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AN ANALYSIS OF THE EXPECTED AND ACTUAL BENEFITS
OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE NATIONAL THERAPEUTIC
RECREATION SOCIETY

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Science
Degree
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Anne Spencer Moseley

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this project to the four men who have been instrumental in my obtaining this degree. They are Dr. Gene Hayes, Dr. John Hemingway, Dr. Bill Higelmire and Dr. Joe Wilson. Their dedication to the field of recreation and the needs of all people (disabled or ablebodied) serves as an example for all. They have nurtured my interest in this profession throughout undergraduate and graduate school, and without them this project would have never been undertaken, much less completed.

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ABSTRACT

Theoretical research has shown that members of a profession join voluntary professional associations because of the benefits they believe they will receive in exchange. What are the reasons why therapeutic recreation professionals join the National Therapeutic Recreation Society, and what is the discrepancy between the benefits they expect to receive and those that they actually receive? Does demographic data such as job position, educational level, membership status or number of years as a member have an effect on expected and actual membership benefits? In this study, a survey designed to assess the expected and actual benefits of membership in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society was mailed to 200 society members (N=2953). A total of 98 surveys were returned for a response rate of 49%.

The results showed that there was little discrepancy between members expected benefits and the benefits they actually received, except in the areas of facilitation of professional status with those in related areas and special skills development. Respondents expected these benefits, but did not believe that they existed. In addition, they were more likely not to consider social benefits as expected benefits of membership than they were substantive benefits.

The frequency of response for questions was too small to statistically define the relationship between demographic data and expected and actual benefits of membership, so the information created by the analysis is descriptively presented and discussed. It is concluded that those who are members of the National Therapeutic Recreation Society generally receive the benefits that they expect when making the decision to join the organization.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It has become commonplace for an emerging occupation to strive for professional identification (Wilensky, 1964), and to have one's status accepted as professional is highly regarded in our society (Moore, 1970). Sociologists have determined criteria that measure the degree to which an occupational group has become professionalized (Wilensky, 1964; Schein, 1972). The "occupation" of therapeutic recreation has come a long way in meeting the criteria for professionalization and it is considered, by most, to be a profession (Peterson, 1981). Among the criteria for professionalization is the establishment of professional associations. Schein (1974, p.8) states:

✓Professionals form professional associations which define the criteria of admission, educational standards, licensing or other formal entry examinations, career lines within the profession, and areas of jurisdiction for the profession. Ultimately the association's function is to protect the autonomy of the profession; it develops reasonably strong forms of self-government by setting rules or standards for the profession.

The therapeutic recreation profession has had a professional association since 1948 when the Hospital Section of the American Recreation Society was formed (Park, 1974). Another early organization recognized by the

profession was the National Association of Recreation Therapists, which was formed in 1953 and was primarily comprised of recreators in state psychiatric facilities. In 1965 a merger of five groups: the American Recreation Society; the National Recreation Association; the American Institute of Park Executives; the National Conference on State Parks; and the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums; formed the National Recreation and Park Society (NRPA). In 1966, the National Therapeutic Recreation Society (NTRS) was recognized as one of seven branches of the National Recreation and Parks Association (Austin & Hunnicutt, 1978). In the twenty years since its inception, the National Therapeutic Recreation Society has become the established professional association for therapeutic recreators.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the National Therapeutic Recreation Society being the established association for professionals in the field of therapeutic recreation, it has been determined that there is a large discrepancy in the number of practicing therapeutic recreators and the number of members in the association. The 1984-5 Occupational Outlook Handbook (U.S. Department of Labor) estimated that there were 31,000 therapeutic recreators in the United States, yet, as of

February 12, 1986, there were only 2953 members of the National Therapeutic Recreation Society (NRPA, 1986). However the decline, proportionate to the number of eligible professionals, in membership in professional associations is not exclusive to the field of therapeutic recreation. In recent years the national trend has been for professionals to no longer become members of voluntary associations (Yeager, 1983). The reasons for current membership trends are not well researched, but a widely accepted theory is that potential members do not consider the benefits to gained from membership to be strong enough to outweigh the costs involved (Olson, 1971; Yeager, 1983). It is the purpose of this study to determine member's perceptions of the expected and actual benefits of being a member in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society. Sub problems to be addressed in this study include:

1. What is the discrepancy between members' expected benefits of belonging to the National Therapeutic Recreation Society and the actual benefits of membership?
2. What is the relationship between job setting and expected and actual benefits of membership in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society?
3. What is the relationship between membership status and expected and actual benefits of membership in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society?
4. What is the relationship between the number of years as a society member and expected and actual benefits of membership in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society?

5. What is the relationship between education and expected and actual benefits of membership in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society?
6. What are the primary reasons why therapeutic recreation professionals join the National Therapeutic Recreation Society?

Definition of Terms

The following definitions will be used for the purposes of this study:

Actual Benefits: Those benefits which are determined to exist for members of the National Therapeutic Recreation Society. Operationally, those benefits which the results of the survey show to exist for members in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society.

Associate: A person involved with a profession because of an outside interest in that profession. Operationally, a member of the National Parks and Recreation Association/Therapeutic Recreation Society who is not employed in the field of therapeutic recreation, but maintains an interest in the profession (NRPA, 1986b).

Expected Benefits: Those benefits which are envisioned to exist for members of the National Therapeutic Recreation Society. Operationally, those benefits which the results of the survey show to be expected by members of the National Therapeutic Recreation Society.

Membership: Belonging to a body, society or organization. Operationally, belonging to the National Therapeutic Recreation Society with the status of a professional, associate, student, retired professional, or organization/institution.

National Recreation and Park Association: The professional organization created to promote the "functions of self-control, socialization and education" of its members. facilitate communication with the public and defend the "professional interest against infringement by the public or other occupational groups" (Barber, 1963, p.677) of all park and recreation professionals. Operationally, the professional organization which provides consultation services, lobbying, symposia, continuing education, regulation of standards, publications and liaison with other professions for all park and recreation professionals.

National Therapeutic Recreation Society: The professional organization created to meet the needs of therapeutic recreation personnel. A branch of the National Recreation and Park Association. Operationally, the professional organization which provides consultation services, lobbying, symposia, continuing education, regulation of standards, publications and liaison with other professionals. The expected and actual benefits of membership in this organization are the subject of this study.

Organization/Institution: An established body instituted for some public, educational or business purpose. Operationally, an agency membership in the National Recreation and Parks Association/National Therapeutic Recreation Society which enables its employees to be eligible for reduced membership dues (NRPA, 1986b).

Professional: A person with:

an established and recognized set of skills and body of knowledge that is implemented in a consistent manner, resulting in the delivery of services that are acknowledged for their quality and predictable impact; in addition, the professional is part of a collective group of others who regulate themselves and the services they provide as a whole so that the consumer can expect and rely on the judgement, motivation, procedures and product (Peterson, 1981, p.2).

Operationally, a member of the National Recreation and Parks Association/National Therapeutic Recreation Society who is active in the therapeutic recreation profession and who pays dues according to the amount of her/his annual salary (NRPA, 1986b).

Retired Professional: A person who previously practiced a profession, but who has withdrawn from that profession. Operationally, a member of the National Recreation and Parks Association/National Therapeutic Recreation Society who has withdrawn from therapeutic recreation practice (NRPA, 1986b).

Student: A person attending an educational institution. Operationally, a member of the National Recreation and Parks Association/National Therapeutic Recreation Society who

attends an educational institution, has the National Recreation Student Branch as her/his primary branch affiliation, and the National Therapeutic Recreation Society as her/his secondary branch affiliation (NRPA, 1986b).

Therapeutic Recreation:

A special service within the broad area of recreation services. It is a process which uses recreation services for the purposive intervention in some physical, emotional and/or social behavior to bring about a desired change in that behavior and to promote the growth and development of the individual. Therapeutic recreation provides opportunities for participation of one's own volition in activities that bring pleasure or other positive personal rewards (Ninth Southern Region Institute on Therapeutic Recreation, 1969).

Operationally, the use of educational techniques, physical activity and recreation participation in the amelioration or treatment of disease, dysfunction or disability.

Delimitations of the Study

The delimitations of the study will be:

1. A random sampling of National Therapeutic Recreation Society members as chosen from the 1986 membership roster.
2. The survey instrument consisting of questions related to background information and the benefits of association membership.

Limitations of the Study

The study may be limited due to:

1. The number of professionals belonging to the National Therapeutic Recreation Society.
2. Respondents' knowledge of the subject and honesty in answering the questions.
3. The time of year at which the survey was administered.

Assumptions of the Study

The assumptions of the study will be:

1. The respondents will to provide accurate information when answering the survey questions.
2. The survey instrument will allow the collection of sufficient information for specific relationships to be analyzed.
3. The randomly selected respondents in this study will provide information representative of all National Therapeutic Recreation Society members.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The review of literature was hindered by a lack of research in this area. Because of this, the author turned to the fields of Sociology and Nursing for additional information. The review will be divided into four categories: 1. The Nature of Professional Associations; 2. The Benefits of Membership in Professional Associations; 3. Professional Associations and Therapeutic Recreation; and 4. Survey Methodology.

The Nature of Professional Associations

"Modern society has placed a high moral value on rationality, effectiveness, and efficiency" and has come to depend on organizations as "the most rational and efficient form of social grouping" (Etzioni, 1964, p.1). One form of this tendency for organization is seen in the special-interest associations which reflect the diverse interests of traders, occupations and professions. The potential for organization and growth of professional associations exists primarily because of the strong

orientation of the professional toward his peers (Moore, 1970).

Wilensky (1964) and Schein (1972) maintain that professionalization of an occupation cannot occur unless some type of professional association is formed. Wilensky (1964, p. 144) states that this association serves to define "whether the occupation is a profession, what the professional tasks are, and how to raise the quality of recruits." Schein (1972) defines the purposes of an association further by identifying more specific group functions. These include defining criteria of admission, creating educational and professional standards, implementing licensing or formal entry examinations, and defining the jurisdiction of the profession. In addition, he considers a professional association's ultimate function is "to protect the autonomy of the profession" and "develop reasonably strong forms of self-government" (Schein, 1972, p.8). Timperley and Osbaldeston (1975) contend that a professional association serves to enable its members to reach more latent goals such as the pursuit of professional status to improve economic or bargaining position.

As reported in Formal Organizations (Blau & Scott, 1962, p.41), Hughes describes five basic models of organizations found in society:

1. the voluntary association of equals where members freely join for a specific purpose;

2. the military model which emphasizes a fixed hierarchy of authority and status;
3. the philanthropic model, consisting of a governing lay board, an itinerant professional, and the clients served;
4. the corporation model with its stockholders, board of directors, managers, and staff; and
5. the family business in which a group of people related by kin and marriage carry on some enterprise or profit.

Blau and Scott (1962) further define types of organizations on the basis of who benefits from their services. The four types of organizations as explained by Blau and Scott are:

1. "mutual-benefit associations" where the prime beneficiary is the membership;
2. "business concerns" where the owners are the prime beneficiary;
3. "service organizations" where the client group is the prime beneficiary; and
4. "commonwealth organizations" where the prime beneficiary is the public at large (p.43).

The type of organization on which this study will focus is the voluntary association or mutual benefit organization.

Homans (1961), Blau (1964), and Olson (1971) have postulated an exchange theory of membership in professional associations. This approach maintains that membership is related to the benefits provided. A person joins an organization if she/he believes there will be benefits in exchange. A study by Cafferata (1979) supported this theory. He found that members in a specialty society participated in and were satisfied by the society in

relation to the number, kind and value of rewards provided. The results also indicated that association leaders and general members evaluated the society differently (Cafferata, 1979).

