPHA • .05

TABLE 2
FIELD LOCATION (ON/OFF CAMPUS) AND ATTENDANCE

<u>FILTER VARIABLES</u>	<u>PROBABILITY LEVEL</u>	<u>SIGNIFICANT*</u>
-	P=.1220	NO
ON CAMPUS	P=.4643	NO
OFF CAMPUS	P=.0137	YES
UNDER 5000 #	P=.0428	YES
5001-10000 #	P=.2869	NO
10001-15000 #	P=.9373	NO
UNDER 2000 e	P=.0530	NO
2001-5000 e	P=.2224	NO
5001-10000 e	P=.1640	NO
OVER 10000 e	P=.8343	NO
SEATS YES	P=.0820	NO

* ALPHA = .05, # = ENROLLMENT, e = DORM POPULATION

TABLE 3
DISTANCE FROM DORMS AND ATTENDANCE

enrollment under 5000 students (Table 3). These values also support hypothesis three.

Soccer promotional budget data and average attendance data were analyzed using Chi-square statistics. This test revealed a significant probability level which supports hypothesis two (Table 4).

Promotional activity and material data was also tested with average attendance figures to test hypothesis two. Chi-square tests indicated significant probability levels which support hypothesis two for every type of promotional activity indicated in the survey except promotional game fliers and the other promotions category (Table 4).

The promotional material and attendance variables were also tested with the on and off-campus field location filter variable. Significant probability levels were computed for all promotional variables with the on-campus filter except promotional game fliers and the other promotions variable (Table 5). The off-campus filter variable produced no significant probability levels (Table 6).

Summary

This chapter revealed the results gathered by the questionnaire. Frequency tables were displayed to provide descriptive statistics of the data. Chi-square statistical tests were calculated on the data and the associated probability levels testing the research hypotheses of this

<u>PROMOTION VARIABLES</u>	<u>PROBABILITY LEVEL</u>	<u>SIGNIFICANT*</u>
PROMOTION BUDGET AMT.	P=.0000	YES
HALF TIME CONTESTS	P=.0000	YES
PRE-GAME GIVEAWAYS	P=.0005	YES
GAME FLIERS	P=.1838	NO
RADIO ADS	P=.0000	YES
NEWSPAPER ADS	P=.0000	YES
TELEVISION ADS	P=.0000	YES
OTHER PROMOTIONS	P=.2389	NO

* ALPHA = .05

TABLE 4
PROMOTION VARIABLES AND ATTENDANCE

<u>PROMOTION VARIABLES</u>	<u>PROBABILITY LEVEL</u>	<u>SIGNIFICANT*</u>
<i>FIELD ON-CAMPUS</i>		
HALFTIME CONTESTS	P=.0000	YES
PRE-GAME GIVEAWAYS	P=.0016	YES
GAME FLIERS	P=.0691	NO
RADIO ADS	P=.0000	YES
NEWSPAPER ADS	P=.0000	YES
TELEVISION ADS	P=.0002	YES
OTHER PROMOTIONS	P=.3112	NO

* ALPHA = .05

TABLE 5

ON-CAMPUS FILTER WITH PROMOTION & ATTENDANCE

<u>PROMOTION VARIABLES</u>	<u>PROBABILITY LEVEL</u>	<u>SIGNIFICANT*</u>
<i>FIELD OFF-CAMPUS</i>		
HALFTIME CONTESTS	P=.4152	NO
PRE-GAME GIVEAWAYS	P=.1343	NO
GAME FLIERS	P=.2274	NO
RADIO ADS	P=.0660	NO
NEWSPAPER ADS	P=.0955	NO
TELEVISION ADS	P=.3580	NO
OTHER PROMOTIONS	P=.4136	NO

* ALPHA = .05

TABLE 6

OFF-CAMPUS FILTER WITH PROMOTION AND ATTENDANCE

study were exhibited. Significant probability levels were found between home attendance levels and the existence of an admission fee, off-campus fields, fields located between .6 and one mile from the dorms and promotional activities and materials. Attendance levels and winning percentage did not yield a significant probability level.

