

A STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF RANK AND GENDER  
ON OFFICERS' CLUB MEMBERSHIP AND USAGE  
AT U.S. AIR FORCE CLUBS IN THE  
CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES

By

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## NOMENCLATURE

APF	Appropriated funds; taxpayer dollars authorized for use by Congress
AFSVA	Air Force Services Agency
CMAA	Club Managers Association of America
CONUS	Continental United States
DoD	Department of Defense
<u>N</u>	Total number in sample
NAF	Non-appropriated funds; those generated by an activity's products or services
p	Probability
PCS	Permanent Change of Station; a permanent transfer from one military installation to another
PRISM	CORPORATE PRISM Survey
SAS	Statistical Analysis System
Services	Air Force Services
SES	Socioeconomic Status
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SRA	Systems Research and Applications Corporation
USAF	United States Air Force
$\chi^2$	Computed value of chi-square test

## CHAPTER I

### Introduction and Statement of the Problem

#### Introduction

Despite extensive literature addressing club management techniques and practices, there are few studies available that suggest solutions to another important problem: membership recruitment and retention. Without sufficient membership, no private club can hope to be successful and Air Force Clubs are no exception. During the decade between 1986 and 1996, the number of Air Force personnel was reduced from nearly 608,200 to just over 389,000—a 36% decline (Black, 1997; Mehuron, 1998). In that same period, however, the corresponding number of Air Force officers' and enlisted club members worldwide plummeted from 574,000 to 301,000—a 48% drop. Officers' clubs in the Continental United States (CONUS) suffered greatly during this period, with membership falling from 94% of eligible members to a mere 46% (Black). With many activities and programs competing for patrons' time and money, Air Force and civilian clubs alike need to evaluate their membership and programs to find areas for improvement.

A common method of solving customer retention problems and identifying useful areas for improvement is through a method known as Gap Analysis, developed by Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry (1990). In this method, organizations seek to understand customers' needs and expectations and develop standards and practices to satisfy those expectations. The organization must first realize its own history, its current status of operations, and its vision for the future. Only then can it move to understand its customers and their needs.

Since it is important for an organization to know not only its customers, but also its history, private clubs must understand their roots. Private clubs originated in ancient times and trace their history to Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire (Perdue, 1997; White, 1979). As time passed, clubs were greatly influenced by English social clubs that emerged in the seventeenth century and by American professional clubs that were formed in the early nineteenth century (Mayo, 1998). From this common foundation, modern country, city, yacht, fraternal, athletic, and military clubs emerged, all of which are known today as private clubs.

Since their inception, private clubs have been based on exclusivity of membership, often discriminating on bases of class, gender, race, and religion and reserving membership for white males from the most elite social strata. Jewish- and African-American groups founded their own private clubs, but they too only allowed male members of distinguished social status to join (Mayo, 1998). Although such discrimination is not as common today, the tradition of such exclusion impacts modern club operations. In order to overcome this image of discrimination and attract more members, private clubs must understand and satisfy the differing needs of each customer segment, particularly women and those in different social classes. Private military clubs are no exception; they too can find marketing opportunities by appealing to prospective female members and individuals of different ranks.

### Objectives and Hypotheses

This research examines the history of private clubs, with a particular emphasis on private military clubs and the Air Force officers' club. Club managers and employees need to know who their members are, what the members want and need most from their

memberships, and what can be done to entice eligible members to join. In analyzing customers, organizations often classify or segment customer groups using demographic, economic, or behavioral factors. Factors like income, age, ethnicity, and gender are commonly used for such classification. In the military, two of the most readily observable demographic factors are an individual's rank and gender, both of which play an important role in daily military life. This research addresses the roles of gender and social status in club membership and participation and identifies possible factors involved in the dramatic decline in Air Force officers' club membership.

### Objectives

The primary objective of this research was to gain a greater understanding of the relationships among gender, rank, club membership, and member usage of clubs in hopes of determining rationale for club affiliation. The researcher sought to provide Air Force officers' club managers and the Air Force Services Agency (AFSVA) with pertinent data to help in policy and planning.

### Discussion of Research Question

This research addresses the problems of membership recruitment and retention as they relate to Air Force clubs, looking at membership composition by rank and gender and comparing that data with club membership and usage by members. The research question addressed was as follows: Does either rank or gender have an effect on officers' club membership or member usage of club facilities at U.S. Air Force (USAF) bases in the Continental United States (CONUS)?

## Hypotheses

There were four null hypotheses with which the researcher worked to determine those effects and relationships:

1. Officer gender has no significant impact on officers' club membership at USAF bases in the CONUS.
2. Officer rank has no significant impact on officers' club membership at USAF bases in the CONUS.
3. Officer gender has no significant impact on officers' club usage among club members at USAF bases in the CONUS.
4. Officer rank has no significant impact on officers' club usage among club members at USAF bases in the CONUS.

## Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it is the first study to look at Air Force Officers' Club membership issues for the CONUS as a whole. Its results provide Officers' Club managers and staff some insights into their primary patrons and customer base and suggest recommendations for change. Results of the study may also help private civilian club managers develop some ideas for understanding and satisfying their own diverse membership.

## Assumptions

A few basic assumptions were made in completing this research. Since the researcher studied secondary data, the first assumption made was that all data was gathered and analyzed with sound survey and statistical protocol. The accuracy of all data was therefore presumed. The influence of non-response bias was considered negligible, as

was the influence of the responses of those providing incomplete responses. Changes over time were also considered inconsequential. Finally, the data and results were accepted as universal to Air Force officers at CONUS bases and generalizable to similar populations.

### Boundaries

As with any research, there were certain boundaries that applied to this study and defined its scope and limitations. The study is bound by its delimitations, limitations, and definitions. Delimitations were the actual confines of the study—the boundaries of included material and research. Limitations were factors outside the researcher's span of control that may have impacted results of the study. Finally, the definitions further describe the limits of the study by providing specific explanations of key terminology.

### Delimitations

This study was limited to Air Force officers' clubs in the Continental United States (CONUS), which are identified in Appendix B (Mehuron, 1998). It did not include officers' clubs from other services, Air Force enlisted clubs, or private civilian clubs. Corresponding data on civilian and other services' clubs was unavailable; data from Air Force enlisted clubs was excluded to limit the scope of the study. Overseas bases were eliminated from the analysis because of the distinct differences between CONUS and overseas club operations. Not only are overseas clubs regulated and funded differently than those at CONUS bases, but they also enjoy a captive membership pool. Military personnel and their family members stationed overseas often flock to their local base clubs out of loneliness for home and a need for American interaction.

