Marketing Sports Facilities: Perspectives from Botswana

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Abstract

The provision of sports facilities contributes immensely to the growth of sports and leisure activities in the countries where they are provided. In some countries, as was the case in Botswana, the government had to spend millions of dollars to provide new Integrated Sports Facilities (ISF's) as a panacea for the continued poor performance of its national teams at different sports events. Where such facilities are managed by government or public organizations (as in Botswana), operational deficiencies, for instance government bureaucracy, is replete. One of such deficiencies relate to inadequate marketing of sports facilities, leading to inadequate use by the populace, poor revenue and consequently poor maintenance and neglect of such facilities. The purpose of the current study was thus to assess the strategies that are used in marketing the ISF's in Botswana using the variables of place, price, product and promotion, referred to as the marketing mix by different authors. With a sample of facility coordinators and users (N=593), the strategies used in marketing the facilities were examined. It was hypothesized that the strategies used to market the ISF's were significantly effective. The specific findings of the study were that the following factors significantly influenced the level of facility use: the price attached to the use of the facility, facility location, promotional strategies used to market the facility and the product. Overall, the strategies used to market the ISF's were found to be ineffective. It was thus recommended that strategies that can be employed to market the ISF's for optimal use include facility proximity, marketing of the facility using integrated mediums of communication and matching the product with need and the price.

Key words: mass participation, price, product

In a parliamentary sitting in April 1997, the Government of Botswana passed a motion to investigate the poor performance of the country's national sport teams (Government White Paper, 2002). This led to an appointment of a five-person committee to carry out the investigation. The absence or poor state of sport facilities was cited as one of the major factors contributing to poor performances of the national sport teams at local and international sporting events. One of the major recommendations of the committee was that the government should construct Integrated Sport Facilities (ISF's) in various areas throughout the country. The government responded swiftly by constructing such facilities in the districts of the north-west (Maun,), north-east (Masunga), south-east (Molepolole) and central (Serowe). The idea was that they should be accessible to all sportspersons and the general public. The facilities include: a stadium with spectator seating and a covered stand with a carrying capacity ranging from 4,000 to 6,000; warm up track; softball pitch with approximately 1000 seats; two volleyball courts, two netball courts, two tennis courts and a basketball court without seats. Also included are ticket rooms and kiosks; internal road, bus and car parks; public washrooms; a club house with a meeting room that can seat up to 30 people; cafeteria and bar and refreshment area. The main objective of setting up the ISF's was to promote participation in recreation and sport by ensuring that they are accessible to as many citizens as possible. Making the benefits of recreation available to the public requires that individuals and community leaders are aware of and buy in on the benefits of specific programs. The job of recreation professionals therefore is not only to provide opportunities for achieving the benefits, but to get the word out about these opportunities. Unless all professionals in the leisure profession promote and articulate the benefits of leisure, the tremendous value that sports facilities adds to human welfare will not be recognized and appreciated fully. These benefits are understood by leisure professionals, academicians and students alike. However, experiencing the benefits by the public at large, as well as special populations, will not reach its full potential without techniques designed to educate and influence the public regarding available opportunities (Mowen & Baker, 2009). The Government of Botswana has intensified the need for adequate participation in sports through directives that public education awareness campaigns should be undertaken through the Directorate of Sport and Recreation (DSR) in order to sensitize the nation on the importance of sport through printed leaflets, workshops, seminars, radio programs and sport festivals (Government White Paper, 2002). However, for the efforts of government in terms of mass participation in sport to be realized, the available facilities have to be marketed well to ensure adequate usage and sustainability. They should also be visible, more available for athletes and consequently sport will be better promoted. These will enhance massive participation in sport at different levels enabling the community to use these sporting facilities for sport development, recreation and social welfare.