Chapter Five

Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

Questionnaires examining factors effecting attendance levels at home men's soccer games were sent to the 187 head coaches of NCAA Division I men's soccer programs. These factors were team success, location of home soccer field, ticket price and promotional activities. This chapter will provide conclusions to support the findings from the data. It will also give recommendations for future study of attendance levels at NCAA Division I men's soccer games. The information presented in this chapter can be used by intercollegiate athletic departments and soccer programs to propose and implement strategies that could increase fan interest at their home men's soccer games.

Conclusions

The data from the questionnaires revealed interesting results. Responses to question three, win/loss record yielded 76 separate winning percentages ranging from .071 to .864. The resulting Chi-square probability level between winning percentage and average attendance levels was .2840. This value is not significant since it is greater than the established alpha level of .05.

Therefore, hypothesis one which maintains that there is a relationship between the success of a men's soccer team measured by the team's win/loss record and the team's average attendance levels at home games is not supported. This indicates that collegiate soccer fans may not place much emphasis on winning when making the decision to attend games. McPherson (1975) indicated in his research that it is possible that fans attend games simply for relaxation or for social interaction (McPherson, 1975).

The existence of an admission fee data and average attendance data did have a significant probability level. Therefore, hypothesis four which states that there is a relationship between the existence and amount of an admission fee and average attendance levels at home men's soccer games is not supported. This finding is supported by the research of Eisen (1989) and Combs (1984) who reported that fans may find the presence of a fee to bring an added value or quality to the game and that it is this increased perception in game quality may lead to increased attendance levels.

Analysis of admission fee data also indicated that fans may not place much emphasis on ticket price when deciding to attend a soccer game. Data from all of the spectator groups identified in the survey had no significant Chi-square

probability levels. Therefore, hypothesis four is not supported.

One reason for this may be that a large part of many home soccer crowds is comprised of students. Only 13 soccer programs charged admission to their own students. A total of 69 programs did not charge admission to any group. Free admission for students may largely contribute to the reason why hypothesis four was not supported. The presence or lack of admission fee does not seem to effect the average attendance level of home soccer games.

Question five gathered information on field location and field distance from a school's dormitories. This data indicated that there is a relationship between students who live in dorms which are located on-campus and are between .6 to 1 mile away from the soccer field and game attendance. Even though a field is on-campus, students may find a distance of over one-half mile too long to travel to a game. This finding is supported by the research of Schurr, Ruble and Ellen (1985) who found that convenience is a major decision factor for college students. This finding supports hypothesis three which states that there is a relationship between the location of a university's home soccer field and average attendance levels at home men's soccer games.

A significant Chi-square probability level of .0137 which supports hypothesis three was determined between the distance

and attendance variables when analyzed using an off-campus field location filter variable. This relationship demonstrates that an off-campus field effects attendance levels at home soccer games. Students may find it difficult to get to the field and other fans may be confused about the actual location of the field since it is not within the boundaries of the campus.

A positive significant relationship supporting hypothesis three was established between distance, attendance and total student enrollment of under 5000. A total enrollment level of under 5000 students, indicated by 51 respondents, depicts a small, compact campus. This type of environment may be conducive to school spirit and increase the flow of information related to athletic contests. Also, smaller schools may not have the operating budgets to sponsor numerous athletic teams present at many large universities which leaves men's soccer as the major fall sport.

Significant relationships were determined between most of the promotional variables from questions seven and eight and attendance levels. These significant probability levels support hypothesis two that there is a significant relationship between the amount of use and type of promotional materials and activities and average attendance levels at home men's soccer games.

It was determined that there was a significant relationship between promotional budget and average attendance levels. Not surprisingly, this indicates that the more money a soccer program has to promote its home games, the more likely the attendance levels will increase. This finding supports the research of Eisen (1989), Hardekopf (1989), Lamphear & Frankel (1990) and Lindahl (1989 that promotional activities are vital to attendance levels at collegiate sport events.

Even though 97 soccer programs at least sometimes used promotional game fliers, the use of promotional game fliers when analyzed with average attendance levels did not yield a significant probability level. This indicates that game fliers may not be an effective way of distributing information about soccer games to increase attendance levels.