Reinhart (1983) writes about the complexity of the societies in which a professional association must function. This includes working with all of the parties, associations and organizations which represent the interests of groups somehow related to that profession. In addition this association must be a self-help organization that promotes the advancement of the profession. The professional association must also deal with complexities within its own society.

The most critical issue facing a voluntary , mutual benefit organization is that of "maintaining internal democratic processes-providing for participation and control by the membership" (Blau & Scott, 1962, p.43). Two major factors that keep these associations from maintaining internal democracy are apathy and oligarchic control. Many members are apathetic in the sense that they are willing to let an active minority run their association (Barber, 1950), thus promoting the existence of oligarchy and elitism.

The article "Functions and Dysfunctions in a Professional Organization: The Case of the Royal College of Nursing of the United Kingdom (Clark, 1977) discusses some of the problems with self promotion. Clark's article deals

with the established professional association for nurses in the United Kingdom. The association was experiencing organization problems and the author related these to three characteristics: oligarchy, elitism and plurality of goals. Oligarchy, or government by few, is good for speedy decision making, efficiency and economy, but can become a problem in mutual benefit organizations. This occurs when the power of decision making is taken away from the collective membership and incorporated by the "expert membership." As defined by Clark, elitism occurs when "the few" who have control are a particular kind of people who excel in one area of the profession and try to assume power in another. In an organization this can be seen when there are a disproportionate number of educators or managers involved in decision making and clinicians are excluded. Problems with plurality of goals occur when there are unclear objectives or subgoals and influences from outside forces such as legislation (Clark, 1977).

Kremmer (1983) has discussed some ways in which these problems can be changed and the work of the professional association can be improved. These include identifying target groups, defining common interests, and planning means of action. Once these steps have been taken, they can be coordinated in order to reach association objectives. In this case the objectives are those of cultivating and promoting the solidarity of the profession, defending

professional interests, and promoting training, education and networking (Kremmer, 1983).

Despite the inherent problems facing mutual benefit associations, the main purpose of them is to further the interests of their members (Olson, 1971). The general lack of participation by voluntary association members seems to point to the need to discern individual factors motivating voluntary association membership. Timperely and Osbaldeston (1975) state that in order for a professional association to function it is necessary to understand the members' motivation for joining, what benefits are expected from membership, and how she/he uses the organization.

The Benefits of Membership in Professional Associations

As stated previously, Homans (1961), Blau (1964), and Olson (1971) developed the concept of exchange theory of membership in professional associations. According to this theory, professionals join associations because they believe that the benefits of membership will outweigh any cost outlays. A positive relationship between benefits of membership and costs should indicate sustained or increased membership rates, while a negative relationship between the two should indicate decreased membership rates (Olson, 1971). Since the relationship between benefits and membership rates seems to be strong, researchers have

undertaken studies in an attempt to determine what benefits would be attractive to potential members.

Clark and Wilson (1961) identified two general types of benefits: social and substantive. They consider social benefits to include such things as "the opportunity to meet people, social events and the chance to travel," and substantive benefits to include "monetary, professional and political advantages." Other research indicates that both social and substantive benefits are attractive to members and potential members, and that a combination of the two types of benefits is needed to meet members' needs. In addition, the attractiveness of these benefits is often enhanced if they are available only to association members (Olson, 1971).

In 1983 Yeager attempted to test nurses' motives for joining a professional association by using the exchange theory as presented by Olson. A twenty-seven item instrument was developed and administered to 750 nurses certified in the state of Kansas. The respondents, both association members and non-members, were asked to indicate, on a scale from 0 to 6, the extent to which they expected each particular benefit when making the decision to join a professional association. The results of the study supported Olson's exchange theory. Those who were members of a professional association considered the benefits to be worth more than the costs involved, and those benefits

available only to members were more attractive than those available to all. Yeager considered these points to be important when using benefits as a membership recruitment strategy.

A related study by Yeager and Kline (1983) used the previously developed instrument in an attempt to further determine the factors affecting nurses decisions to join or not to join a professional association. In this study they polled 500 nurses in a Midwestern state and reported on the different kinds of benefits associated with membership, along with employment responsibilities, education level, job satisfaction and membership status. The results of the study showed that 40% of the respondents belonged to a professional association and nurses with a bachelor degree were more likely to join. There were also several employment factors which affected membership. These were: 1. number of hours worked; 2. employment status (employed vs. unemployed); 3. location and type of employing organization; and 4. income factors. Finally, it was found that professional association members reported significantly ($p < .02$) higher levels of job satisfaction (Yeager & Kline, 1983).

An editorial in Healthcare Financial Management (Doody, 1985) reported the results of a 1983 Gallup poll entitled "A Study of How Professionals View Their Associations." In

this report eight areas in which members expected their associations to be active were identified. These were:

1. Providing publications and information.
2. Developing contacts and meeting others in their field of work.
3. Forecasting problems the profession will face.
4. Providing continuing education to members.
5. Determining or maintaining the standards of the profession.
6. Promoting the profession among the public.
7. Representing the interests of the profession before government.
8. Providing guidance in developing curriculum used to train new professionals entering the field. (p10).

The Gallup poll cited the provision of publications and information as the single most important benefit wanted when seeking professional association membership, and the opportunity to develop contact with others in the field as the second most important benefit (Doody, 1985).

Research in the area of benefits of membership in professional associations is primarily theoretical in nature (Clark & Wilson, 1961; Homans, 1961; Blau, 1964; Olson, 1971), although empirical research has seemed to support the theoretical foundations. The importance of the consideration of potential benefits for both members and membership recruiters is high. Members consider potential benefits in relation to costs incurred while membership recruiters consider them in relation to attractiveness for

potential members. The combination of social and substantive benefits provides an association with the power to meet most members needs (Olson, 1971).

Professional Associations and Therapeutic Recreation

"The growth and demand for recreation services has led to the organization of a number of professional societies" (Eppley, 1957). The growth and establishment of these societies before and after Eppley's statement has been well documented (Park, 1974; Austin & Hunnicutt, 1978; Peterson, 1981), and recreation and park professionals have seen the emergence of the National Recreation and Park Association as their established professional organization. The National Therapeutic Recreation Society, a branch of the National Recreation and Parks Association, is the organization which protects the autonomy of and furthers the profession of therapeutic recreation (Park, 1974).

In his article, "The Role of a National Organization for Therapeutic Recreation," Park (1969) defines what he considered to be primary concerns for the society in its early years. These concerns were:

1. policies and procedures
2. personnel standards
3. legislation
4. budget and finance
5. relationship with the consumer and other professions
6. recruitment
7. communication (p. 8-10).

He stressed that the National Therapeutic Recreation Society is not an autonomous body, but must answer to its parent organization, the National Recreation and Parks Association. He considered the major benefit in this structure to be in the area of budget and finance because the budget often exceeded the amount of money taken in, yet the society was able to get the necessary funds from the parent organization.

In 1981, Park again discussed the role of the National Therapeutic Recreation Society in his article "Therapeutic Recreation in the New Decade". He contended that there had been difficulty in achieving unity as a profession in the 1970's and that the organization needed to accomplish several goals in a short time. These included:

1. better organization as a professional body;
2. become more sophisticated in interactions with other disciplines and regulatory bodies;
3. become more assertive in efforts to sell ourselves and our services; and
4. become more skilled in the delivery of face to face services (p. 13).

He also emphasized that there must be a heightened sense of individual personal commitment of the professional organization to achieve its goals and serve to further therapeutic recreation.

In 1984, Peterson brought up some problems facing the National Therapeutic Recreation Society. The major concern was the inability of the society to respond to the demands

of its members because of its organizational structure as a branch of the National Recreation and Parks Association. Primary to this concern was the inability to address issues in the area of health care and a lack of control over finances (Peterson, 1984). This last point is in direct opposition to Park's (1969) statement that lack of monetary control was an attribute to being a branch of the parent organization. The growth of the membership and professional diversity had reversed the problem of funding, with the society taking in more money than the parent organization allowed in the budget. Peterson further stated that the lack of ability to disseminate information to members compounded the problem of dissatisfaction with services. However, she praised the ability of the society to identify professional tasks and set and accomplish goals (Peterson, 1984).

There have been no research studies on the benefits of membership in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society, although Navar (1981) conducted a study of the professionalization of therapeutic recreation in the state of Michigan which addressed the use of the professional organization as reference for information. She asked questions designed to measure the attitude of the practitioners to using the professional organization to obtain information. The results showed ($p < .01$) that most respondents believed that professional associations should

be supported, but many did not believe that the association provided much benefit for the average member. Less than one half of the respondents read association publications regularly or attended professional meetings. It was also found that persons who had a degree in recreation or therapeutic recreation used the professional organization as an information source more often than others (Navar, 1981).

The question of benefits to be gained from membership in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society was brought up by Shank in the April, 1986 issue of the NTRS Newsletter. In this publication Shank reports on the findings of the Gallup poll cited in the Doody (1985) article. She feels that the conclusions of the poll warrant the attention of the National Therapeutic Recreation Society membership, and invites the membership to respond to whether they feel the organization is providing these benefits. The results of this response have yet to be published, but the fact that the question of membership benefits has been raised in relation to the National Therapeutic Recreation Society would seem to indicate an interest in whether members needs are being met.

Survey Methodology

The construction of survey instruments has been extensively researched and many methods have been developed

(Dillman, 1978; Sheatsley, 1983; Borg & Gall, 1983). Each method developed has its own peculiarities and each researcher her/his own way of implementing the method, but certain aspects of instrument development are widely agreed upon. These aspects are:

1. make sure the instrument meets the objectives of research;
2. obtain the most complete and accurate information possible; and
3. make sure to consider the constraints of time and available resources (Sheatsley, 1983).

Although these facets must be addressed when constructing any questionnaire, the needs of the researcher will dictate variations in design.

Sheatsley (1983) has formulated a five step approach to survey development:

1. Decide what information is required.
2. Draft some questions to elicit that information.
3. Put them into a meaningful order and format.
4. Pretest the result.
5. Go back to 1. (p. 202).

Borg and Gall (1983) provide a list of general rules for constructing a questionnaire. This list includes:

1. Make sure items are clearly worded.
2. Use short questions.
3. Do not present two ideas in the same item.
4. Avoid using negative items.
5. Avoid technical language.

6. Be careful not to bias the answer.

There are two types of questions that can be used when designing a survey instrument: open form and closed form. Open form questions give the respondent the opportunity to answer in any manner which she/he wishes, while closed form questions force the respondent to choose an answer (Thomas & Nelson, 1985). Both types of questions have advantages and disadvantages. The main advantage of open form questions is that they allow answers from the respondents' own frame of reference. The main disadvantage is that the information provided is often repetitious, irrelevant and hard to categorize. The main advantage of closed form questions is the ease with which they can be categorized, especially for computer use. The main disadvantages are that respondents cannot express their exact meaning and question bias is more common (Sheatsley, 1983).

Perhaps the most comprehensive method for developing a survey instrument is the Total Design Method (TDM) created by Dillman (1978). This method consists of two parts:

1. identifying and designing each aspect of the survey process that may affect response in a way that maximizes response rates; and
2. organizing the survey instrument in a way that assures that the design intentions are carried out in complete detail (Dillman, 1983).

The general principles followed in the Total Design Method are fairly simple. They include designing the questionnaire as a booklet; leaving the first and last pages free from

questions; ordering questions with the most interesting, topic related first; and formulating each question with care. The implementation procedures for the Total Design Method are very precise, including instructions for cover letters, mailout package presentation, and procedures for follow-up mailings (Dillman, 1978). The Total Design Method is foreseen to be particularly applicable to social science research because it provides a way to represent lengthy questionnaires in a concise manner (Dillman, 1983).