## Limitations

There were several limitations in this study, the most significant being the inability to determine non-response bias. Non-response bias occurs when subjects fail to respond to a survey or questionnaire because of some pre-conceived notions about the survey instrument or researchers. Non-responders are often individuals who wholly disagree with the subject matter of a research study or who feel it would be disadvantageous for them to complete a survey. However, non-responders may also include those who never received their surveys, those whose surveys were not properly returned to the survey agency, or those who thought the survey would take too long to complete. The reasons for an individual's lack of participation are seldom, if ever, identified and are impossible to ascertain. A related limitation occurs when individuals return questionnaires but omit pertinent data. For this study, individuals that failed to enter key demographic data (base, military status, rank, or gender) were unable to be considered for specific analyses, as were those who chose not to specify whether or not they were club members. If an officer indicated his or her rank and whether or not he or she was a club member, but failed to indicate his or her gender, that individual's data was used for rank comparisons and omitted for gender comparisons.

Another limitation associated with this study is its time dependence. Only one iteration of the survey was completed, so no changes over time are discernable. Additionally, this survey was administered over an 18-month period, during which social, political, or other changes may have affected survey responses.

Finally, the military structure itself may have been a limitation to this study. Individuals concerned that their responses would somehow have associated ramifications

may have answered in a manner they felt was politically correct, instead of answering truthfully.

### Definitions

Active Duty. An individual who has voluntarily committed him or her self to serve in military service, is currently serving in this capacity, and is being paid for such service. These individuals can be identified by the DD Form 2AF, US Armed Forces Identification Card (Campbell, 1993).

Air Force Officer. A military member who has received a commission and currently holds the rank of second lieutenant through general (O-1 to O-10) (Campbell, 1993).

Air Force Services (Services). Activities and programs that provide combat support and community service programs to commanders and other base personnel. These combat support functions directly support Air Force wartime readiness, while community service programs enhance quality of life issues for Air Force members and their families. Services was previously called Morale, Welfare, and Recreation, or MWR (Air Force Services Agency [AFSVA], 1998a).

Air Force Services Agency (AFSVA). A field-operating agency that oversees all Air Force Services activities and supports the bases, major commands, and Air Staff with technical assistance, procedure development, non-appropriated fund management, and centralized program management (AFSVA, 1998a; Mehuron, 1998).

Air Force Clubs. Air Force Clubs are members-only facilities that support the traditions of the Air Force through special events, private lounges, and fine dining. It is Air Force policy that separate officer and enlisted clubs should be maintained whenever



possible. Air Force Clubs have over 325,000 members worldwide, making the entire group the world's 91<sup>st</sup> largest food and beverage operation (AFSVA, 1998a).

CORPORATE PRISM. An Air Force Services Agency marketing initiative designed to answer questions about the market for Services programs and activities. This two-fold program included a detailed market analysis questionnaire and accompanying menu-driven software (AFSVA-a).

Installation. An area designated by the United States government for the purpose of training and employing military personnel. Installations are commonly referred to as posts in the Army, bases in the Air Force, and stations in the Navy and Marines (Campbell, 1993).

Private Club. "A place where people with a common bond of some type—similar interests, experiences, backgrounds, professions, and so on—can congregate for social and recreational purposes" (Perdue, 1998, p. 3). Private clubs include country, city, yacht, athletic, and military clubs.

#### Outline of Work

The chapters that follow address pertinent literature, outline the steps taken to gather and analyze the data, report the results of the analysis, and discuss the results. A review of the literature relevant to this study is discussed in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER II

### Review of Literature

#### Introduction

Although most private clubs are organized around the similar interests and needs of their members, the management of such clubs is no easy task. Despite basic similarities among members, individual backgrounds, needs, desires, preferences, and expectations combine to form a very diverse membership base. Since revenues for private clubs are traditionally generated from the members themselves, club managers and employees must work to satisfy and delight this diverse membership by delivering quality service. Successful managers seek to understand their members' varying needs and expectations so they can recruit and maintain a strong participation of satisfied customers. The importance of the loyal member to the overall success of a private club warrants much study on the differing needs of current and potential members and members.

To ensure customer satisfaction and customer retention, clubs must embark on a journey toward service quality. Before they can reach that goal, however, they need a clear understanding of where they have been, where they are now, and where they would like to be in the future. Central to this journey is the identification and correction of past mistakes. Private clubs, for example, have a shared history of discrimination on many levels, including class, gender, race, and religion. In order to overcome their reputation of discrimination, clubs must understand their roots. Once they have established this understanding, they can follow the steps of Gap Analysis toward the service quality objective. The chapter that follows critically reviews contemporary literature regarding service quality, private civilian and military club history and management, and gender and

social status issues in private clubs. The review concludes with a summary and critique of existing literature, followed by a discussion of the specific research question suggested by the review and examined in this thesis.

### Service Quality

Customer satisfaction and retention are attained through service quality, a concept based primarily on the two facets of customer perceptions and customer expectations. Customer perceptions are subjective assessments of actual service experiences, while customer expectations are defined as “the standards of or reference points for performance against which service experiences are compared, and are often formulated in terms of what a customer believes should or will happen” (Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996, p. 37). Customer expectations are driven by a number of factors, including past experiences, word-of-mouth communications, advertising, and sales promises. A “gap” between customer expectations and perceptions occurs any time there is a disparity between the two and inhibits the delivery of quality service. This gap was defined by Zeithaml et al. (1990) and can be further broken down into four provider gaps as follows:

Provider gap 1: Not knowing what customers expect.

Provider gap 2: Not selecting the right service designs and standards.

Provider gap 3: Not delivering to service standards.

Provider gap 4: Not matching performance to promises.

Closure of these four gaps is best done in sequence, reevaluating service performance regularly. To effectively close Gap #1, an organization has to fully understand its customers and their needs. Customer retention is key to successful operations. Not only are satisfied customers more likely to attract other customers, but

customer retention has a positive effect on the bottom-line. Studies show that it costs five times as much to attract a new customer as to retain an existing one (Kotler, 1997). Additionally, a mere 5% decrease in customer turnover—commonly called customer churn—can increase profits 25-85%, depending on the industry (Kotler; Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996). It is also important to understand how differing customer segments might interact with one another in order to prevent conflicts like gender or social rivalry (Taylor & Moghaddam, 1994).