Access to these facilities is free and the observation is that the cost of the public facilities in most cases is subsidized which can be considered a social service type of approach to pricing. However, there is an opportunity to use the ISF's to charge gate takings, advertising space, stadium rentals, conference room rentals and lease of tuck shops. In this study the aim was to assess strategies used to market the ISF's using place, price, product and promotion collectively named the marketing mix and first expressed by McCarthy (1964) as quoted by Bennett (1997). The marketing mix approach ensures that when a product or service is made available to the consumer, it has been planned, designed, packaged, promoted and delivered in such a manner that the consumer is not only persuaded to buy, but also to repeat the experience as often as possible (Madhu, 2010; Malcolm & Martin, 2003). In view of the need for more sources of funding for the sustenance of the facilities, it is necessary for facility administrators to ensure that marketing strategies are put in place that will ensure that

the facility is marketed appropriately. The purpose of this study therefore was to assess the strategies used in marketing the ISF's in Botswana. In this study, the concept of the four P's is applied in relation to the ISF's as put forward by the following authors: Place (Bean & Hussey, 1997; Dogra & Ghuman, 2008; Lancaster & Withey,2006;); Price (Wong, Huhman, Asbury &Heitzler, 2004); Product (Belohlavek, 2008; Dogra & Ghuman, 2008;); and Promotion (Blythe, 2006; Dogra & Ghuman, 2008; Smith & Taylor, 2004).

This study was guided by the following hypotheses:

1. From the perception of coordinators, and users, the ISF's are used effectively.
2. From the perception of coordinators, and users, the ISF location significantly influences the use of the facility.
3. In view of the coordinators, and users, the use of each component of the sport complex does not depend significantly on the price.
4. In the view of the coordinators, and users, strategies used to market the ISF's are significantly effective.

Methodology

Sample

A purposive sampling technique was used in this study as suggested by Schutt (1996). In this study, the researchers used judgment/discretion in line with the suggestions of Coldwell and Herbst (2004) to select candidates who best met the purpose of the study. This was helpful in getting the opinions from those who are responsible for the management of the ISF's. There are four ISF's in Botswana and they are situated in the towns of Molepolole, Masunga, Maun and Serowe. The four facilities were investigated and the researchers purposively picked the four facility coordinators. In addition, four samples of 150 users at each ISF's (N=600) were selected for the study due to their periodic or regular use of the facility.

Instruments

The researchers developed two questionnaires for the coordinators and the users. Based on the research variables the questionnaire for the coordinators and for users was divided into five sections; the first section dealt with background information and the second section measured the level of usage of the facility using a rating scale. The third section dealt with participants' perceptions on the locations as it influences the use of the facility using a 4 point Likert type scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree). The fourth sections dealt with the respondent's attitude towards facility charges using a 4- point Likert type scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree). Section five dealt with information on the effectiveness of strategies used to market the facility using a Likert type scale. The instruments were carefully reviewed by the researchers and colleagues in facility managment and marketing. The feedback from the colleagues was helpful in amending the instruments and ensuring adequate content. The instruments were also pilot tested by administering them to 50 randomly selected users of the University of Botswana stadium as well as the coordinator. The feedback from the pilot study was used to ensure that the items on the questionnaires were clear and unambiguous.

Data Analysis

The data collected were coded and entered into the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) and percentages, bar charts, population t-test on a single mean and one way ANOVA were used to test the hypotheses. Population t-test of single mean was used to test the perception of users on the extent to which the different components of the facility are utilized and the effectiveness of the strategies used for marketing ISF's. The other two hypotheses were tested using one way ANOVA at an alpha level of 0.05. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is suitable as a parametric test to compare the variances of means of dependent variables caused by two or three groups of independent variables (Gay, et al., 2006). One-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistics was used to test the same hypothesis in response to the coordinators because the cases were very few.

Results

Demographics Data

Out of 600 participants only 593 gave relevant responses. The rest of the participants (7) either did not respond or did not return the questionnaire. A total of 353 (60%) participants were male respondents, while 240 (40%) were females. These percentages might imply that the population constituted more males than females and that males were more willing to answer the questionnaire than females.

Table 1. ***Number of Participants in Relation to Gender***

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	353	58.8	58.8	58.8
Female	240	40	40	98.8
No response	7	1.17	1.17	100
Total	600	100	100	

Questionnaire Data

A t-test of single mean was done based on user's responses on the extent to which the different components of the facility are significantly utilized. Table 2 shows mean values lower than the expected mean of 2.50 on all items except the football pitch and the conference facility, which had a mean score of 2.71 and 2.94 respectively.