Summary

The nature of professional organizations has been theoretically defined by many sociologists (Homans, 1961; Blau, 1964; Etzioni, 1964; Wilensky, 1964; Olson, 1971; Schein, 1972), and it can be generalized that these organizations are similar across professions. The commonly accepted rationale for joining a voluntary professional association is that one joins because of the benefits provided. This theory has been supported by empirical research (Cafferata, 1979; Yeager, 1983; Yeager & Kline, 1983) and the expectation of benefits is inherent to the nature of professional associations. Other aspects of voluntary associations include elitism, oligarchy, plurality of goals (Clark, 1977) and problems with organization and information dissemination (Peterson, 1984). These aspects

can be detrimental to the organization, but factors motivating membership have been shown to be more closely related to expected benefits (Yeager & Kline, 1983).

Benefits of membership in voluntary associations have been divided into two major categories: social and substantive (Clark & Wilson, 1961). Studies have shown that a combination of both these categories is required to meet members needs and that declining membership can be related to a failure to provide the benefits to meet these needs (Olson, 1971; Yeager & Kline, 1983). Doody (1985) has defined eight areas in which members expect their associations to be active in order to provide the benefits to meet their needs. Recently, the question of whether the National Therapeutic Recreation Society is providing the benefits to effectively meet members needs was raised (Shank, 1986), but the issue has remained unaddressed by researchers.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES

This chapter identifies the procedures which will be followed in conducting this study.

Purpose of the Study

It is the purpose of this study to determine members' perceptions of the expected and actual benefits of being a member of the National Therapeutic Recreation Society. Sub problems to be addressed include:

1. What, if any, is the discrepancy between members' expected benefits of belonging to the National Therapeutic Recreation Society and the actual benefits of membership?
2. What is the relationship between job setting and expected and actual benefits of membership in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society?
3. What is the relationship between membership status and expected and actual benefits of membership in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society?
4. What is the relationship between number of years as a society member and the expected and actual benefits of membership in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society?
5. What is the relationship between education level and expected and actual benefits of membership in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society?
6. What are the primary reasons why therapeutic recreation professionals join the National Therapeutic Recreation Society?

Subjects

In this study, 200 members of the National Therapeutic Recreation Society (N=2953) were randomly selected to receive a survey questionnaire. There were no prerequisites for selection other than the stipulation that the participants had chosen the National Therapeutic Recreation Society as a branch affiliation to their membership in the National Recreation and Parks Association. All levels of membership in the National Recreation and Parks Association/National Therapeutic Recreation Society (professional, retired professional, associate, student, and organization/institution) were included in the population from which the sample was selected.

Instrumentation

The questionnaire used in this study was constructed by the author. It was developed using concepts from the Total Design Method (Dillman, 1978), and from other researchers in this area (Borg & Gall, 1983; Sheatsley, 1983). The questionnaire was based on information gleaned from the literature and was designed to assess the expected and actual benefits of membership in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society. Once a preliminary survey instrument

was constructed, it was sent to three therapeutic recreation educators and one commercial recreation educator for comments and suggestions. When the preliminary questionnaire was returned, revisions were made and the final instrument was constructed (Appendix A).

The final questionnaire is divided into three sections: 1) background information; 2) benefits of membership; and 3) comments. The first section, background information, contains 12 closed ended questions relating to demographic information about the respondent. The questions include agency description, type of service provided, professional position, educational level, certification status, and number of years as a member of the National Recreation and Parks Association/National Therapeutic Recreation Society. In addition, this section asks for information regarding continuing education and conference/symposia attendance.

The second section, benefits of membership, is divided into two parts. The first part is a list of 19 suggested benefits of membership in a professional association. The respondent is asked to reply according to whether she/he believes that the statements reflect an expected benefit, an actual benefit, both expected and actual benefits, or no benefit of membership in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society. The second part of this section contains 12 attitude statements about the effectiveness of the National Therapeutic Recreation Society in meeting members needs.

The respondent is asked to rate the statement according to whether she/he believes the National Therapeutic Recreation Society meets its members needs: 1) usually, 2) sometimes, or 3) never.

The third section, comments, contains three open ended questions and space for additional comments. The open ended questions ask the respondents to list any additional benefits she/he receives from National Recreation and Park Association/National Therapeutic Recreation Society membership, any additional benefits she/he would like to receive from membership, and her/his primary reason for becoming a member of the National Recreation and Parks Association/National Therapeutic Recreation Society.

Implementation

The survey will be implemented through the mail. Each subject will receive an explanatory cover letter, a copy of the survey instrument and a self-addressed stamped envelope in which to return the completed questionnaire. A follow up mailing will be conducted only if the initial response is not sufficient to provide enough valid data for the study.

Analysis

The results of the questionnaire will be analyzed by using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) package for the IBM personal computer. This statistical package is capable of conducting over 50 procedures for summary statistics, including multiple linear or nonlinear regression; analysis of variance and covariance; correlation; frequency and crosstabulation tables; categorical data analysis and matrix manipulation (Francis, 1981). The SAS procedures used in this study will be frequencies and crosstabulations. A chi-square test will be used to determine the statistical significance of the results.

Once the data have been analyzed it will be organized in order to address the purpose of the study and its subproblems. The primary comparison will be to crosstabulate the responses provided in the section on background information with the responses in the section on membership benefits. The responses provided in the comments section will be used to provide additional information for discussion.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The survey was administered by mail during the time period of November 15 through December 5, 1986. It was sent to 200 randomly selected (N=2953) members of the National Therapeutic Recreation Society. Representatives from all categories of membership were included in the population from which the sample was selected. The survey was returned by 98 of the 200 recipients, which is a response rate of 49%. Although this response rate can be considered high for an initial mailing with no follow up mailings, the number of responses received could have been negatively affected by the time of year during which the survey was mailed (Thomas & Nelson, 1985).

Frequencies

The results showed that the respondents worked at a variety of facilities that provide therapeutic recreation services. The four types of facilities (N=98) reported most often were: 1) mental health facility, 23.5%; 2) educational setting, 14.3%; 3) others, 12.2%; and 4) rehabilitation center, 11.2% (Table 1). The category of

others included a camp for handicapped people, special services, a residential treatment center, an elementary school, an apartment building for the retired, well aged, and a disabled sports team. The primary orientation of services provided by the respondents was reported as follows: 1) clinical, 61.5%; 2) educational, 19.8%; and 3) community, 18.8% (N=96).

TABLE 1. Number of Respondents by Agency

N=98				
FACILITY	FREQ	%	CUM FREQ	CUM %
GENERAL HOSPITAL	9	9.2	9	9.2
MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY	23	23.5	32	32.7
DEVELOPMENTAL DIS.	8	8.2	40	40.8
REHABILITATION CENTER	11	11.2	51	52.0
LTC/NURSING HOME	10	10.2	61	62.2
PUBLIC PARKS & REC.	9	9.2	70	71.4
CORRECTIONAL AGENCY	1	1.0	71	72.4
EDUCATIONAL SETTING	14	14.3	85	86.7
SUBSTANCE ABUSE FAC.	1	1.0	86	87.8
VOCATIONAL TRAINING	0	0	86	87.8
OTHER	12	12.2	98	100.0

The job positions which the respondents held are presented in Table 2. The majority of those returning the questionnaire were employed as therapists/specialists (39.2%), with supervisor being the next highest reported position (22.5%), followed by administrator (17.5%). The

category of others included coordinator, director, activity director, nurse aide II, and clinical director.

TABLE 2. Number of Respondents by Job Position

N=97				
POSITION	FREQ	%	CUM FREQ	CUM %
ADMINISTRATOR	17	17.5	17	17.5
SUPERVISOR	22	22.7	39	40.2
THERAPIST/SPECIALIST	38	39.2	77	79.4
INSTRUCTOR/PROFESSOR	10	10.3	87	89.7
CONSULTANT	2	2.1	89	91.8
OTHER	8	8.2	97	100.0

All categories of membership in the National Recreation and Parks Association/National Therapeutic Recreation Society were represented in the response (N=98). The majority of respondents were professional members (84.7%) of the organization. Table 3 provides the results of the categories of membership status. Responses for the category of others include therapeutic recreation assistant and instructional aide/dorm counselor.

The number of years as a member of the National Recreation and Parks Association/National Therapeutic Recreation Society was diverse, with the least being 1 year and the most being 25 years (N=97, M=7.186, SD=5.345). The number of years as a member were categorized in groups of

three in order to simplify analysis and presentation (Table 4). The majority of the respondents have been a member of the organization for 1 to 3 years (34%), and over one-half (69%) of the respondents have been members between 1 and 9 years. Of those returning questionnaires, 79.6% reported that she/he was responsible for paying her/his own membership dues, while 20.4% reported that her/his employer paid these dues.

TABLE 3. Respondents' Membership Status in NRPA/NTRS

N=98				
MEMBERSHIP STATUS	FREQ	%	CUM FREQ	CUM %
PROFESSIONAL	83	84.7	83	84.7
ASSOCIATE	3	3.1	86	87.8
STUDENT	6	6.1	92	93.9
RETIRED PROFESSIONAL	3	3.1	95	96.9
ORGANIZATION/INST.	1	1.0	96	98.0
OTHER	2	2.0	98	100.0

TABLE 4. Number of Years as an NRPA/NTRS Member

N=97 M=7.186 SD=5.345				
YEARS	FREQ	%	CUM FREQ	CUM %
1-3	33	34.0	33	34.0
4-6	17	17.5	50	51.5
7-9	17	17.5	67	69.0
10-12	15	15.5	82	84.5
13-15	7	7.2	89	91.7
16-18	5	5.2	94	96.9
19-21	2	2.1	96	99.0
22 AND OVER	1	1.0	97	100.0

The majority of those responding have earned a bachelors degree in therapeutic recreation (36.5%) or a masters degree in therapeutic recreation (22.9%). The complete breakdown of the educational level of the respondents is provided in Table 5. The results showed that 73.5% of those returning questionnaires (N=98) were certified by the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification, with 97.2% of those being certified on the professional level.

TABLE 5. Educational Level of the Respondents

N=96				
EDUCATION	FREQ	%	CUM FREQ	CUM %
HIGH SCHOOL	3	3.1	3	3.1
BACHELORS DEGREE	7	7.3	10	10.4
BACHELORS/RECREATION	11	11.5	21	21.9
BACHELORS/THER. REC.	35	36.5	56	58.3
MASTERS DEGREE	5	5.2	61	63.5
MASTERS/RECREATION	6	6.3	67	69.8
MASTERS/THER. REC.	22	22.9	89	92.7
DOCTORAL DEGREE	7	7.3	96	100.0

Of those returning questionnaires, 95.9% (N=98) reported that she/he read the Therapeutic Recreation Journal regularly. Within the past three years, 61.2% (N=98) have attended a state recreation conference, 54.7% (N=97) have attended National Therapeutic Recreation Society endorsed symposia, and 33% (N=97) have attended the National

Recreation and Parks Association Congress for Recreation and Parks. In addition, 71.1% (N=97) report that she/he participates in continuing education by taking an average of 5.8 Continuing Education Units per year. Generally, those responding to the questionnaire do not consider themselves as active members of the organization, with only 30.9% (N=97) responding yes to the question "Do you consider yourself an active member of NRPA/NTRS/."

The next section of the questionnaire contained statements about the benefits of being a member of the National Recreation and Parks Association/National Therapeutic Recreation Society and the effectiveness of these organizations in meeting members needs. The first part of this section contained 19 statements referring to the benefits of membership and the responses were categorized according to whether the statement was believed to be an expected benefit, an actual benefit, both expected and actual benefits, or no benefit of being a member in the organization. The results of this section are presented in Table 6.