### Private Clubs

No analysis of clubs is complete without first establishing a basic understanding of the origins of private clubs. A private club can be defined as “a place where people with a common bond of some type—similar interests, experiences, backgrounds, professions, and so on—can congregate for social and recreational purposes” (Perdue, 1997, p. 3). They can include country, city, yacht, athletic, or military clubs. By definition, clubs must have a selective process for determining membership and, for that reason, usually require members to pay monthly dues. People join clubs for a variety of reasons, including clubs’ exclusive atmosphere, recreational facilities, convenience, professional development, family tradition, and personal attention.

Because of the membership fees, club members expect a consistently high level of service from club managers and employees. Interactions that club managers and their employees have with members are key to fostering or hindering long term relationships with those customers. Whether responding to guests’ changing needs or surveying their current needs, membership interaction is an art that should be mastered by all club employees.

## History of Private Clubs

The history of private clubs began in ancient times. According to both White (1979) and Perdue (1998), private clubs trace can their roots to Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire, where select groups of men met their peers in bathhouses for political, social, and recreational purposes. Governors often accomplished their behind-the-scenes business at these communal baths, where they conjured plots, planned assassinations, and swapped influences (White). Medieval Europe gave rise to club-like organizations in their merchant and craft guilds (Perdue). Even translations of the Gospels of John and Luke contributed to club management history. Their use of the term “steward” in reference to the person who served food or the person in charge of the myriad duties and responsibilities of a household was the first term used to describe club management duties (White).

British Roots. Despite the historical influence, the direct forerunners of city and country clubs in the United States were English social clubs, which began developing in coffeehouses, restaurants, and taverns in the seventeenth century (Mayo, 1998). Coffeehouses were first formed at universities, including Oxford, All Souls, and Cambridge; the coffeehouse at Oxford was the first to be called a club (Perdue, 1997). When a club’s membership became too large to reserve a mere portion of these coffeehouses and taverns for meetings, members began paying a fee to temporarily close the establishments to all but their group. One such club was London’s Almack’s Tavern, where a club called Boodle’s began to meet in 1762 (Mayo). Eventually, clubs sought more permanent facilities and began building clubhouses in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The most prestigious clubs were built on Pall Mall or on Regent or St. James’s

streets and boasted architectural grandeur and the social elitism. The prominence of these clubs and their enviable locations served as a physical testament to the social status of their wealthy male members. With long waiting lists, these clubs developed policies and procedures to both select and expel members, allowing only the most prestigious of gentlemen to join their ranks.

Clubs in the United States. Mayo (1998) addresses the wealthy urban class of professionals and merchants began to emerge in American society in the early nineteenth century and their role in the formation of clubs. Wealthy American men of this elite class began to meet in taverns and private homes to share literature, discuss current events, and dine. Like British social clubs, membership was highly selective—in fact, election to clubs often required a unanimous vote. By the 1830s, the British club movement was in full-force in the United States, with city clubs forming in many major cities. These earliest clubs included Boston's Somerset Club (originally called the Temple Club), the Philadelphia Club, New York's Union Club, San Francisco's Pacific Union, and Baltimore's elite Maryland Club. Because of the explosive growth of cities in the latter part of the nineteenth century, many clubs began to relocate in the country to isolate themselves from lower classes and demonstrate their distinguished status. Only the wealthy had vehicles and could drive to these remote locations. Although they owned lavish homes and could afford to entertain large groups at home, club members enjoyed spending leisure time outside their homes with fellow businessmen and colleagues (Mayo).

Modern American Clubs. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, clubs continued their elitist, male-only practices. However, as World War I drew to a close, Americans had more spending money and more leisure time. Many wanted to enjoy the club lifestyle

previously reserved for the privileged few. These factors contributed to the emergence of 4,500 new clubs in the 12-year period between 1915 and 1927, an incredible feat considering only 1,000 clubs had previously existed in the United States (Mayo, 1998). This growth did not, however, put club membership within reach of the general populace. It merely offered expanded opportunities for the emerging upper class to enter elite society. Recognizing a need for specialized training and professional interaction for the managers of these evolving clubs, Colonel C. G. Holden helped found the Club Managers Association of America (CMAA), first called the National Association of Club Managers, in 1927 (Duncan, 1977). Currently the association has over 5,000 active members who manage over 3,000 private civilian and military clubs in the United States and abroad (Club Managers Association of America [CMAA], 1998). CMAA's objectives are as follows:

- 1) To promote and advance friendly relations between and among persons connected with the management of clubs and other associations of similar character and
- 2) To encourage the education and advancement of its members and to assist club officers and members, through their managers, and to secure the utmost in efficient and successful operations (CMAA, 1998).

Although clubs today still have membership policies and require members to pay dues, they have a tremendous impact on our economy. As a group, clubs employ over 268,000 employees and each spends an average of \$1.3 million in their local communities.

Additionally, private clubs raise an average of \$231 million per year for charities, up from \$82 million in 1989 (CMAA, 1998; CMAA, 1990).

## Private Clubs and Gender

The exclusion of women from private clubs mirrored their standing position in society. Ware (1997) and Weatherford (1994) highlight this position: For centuries, women were burdened by household duties, lack of extensive formal education, and legal and social limitations on their social and physical mobility. Their lives were centered exclusively in the home. After the Civil War, however, technological advances like electricity, central heating, indoor plumbing, and store-bought foods began to free women of their hardest household burdens. In the period between 1890 and 1920, middle and upper class women turned their newly freed efforts to reform and activism in a time known as the progressive era. Many single women expanded their educational horizons at women's colleges like Vassar and Bryn Mawr and tried to enter the man's workplace. Married and single women alike turned their energies to formal political and social organizations in a push known as the club movement. The majority of women's clubs formed during this period were either study clubs or civic clubs (Weatherford).