The results also showed negative values of mean difference and t -values on all items except the football pitch and conference facilities with mean differences scores .217 and .446 and 't' values of 4.566 and 10.392 respectively. The test showed that all the components of the ISF were ineffectively used with mean values ranging between 1.67 and 2.40 respectively. Furthermore, the test showed significant values for conference facilities and football pitch indicating mean values above the expected mean at 2.94 and 2.71 respectively. The hypothesis tested showed that the ISF's are not used effectively. One-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic test based on coordinators response was used on the rate in which different components of the facility were utilized. The results in Table 3 show that it is not true that the sport facilities were significantly utilized. The probability ranged between .214 and .967 higher than the significance level of p<0 .05, on all items.

Table 2. ***Users Perception on the Level of Usage of Different Components of the Facility***

(Expected mean = 2.50)

Items (the level at which the)	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Mean Difference	t	df
Whole ISF facility is used	1.6796	.94540	.03882	-.82040	-21.132	592
Football pitch is used	2.7179	1.1545	.04773	.21795	4.566	584
Conference facility is used	2.9468	1.0382	.04300	.44683	10.392	582
Softball pitch is used	2.4300	.96855	.03977	-.06998	-1.760	592
Netball pitch is used	2.1417	.99670	.04093	-.35835	-8.755	592
Athletic track is used	2.4031	.98640	.04085	-.09691	-2.372	582
Kiosk is used	2.2075	.98082	.04062	-.29245	-7.199	582
Volleyball courts are used	2.2968	.91142	.03743	-.20320	-5.429	592
Basketball courts are used	2.2833	.98159	.04031	-.21669	-5.376	592
Tennis courts are used	2.3103	.93080	.03822	-.18971	-4.963	592
Cafeteria is used	2.0617	.85733	.03551	-.43825	-12.343	582
Entertainment area is used	2.0532	.86489	.03582	-.44683	-12.474	582
Open space is used	1.9826	.89387	.03731	-.51742	-13.868	573

*Significant at 0 .05 alpha level; Critical t = 1.98

Note: Std. = standard deviation

The findings were that in the perception of the coordinators the facilities were not significantly utilized.

Table 3. ***Coordinators Perception Towards Effective Use of the Facility***

Facility	Extent that the facility is used			
	Normal Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.	Decision
Whole facility	1.4	0.548	.510	Retain the null
Soccer pitch	2.4	0.548	.510	Retain the null
Softball pitch	2.4	0.548	.510	Retain the null
Netball courts	2.2	0.447	.214	Retain the null
Athletics track	2.2	1.030	.967	Retain the null
Kiosk	2.2	1.095	.510	Retain the null
Volleyball courts	1.8	0.447	.214	Retain the null
Basketball courts	1.4	0.548	.510	Retain the null
Tennis courts	1.4	0.548	.510	Retain the null
Cafeteria	1.4	0.548	.510	Retain the null
Entertainment area	2.4	0.548	.510	Retain the null
Open space	2.4	0.548	.510	Retain the null

P≤0.05

The findings related to the influence of location on the use of facility are presented in Table 4. Forty-three users strongly disagreed, 97 disagreed contrary to 381 who agreed, while 61 strongly agreed that the right location for the facility influenced use and accessibility by people from outside Botswana.

Table 4. ***Users Perception of Sports Facilities Location on Use of Facilities***

Level of agreement on the extent to which the facility is at the right location	Level of usage by people from outside Botswana			
	n	Mean	SD	Std. Error
Strongly disagree	43	2.2093	1.45665	.22214
Disagree	97	2.2887	.74943	.07609
Agree	381	2.9213	.57041	.02922
Strongly agree	61	3.1967	.65370	.8370
Total	582	2.7921	.77376	.3207

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Means square	F-value
Between Groups	55.533	3	18.511	36.602
Within Groups	292.311	578	.506	
Total	347.844	581		

*Significance, p<0.05; Critical F-value =2.62

In testing this hypothesis, analysis of variance on the extent to which location of the facility influenced usage and accessibility by people from outside Botswana. The results of the analysis showed significant mean differences on the extent to which location of the facility influenced usage and accessibility by people from outside Botswana with an F-value of 36.60. Given 3 and 578 degrees of freedom at the set alpha level of 0.05 this was found to be statistically significant at p<0.05. The mean differences between the different levels of agreement on the extent to which the facility was at the right location on the level of usage by people from outside Botswana was statistically significant. In other words, the location of the facility was found to significantly influence usage by people from outside Botswana. Hence the hypothesis that sports facility location does not significantly influence use of the facility by people from various districts was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was retained. This means that the perception of users on the extent to which the facility was at the right location was found to significantly influence usage and accessibility by people from outside Botswana. On the issue of the sport facility location influencing the use of the facility by current users from various districts, 43 users strongly disagreed, 97 disagreed contrary to 383 agreeing, while 70 strongly agreed that location of the facility influenced use by people from various districts in the country. In testing this hypothesis analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the extent to which location of the facility influenced usage and accessibility by people from various districts as a result of the users perception gave an F- value of 66.07 (see Table 5) with 3 and 589 degrees of freedom.