The second part of this section contained 12 statements regarding the effectiveness of the organization, with the responses being categorized according to whether the

Table 6. Response to NRPA/NTRS Membership Benefits Statements

BENEFIT	EXPECTED		ACTUAL		BOTH		NONE	
	FREQ	%	FREQ	%	FREQ	%	FREQ	%
A.EXPOSURE TO NEW IDEAS (N=97)	26	26.8	13	13.4	58	59.8	0	0
B.OPPORTUNITY FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION (N=96)	26	27.1	10	10.4	52	54.2	8	8.3
C.INFORMS OF SPECIAL PROGRAMS (N=98)	28	28.6	14	14.3	55	56.1	1	1.0
D.INFORMS OF MEETINGS/SYMPOSIA (N=98)	10	10.2	20	20.4	67	68.4	1	1.0
E.OPPORTUNITY TO SOCIALIZE WITH PEERS (N=97)	18	18.6	12	12.4	49	50.5	18	18.4
F.OPPORTUNITY FOR TRAVEL (N=97)	13	13.4	22	22.7	28	28.9	34	35.1
G.BREAK FROM WORK (N=95)	7	7.4	18	18.9	25	26.3	45	47.4
H.OPPORTUNITY FOR JOB ADVANCEMENT (N=97)	34	35.1	8	8.2	16	16.5	39	40.2
I.JOB PLACEMENT (N=96)	37	38.5	11	11.5	26	27.1	22	22.9
J.PROMOTION OF PROFESSIONALISM (N=97)	30	30.9	10	10.3	57	57.8	0	0
K.VALIDATION OF IDEAS (N=94)	36	38.3	8	8.5	42	44.7	8	8.5
L.IMPROVEMENT OF TR SERVICES (N=97)	37	38.1	12	12.4	45	46.4	3	3.1
M.SUPPORT FOR TR PROFESSIONALS (N=97)	38	39.2	10	10.3	44	45.4	5	5.2
N.OPPORTUNITY FOR SELF IMPROVEMENT (N=96)	26	27.1	9	9.4	53	55.2	8	8.3
O.PROFESSIONAL STATUS WITH OTHER TR PROFESSIONALS(N=97)	27	27.8	14	14.4	50	51.5	6	6.2
P.PEER CONTACT (N=97)	23	23.7	10	10.3	50	51.5	14	14.4
Q.SPECIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT (N=95)	42	44.2	10	10.5	25	26.3	18	18.9
R.COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT (N=97)	35	36.1	12	12.4	36	37.1	14	14.4
S.PROFESSIONAL STATUS W/ PROFESSIONALS IN RELATED AREAS(N=96)	43	44.8	10	10.4	33	34.4	10	10.4

National Recreation and Parks Association/National Therapeutic Recreation Society 1. usually, 2. sometimes, or 3. never meets the needs described in the statements. The results of this section are reported in Table 7, with the mean and standard deviation for each statement reported in Appendix B.

Table 7. Response to NRPA/NTRS Effectiveness Statements

NRPA/NTRS EFFECTIVELY:	USUALLY		SOMETIMES		NEVER	
	FRO	%	FRO	%	FRO	%
A. MEETS THE NEEDS OF COMMUNITY THERAPEUTIC RECREATORS (N=91)	15	16.5	64	70.3	12	13.2
B. MEETS THE NEEDS OF CLINICAL THERAPEUTIC RECREATORS (N=95)	24	25.3	63	66.3	8	8.4
C. REGULATES EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS (N=93)	36	38.7	42	45.2	15	16.1
D. REGULATES COMPETENCE OF PRACTITIONERS (N=92)	18	19.6	48	52.2	26	28.3
E. ADVOCATES FOR THE THERAPEUTIC RECREATION PROFESSION (N=93)	35	37.6	49	52.7	9	9.7
F. FACILITATES INTERACTION W/RELATED PROFESSIONS (N=94)	19	20.2	47	50.0	28	29.8
G. LOBBIES FOR THERAPEUTIC RECREATION IN MATTERS OF LEGISLATION (N=90)	32	35.6	47	52.2	11	12.2
H. ADVOCATES FOR THE RIGHT OF SPECIAL POPULATIONS (N=92)	40	43.5	44	47.8	8	8.7
I. PROTECTS THE AUTONOMY OF THERAPEUTIC RECREATION (N=91)	17	18.7	61	67.0	13	14.3
J. PROVIDES STEPS FOR SELF REGULATION (N=91)	22	24.2	61	67.0	8	8.8
K. FACILITATES INTERACTION WITH OTHER TR ORGS. (N=92)	21	21.8	55	59.8	16	17.4

Crosstabulations

The frequencies of several questions were crosstabulated with the statements regarding membership benefits and the effectiveness of the National Therapeutic Recreation Society in meeting members needs. Originally, a chi-square test was planned to determine the significance of the difference between the expected frequencies and the observed frequencies, but the observed frequencies were too small for the chi-square test to be valid. As a result, the significance of the relationship between the crosstabulated questions was not tested, and the data were descriptively presented using the observed frequencies and percentages. In order to more fully investigate the relationship between membership benefits and the background information to which they are compared, the benefit statements were divided according to whether they could be considered social or substantive (Clark & Wilson, 1961), and comparisons between the two were made. Those benefits determined to be in the social category were:

Membership in NTRS:

1. provides opportunities to socialize with peers.
2. provides opportunity for travel.
3. provides a break from work.
4. provides professional peer group contact.
5. provides professional status with other therapeutic recreation professionals.

Those which were included in the substantive category were:

Membership in NTRS:

1. exposes one to new ideas.

2. provides opportunities for continuing education.
3. informs of special programs.
4. informs of meetings/symposia.
5. provides opportunities for job advancement.
6. provides job placement services.
7. promotes professionalism.
8. provides the mechanism for validation of ideas.
9. facilitates improvement of therapeutic recreation services.
10. provides support for therapeutic recreation professionals.
11. provides opportunities for self improvement.
12. provides opportunities for special skill development.
13. provides opportunities for committee involvement.
14. provides professional status with professionals in related areas.

The first questions to be compared were the 19 membership benefits statements and question number 1, which asked the respondent to select the type of facility in which she/he was employed. A comparison of those selecting "expected" in response to the membership benefits statements showed that, in general, those who worked in rehabilitation facilities (N=11) had the highest rate of expected benefits. For example, 81.8% of those who worked in rehabilitation facilities expected that membership in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society would "provide professional status with professionals in related areas," but did not believe that this benefit had been actualized. Other high expected benefits for those working in rehabilitation facilities were: 1) 63.6% on the statement "Membership in NTRS provides opportunities for continuing education"; 2) 72.7% on the statement "Membership in NTRS provides

opportunities for job advancement"; and 3) 72.7% on the statement "Membership in NTRS provides the mechanism for validation of ideas". One benefit that had a high percentage of "expected" responses for all types of facilities was "Membership in NTRS provides job placement services," with 42.9% of those who worked in developmental disabilities agencies (N=8), 54.6% of those from rehabilitation facilities (N=11), 60% of those from long term care facilities (N=10), and 66.7% of those from public park and recreation agencies (N=9) expecting this benefit.

A comparison of those selecting "actual benefit" in response to the membership benefits statements showed that this choice received a relatively low percentage of responses regardless of the type of facility in which the respondent was employed. The lowest percentage of responses was found in the statement "Membership in NTRS provides opportunities for job advancement," with 22.2% of those working in public park and recreation agencies (N=9), 18.2% of those employed in rehabilitation facilities (N=11), 14.3% of those in a educational setting (N=14), and 8.3% of those working in other (N=12) areas choosing "actual" for this statement. In general, respondents employed in general hospitals (N=9) had the highest percentage of responses in this category. They responded higher than others to the following statements: 1) "Membership in NTRS provides the mechanism for validation of ideas" (33.3%); 2) "Membership

in NTRS provides professional status with other therapeutic recreation professionals" (33.3%); 3) "Membership in NTRS provides professional peer group contact" (33.3%); and 4) "Membership in NTRS provides professional status with professionals in related areas" (44.4%).

The percentage of those responding "both" an expected and actual benefit was high for all types of facilities. The statement "Membership in NTRS promotes professionalism" had a particularly high percentage of response. Seventy-three percent of those employed in a mental health facility (N=23), 66.7% of those working in general hospitals (N=9) and public park and recreation agencies (N=9), 64.3% of those in educational settings (N=14), and 57.1% of those employed in developmental disabilities agencies (N=8) felt that this was both an expected and actual benefit. Conversely, the statement "Membership in NTRS provides opportunities for special skills development" had a low percentage of response in this category. Only 11.1% of those employed in general hospitals (N=9), 18.2% of those from rehabilitation facilities (N=11), 20% of those employed in long term care facilities (N=10), 23.1% of those in educational settings (N=14), and 25% of those working in other (N=12) areas thought that this benefit was both expected and actual.

The percentage of those responding "no" benefit of membership in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society

was low for all types of agencies in the majority of benefit statements. Those statements receiving the lowest percentage of responses were: 1) "Membership in NTRS exposes one to new ideas"; 2) "Membership in NTRS informs of meetings/symposia"; 3) "Membership in NTRS informs of special programs"; and 4) "Membership in NTRS promotes professionalism." The three benefit statements which were most strongly considered not to be an expected or actual benefit of membership in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society were: 1) "Membership in NTRS provides opportunity for travel"; 2) "Membership in NTRS provides a break from work"; and 3) "Membership in NTRS provides opportunities for job advancement." Table 8 shows a comparison, by facility, of those statements receiving high and low number of responses for the category of "no benefit".

The comparison between social and substantive benefits by facility type and response category is given in Table 9. Looking at this table, one can see that those working in all types of facilities expected substantive benefits more than social benefits, and that most considered substantive benefits to be both expected and actual more than they considered social benefits to be both expected and actual. Conversely, those employed in all types of facilities considered social benefits to be neither expected nor actual

Table 8. Comparison, by Facility, of High and Low Percentages for the Category of No Benefit of Membership in the NTRS.

FACILITIES	N	BENEFIT						
		A	C	D	J	E	F	G
1.GENERAL HOSP	(9)	0	0	0	0	55.6	77.9	66.7
2.MENTAL HEALTH	(23)	0	0	0	0	22.7	54.6	39.1
3.DEVELOPMENTAL								
DISABILITIES	(8)	0	0	0	0	62.5	42.7	28.6
4.REHABILITATION								
FACILITY	(11)	0	0	0	0	36.4	36.4	9.1
5.LONG TERM CARE								
FACILITY	(10)	0	0	0	0	40.0	40.0	60.0
6.PUBLIC PARKS &								
RECREATION	(9)	0	11.5	11.5	0	33.3	55.6	22.2
7.CORRECTIONAL								
AGENCY	(1)	0	0	0	0	0	100	0
8.EDUCATIONAL								
SETTING	(8)	0	0	0	0	21.4	38.5	42.9
9.SUBSTANCE ABUSE								
AGENCY	(1)	0	0	0	0	0	100	100
10.OTHER	(12)	0	0	0	0	33.3	33.3	50.0

* KEY: Membership in NTRS:

- A. exposes one to new ideas
- C. informs of special programs
- D. informs of meetings/symposia
- J. promotes professionalism
- E. provides opportunities to socialize with peers
- F. provides opportunity for travel
- G. provides a break from work

Table 9. Comparison, by Facility, of the Percentage of Responses for Social and Substantive Benefits of Membership in NTRS.