Mayo (1998) addresses private club membership, which like many organizations was initially restricted to white males. Jews and African Americans began their own clubs, but women were restricted from membership in all clubs. Not only did club constitutions disallow their membership, but restrictions on women's travel and participation in business prevented their physical, social, and professional mobility. Because of these restrictions and traditional social mores, women could not accumulate the wealth and social status required of club members. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, women began to organize their own social clubs, such as New York City's Colony Club founded in 1907. Through participation in voluntary organizations, women began to form ties with



other women, building social networks, expanding job opportunities, and providing access to social and political resources (Mayo, 1998). As women fought for political and social equality, managers of prestigious male-only clubs began to see women's presence as a market for potential growth and began to allow their participation. However, this participation was only guaranteed through the membership of their husbands; single or divorced women had virtually no opportunities to join or participate in clubs. By the late 1970s and early 1980s, private clubs were reconsidering their discriminatory policies. Not only did they recognize the profit potential female membership would draw, but legal challenges also forced them to consider a policy change. Traditionally, clubs had reserved preferential golf tee times for men, excluded members' ex-wives from membership, and refused to allow single women to join (Mayo).

In 1993, however, the National Organization of Women (NOW) challenged policies that excluded single women, and in 1994 Diane Graham filed a lawsuit to stop discrimination in golf tee time scheduling. Racial minority groups also fought for equality in the private club arena (Mayo, 1998). According to S. Finch of CMAA, although ladies receive 49% of all privileges associated with membership types, 17% still receive no voting privileges (personal communication, November 30, 1998). Despite these existing limitations and the fact that male club members still outnumber female, female membership and participation is a topic of conversation among club managers. At a 1996 city and athletic club conference, women, minorities, and younger members were considered "the best potential for future membership growth" (Study of city and athletic clubs, 1996, p. 15).

## Private Clubs and Social Status

In addition to their exclusion of women, private clubs were intended to serve as the exclusive preserves of the rich. Clubs required their members to maintain a minimum social status and were a place where “class and culture were woven together into a complex tapestry that shaped a club man’s social status” (Mayo, 1998, p. 27). The image of a club rested on the social status of its members and on the exclusivity of its membership. Until the 1940s, only the most affluent members of American society were afforded club membership. Even members of this social elite had to face careful screening by membership committees. In some clubs, prospective members could not even submit an application without extensive influence. After World War II, however, less affluent members of society began to demand public golf courses and affordable clubs with golf courses. This demand led to a mammoth growth of country clubs between the 1960s and 1980s and made club membership possible for many more Americans (Perdue, 1997).

Social identity can be defined as one’s “knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of the group membership” (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 7). By this definition, social status, like club membership, is linked to a sense of group belonging. In a study relating social status and club membership, McCoy (1993) compared Havighurst’s adult social roles to standard socioeconomic status levels (SES). SES levels are levels of social hierarchy based on assigning and ranking values to indices like occupation, level of education, or income. These values are then combined for a final score (Havighurst & Newgarten, 1967). Social classes were based on five broad SES levels, which McCoy labeled: Disenfranchised ; Working Class; Middle Class; Upper Class; and Elite, outlined in Table I.

Table I

Socioeconomic Status (SES) Levels

SES Level	Applicable Categories	
	Label	Range of Scores Included
Level 1	Disenfranchised	0-9 points
Level 2	Working Class	10-65 points
Level 3	Lower Middle Class	66-87 points
Level 4	Upper Middle Class	88-98 points
Level 5	Elite	99-100 points

Using Havighurst's definition, McCoy (1993) declared a social role to be "a pattern of customary behavior which is defined by and expected by a society of people who fill certain positions in the social structure" (p. 34). He also cited nine basic social roles identified by Havighurst: parent, spouse, homemaker, worker, leisure, church member, club and association member, citizen, and friend. To identify the effects of demographic variables on these nine social roles, McCoy compared role performance mean scores according to age, social class, and gender. He determined role performance by comparing interview results to a scale ranking participation in each role. For example, performance of the role of association/club member rated participation from one to five, depending on whether or not individuals became members of clubs and how involved they were once they joined.

Based on the rating scales described above, males outperformed females in the association/club member role at the  $p = 0.05$  level. More notably, however, was the fact

that, among both males and females, significant differences were noted at the 0.01 level between social class and the role of association/club member. Although specific reasons were not given, McCoy's study (1993) demonstrated that club membership was still a factor of social status. Havighurst & Newgarten (1967) commented that the upper class "usually have a family tradition of social prominence that extends back several generations... and will belong to the most exclusive social clubs" (p. 21).

### Military Clubs

As private clubs, military clubs share the history and traditions addressed above. Although they share these origins with their civilian counterparts, military clubs are very different from private civilian clubs. Like civilian clubs, military clubs restrict membership, but must operate under different rules and follow their own traditions. However, these differences do not protect military clubs from some of the recruitment and retention challenges facing other private clubs.

### History of Military Clubs

Military clubs began to establish an identity distinct from civilian clubs as early as ancient Greek times. Greek armies in the field formed what were called "mesas" or groups of "men of equal rank dining together to form a common bond" (White, 1979, p. 3). By Medieval times, the word was corrupted to "mess" and referred to the sharing of a meal by military groups. By the mid 1970s, the term "mess" began to be replaced by the civilian term "club" although both terms are still used to some extent (White).

Forerunners of Military Clubs. In the United States, military club origin is traced to the 1820s, when an Army regulation authorized officers to form a group or "club to share commonalties and to establish cohesion and camaraderie" (Trefry, 1986, p. 8).

Over the years, military members were provided previously unavailable food and merchandise from civilian concessionaires known first as sutlers, then as post traders. These concessionaires were authorized to provide items not issued. At bases where post traders were not authorized, officers formed social clubs known as canteens. Canteens were regulated by the War Department for the benefit of all military members (not just officers) and, in 1892, were authorized congressional funding for buildings and transportation (Trefry). Congress abolished sutlers and post traders in 1866 and 1893, respectively, and replaced them with the Post Exchange. The stated purpose of the Post Exchange was to “supply the troops at reasonable prices with the articles of ordinary use, wear, and consumption not supplied by the government, and to afford them the means of rational recreation and amusement” (Trefry, p. 9). The Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) continues to operate under similar guidelines today, providing a portion of their profits to morale and recreation programs for military members.