The results of the analysis indicate significant influence of the facility location on use of the facility by people from various districts (p<0.05). Hence, the hypothesis was rejected. Thus, the location of the facility has significant influence on usage by users from various districts in Botswana. This means the perception of users on the extent to which the facility is at the right location was found to significantly influence use and accessibility by people from various districts in Botswana. The mean difference between the levels of agreement on the extent to which the facility is at the right location as influenced by the level of access by road was

Table 5. ***Users Perception of Sports Facilities Location on Use of Facilities***

Level of agreement on the extent to which the facility is at the right location	Level of usage by people from various district in Botswana			
	n	Mean	SD	Std. Error
Strongly disagree	43	2.0233	1.24381	.18968
Disagree	97	2.4433	.66095	.06711
Agree	383	2.9217	.45663	.02333
Strongly agree	70	3.4000	.49344	.05898
Total	593	2.8347	.67759	.02783
Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Means square	F-value
Between Groups	68.439	3	22.813	66.073*
Within Groups	203.365	589	.345	
Total	271.804	592		
*Significance, p<0.05; Critical value = 2.62				
Between Groups	77.187	3	25.729	
55.366*				
Within Groups	265.345	571	.465	
Total	342.532	574		
*Significance, p<0.05; Critical value = 2.62				

statistically significant p< 0.05. That is to say, the user perception on the location of the facility was found to significantly influence user access by road.

Table 6 shows the results of the perception of users on the price and usage of the facility. To test this hypothesis, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) examined the level to which price influence the use of the facility was carried out. A total of 400 users of the facility felt that it was not necessary to pay to use the facility, while 22 felt the price attached to use of the facility was too low. A further 84 people felt the price was satisfactory, while 75 respondents felt it was too high. The analysis of the variability in the level of the usage of the facility as a result of the level of perceptions of users gave an F-value of 2.09 (see Table 6). Given 3 and 577 degrees of freedom and at a .05 alpha level, this was found to be lower than the critical value of 2.62.

Table 6. ***Users Perception About Price of Facility Usage***

Perceptions of users about price	Level of usage of the facility			
	n	Mean	SD	Std. Error
It is not necessary	400	1.6925	.89159	.04458
It is too little	22	1.9091	.29424	.06273
It is satisfactory	84	1.6071	.67695	.07386
It is too much	75	1.8933	.79820	.09217
Total	581	1.7143	.83931	.03482
Source of variation	Sum of square	df	Mean squares	F- value
Between groups	4.393	3	1.464	2.091*
Within groups	404.178	577	.700	
Total	408.571	580		
*Not significance at 0.05 alpha levels; Critical F- value 2.62				

Hence, the hypothesis that the price significantly influenced usage of the facility was retained. Thus the perception of clients about the price charged does not significantly influence usage of the facility. One-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistics was used to test the view of the coordinators on the use of each component of the facility and the issue of price. Non-parametric test based on coordinators responses was done on the level to which the prices influenced the use of each component of the sport facility (see Table 7). The results showed insignificance values ranging between .214 and .967 on all items; this means the hypothesis which states that the use of each component of the sport complex depends significantly on the price was therefore rejected.

Table 7. ***Coordinators Perception About Price of Each Component of the Sports Complex***

Facility	Level that the price affects use of facility			
	Normal mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.	Decision
Whole facility	2.4	0.548	.510	Retain the null
Soccer pitch	2.4	0.548	.510	Retain the null
Conference facility	2.2	0.447	.214	Retain the null
Softball pitch	2.2	1.304	.967	Retain the null
Netball courts	2.2	1.095	.510	Retain the null
Athletic track	1.8	0.447	.214	Retain the null
Kiosk	1.4	0.548	.510	Retain the null
Volleyball courts	1.4	0.548	.510	Retain the null
Basketball courts	1.6	0.548	.510	Retain the null
Tennis courts	1.8	1.095	.510	Retain the null
Cafeteria	1.6	0.894	.577	Retain the null
Entertainment area	1.4	0.548	.510	Retain the null
Open space	1.4	0.548	.510	Retain the null
Not significant at 0.05 alpha level				

Results showed that the coordinators were not in agreement that the price influenced the use of the facility or that the use of the facility depended significantly on the price attached. In other words, the influence on the use of the facility was not an occurrence which could be attributed to the price. The coordinators perception about the price was found to be insignificantly influencing the use of the facility.