These fliers may be easily torn down, blown away or have other fliers posted over them. Also, students may be immune to the effects of fliers because of the numerous fliers posted by other individuals and campus organizations. Game fliers could be printed on bright colored paper and posted in conspicuous locations to possibly increase effectiveness.

Promotion and attendance variables were also analyzed using both an on and off-campus filter variable. Probability levels computed between every promotional variable, average attendance level and the off-campus filter variable were not

significant. This supports the finding that an off-campus field, even with good promotions, will deter fans from games. The on-campus filter variable revealed significant probability levels between every promotional variable and attendance except for the promotional game fliers and other promotions variables. This is consistent with the previous findings about promotional game fliers.

Promotional game fliers were the most commonly used type of promotional materials and television was used the least. Budget constraints are most likely the driving force behind these promotional expenditures decisions by soccer programs. Overall, it seems that promotional activities at soccer games helps to increase attendance levels.

Bleachers were located at 153 of the soccer fields. Only 5 programs reported that their field had no seating. A significant probability level was not recorded when seating was used as a filter variable with distance and attendance.

The largest response group of average game attendance was 251-500 spectators. This group was comprised of 58 programs. The smallest was the group indicating average attendance levels of over 2500 fans. Only six programs indicated this level of fan support.

Recommendations

Replication of this study in a few years should provide insight in the area of collegiate soccer attendance.

Following are some suggestions that can be addressed if replication was to be attempted.

Survey questions should be designed in such a way that responses could be recorded as interval data. This would allow correlational statistics to be run on the received data.

Additional factors that may effect attendance levels should also be analyzed. Factors such as the existence of a football team, game time or the quality of the opponent may play a significant role in men's soccer attendance levels.

It would be interesting to do research on attendance levels at the conference instead of the national level. Separate studies should be done looking at any of the variables examined in this study. Ticket price may have the most potential as a possible topic. Also, examining the demographics of the crowds at Division I men's soccer games could make interesting research.

Summary

This chapter provided interpretation for the various relationships between the variables of the study. Conclusions were made reflecting the findings of the study. Possible avenues for future research on attendance levels at collegiate men's soccer games were also recommended.

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Appendix A

Please check the answer that most appropriately describes the situation at your school. Estimate to the best of your knowledge if you do not have access to exact figures.

1. What is the total student enrollment of your school?

Under 5000
 5001-10000
 10001-15000
 Over 15000

2. How many students at your school live in on-campus housing?

Under 2000
 2001-5000
 5001-10000
 Over 10000

3. What was the record of your men's soccer team at the conclusion of the 1991 regular season?

Wins
 Losses
 Ties

4. Do you charge an admission fee at your home soccer games?

Yes
 No

If yes, please indicate the amount charged to these groups.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Students enrolled at your school	_____
College students not enrolled at your school	_____
Children (under age 18)	_____
Adults (age 18 and over)	_____
Other _____	_____

5. Please indicate whether your home field is located on campus or off campus and the distance it is from the undergraduate dormitories of your school?

_____ On campus _____ Off campus

Distance from dormitories:

_____ Under .5 mile _____ .6 and 1 mile _____ 1.1 and 2 miles _____ Over 2 miles

6. Are bleachers or any other type of seating provided for spectators at your home soccer games?

_____ Yes _____ No

7. Approximately how much money is budgeted by your athletic department solely for the promotion of soccer? (This figure should include all promotional posters, game day fliers, media guides and special game day or season long promotional contests)

_____ Zero _____ \$1 and \$500 _____ \$501-1000 _____ OVER \$1000

8. Please use the scale below to indicate what extent your soccer program uses the following promotional activities during the regular season.

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
	1	2	3	4	5

_____ Half-time contests

_____ Pre-game giveaways

_____ Promotional game fliers

_____ Radio ads

_____ Newspaper ads

_____ Television ads

_____ Other: _____

9. What was the average home attendance per game during your 1991 men's soccer regular season?

Under Over
 _____ 250 _____ 251-500 _____ 501-1000 _____ 1001-2500 _____ 2500

_____ PLEASE CHECK IF YOU WOULD LIKE THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY SENT TO YOU

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND INFORMATION. Please place the completed questionnaire into the return envelope provided. If the envelope has been misplaced, place the completed questionnaire in an envelope and mail to: Carmen Juliano, 203 Penn Street, Blacksburg, VA 24060. If you have any questions regarding this survey, please call me collect at (703) 552-8239.