The Advent of the Officers’ Mess. Post Exchanges and canteens supported troops through World War I, but Officers’ Clubs soon came into their own, possibly after associating with allied officers’ messes and observing the resulting esprit de corps and cohesion. Officers’ messes offered members golf courses, tennis courts, nurseries, and polo clubs to counter the low pay and geographic separation that went along with military service. Congress authorized appropriated funds (APF)—or taxpayer dollars—for military and civilian employees, rents and utilities, and building and maintenance of these facilities. With this authorization, support and membership in officers’ messes grew and even gave rise to private clubs for enlisted members. Until the Vietnam Conflict, all officers belonged to the officers’ mess. Although membership was essentially mandated,

officers belonged to their club for the affordable, high quality products and the sense of tradition and exclusion it offered them (Trefry, 1986). To many, officers clubs were among the traditions fundamental to military life and the equivalent of a requisite professional organization like the American Medical Association (Matthews, 1997a).

The Decline of the Officers' Mess. By the time of the Vietnam Conflict, demographic and social changes had begun to affect the military and, as a result, also changed the officers' mess. Restrictions on eating in mess halls and living in barracks were lifted and officers were no longer required to be members of the mess. Military members were often married and their spouses and families found new outlets in work and school. Soon, nurseries, swimming pools, and other functions were taken out from under the officers' mess umbrella and opened to the entire base population. These changes left messes and clubs reduced to food and beverage operations—and in fierce competition with the growing food and entertainment industries just outside their bases' perimeters. Despite inefficiencies of operation and decreased patronage, clubs were able to continue operations with appropriated fund (APF) support and income from alcoholic package beverage store sales (Trefry, 1986).

#### Military Clubs and Gender

Although women had served their nations' military forces as nurses, water-bearers, cooks, laundresses, and saboteurs, they were not made a formal part of the military until 1901, when the Army nurse corps was formed. They continued to be restricted from restricted from regular, full-time military service in the United States until 1948. During World War II, 400,000 women had served in nearly all non-combat military occupations to support the war effort, but they were released from service as the war drew to a close

(Fritz, 1997). Due to the persistence of women in Congress and commanders of women who had served in World War II, women were finally afforded a permanent place in the United States military (Weatherford, 1994). On June 12, 1948, President Truman signed into law the Armed Forces Integration Act which meant that women who were not nurses would no longer be discharged from military service at the end of a war (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 1998; Fritz; Weatherford).

Women were now eligible to join the exclusive officers' club, but overall integration was slow. Although women were never excluded from officers' club membership once they were ensured full-time military status, club traditions and other military exclusions may have kept them away from the club. They often had separate facilities, privileges, and training requirements. Initially, they could not attain any rank higher than O-5 and could not receive compensation or benefits for their dependents (Weatherford, 1994). It took until 1967 for legislation to allow women into general officer ranks (O-7 to O-10) in the Army and Air Force; it took another decade for corresponding female promotions in the Navy and Marines (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1998). Despite these advances, they were not allowed into the three service academies (United States Air Force Academy, United States Military Academy, and the United States Naval Academy) until 1976, and even then were housed separately from the male cadets and midshipmen (Fritz, 1997; Gerber, 1998). After many growing pains and experiences with sexual discrimination and harassment, women now make up 14.2% of the American military officers with 16.2% of Air Force officers being female (Weible, 1998).

### Military Clubs and Social Status

In the military, the only measure of social status is one's rank. Enlisted personnel are divided into junior enlisted (E-1 to E-4), noncommissioned officer (NCO—E-5 to E-6), and senior noncommissioned officer (E-7 to E-9) categories. Commissioned officers, on the other hand, are commonly referred to as company grade officers (CGOs; O-1 to O-3), field grade officers (O-4 to O-6), and flag officers (O-7 to O-10). McCoy recognized these distinctions in his social scale, which can be seen in Table II (1993).

Table II

### Military Rank and SES Level

SES Level	Applicable Categories	
	Common Title	Applicable Grades
1. Disenfranchised	--	--
2. Working Class	Junior Enlisted	E-1 to E-4
	Noncommissioned Officer (NCO)	E-5 to E-6
3. Lower Middle Class	Senior Noncommissioned Officer	E-7 to E-9
	Company Grade Officer (CGO)	O-1 to O-3
4. Upper Middle Class	Field Grade Officer	O-4 to O-6
5. Elite	Flag Officer	O-7 to O-10

Using such a classification system, military rank can be compared to civilian social strata. Like the civilian population, the greatest number of military members is concentrated in the lower strata. Of the 73,983 officers on active duty in September of 1997, only 273 were flag officers. Field grade officers numbered 29,611, while the



number of CGOs was 44,099. There were also nearly 300,000 enlisted members in the Air Force at this time (Mehuron, 1998). The disparity among officer ranks and SES levels demonstrates an added difficulty for officers' club managers and staff. Clubs were designed for the elite, but try to support and satisfy members of three different social categories. Despite spanning three SES levels, military officers as a group are a distinct subset of the American population as a whole. The United Services Automobile Association (USAA) provides insurance services to active duty, retired, and veteran military officers. USAA Chief Executive Officer, Robert F. McDermott described his customers as "well-educated, affluent, and honest. Today, 42% have graduate degrees... the median family income is almost twice the national median" (Teal, 1991).

#### Changes in Air Force Clubs

Gender and rank issues are an integral part of Air Force life and, as a result, of Air Force clubs. To best understand how the status of Air Force clubs affects membership issues like rank and gender, it is necessary to understand the recent evolution of clubs. Although some of the changes in the Air Force club system have been alluded to, the factors driving those changes must be addressed. These factors include forces external to the club system and the internal adaptations made in response to those forces.

#### External Forces Driving Change

As mentioned above, the military has undergone many political and social changes over the years. The Air Force is no exception. External factors like congressional decisions, demographic changes, and societal factors have impacted traditional club operations.

Congressional Decisions. Recent congressional decisions have removed some of clubs' traditional funding sources. With the decline in club participation and membership following the Vietnam conflict, clubs maintained their programs, prices, and low dues with external fund sources (Trefry, 1986). However, declaring such use of taxpayer money unnecessary, congress realigned the funding method for all Services activities (MWR, 1988; Review, 1979).