An independent t-test of single mean was done based on user's views on the effectiveness of the strategies used to market the ISF. Results in Table 8 show values of means lower than the expected mean of 2.50 on all items. Furthermore, the results also show negative values of mean difference and t-values on all items. The test showed that all the strategies used to market the ISF were significantly ineffective with mean values ranging between 1.22 and 1.56 respectively, which is below the expected mean of 2.50.

This means the hypothesis which states that the strategies used to market the ISF were not significantly effective is retained. One-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistics based on the coordinators response was done in order to establish if the strategies used to market the facility was significantly effective (Table 9). Results show that the strategies were not significantly effective with values ranging between .21 and .96 higher than the significance level of .05 on all items. The coordinators were in agreement with the hypothesis that the strategies used to market the facility were not significantly effective.

Table 8. ***Effectiveness of Strategies Used for Marketing Integrated Sport Facilities***

(Expected mean = 2.50)

Marketing strategies	mean	df	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	Mean difference	t
Signage.	1.5672	579	.84188	.03496	-.93276	- 26.68*
Print media.	1.5186	589	.86754	.03572	-.98136	-27.48*
Electronic media.	1.3855	580	.69684	.02891	-1.11446	-38.55*
Billboards.	1.4241	579	.81614	.03389	-1.07586	-31.75*
Blimps.	1.2847	589	.49129	.02023	-1.21525	-60.08*
Internet.	1.2238	580	.47871	.01986	-1.27625	-64.26*
Exhibitions.	1.3102	589	.60028	.02471	-1.18983	-48.15*
Facility tours	1.5102	589	.88703	.03652	-.98983	-27.11*
Direct mail	1.4720	571	.78354	.03276	-1.02797	-31.38*
Personal selling	1.5138	579	.84241	.03498	-.98621	-28.19*
Directional signs	1.4288	589	.75361	.03103	-1.07119	-34.53*
Endorsement	1.4109	588	.74980	.03089	-1.08913	-35.25*
Promotional items	1.3203	589	.69004	.02841	-1.17966	-41.53*
Partnerships	1.3590	584	.74555	.03082	-1.14103	-37.02*

*Significance at 0.05 alpha level; Critical t = 1.98

Table 9. ***Coordinators Perception About the Effectiveness of Sport Facility Marketing Strategies***

Marketing strategies	Normal Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.	Decision
Whole facility	1.4	0.548	.510	Retain the null
Signage	2.2	1.095	.510	Retain the null
Print media	1.8	0.447	.214	Retain the null
Electronic media	1.4	0.548	.510	Retain the null
Billboards	1.4	0.548	.510	Retain the null
Blimps	1.4	0.548	.510	Retain the null
Internet	2.4	0.548	.510	Retain the null
Exhibitions	2.4	0.548	.510	Retain the null
Facility tour	2.2	0.447	.214	Retain the null
Direct mail	2.2	1.304	.967	Retain the null
Personal selling	2.2	1.095	.510	Retain the null
Directional signs	1.8	0.447	.214	Retain the null
Endorsement	1.4	0.548	.510	Retain the null
Promotional items	1.4	0.548	.510	Retain the null
Partnership	1.5	0.577	.846	Retain the null

Not significant at 0.05 alpha level

Discussion

The main thrust of this study was to assess the strategies used in marketing the ISF's in Botswana using the marketing mix and how these affected the usage of the facilities. The results from this study show that the elements of place, price, product and promotion had a great influence on the marketing and use of a sport facility. This is consistent with emerging research and anecdotal evidence which suggests that proximity, price and promotion can stimulate increased utilization of sport facilities (Mowen & Baker, 2009). However, the effectiveness of independent strategies is still unclear. One of the key questions for any service provider is to identify exactly what it is that the users are 'buying'. In marketing terms this is often referred to as the core product. The core product is the fundamental service which the ISF is offering and the augmented service is the additional benefit that the customer utilizes. From the coordinators point of view, the decision has to be reached as to what actually is the product/service provided to the users. Problems can also arise due to a mismatch occurring between services provided and the needs of users. In other words, people may be given a service but not the one which would best meet their needs. ISF's are important because they are developed in response to the need cited in the Seepapitso (Government White Paper, 2002) report and the emerging recognition that ISF's with quick access may have a competitive advantage. So those who manage ISF's are not only competing for users, but they are re-examining their management, their manner of justifying the budget and their existence.