	1*	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<u>SOCIAL</u>										
EXPECTED	11.1	15.0	24.3	37.0	26.0	8.9	0	7.2	40.0	21.7
ACTUAL	17.8	15.0	5.4	9.3	10.0	17.8	20.0	23.2	0	23.3
BOTH	35.6	50.4	37.8	33.3	40.0	37.8	60.0	52.2	40.0	31.7
NONE	35.6	19.5	32.4	20.4	26.0	33.3	20.0	17.4	20.0	23.3
<u>SUBSTANTIVE</u>										
EXPECTED	21.4	32.5	37.3	51.6	37.4	29.6	7.1	25.0	64.3	31.9
ACTUAL	20.6	5.9	7.8	13.1	12.9	16.0	28.6	10.4	0	13.3
BOTH	39.7	54.4	45.1	28.8	35.9	40.0	64.3	55.7	35.7	44.6
NONE	15.9	7.2	9.8	3.9	12.2	14.4	0	8.9	7.1	15.1

*KEY: 1.General Hospital (9)
 2.Mental Health Facility (23)
 3.Developmental Disabilities Agency (8)
 4.Rehabilitation Center (11)
 5.Long Term Care Facility (10)
 6.Public Parks and Recreation Agency (9)
 7.Correctional Agency (1)
 8.Educational Setting (14)
 9.Substance Abuse Agency (1)
 10.Others (12)

more than they considered substantive benefits to be neither expected nor actual.

The responses to question number 1 of the survey were also crosstabulated with the 12 attitude statements regarding the effectiveness of the National Therapeutic Recreation Society in meeting members needs. The percentage of those responding "usually" or "never" to the attitude statements was generally low for all types of facilities, with the percentage of those responding "sometimes" being high. An exception to this was the statement "The NTRS effectively regulates educational standards." A high percentage of those working in general hospitals (N=9, 66.7%), mental health facilities (N=23, 43.5%), rehabilitation centers (N=11, 70%), and correctional agencies (N=1, 100%) thought that the NTRS was usually effective in meeting this need, while those working in developmental disabilities centers (N=8, 57.1), long term health care facilities (N=10, 60%), public park and recreation agencies (N=9, 75%), and educational settings (N=14, 53.9%) thought that the NTRS was only sometimes effective in meeting this need. As stated previously, very few of the respondents thought that the NTRS was never effective in meeting the stated needs with the exception of 63.6% of those employed in "other"(N=12) facilities and 100% of those working in substance abuse agencies (N=1), who

believed that the organization was never effective in regulating the competence of practitioners.

The second question to be crosstabulated with the benefits of membership statements and the statements regarding the effectiveness of the National Therapeutic Recreation Society in meeting members' needs was question number 2 of the survey, which asked the respondent to choose the primary orientation of her/his services. The choices for this question were: 1) clinical, 2) community, and 3) educational. The percentage of responses to the category of "expected benefit" were lower than 45 % with a few exceptions: 1) 55.6% of those who classified their services as community oriented believed the statement "Membership in NTRS provides job placement services" was an expected benefit; 2) 51.7% of those who classified their services as clinically oriented believed the statement "Membership in NTRS provides opportunities for special skill development" was an expected benefit; and 3) 55.9% of the clinically oriented believed the statement "Membership in NTRS provides professional status with professionals in related areas" was an expected benefit.

The responses to the category "actual" benefit were lower than 35% for all benefit statements. The percentage of those believing the benefit statements were both expected and actual was higher than 50% in most cases. The four benefit statements which, when compared with the others,

have a low percentage of responses for the category of "both" are presented in Table 10. There were also two benefit statements which had no response in the category of "none". These statements were: 1) "Membership in NTRS exposes one to new ideas"; and 2) "Membership in NTRS promotes professionalism."

A comparison of the percentage of response for social and substantive benefits, by service orientation, is given in Table 11. This table shows that the majority of the respondents, regardless of service orientation believed that social and substantive benefits were both expected and actual. A higher percentage of those providing clinically oriented services thought that both categories of benefits were expected, but not actualized. Those providing educational services believed that a higher percentage of their expected benefits had become actual benefits.

The comparison of service orientation and the statements regarding the effectiveness of the National Therapeutic Recreation Society in meeting members' needs showed that a high percentage of respondents thought that the organization was sometimes effective in meeting members' needs. The percentage of those responding "usually" was especially high for those whose services were clinically oriented. For example, 46.5% of those providing clinical (N=59) services believed that "The NTRS effectively regulates educational standards"; 41.2% believed that "The

Table 10. Membership Benefits with Low Percentage of Response to the Category "Both" by Service Orientation.

BENEFIT	CLINICAL (N=59)	COMMUNITY (N=18)	EDUCATIONAL (N=19)
MEMBERSHIP IN NTRS:			
F.PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY FOR TRAVEL	31.0	22.2	31.6
G.PROVIDES A BREAK FROM WORK	25.9	33.3	23.5
H.PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR JOB ADVANCEMENT	15.3	27.8	11.1
I.PROVIDES JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES	28.8	16.7	33.3

Table 11. Comparison, by Service Orientation, of the Percentage of Responses for Social and Substantive Benefits of Membership in NTRS.

	CLINICAL (N=59)	COMMUNITY (N=18)	EDUCATIONAL (N=19)
<u>SOCIAL</u>			
EXPECTED	21.6	10.0	17.6
ACTUAL	9.9	22.2	18.7
BOTH	42.1	40.0	47.3
NONE	26.1	27.8	16.5
<u>SUBSTANTIVE</u>			
EXPECTED	34.1	28.3	30.2
ACTUAL	7.9	11.9	10.3
BOTH	43.9	47.0	51.2
NONE	9.5	12.7	8.3

NTRS effectively regulates standards of practice"; and 49.1% believed that "The NTRS effectively advocates for the rights of special populations." A higher percentage of those whose services were primarily community oriented (N=18, 33.3%) felt that the National Therapeutic Recreation Society was never effective in facilitating interaction with related professions.

Question number 3 which asked the respondent to describe her/his job position (administrator, supervisor, therapist/specialist, instructor/professor, consultant or other) was compared with the statements found in the benefits of membership section of the survey. The percentage of responses in the category of "expected" was generally lower than 50%. Exceptions to this were found with those labeling their job positions as supervisor (N=22), instructor/professor (N=10), and "other" (N=8). The benefit statements which over 50% of the supervisors thought were expected benefits were:

1. Membership in NTRS promotes professionalism (54.6%).
2. Membership in NTRS facilitates improvement of therapeutic recreation services (50.9%).
3. Membership in NTRS provides support for therapeutic recreation professionals (68.2%).
4. Membership in NTRS provides opportunities for special skill development (71.4%).

Instructors/professors (55.6%) and "others" (62.5%) believed that the statement "Membership in NTRS provides professional status with professionals in related areas" was an expected benefit.

The comparison of the category "actual" benefit with job position showed no areas in which there were a large percentage of responses, although those in the position of "others" (N=8) had a higher percentage of responses across all statements (12.5%-37.5%). As in other comparisons, the category of "both" had the highest overall percentage of responses. Of all job positions, those who had the position of supervisor (N=22) had the lowest percentage of responses for this category. Three statements which had a particularly low response for supervisors were:

1. Membership in NTRS provides support for therapeutic recreation professionals (18.2%).
2. Membership in NTRS provides opportunities for special skill development (9.5%).
3. Membership in NTRS provides opportunities for committee involvement (22.7%).

The four statements which had a low percentage of response for the category of "both" when compared with question number 2 also had a low percentage of response in this comparison (Table 12). The percentage of responses in the category of "none" were all under 50%, except for the statement "Membership in NTRS provides a break from work," which 57.1% of the supervisors (N=22) and 54.1% of the therapists/specialists (N=38) did not believe to be a benefit of membership.

Table 12. Membership Benefits with Low Percentage of Response to the Category "Both" by Job Position.

BENEFIT	*A	S	T/S	I/P	C	O
MEMBERSHIP IN NTRS:						
F.PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY FOR TRAVEL	23.5	38.1	34.2	30.0	0	0
G.PROVIDES A BREAK FROM WORK	18.8	28.6	29.7	40.0	50.0	0
H.PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR JOB ADVANCEMENT	17.7	27.3	8.1	30.0	0	12.5
I.PROVIDES JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES	23.5	22.3	29.7	30.0	50.0	28.6

*KEY:

A-ADMINISTRATOR (N=17)
 S-SUPERVISOR (N=22)
 T/S-THERAPIST/SPECIALIST (N=38)
 I/P-INSTRUCTOR/PROFESSOR (N=10)
 C-CONSULTANT (N=2)
 O-OTHER (N=8)

Table 13 is a comparison of the percentage of responses for social and substantive benefits by job position. This table shows, again, that the category of both an expected and actual benefit is high for social and substantive benefits. Supervisors have a higher percentage of responses to the category of "expected" for both types of benefits. Also, the responses to the category of "none" are higher for social benefits than for substantive benefits, while the category of "expected" is higher for substantive benefits than social benefits.

The comparison of job position with the statements regarding the effectiveness of the National Therapeutic

Table 13. Comparison, by Job Position, of the Percentage of Responses for Social and Substantive Benefits of Membership in NTRS.

	*A	S	T/S	I/P	C	O
<u>SOCIAL</u>						
EXPECTED	20.2	24.1	15.5	14.0	0	23.1
ACTUAL	13.1	10.2	11.8	24.0	30.0	30.8
BOTH	39.3	40.7	45.5	48.0	60.0	25.6
NONE	27.4	25.0	27.3	14.0	10.0	20.5
<u>SUBSTANTIVE</u>						
EXPECTED	31.1	42.6	32.9	28.8	7.1	29.1
ACTUAL	7.2	12.5	9.0	11.5	10.7	24.5
BOTH	50.2	36.4	47.9	49.6	71.4	38.2
NONE	11.5	8.5	10.2	10.1	10.7	8.2

*KEY:

A-ADMINISTRATOR (N=17)
 S-SUPERVISOR (N=22)
 T/S-THERAPIST/SPECIALIST (N=38)
 I/P-INSTRUCTOR/PROFESSOR (N=10)
 C-CONSULTANT (N=2)
 O-OTHER (N=8)

Recreation Society in meeting members' needs showed that respondents generally agreed that the organization was sometimes effective in meeting members' needs, with a few exceptions. Those who were therapists/specialists (N=38) believed that the national Therapeutic Recreation Society was usually effective in meeting the following needs: regulating educational standards (47.2%), regulating

standards of practice (41.7%), and advocating for the rights of special populations (52.8%). Those in the category of "others" (N=8) believed that the National Therapeutic Recreation Society was usually effective in meeting these needs (all 57.1%): those of clinical therapeutic recreators, regulating educational standards, advocating for the therapeutic recreation profession, lobbying for therapeutic recreation in matters of legislation, and advocating for the rights of special populations. Supervisors (N=22) believed that the National Therapeutic Recreation Society was never effective in facilitating interaction with other professions (47.6%).

The comparison of question number 4 with the benefit statements and the statements regarding the effectiveness of the National Therapeutic Recreation Society in meeting members' needs was hindered because of a heavy concentration of responses in one category of question number 4. This question asked the respondent to select her/his membership status in the organization, and the category of professional (N=83) was chosen by 84.7% of those who returned surveys. Since the other categories had few responses, comparison by membership status was difficult. The relationship between different levels of membership in the organization and social and substantive benefits provides the most information (Table 14).

Table 14. Comparison, by Membership Status, of the Percentage of Responses for Social and Substantive Benefits of Membership in NTRS.