In 1979, the House Armed Services Committee of the 96<sup>th</sup> Congress identified inefficient practices in military club management and named the availability of outside funds as the primary cause. Although military clubs worldwide reported a net income of \$19 million in fiscal year 1977, 25% of all clubs lost money. The net income figure included \$45 million in alcoholic beverage package store profits (without which 57% of clubs would have lost money) and relied upon \$93 million in appropriated fund (APF) support. The committee felt that the additional funding sources were enabling complacency in club managers and commanders. They claimed commanders and managers were not taking appropriate strides to run efficient, businesslike operations or to satisfy their customers. The evidence presented was a finding that, in 1979, 24% of eligible military personnel (both officer and enlisted) never used the club and 44% did so less than once a month. As a result, the committee recommended that package store sales be separated from club operations and that dependence on APF support be minimized (Review, 1979).

These issues were re-addressed before the 100<sup>th</sup> Congress in 1988. At that time, a review of APF support of DoD Morale, Welfare, and Recreation programs was accomplished for the period between fiscal year 1977 and 1984. At a time when the

services were supposed to be decreasing reliance on appropriated support, APF funding increased among all services. Increases ranged from 82% for the Air Force to 156% for the Marines. Despite arguments from all four services about the merits of clubs and their contribution to the mission, direct APF support for clubs and several other revenue-generating activities was withdrawn. In order to clarify which activities were eligible for APF funding, a category system was devised (MWR, 1988).

The new funding breakdown was based on the fact that Services activities are funded with a combination of taxpayer dollars—APFs, and self-generated non-appropriated funds (NAFs). Mission-essential combat support functions were authorized full APF support and were termed Category A activities. All other activities, on the other hand, had to rely on NAFs. Those activities that were deemed essential to community and family support, but had the capacity to generate funds for their own support were authorized at least 50% APFs to sustain their operations. The final category of activities included quality-of-life activities with significant revenue-generating capabilities. Termed Category C activities, they now had to generate enough income to cover their own operational costs. A listing of the activities in each category can be found in Appendix C (AFSVA, 1998a). When Air Force clubs were named part of this third and final category, all but overseas and isolated clubs lost relied-upon APF support (MWR, 1988).

Demographic Changes. Air Force bases are no longer hidden on the outskirts of society, but instead are surrounded by burgeoning communities. The force is becoming smaller and more specialized as peace is forged with former enemies and as technology enables fewer personnel to provide the same or better defense. The number of personnel in the Air Force declined from over 608,000 in 1986 to 388,000 a decade later (Black,

1997; Mehuron, 1998). In addition to the decline in force size, the composition of the force has changed dramatically. Increasing numbers of Air Force members are married, older, better educated, more mobile, from minority groups, and/or female, a reflection of changes in society at large. In 1977, 63.4% of the Air Force was married; in 1997, that number was 64.1%—higher than the national average of 53%. The percentage of female officers in the Air Force skyrocketed from 5.6% to 16.2% in that same period (Weible, 1998).

Societal Influences. Culver (1992) identified three sociological trends in American society that impacted club operations: working spouses, a focus on family life, and a bias against alcohol. As women began to work outside the home, many families had two working spouses for the first time. In the military, the number of dual-military couples increased as well. Not only did couples want to spend precious time together after work, but they had to take care of their home, since neither was home during the day to do so. Women's entry into the workplace and the officers' club began an era of "political correctness" that discouraged the lewd behavior commonly attributed to young officers. A related trend Culver identified was an increased focus on family life, particularly on the part of fathers. Men are increasingly encouraged to spend time raising their children instead of relying solely on their spouses or day care providers to do so. Culver's final trend was the de-glamorization of alcohol by the Air Force and by society at large. This trend was addressed by others as well, all of whom commented that it had left clubs searching for new sources of revenue and entertainment (AFSVA-c; D'Agostino, 1992; Matthews, 1997c; Stone, 1998; Taylor, 1995). Stone (1998) highlighted the problem using Army clubs as an example: "Two decades ago, half of Army club revenues came

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HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

from alcohol. Today it's just 20%. Happy hours are banned" (16A). Before these sweeping changes, junior officers would frequent their base clubs and participate in elaborate drinking games (Powell, 1994). Since they were the ones starting families or married to working spouses, company grade officer participation in the club—its largest potential market—began to dwindle (Culver, 1992).

### Internal Adaptations

In response to the changes in the military as a whole, military clubs have also had to adapt. Funding cuts, the loss of package store sales revenues to AAFES, and demographic and changes have made a lasting impact on club operations. Air Force clubs operated at a loss for at least three years, losing \$5 million in 1994, \$12 million in 1995, and \$7 million in 1996 (Matthews, 1997b). Total revenue dropped from \$346 million in 1985 to \$295 million in 1995 (McKenna, 1996). Many individual clubs closed, decreased hours, or merged with clubs that had previously been for different ranks (Stone, 1998). The resulting changes and adaptations may impact the clubs' ability to attract and retain members, particularly those from underrepresented segments, like female and junior officers. In order to address these challenges, the Air Force Services Agency, the body that governs all Air Force club activities, has done some research of their own into Air Force club management and membership. They have also launched Air Force-wide programs aimed at recruiting new members. Among these initiatives are customer survey programs, a focus on tradition, a special credit card for members, and discounted prices for members.

## Surveys

The surveys developed by the Air Force Services Agency (AFSVA) attempted to identify and define the market for Services activities. In general, they were designed to help base level Services improve their products, services, and patronage through market research. Toward that end, two key survey instruments were developed, one focusing on all Services activities and the other on clubs alone.

CORPORATE PRISM. CORPORATE PRISM is an Air Force Services Agency marketing initiative designed to answer questions about the market for Services programs and activities. This two-fold program included a detailed market analysis questionnaire and accompanying menu-driven software (Windows Survey, 1997). To date, three separate iterations of the questionnaire have been administered to active duty, retired military, and civilian personnel worldwide (AFSVA-a).

Club Survey. In 1997, AFSVA launched another survey aimed at better understanding club members. This latest survey, USAF SCN 97-56, Air Force Clubs Survey, intended to see where club members and non-members were spending their entertainment dollars and why. Over 38,000 officers, enlisted members, retirees, civilian employees, and family members responded to the study. Results indicated that non-club members used off-base facilities because they didn't have to pay dues and membership wasn't required. The reason most members gave for using off-base facilities was ranked third by non-members: better menu selection. This reason was closely followed by better food quality for members and convenience for non-members. This study enabled AFSVA personnel to better understand the competition clubs faced and determine the extent to

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which members and non-members were patronizing the competition (Windows Survey, 1998).