The interaction of place and level of usage of the facility produced a significant relationship in this study. The hypothesis that location has a significant influence on the level of ISF's use was tested and it was found that for both coordinators and users, locations significantly influenced usage with all the t-values yielding negative values and were way below the critical t- value. So it is clear from this study that location, place of distribution and proximity affects the use of a sport facility. These results are consistent with the findings in the literature (Hayward, 2003; Mowen & Baker, 2009). In fact, according to Mowen and Baker (2009), a majority of studies have found a positive relationship between facility proximity and physical activity level.

People who live closer and have easier access to parks, recreation, fitness and sport sector opportunities use them more frequently and are more physically active. Proximity can also be influenced by the degree of connectivity. Thus, convenient and safe routes to services promote more frequent use of, and transportation to, such amenities. The findings from this study indicate a significant influence between the mean of proximity and use, which concurs within the literature (Dogra & Ghuma, 2008) and strengthens the fact that proximity has a significant influence on the use of the facility.

The analysis of the data based on user perception indicated that there was a significant influence of the price attached to the use of the facility on the level of usage of ISF's, while the coordinators indicated the contrary. However, based on the coordinators responses the price had no significant influence on the usage of an ISF. Therefore, the possibility that these variances were artificial cannot be ruled out. For example, the coordinators point of view on the price that it did not influence the use of the facility can be argued and can be looked at based on the perception that they were reluctant to give their true feelings of the state of affairs for fear of political reprisal. The statistics from the current study clearly shows that price had a significant effect on the use of the facilities and this is consistent with evidence from the literature (Graham & Allan, 2008; Siegfried & Zimbalist, 2000). The effect of this is that the facilities will not be used optimally as users will want free access, with subsequently no money generated and sustainability of the facilities reduced. This like Fuller (1999) stated is like "meeting our needs today… and destroying the future generations to meet theirs" (p.10). Therefore Fuller (1999) indicated that "given a finite communal resource, individuals will seek to maximize their gains given that no costs are charged. If there is no outside force to keep them in line, then eventually they will destroy the resource for all" (p.11). Moral arguments used to justify price attached to social service provisions is that if people have the right to a

service, they also have the responsibility to pay for it. The social marketer has to adopt a reasonable pricing policy in which the benefits gained by the consumer are greater than the costs of the product, while making pricing decisions (Wong, et al., 2004). The marketer must consider factors such as the purchasing power of the target approach and the quality of the product (Madhu, 2010). Too high or low prices of the products may get a lesser or no response from the consumer. The effects of price misjudgment are quickly apparent in terms of their influence on the optimal use of the sport and recreation facility. Lancaster and Reynolds (2002) indicated that whilst there is ample scope for product differentiation by the seller, price remains a vital yardstick that buyers use in reaching a purchase decision. However, the price attached to the use of sport facilities has limited quality and efficiency of improving equity for the users without effective marketing strategy in place. In general, most people hold a negative attitude towards the price. In contrast, affordability of sport facilities is relatively a more important issue than distance (Graham & Allan, 2008). This was true for this study. The government of Botswana remains nominally committed to the provision of affordable and accessible sport facilities. Access to facilities may however be restricted because facility costs are excessive relative to the income of the potential users, emphasizing the link between purchasing power and access to facility. In all, the price attached to the use of sport facilities has limited quality and efficiency of improving equity for the users without effective marketing strategies in place.