	*P	A	S	RP	O/I	O
<u>SOCIAL</u>						
EXPECTED	18.8	6.7	31.0	0	0	10.0
ACTUAL	13.2	33.3	10.3	46.7	20.0	60.0
BOTH	44.7	46.7	20.7	40.0	0	0
NONE	23.2	13.3	37.9	13.3	80.0	30.0
<u>SUBSTANTIVE</u>						
EXPECTED	34.3	40.5	38.1	9.5	0	10.7
ACTUAL	9.2	21.4	17.9	21.4	50.0	42.9
BOTH	47.5	21.4	30.9	52.4	0	32.1
NONE	9.0	16.7	13.1	16.7	50	14.3
<u>*KEY</u>						

P-PROFESSIONAL (N=83)

A-ASSOCIATE (N=3)

S-STUDENT (N=6)

RP-RETIRED PROFESIONAL (N=3)

O/I-ORGANIZATION/INSTITUTION (N=1)

O-OTHER (N=2)

Table 14 shows that the majority of respondents thought that the two types of benefits were both expected and actual, except in the case of students (N=6, 37.9%) and organizations/institutions (N=1, 80%) who felt more strongly that the social category was not a benefit of membership. Also, those in the category of "others" (N=2, 42.9%) were more likely to classify a substantive benefit as actual, but

not both actual and expected, while associate members (N=3, 40.5%) were more likely to classify substantive benefits as "expected".

The comparison of question number 4 with the attitude statements regarding the effectiveness of the organization was similar to that of previous comparisons, with "sometimes" having the highest percentage of responses. Those who were student (N=6) members or who chose "other" (N=2) as their membership status were much more likely to choose "usually" than those of other membership status. "Usually" was selected by a majority (50%-100%) of the members of these two groups for every statement except the first two: "The NTRS effectively meets the needs of community therapeutic recreators," and "The NTRS effectively meets the needs of clinical therapeutic recreators." In addition, 32.5% of professionals (N=83), 33.3% of associates (N=3), and 33.3% of retired professionals (N=3) believed that the organization was never effective in facilitating interaction with related professions.

The number of years as a member of the National Recreation and Parks Association/National Therapeutic Recreation Society was compared with the membership benefits statements and the attitude statements about the effectiveness of the organization. The percentage of those choosing the category of "expected" was under 50% in all but a few instances. The statement "Membership in NTRS provides

the mechanism for validation of ideas" was listed as an expected benefit by 58.8% of those who had been members for 4-6 years (N=17) and by 100% of those who had been members for more that 22 years (N=1). "Membership in NTRS facilitates improvement of therapeutic recreation services" was expected by 66.7% of those who had been members for 10-12 years (N=15). The statement "Membership in NTRS provides opportunities for special skill development" was expected by 64.7% of those who had been members 4-6 years, 58.8% of those who had been members 7-9 years (N=17), and 60% of those who had been members 10-12 years.

The percentage of those choosing "actual" was under 50% in all instances, with those belonging to the organization from 10-12 years (N=15) having particularly low percentages of responses (0-13.3%). The percentage of responses for the category "both" an expected and an actual benefit was high, with those belonging to the organization from 19-21 years (N=2) and over 21 years (N=1) having the highest percentage. Those who had been members from 1-3 years (N=33) had a low percentage of response in this category for the following benefits:

1. Membership in NTRS provides a break from work (18.8%).
2. Membership in NTRS provides job placement services (15.6%).
3. Membership in NTRS provides opportunities for special skills development (28.1%).
4. Membership in NTRS provides opportunities for committee involvement (28.1%).

The statement "Membership in NTRS provides opportunities for job advancement" had a low percentage of responses for all categories (0-23.5%).

The benefit category of "none" was the lowest of the four choices, except for for the statement "Membership in NTRS provides a break from work." For this statement, 56.3% of those who were members from 1-3 years (N=33), and 58.8% of those who were members from 4-6 years (N=17) and 7-9 years (N=17) believed that it was not a benefit of membership.

Table 15 is a comparison of the percentage of responses for social and substantive benefits which is categorized by the number of years as a member of the National Recreation and Parks Association/National Therapeutic Recreation Society. This table shows that a high percentage of the respondents considered both types of benefits to be expected and actual, especially those who had been members for more than 19 years. Those who had been members for 10-12 years believed that social benefits were both expected and actual (57.3%) more often than substantive benefits (44.5%). As seen in other comparisons, social benefits were considered not to be benefits of membership at higher percentage rates than substantive benefits, especially by those who were members from 1-3 years and 4-6 years.

Table 15. Comparison, by Number of Years as a Member of NRPA/NTRS, of the Percentage of Responses for Social and Substantive Benefits of Membership in NTRS.

	1-3 N=33	4-6 N=17	7-9 N=17	10-12 N=15	13-15 N=7	16-18 N=5	19-21 N=2	22 ⁺ N=1
<u>SOCIAL</u>								
EXPECTED	20.5	11.8	23.8	20.0	5.7	28.0	0	0
ACTUAL	12.4	18.8	15.5	8.0	28.6	36.0	22.2	0
BOTH	35.0	42.4	36.9	57.3	48.6	20.0	77.8	80.0
NONE	31.7	27.1	23.8	14.7	17.1	16.0	0	20.0
<u>SUBSTANTIVE</u>								
EXPECTED	31.3	37.3	37.1	45.5	6.3	32.9	3.7	14.3
ACTUAL	15.6	8.9	11.4	2.9	17.7	22.9	0	0
BOTH	39.3	45.8	42.6	44.5	67.7	32.9	92.6	71.4
NONE	13.8	8.1	8.9	7.2	8.3	11.4	3.7	28.6

There were not many noticeable differences in response to the number of years as a National Recreation and Parks Association/National Therapeutic Recreation Society member and the statements regarding the effectiveness of the organization. The majority of responses fell in the category of "sometimes." Those who had been a member of the organization for 13-15 years (N=7) did believe that the NTRS was usually effective in regulating educational standards (66.7%), in advocating for the rights of the therapeutic

recreation profession (83.3%), and in advocating for the rights of special populations (83.3%). In contrast, 100% of those belonging to the organization more than 21 years (N=1) believed that the NTRS was never effective in regulating educational standards. Those who had been members for 19-21 years (N=2) believed that the NTRS was usually effective in lobbying for therapeutic recreation in matters of legislation, and in advocating for the rights of special populations.

The final question to be compared with the membership benefits statements and the statements about the effectiveness of the organization was question number 7, which asked the respondent to give her/his highest educational level achieved. The percentage of responses to the choice of "expected" was higher in this comparison than in any other, with over 60% of those who had a masters degree in a field other than recreation (N=5) choosing expected for 11 out of the 19 statements. The statement which had the highest percentage of responses was "Membership in NTRS provides opportunities for committee involvement," with 66.7% of those with a bachelors degree in a field other than recreation (N=7), 100% of those with a masters degree in a field other than recreation, and 66.7% of those with a masters degree in recreation (N=6) believing that this was an expected benefit. Another statement with a high percentage of responses in this category was

"Membership in NTRS provides support for therapeutic recreation professionals," with 66.7% of those with a bachelors degree in a field other than recreation and 66.7% of those with a masters degree in recreation choosing this. The lowest percentage of responses fell in the category of those whose highest educational level was a high school diploma (N=3, 0-33.3%).

The percentage of those selecting "actual" benefit was under 50% at all educational levels, except for those with a high school diploma (N=3) which had 66.7% responding to 10 of the 19 statements. The percentage of responses for the category of "both" an expected and an actual benefit was similar to that of other comparisons except in the categories of high school diploma (N=3), bachelors degree in a field other than recreation (N=7), and masters degree in a field other than recreation (N=5). Responses in these categories ranged from 0% to 40%. The statement with the highest percentage of responses for this choice was "Membership in NTRS exposes one to new ideas." This statement was believed to be an expected and actual benefit by 81.8% of those with a bachelors degree in recreation (N=11), 61.8% of those with a bachelors degree in therapeutic recreation (N=25), 54.6% of those with a masters degree in therapeutic recreation (N=22), and 71.4% of those with a doctoral degree (N=7). In general, those with a

doctoral degree had the highest percentage of responses on all statements.

The category of "none" had the lowest percentage of responses, with most of them being under 40%. An exception was the statement "Membership in NTRS provides a break from work," which 54.6% of those with a bachelors degree in recreation (N=11), 55.9% of those with a bachelors degree in therapeutic recreation (N=25) and 80% of those with a masters degree in a field other than recreation (N=5) thought was not a benefit of membership. Also, 71.4% of those with a doctoral degree believed that membership in NTRS did not provide opportunities for job advancement.

Table 16 presents a comparison of the percentage of responses for social and substantive benefits according to educational level of the respondents. It shows that a higher percentage of those with a high school diploma (N=3) believe social (53.3%) and substantive (50%) benefits to be actual, but did not expect them. Also, those with a bachelors degree (N=7) and a masters degree (N=5) in a field other than recreation have a higher percentage of expected benefits for both social and substantive. In other categories both expected and actual benefits received the highest percentage of responses for the two types of benefits, and all educational levels are more likely to consider the social type as not being benefits of membership than they are the substantive type.

Table 16. Comparison, by Educational Level, of the Percentage of Responses for Social and Substantive Benefits of Membership in NTRS.

	*1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<u>SOCIAL</u>								
EXPECTED	6.7	40.6	12.7	23.3	40.0	20.0	9.2	2.9
ACTUAL	53.3	18.8	7.3	13.4	8.0	6.7	20.2	22.9
BOTH	6.7	25.0	50.1	36.0	12.0	60.0	51.4	20.0
NONE	33.3	15.6	29.1	27.3	40.0	13.3	19.3	20.0
<u>SUBSTANTIVE</u>								
EXPECTED	5.0	51.1	22.9	35.9	64.3	39.3	30.6	13.4
ACTUAL	50.0	20.5	7.8	11.1	5.7	13.1	9.4	9.3
BOTH	20.0	25.0	54.9	43.9	21.4	45.2	49.2	60.8
NONE	25.0	3.4	14.4	9.1	8.6	2.4	10.7	16.5

*KEY:

- 1-HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA (N=3)
- 2-BACHELORS DEGREE (N=7)
- 3-BACHELORS DEGREE IN RECREATION (N=11)
- 4-BACHELORS DEGREE IN THERAPEUTIC RECREATION (N=25)
- 5-MASTERS DEGREE (N=5)
- 6-MASTERS DEGREE IN RECREATION (N=6)
- 7-MASTERS DEGREE IN THERAPEUTIC RECREATION (N=22)
- 8-DOCTORAL DEGREE (N=7)

The comparison of educational level with the effectiveness of the organization again showed a great number of responses to the choice "sometimes". Those who had a bachelors degree in recreation believed that the organization was usually effective in meeting the following needs:

1. advocating for the therapeutic recreation profession (54.5%);
2. facilitating interaction with other professionals (54.6%);
3. lobbying for therapeutic recreation in matters of legislation (63.6%);
4. advocating for the rights of special populations (63.6%);
5. protecting the autonomy of therapeutic recreation (54.6%);
6. providing steps for self-regulation (54.6%); and
7. facilitating interaction with other therapeutic recreation organizations (54.6%).

Those who had a masters degree in a field other than recreation (N=5) believed that the NTRS was never effective in facilitating interaction with related professions (75%), advocating for the rights of special populations (75%), and protecting the autonomy of therapeutic recreation (60%).

Comments

The final section of the questionnaire contained open ended questions to which the respondents were asked to reply. A synopsis of their answers follows:

When asked what additional benefits were received from membership in NRPA/NTRS, respondents most often replied

information in the form of Parks and Recreation magazine, the Therapeutic Recreation Journal and NRPA/NTRS newsletters. They also cited the opportunity to meet those in other branches of NRPA and the opportunity for participation in workshops as additional benefits. Some believed that membership provided recognition from potential employers and increased chances of publication, while others believed professionalism and certification were additional benefits received.

When asked what additional benefits she/he would like to receive from membership in the organization many indicated a need for more networking with other professionals within states and across the country. Other benefits that members would like to see include:

- job placement services
- affordable workshops/more local workshops
- licensure
- increased lobbying for therapeutic recreation legislation
- fewer branch centered activities
- more empirical research and evaluation
- interaction opportunities with other health related professionals
- contact lists and lists of therapeutic recreation programs throughout the country
- enhanced student roles
- standardization of profession in clinical settings.