### Return to Tradition

AFSVA has initiated a return to the traditions of the club in an effort known as “ReBLUEing” (AFSVA-c). ReBLUEing involves linking institutional values to Air Force clubs, by highlighting club opportunities to support the mission. Club support is provided through official military and protocol functions, military social events, institutional events, the display of unit décor and memorabilia, and community support. Additionally, clubs contribute to unit cohesion and morale and “are where young airmen are steeped in the culture of the Air Force and groomed in its heritage and values” (Matthews, 1997b, p. 14). General Colin L. Powell (1994) highlighted this role from his days as a junior officer: “Our social life revolved around the O-club... Every evening the lieutenants adjourned to the bar... while the old captains held court, regaling us with war stories and passing on legends” (p. 52). Taylor (1995) reminds officers that they are not in regular jobs, but are defending the nations and upholding traditions worthy of respect. He argues that clubs “embody the essence of military tradition and serve a vital purpose” (p. 29).

### Air Force Club Card

Another initiative instituted by AFSVA was the Air Force Club Membership Card. This card system evolved as a result of Air Force clubs outsourcing their accounts receivable to the First National Bank of Commerce in New Orleans (AFSVA-c). It had previously been tested in Air Force Materiel Command for several years before being launched Air Force-wide (Services officials, 1996). This new system provided club members with the bank’s choice of a gold MasterCard, a regular MasterCard, or a

proprietary card. Interest rates on cards were fixed at 13.5% and club members did not get to select which card to receive. All cards can be used at the club and at other Services facilities; only the MasterCard can be used off base (Matthews, 1996; More myths, 1996). Not only was the change in response to members' desire for a more useful card, but it also saved money for individual base clubs. Cost savings were generated through the reduction or elimination of manpower, postage, and supply requirements associated with billing and collections (AFSVA-c; More myths).

Despite the added benefits of the new card, not all members responded favorably to the change (Matthews, 1996). Some individuals didn't want a new credit card and felt that they should have had the option to choose a proprietary card. Other arguments were that the bank would use the Air Force as a collection agency because it was authorized to release members' financial information to Air Force commanders. Despite the arguments, the new card system allows members to have revolving accounts and standardizes club operations throughout the Air Force (Services officials, 1996).

In conjunction with First National Bank, AFSVA solicited eligible new members with special membership drives. In three different membership drives, they offered random samples of non-members introductory interest rates of 6.9%; fixed interest rates of 9.9%; or 2 free months of club membership for new members (AFSVA, 1998b). Response rates for the Spring 1998 membership drive averaged 4.13%; In the Fall, they averaged 4.04%. Although these response rates seem low to surveyors and statisticians, banks can usually expect only a 1-2% return on new credit card solicitations. After current members complained about the lower interest rates offered to non-members, they



were allowed fixed interest rates of 9.9% with balance transfers of \$1000 or more (AFSVA, 1998b).

### Member Value Pricing

In conjunction with Club Card efforts, AFSVA developed a program known as “Member Value Pricing” (AFSVA, 1997a). Before the institution of this program, non-club members were free to use all club programs and facilities with the exception of check cashing. The only added incentive to club membership was a packet of discount club coupons sent with the monthly bill. With the addition of this program, however, non-members who are eligible to join the club are charged up to \$3 extra per meal in base clubs and are excluded from special, members-only events. This surcharge applies even for mandatory military functions held at the club (AFSVA-c; AFSVA, 1997a; Matthews, 1997c).

### Additional Initiatives

Additional initiatives undertaken by the Air Force Services Agency include corporate promotions and membership drives; training courses for club managers, themed “signature brand” restaurant and kiosk concepts, and centralized purchasing. Members and their families who are attending college part- or full-time are eligible to compete for scholarship money in summer essay contests on club heritage, traditions, and values. Some of the signature brand concepts that will be added to clubs in coming years include J. R. Rockers Sports Café; Wright Brothers’ Market and Bakery; and Classic’s Diner (AFSVA-a). These initiatives were not in vain; membership drives in 1997 attracted 12,198 new members in the CONUS—a growth of 5.27% (Black, 1997).

### Summary of Literature

The research included in this review related the importance of service quality to customer satisfaction and retention. It showed that organizations must have an accurate understanding of their history, their customers, and their prospective customer base in order to perform Gap Analysis and achieve service quality (Zeithaml et al., 1990). In keeping with the requirements for closing Gap 1, organizations must make an effort to determine the specific needs and expectations of their customers before blindly making changes or improvements. With an understanding of their role in the private club system and their distinct history, Air Force clubs can begin research on their customers' expectations.

### Rationale for the Study

Available literature suggests that knowing and understanding your customers can enable better service and satisfaction. It also indicates that the changing composition of the military requires different product and service offerings. To this end, it is necessary to analyze available data for clues on varying member needs and desires. Both gender and social status or rank have played an important role in the history and development of private military and civilian clubs. Because of that influence, this research focuses on those two factors in an attempt to determine their influence on club membership and club usage by members at Air Force bases in the Continental United States.

## CHAPTER III

### Methods and Problems

#### Introduction

Many private clubs face recruitment and retention challenges, and Air Force clubs are no different. To evaluate markets for various Services activities and programs, including officers' and enlisted clubs, the Air Force Services Agency (AFSVA) developed an on-going market research program known as CORPORATE PRISM, which was operationalized in late Spring, 1991. All Air Force installations were re-surveyed in 1994 and 1996 in survey iterations known as PRISM II and PRISM III, respectively. These surveys addressed such issues as defining and quantifying the market for Services activities, determining Services market share, and identifying improvement areas to increase market share. Through the use of the PRISM III survey instrument and relevant data collected from it, the researcher was able to investigate the effects of rank and gender on club membership and reasons for use of Air Force officers' clubs in the CONUS. The methods described below include both those used by AFSVA to gather PRISM III data and those used by the researcher to analyze that data for this particular study.

#### Participants

Participants for the PRISM III study were taken from random samples of Air Force active duty military and civilian employees and from Air Force retirees at 86 Air Force installations worldwide. In order to best understand the participant selection—or sampling procedures—used in CORPORATE PRISM, it is necessary to enumerate the four basic steps involved. The population(s) were first identified, then adjusted to meet established constraints. Appropriate sample sizes were determined next, with random

sample selection occurring in the final step. The population considered for this study included four population subsections at each base. These were active duty enlisted, active duty officer, and government civilians assigned to the base, and Air Force retirees who resided in the local area (AFSVA-b).