Regarding the strategies used for marketing, the findings of the study showed that the strategies used for marketing generally influenced the use of the facility. This has to do with the marketing mix of promotion which deals with activities (strategies) that "communicate the merits of the product and persuade target customers to buy it" (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004, p. 58). Promotion is a very vital aspect of the marketing mix as it encompasses the elements of price, place and product and like Mullin, Hardy and Sutton (2007, p.237) asserted "it is a critical mechanism for positioning a product and its image in the mind of the consumer". The findings of the study have shown that all the strategies used to market the ISF were significantly ineffective. This is worrisome because as literature (Fried, 2010; Irwin, Sutton & McCarthy, 2002; Kotler & Armstrong, 2004; Mullin, et.al., 2007) has clearly indicated, there is a direct relationship between adequate use of promotional strategies and clients usage of a facility or a product. Fried (2010) further asserted that a lot of effort should be devoted to promoting or marketing a facility, for all the end users, fans and those who support the facility. The findings from the study, however, reveals otherwise and this accounts for the low usage of the ISF's in Botswana as shown in Tables 2 and 3. The reason might be that in disseminating information, the facility owners' expenditure will increase, so promotional activities might therefore be kept to a minimum. Restrictions on access may also occur because information regarding services is not widely available. It is very clear from the current study that this is a major problem. Promotion is a very important element in influencing the behavior of clients. Lack of awareness is often cited as a reason that people do not use park, recreation, fitness and sport sector services and the complexity, cost and pervasiveness of today's media make it difficult for fiscally constrained park, recreation, fitness and sport sector organizations to reach targeted audiences consistently (Mowen & Baker, 2009). Literature (Blann & Armstrong, 2011; Fried, 2010; Irwin, et.al., 2002; Kotler & Armstrong, 2004; Mullin, et.al., 2007; Schwarz, Hall & Shibili, 2010;) is replete with the range of different promotional techniques that can be utilized depending on the original marketing objective. If the objective is to obtain more users, word of mouth propaganda is often seen as the most effective promotional method. However, if the objective is to raise the product profile; public and press relations may achieve better results. Thus, it is crucial for sport facilities managers to ensure that influential elementss such as endorsement, billboards, directional signs, internet, electronic media, signage, facility tour, print media, direct mail, personal selling, promotional items and blimps are emphasized. Schwarz, et.al., (2010) further posits that the elements of sport promotional mix that sport facility managers use include advertising, sponsorship, public relations and atmospherics. They maintained that to coordinate the interaction between the elements of the sport promotional mix, a strategy must be developed that focus on building brand loyalty and product credibility, developing image, and positioning the brand.

Conclusion

The marketing mix approach suggested by Torkildsen (1993) and Kumar (2010) acknowledges the importance of assessing the local facility, using place, price, product and promotion presumed to be changed in order to change the demand for the services provided. The findings show that: the price attached to facility use, facility location, promotional strategies used to market the facility and the product significantly influenced the level of facility use. The main findings were that the strategies used for marketing an ISF were ineffective. It is thus concluded that the variables of place, price, product and promotion as well as the strategies to market the facility significantly influence clients usage of the Intergrated Sports Facilities in Botswana .

Practical Recommendations

This section provides recommendations, based on this study. These recommendations are intended to help the Government of Botswana and other Governments and owners of sports facilities market their sports facilities in order to have optimal utilisation by the users. Obviously some of these recommendations will serve the Government of Botswana and other countries with similar sports facilities characteristics better than others. So other countries or facility owners can decide to what extent, if any, they want to implement these recommendations.

Governments and owners of sports facilities should:

- Create better access and communication with existing sport facility settings. These efforts should overlap with ongoing community planning and transportation initiatives.
- Develop community planning guidelines and ordinances that foster the development of sport facilities within walking distance of (or close proximity to) targeted populations.
- Ensure that the ISF's program offerings include low/no cost, particularly for those who are more at risk of being inactive. More attention must be paid to cost effective

methods for screening the very poor out of paying user charges and making sure that those who can pay do pay to align the price to the theory of intergenerational equity.

- Ensure that the strategies for marketing the sport facilities be an ongoing exercise in order to streamline the shortcomings and consolidate the strength for optimal use of the facilities.
- Ensure that marketing assumes a clear importance within the organization. Outsourcing some key marketing initiatives to a professional organization as and when required is recommended.

Recommendations for Future Research

In this study, the focus has been on government owned/public facilities' marketing strategies and usage of sports facilities. Such a study could be done using private sports facilities and the outcome compared with this study. Such comparison will be useful in indicating if there are differences in the marketing strategies used and the utilization of the facilities. These will help Governments and facility owners to focus their efforts on improving their marketing strategies and consequently the utilization of the sports facilities.

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