The list of "wants" was long, but the major point of most of them was increased communication between the National Therapeutic Recreation Society and the states and between the states and the practitioners.

When asked to list her/his primary reason for joining NRPA/NTRS, the overwhelming majority of the respondents listed professional status and/or the promotion of professionalism in therapeutic recreation. Other reasons for becoming a member were:

- to meet state requirements
- to meet job requirements
- for resume
- registration
- national certification
- for information, i.e. journals, newsletters
- continuing education opportunities.

Summary

This chapter describes the results of the Membership Benefits Survey which was administered to 200 members of the National Therapeutic Recreation Society. The small observed frequencies prevented the significance of the relationships between questions from being established, so the results were presented using frequencies and percentages. Questions were crosstabulated so that the subproblems of this study can be addressed in the following chapter. This included a comparison of facility type, service orientation, job position, membership status, number of years in the organization, and educational level with membership benefits. These benefits were also divided into two types for easier comparison with the background factors. These types were social and substantive benefits. The final part of the

chapter summarizes the responses to three open ended questions included in the survey.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter will summarize the findings of this study and present the conclusions reached by the researcher. In addition, recommendations for future research will be given.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine members' perceptions of the expected and actual benefits of being a member of the National Therapeutic Recreation Society. Sub problems were to study the relationships between job setting, membership status, education and number of years as a society member with expected and actual benefits of membership. An additional sub problem was to identify the primary reasons why therapeutic recreation professionals join the National Therapeutic Recreation Society.

A review of the literature showed much theoretical basis for why professionals join voluntary associations, but little empirical research in this area has been conducted. Theory and the research that has been conducted support the rationale that people become members because of the benefits provided (Blau, 1964; Olson, 1971; Cafferata, 1979; Yeager,

1983; Yeager & Kline, 1983). Clark and Wilson (1961) divide the benefits of membership into two categories: social and substantive. A combination of both types is required to meet members' needs (Olson, 1971; Yeager & Kline, 1983). Doody (1985) defined eight areas in which members expect their associations to be active in order to provide the benefits to meet their needs, but, recently, the question of whether the National Therapeutic Recreation Society is effectively active in these areas was raised (Shank, 1986), although it has remained unaddressed by researchers.

For the purpose of this study, a questionnaire was constructed by the author. This instrument was based on information gleaned from the literature and was designed to assess the expected and actual benefits of membership in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society. The survey was administered by mail to 200 randomly selected members of the organization (N=2953). The questionnaire was returned by 98 of the 200 who received it, for a response rate of 49%. The Statistical Analysis System (SAS) was used to analyze the data, with frequencies and crosstabulations being the focus of the analysis. The data was then organized in such a way that the sub problems could be addressed.

Conclusions

The frequency of response of each question was tabulated in order to obtain an overall picture of the data before discussion of the the crosstabulations. The background information shows that the "typical" respondent was a therapist/specialist in a mental health facility and considered her/his services to be clinical in nature. She/he has a bachelors degree in therapeutic recreation, is certified by the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation on the professional level, and has been a professional member of the National Recreation and Parks Association/National Therapeutic Recreation Society for 1-3 years. In addition, she/he has attended a state conference within the past three years and takes an average of 5.8 continuing education units per year, but does not consider herself/himself an active member of the organization.

The results of the second section of the questionnaire can be used to address the first sub problem of the study:

Sub problem 1: What, if any, is the discrepancy between members expected benefits of membership in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society and the actual benefits of membership?

In answering the first part of this section the respondent chose whether she/he believed a statement was an expected but not an actual benefit; an actual benefit but one that was not expected; both an expected and an actual benefit; or no benefit of membership in the organization. The

frequencies showed that, in general, there was no discrepancy between expected and actual benefits since the majority chose the category both for most of the statements. There were, however, some exceptions.

The first of these was the statement "Membership in NTRS provides an opportunity for job advancement," which the majority of respondents cited as not being a benefit of membership. In addition, the next highest number of respondents said that she/he expected this benefit, but that it was not an actual benefit. The fact that the majority of members did not think that this was a benefit is not surprising if one believes that the nature of professional associations is to further the profession (Schein, 1972) rather than the individual. However, if one believes that a professional association should enable its members to reach more latent goals such as the pursuit of professional status to improve economic or bargaining position (Timperley & Osbaldeston, 1975), then the high percentage of those expecting this benefit could be a problem for membership recruitment and retention.

Another discrepancy was found with the statements "Membership in NTRS provides an opportunity for travel," and "Membership in NTRS provides a break from work." More respondents believed that this was an actual benefit once they became members, but did not expect it when joining the association. According to Clark and Wilson (1961), these

two benefits can be considered social in nature. Since a combination of social and substantive benefits is considered necessary for membership retention the fact that these benefits have been realized is a plus for the National Therapeutic Recreation Society. Also, they can be considered to be available only to association members so the attractiveness of membership is enhanced by them (Olson, 1971).

The final difference in expected and actual benefits was found in the statements "Membership in NTRS provides professional status with professionals in related areas." and "Membership in NTRS provides opportunities for special skills development." More respondents expected these benefits when joining the organization, but did not believe that they had received them through membership. Since these benefits are expected by the membership it is important for the organization to try and actualize them in order to function (Timperely & Osbaldeston, 1975).

In answering the second part of this section the respondent was asked to rate statements according to whether she/he believed that the National Therapeutic Recreation Society was usually, sometimes or never effective in meeting members' needs. Overall, the respondents thought that the organization was sometimes effective in meeting members needs. In addition, in all but two statements, a higher number of those replying thought that the association was

usually effective in meeting members needs than thought the association was never effective. These two statements were: "The NTRS effectively regulates competence of practitioners," and "The NTRS effectively facilitates interaction with related professions." Since two of the primary purposes of a voluntary professional association are creating educational and professional standards and protecting the autonomy of the profession, it would seem that members' attitudes toward these statements show that the National Therapeutic Recreation Society is deficient in fulfilling two of the purposes of its existence.

In order to address the relationship between membership benefits and background information the frequencies of questions 1-4, 6 and 7 were crosstabulated with the frequencies from part two of the survey. The observed frequencies were too small to conduct a valid chi-square test, so the significance of the relationship between the crosstabulated questions was not tested. The conclusions, based on these crosstabulations, will be presented in such a way that they address the sub problems of the study.

Sub Problem 2: What is the relationship between job setting and expected and actual benefits of membership in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society?

Since questions 1-3 of the survey pertain to the nature of the respondents' employment, the crosstabulations of these three questions will be looked at together in drawing conclusions about this sub problem. Those who worked in

rehabilitation centers and those who labeled their job position as supervisor, instructor/professor, or "other" had a greater number of expected benefits which had not been actualized. This could mean that, since these members are not receiving the benefits they thought they would, the cost of membership now outweighs the benefits, creating a negative relationship which could decrease the possibility that they will remain members (Olson, 1971). It could also mean that these members have expectations of the organization that are too high to be fulfilled at this time.

Those that were employed in general hospitals had a higher number of benefits which they believed to be actual, but which they did not expect when joining the organization. Since the respondents that worked in other types of facilities believed that these benefits were both expected and actual, it is possible that those employed in a general hospital have lower expectations about what membership in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society has to offer them.

It is interesting to note that, regardless of where the respondent was employed, a large number of them felt that the opportunity for travel, a break from work and opportunities for job advancement were not benefits of membership in the organization. The first two of these benefits are social in nature. Does this mean that, when grouped by type of employing facility, National Therapeutic

Recreation Society members do not expect or receive social satisfaction from their membership? The third benefit, opportunities for job advancement, can be considered a substantive benefit of membership and was discussed earlier. Basically, if one believes the purpose of the organization is to further the profession rather than the individual, then this would not be a benefit.

An expected discrepancy between service orientation and the two statements "The NTRS effectively meets the needs of community therapeutic recreators," and "The NTRS effectively meets the needs of clinical therapeutic recreators" was that clinical recreators would choose "usually" more often for the first statement and that community recreators would choose "usually" more often for the second statement. This expectation comes from recent discussion regarding the National Therapeutic Recreation Society's ability to meet the needs of the different service orientations (Peterson, 1984). Only part of this expectation was substantiated by the results. More community recreators believed that the organization usually meets the needs of clinical recreators, but fewer clinical recreators believed that the organization usually meets the needs of community recreators.

Interestingly, more educators also believed that the NTRS usually meets the needs of clinical recreators. It is hard to interpret these results because the nature of the parent organization (NRPA) and, thus, its branches (NTRS included)

is to further the parks and recreation field which is generally regarded as community in nature. One explanation is that the focus, in recent years, on the "clinical vs. community" controversy might have led the organization to concentrate its efforts more on meeting the needs of those working in clinical areas (Peterson, 1984).

With the exception of the instances explained in the previous paragraphs, the majority of responses for all three questions fell in the category of both expected and actual benefits of membership. This indicates that there are no major differences between expected and actual benefits based on job setting, and that job setting has little bearing on how one views the effectiveness of the organization.

Sub Problem 3: What is the relationship between membership status and expected and actual benefits of membership in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society?

The study of this relationship was difficult because an overwhelming majority of those that responded were members at the professional level, and it is unclear if the sample was representative of the population from which it was drawn. Explanations for the large number of responses from professional members could be that the organization is made up primarily of professional members so the sample was representative of the population, that the sample was not representative of the population, or that professional members are more conscientious about replying to surveys.

Regardless of the reason for the response patterns, conclusions that can be drawn are that student members are more likely to expect substantive benefits than social, and that they are more likely to consider that the organization is usually effective in meeting members needs. A possible explanation for this is that, not being practitioners, student members view the organization differently than those in other membership categories. It is easier to believe that the association is effective in meeting needs when one has not been faced with a situation in which this effectiveness has been tested.

The author finds it interesting that students do not expect social benefits when most of the student members with whom she is associated (herself included) consider the social benefits of membership to be very important. Perhaps those students responding to the questionnaire answered conservatively when dealing with social benefits in an attempt to be considered "serious" members of the organization.

When studying this relationship, a problem with the design of question number 4 was found. The category "other" was included as a response choice, but the first five response choices represented all the categories of membership. Therefore, those that chose "other" did not actually provide their membership status. This only

involved two respondents, but it could have been avoided if the response category had been excluded.

Sub Problem 4: What is the relationship between number of years as a society member and the expected and actual benefits of membership in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society?

Those who had been a member of the organization from 1-12 years had the majority of their responses in the category of both an expected and an actual benefit, but for those benefits not categorized as "both", they had more expected than actual benefits. The opposite was true for those that had been members for over 12 years. In addition, those who had been members for fewer years were more likely to categorize social benefits as not existing than were those who had been members for a longer period of time.

The relationship between number of years as a society member and benefits of membership is hard to interpret because the percentage of responses are not concentrated in particular categories as in other comparisons. Basically, it can be concluded that those who have been members from 1-12 years have a greater discrepancy between the benefits they expect and those that they receive. Since these members represent well over 50% of those responding it would seem that this could be a problem for the organization as far as membership retention is concerned. If expected benefits are not actualized then members will no longer believe there is a fair exchange of dues for benefits and

the value of membership in the organization will diminish (Olson, 1971; Cafferata, 1979).

Sub Problem 5: What is the relationship between education level and expected and actual benefits of membership in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society?

There were three levels of education which had a large discrepancy between expected and actual benefits. Those that had a bachelors degree in a field other than recreation and those that had a masters degree in a field other than recreation had a much higher percentage of expected benefits, and those whose highest education level was a high school diploma had a higher percentage of actual benefits.