PLEASE TRY TO COMPLETE AND RETURN THIS SURVEY BY FEBRUARY 24, 1992.

Appendix B

January 14, 1992

Jerry Cheynet
Head Men's Soccer Coach
Blacksburg, VA 24060

Dear Coach Cheynet,

The Sports Marketing Department at Virginia Tech is conducting a study to determine the various factors that affect attendance levels at NCAA Division I men's varsity soccer games. We need your help. Would you please take a few minutes to supply us with the information requested in the following survey. All NCAA Division I schools with men's soccer programs are being asked to participate and all answers will be kept strictly confidential. The coding on each survey is to assist the researcher with the recording of results.

Please remain candid throughout the questionnaire. It is important that all questions are answered to the best of your ability and that no questions are omitted. This will provide much better information for the researcher conducting this study.

In an effort to provide you and your athletic department with information on factors that affect attendance levels, the results of this study will be made available to you if you so desire. Please indicate on the last page of the questionnaire if you would like to be sent the results of the study.

Place the completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelope and mail it to: Carmen Juliano, Soccer Office, Virginia Tech Athletic Department, P.O. Box 158, Blacksburg, VA 24060-0518 or FAX the completed questionnaire to (703) 231-3060.

If you have any questions, please call Carmen Juliano at (703) 552-8239 or (703) 231-3048.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Sincerely,

Carmen Juliano
Graduate Assistant
Virginia Tech Men's Soccer

Elyzabeth Holford
Thesis Committee Chairperson
Attorney at Law

Appendix C

February 17, 1992

Last week a questionnaire was sent to you asking for information on your soccer program. This information will be used in a study of various factors that effect attendance levels at NCAA Division I men's soccer games.

If you have already completed and mailed the questionnaire back to me by the time you receive this postcard, I thank you sincerely. If you haven't, please take the time to answer the survey. In order to accurately assess the current attendance situation at Division I soccer games, it is extremely important that your program's information be received.

If for some reason you did not receive the questionnaire, please call me collect at (703) 552-8239 and I will place one in the mail today.

Sincerely,

Carmen Juliano
Graduate Assistant
Virginia Tech Men's Soccer

Appendix D

February 28, 1992

Jerry Cheynet
Head Men's Soccer Coach
308 Cassell Coliseum
Blacksburg, VA 24060

Dear Coach Cheynet,

Approximately three weeks ago I sent you a letter and questionnaire examining the relationship between various factors and spectator attendance levels at NCAA Division I men's soccer games. As of today, I have not received a reply from you. If you have already completed and returned the questionnaire by the time you receive this letter, please accept my genuine thanks.

If not, I hope that you can take the time to fill out the questionnaire and return it as soon as possible. Your participation is vital in order to obtain an accurate view of the factors that cause fluctuations in attendance levels at different Division I institutions. A replacement questionnaire and return envelope is enclosed if the original has been misplaced.

Also, please indicate on the last page of the questionnaire if you would like the results of the study sent to you. If the return envelope is misplaced, mail the completed questionnaire to: Carmen Juliano, 203 Penn St., Blacksburg, VA 24060 or FAX the completed questionnaire to (703) 231-3060.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Carmen Juliano
Graduate Assistant
Virginia Tech Men's Soccer

VITA

Carmen Juliano was born July 17, 1966 in Fort Knox, Kentucky. He was raised in Long Branch, New Jersey and received his high school diploma from Long Branch High School.

Carmen received his Bachelor's of Science Degree in Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Management with a minor in Communications from Virginia Tech on December 14, 1989. He is currently the graduate assistant for the Virginia Tech Men's Soccer Team and will pursue a career in Sport Management.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Carmen Juliano". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "C".

Carmen Douglas Juliano