One can generalize this information in the following manner: those for whom the highest education level is a high school diploma have the fewest expectations of benefits when choosing to join the organization; those that have a degree in recreation or therapeutic recreation have more of their expectations realized as actual benefits; and those that have a degree in a field other than recreation have greater expectations and fewer realized benefits. The implications of this generalization are that recreation or therapeutic recreation education teaches members how to effectively use the organization in order to maximize the actualization of their expected benefits, or that it teaches members not to expect too much from the organization when making the decision to join. Considering that a greater number of those who had a degree in recreation believed that the NTRS

was usually effective in meeting the needs of its members, it is possible to conclude that educational background does prepare one to make the maximum use of the organization. This also supports Navar (1981) who found that persons who had a degree in recreation or therapeutic recreation were more likely to effectively use the organization to meet their needs.

Since the researcher was unable to statistically determine that relationships between background information and membership benefits actually existed, it was hard to address the questions posed by the sub problems. Regardless of this, there were several benefits of membership which continued to be cited by a high number of respondents as expected throughout the comparisons. These benefits were:

1. Membership in NTRS provides job placement services.
2. Membership in NTRS provides the mechanism for validation of ideas.
3. Membership in NTRS provides professional status with professionals in related areas.
4. Membership in NTRS provides opportunities for special skills development.

Because these benefits are expected by many, but not actualized, they should be of some concern to the organization. As long as these benefits remain expected then the National Therapeutic Recreation Society will be unable to fulfill its function as a mutual benefit organization (Blau & Scott, 1962; Olson, 1971).

The results of the response to the questions in the comments section will be used in addressing the last sub problem of the study.

Sub Problem 6: What are the primary reasons why therapeutic recreation professionals join the National Therapeutic Recreation Society?

When asked to respond to this question the majority of those answering said that they joined the organization to achieve professional status and/or to promote professionalism in therapeutic recreation. This response supports the definition of the purpose of a voluntary professional association as given by Wilensky (1964) and Schein (1972). It also supports Moore (1970) who believes that an association has potential for growth because of a strong orientation of the professional toward his peers (professional status).

Some of the other primary reasons for joining the organization included meeting state requirements, meeting job requirements, continuing education opportunities and adding to one's resume. These reasons support Timperley and Osbaldeston (1975) in their contention that professionals join associations because of more latent goals such as improved economic or bargaining position.

One theory of membership in professional associations that is not clearly represented in the responses to this question in exchange theory (Homans, 1961; Blau, 1964; Olson, 1971). Although the respondents listed potential

benefits as reasons for joining, no one actually said that she/he joined the organization because of the benefits that she/he would receive in exchange for dues. One person did comment that she/he was going to stop her/his membership because the costs were too high compared to the benefits.

Several respondents cited professional certification as their primary reason for joining the National Therapeutic Recreation Society. It seems to the author that this response indicates a continued confusion on the part of therapeutic recreators as to the difference between the National Therapeutic Recreation Society and the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification. The organization needs to find some way to clarify the fact that the only way a person can become certified as a Therapeutic Recreation Specialist is through the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification, and that membership in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society only registers a person as a therapeutic recreation professional.

Recommendations Based on This Study

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Plan to use a large enough sample so that relationships within the data can be statistically defined.

2. Include nonmembers in the sample population. Why are they not members? What types of benefits, if any, might make membership attractive to them?
3. Find out how the respondents think the NTRS could become more effective in actualizing expected benefits and meeting members' needs.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Recommendations for future studies in similar areas of research are:

1. Does the membership think that the NTRS is active in the areas that are defined by Doody (1985) as necessary for voluntary associations? How effective is the NTRS in meeting needs within these areas?
2. Conduct a study to determine why NTRS members generally consider themselves to be inactive. Why are they not more active? What would help them become more active?
3. Conduct a study to determine why social benefits are less important to the membership of the National Therapeutic Recreation Society than substantive benefits.
4. Why is the distinction between the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification and the National Therapeutic Recreation Society so hard to make? How can the NTRS facilitate the awareness of the difference between the two?

Summary

This chapter presents the conclusions of the study based upon the interpretation of the results and gives recommendations based on those conclusions. Although the relationships between background information and membership

benefits were not able to be statistically defined, inferences about these relationships can be made. Basically it can be concluded that there is little discrepancy between members' expected benefits and the benefits they believe they actually receive, regardless of job position, membership status, number of years as a member, or educational level. Of course, this is a generalization with a few exceptions in each comparison that was made. Four areas in meeting members needs are identified as potential problems for the National Therapeutic Recreation Society. The recommendations given are divided into two parts: those based on this study and those relating to research in similar areas. They include suggestions for research format as well as content.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

10 November 1986



Division of
Recreation and
Leisure Studies

Therapeutic
Recreation Grant

Dear NTRS Member:

I am attempting to assess the expected and actual benefits of membership in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society as part of the requirements for a Masters degree in Therapeutic Recreation at the University of Tennessee. This project is in no way endorsed or financially supported by NRPA/NTRS. I am asking for your help in this project by completing the enclosed questionnaire and returning it to me by December 5, 1986.

The information received through the questionnaire will be kept completely confidential, and will be used only for the purposes of my Masters project.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anne S. Moseley".

Anne S. Moseley, CTRS
Graduate Assistant

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS SURVEY

This questionnaire is designed to assess the expected and actual benefits of membership in the National Therapeutic Recreation Society. It is divided into three sections. The first asks for background information, the second asks for membership benefits information, and the third gives the opportunity for individual input. Instructions for completing each section are provided. Please read them carefully.

Thank you for taking a few minutes to complete this questionnaire. Please return it in the envelope provided by December 5, 1986.

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

When answering the questions in this section of the survey, please **CIRCLE** the number that corresponds to your choice. If more than one choice can apply please circle only the one that best corresponds to your answer.

1. Which of the following best describes your agency or facility?

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. General Hospital | 6. Public Parks and Rec |
| 2. Mental Health Facility | 7. Correctional Agency |
| 3. Dev. Disabilities Agency | 8. Educational Setting |
| 4. Rehabilitation Center | 9. Substance Abuse Agency |
| 5. Long Term Care Facility/
Nursing Home | 10. Vocational Training |
| | 11. Other _____ |

2. Which of the following is the primary orientation of the services you provide?

1. Clinical 2. Community 3. Educational

3. Which of the following best describes your position?
(select one)

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Administrator | 4. Instructor/Professor |
| 2. Supervisor | 5. Consultant |
| 3. Therapist/Specialist | 6. Other _____ |

4. What is your membership status in NRPA/NTRS?

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Professional | 4. Retired Professional |
| 2. Associate | 5. Organization/Inst. |
| 3. Student | 6. Other _____ |

5. Who is responsible for paying your membership dues?

1. Myself 2. Employer 3. Other _____

6. How many years have you been a member of NRPA/NTRS?

7. What is your highest educational level achieved?
(please specify degree)

8. Are you certified by NCTRC?

1. yes 2. no

if yes, at which level?

1. professional
2. provisional professional
3. paraprofessional

9. Do you read the Therapeutic Recreation Journal or other journals related to the field of therapeutic recreation?

1. yes 2. no

10. Do you take Continuing Education Units?

1. yes 2. no

if yes, how many? _____/year

11. Have you attended the following in the last three years?

State association conferences?

1. yes 2. no

NTRS endorsed symposia or institutes?

1. yes 2. no

NRPA National Congress?

1. yes 2. no

12. Do you consider yourself an active member of NRPA/NTRS?

1. yes 2. no

II. BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP:

1. The items in this section are suggested benefits of membership in a professional association. Please circle the corresponding number depending upon whether you feel the statement reflects an expected or actual benefit of membership in NTRS. An expected benefit is one which you anticipated you would receive by becoming a member of NTRS. An actual benefit is one which you have received as an NTRS member. If you feel the benefit is both expected and actual circle the number corresponding to BOTH. If you feel that the benefit is neither expected nor actual then circle the number corresponding to none.

KEY:

E--expected

A--actual

B--both

N--none

	<u>E</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>N</u>
Membership in NTRS:				
a. exposes one to new ideas	1	2	3	4
b. provides opportunities for continuing education	1	2	3	4
c. informs of special programs	1	2	3	4
d. informs of meetings/symposia	1	2	3	4
e. provides opportunities to socialize with peers	1	2	3	4
f. provides opportunity for travel	1	2	3	4
g. provides a break from work	1	2	3	4
h. provides opportunities for job advancement	1	2	3	4
i. provides job placement services	1	2	3	4
j. promotes professionalism	1	2	3	4
k. provides the mechanism for validation of ideas	1	2	3	4
l. facilitates improvement of therapeutic recreation services	1	2	3	4
m. provides support for therapeutic recreation professionals	1	2	3	4
n. provides opportunities for self improvement	1	2	3	4
o. provides professional status with other TR professionals	1	2	3	4
p. provides professional peer group contact	1	2	3	4
q. provides opportunities for special skill development	1	2	3	4
r. provides opportunities for committee involvement	1	2	3	4
s. provides professional status with professionals in related areas	1	2	3	4

2. The items in this section are attitudinal statements about the effectiveness of NTRS. Please rate the statement according to the following scale:

1. Usually
2. Sometimes
3. Never

The NTRS effectively:

a. meets the needs of community therapeutic recreators	1	2	3
b. meets the needs of clinical therapeutic recreators	1	2	3
c. regulates educational standards	1	2	3
d. regulates standards of practice	1	2	3
e. regulates competence of practitioners	1	2	3
f. advocates for the therapeutic recreation profession	1	2	3
g. facilitates interaction with related professions	1	2	3
h. lobby for therapeutic recreation in matters of legislation	1	2	3
i. advocate for the rights of special populations	1	2	3
j. protect the autonomy of therapeutic recreation	1	2	3
k. provide steps for self-regulation	1	2	3
l. facilitates interaction with other TR organizations	1	2	3

III. COMMENTS:

1. What, if any, additional benefits do you receive from NRPA/NTRS membership?

2. What, if any, additional benefits would you like to receive from NRPA/NTRS membership?

3. What would you consider your primary reason for becoming a member of NRPA/NTRS?

4. Please make any additional comments.

Thank you very much for your time and valuable input. Once again, be assured that this information will be used only for the purposes of this study. Please return this questionnaire in the envelope provided.

Anne S. Moseley
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Knoxville, TN 37919

APPENDIX B

The Mean and Standard Deviation of Response
to Attitude Statements

<u>STATEMENT</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
The NTRS effectively:			
A. meets the needs of community therapeutic recreators	91	1.967	.547
B. meets the needs of clinical therapeutic recreators	95	1.832	.558
C. regulates educational standards	93	1.774	.709
D. regulates standards of practice	93	1.871	.695
E. regulates competence of practitioners	92	2.087	.690
F. advocates for the therapeutic recreation profession	93	1.720	.632
G. facilitates interaction with related professions	94	2.096	.704
H. lobbies for therapeutic recreation in matters of legislation	90	1.767	.654
I. advocates for the rights of special populations	92	1.652	.637
J. protects the autonomy of therapeutic recreation	91	1.956	.576
K. provides steps for self regulation	91	1.846	.556
L. facilitates interaction with other therapeutic recreation organizations	92	1.946	.635

VITA

Anne Spencer Moseley was born in Lynchburg, Virginia on August 11, 1963. She was graduated from Heritage High School in June 1981 and entered Old Dominion University the following August. In August 1985 she received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Education. In the fall of 1985 she accepted a research assistantship at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville and began study toward a master's degree in Recreation. This degree was awarded in March 1987.

The author is certified as a Therapeutic Recreation Specialist at the Professional level by the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification. She is a member of the National Recreation and Parks Association, the National Therapeutic Recreation Society, the American Therapeutic Recreation Society and the Virginia Recreation and Parks Society, Therapeutic Section. Ms. Moseley has a particular interest in wheelchair sports and recreation for the physically handicapped and plans to seek employment in this area.