#### PRISM Population Definition

Population eligibility was determined on a per-installation basis using Air Force master personnel files, which are updated monthly. Specifically, active duty populations were identified using the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Records System (DEERS), a computerized information service linked by an extensive voice and data communications network to U.S. Armed Forces installations. DEERS is used by the government to verify and confirm the eligibility of those individuals receiving Uniformed Service benefits and monitors such data as name, rank, grade, home address, and permanent change of station (PCS) status. Military and civilian employees were selected from DEERS databases at Air Force Personnel Command (AFPC) and the Civilian Personnel Management Center (CPMC), respectively, at Randolph Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas. Retiree populations were determined by combining data from the retiree master personnel files at AFPC and the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) in Monterey, California. AFPC provided names and addresses of retirees, while relevant zip codes were determined by DMDC. For most installations, zip codes within a 45-mile radius were considered, but a smaller radius was used in dense population areas, such as Washington, D.C. and San Antonio, TX. Air Force retirees who were also government civilian employees were considered as civilians for the study because their lifestyles more closely resembled those

of their co-workers than their fellow retirees. Once the total populations had been defined and determined for each base, applicable restrictions were applied (AFSVA-b).

#### PRISM Population Restrictions

To be included in the eligible population, active duty members had to be permanently assigned to the particular installation for at least 90 days and could not be scheduled for a PCS within 90 days of the survey. Rank was limited to enlisted grades E-1 to E-9 and officer grades O-1 to O-6. Personnel with masked location data—those in secret locations—were excluded. Like military personnel, civilians had to be permanently stationed at the base 90 days before and after survey administration. Civilian rank was restricted to government civilians in grades GS-1 to GS/GM-15 and WG-1 to WS-18. Ranks included in the population are outlined in Table 3. In this study, all references to civilians or civilian employees pertain only to Department of Defense (DoD) civilian employees stationed at Air Force installations. Non-appropriated fund (NAF) employees were not considered for this study. Air Force retirees in grades E-1 to E-9 and O-1 to O-6 who had retired after 1965 were included in the population. Those who were more than 50% disabled at retirement or who had requested only official Air Force correspondence be sent to their home addresses were not included in the study (AFSVA-b).

#### PRISM Population Sampling

The sum of eligible military, civilian, and retired personnel at each of the 86 surveyed bases became the total population for that base. The eligible population Air Force-wide was 662,047, with an average population per installation of 7,698. Sample sizes, however, were determined from individual population subsections at each base since

population sizes vary drastically among bases. Using the formula below, stratified random sample sizes were established based on a 95% confidence level and 5% degree of precision:

$$n = \frac{(N)(Z)^2(.25)}{[(d)^2(N-1)] + [(Z)^2(.25)]}$$

In the above equation, n = sample size; N = population; d = precision level (0.05 for 95% ± 5%); and Z = Z value for confidence level (1.96 for 95% ± 5%). For example, at a base with 3,648 officers, a sample size of 348 would have been required to be statistically significant within the 95% ± 5% range (AFSVA-b). This is the number of actual surveys that needed to be returned in order for the sample to be representative of the enlisted personnel at that base. In other words, more surveys needed to be mailed out. Based on an historic average return rate near 33%, PRISM surveyors mailed out three times the required number of booklets, or 1044 for this example. Table III shows a detailed breakdown of the overall population and sample sizes (AFSVA, 1997b).

Table III

CORPORATE PRISM Population and Sample Sizes

Group	Population Subsection				Total
	Enlisted	Officer	Civilian	Retiree	
Grand Total Population	264,910	60,228	122,101	214,808	662,047
Average Population	3,080	700	1,420	2,498	7,698
Grand Total Sample	85,407	43,614	48,767	64,460	242,248
Average Sample	993	507	567	750	2,817

### PRISM Sample Selection

Once each required sample size (n) was determined, random samples were selected using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) statistical program on an IBM mainframe. SAS assigned each member of the population a random number from 1 to 1,000,000. Once assigned to specific names, these numbers were arranged in ascending order and the first "n" were selected based on the predetermined sample size. Mailing labels were then produced for each group of samples. Labels for active duty and DoD civilians were arranged according to their organizations and office symbols, while those for retirees were sorted according to zip code.

### Apparatus

As defined before, CORPORATE PRISM was an Air Force Services marketing initiative designed to answer questions about the market for Services programs and activities. This survey was designed to define the market, ascertain how much of the market was using Services facilities, determine how to improve existing programs and target potential customers. It was intended to provide installation-level market information in a timely, easy-to-use format.

The actual apparatus used for this study was called PRISM III, since it was the third iteration of the CORPORATE PRISM program. A copy of the questionnaire, Air Force Services Market Survey, USAF SCN 96-17 (1996), can be found in Appendix A. Survey questions were developed and expanded from PRISM I and PRISM II, which were run in 1991 and 1994, respectively. Since the original intent was to allow installation-level marketers to have a real-time "snapshot" of current market data, archival data was not maintained from these studies. Additionally, with base turnover occurring approximately

every three years, archival data did not prove to be helpful at the installation level. However, no changes were made to PRISM IV, slated to run from 1998-1999, so that comparisons could be made with data from PRISM III.

### PRISM Components

The initial portion of the project included the administration of a detailed Services Market Analysis questionnaire to active duty personnel, civilians, and Air Force retirees, as described above. Respondents were asked about use of on-base Service programs and competing off-base activities in a variety of program areas, including clubs and entertainment. Participants were requested to indicate how often and where they used programs and specify which improvements would increase their Services use.

The second component of the project was a unique, menu-driven software system in Windows that provided market size and share information, strategies for improvement, and potential target markets to base-level marketing managers through easy-to-understand texts and graphs (Windows Survey, 1997). This software was also designed for use at the regional or Air Force level.

### PRISM Survey Format

The CORPORATE PRISM questionnaire consisted of 77 multiple choice questions on scannable forms and was broken down into 14 sections. The first section requested demographic information, while the remaining 13 sections addressed specific Services programs and activities. There was an additional seven-question section for those who wanted to request further information about Services activities, as well as an area for handwritten comments.



Demographics. The demographic section of the survey requested information about participants' rank or grade, age, gender, marital status, number and age of children, commuting time to work, and spouse's employment status. One such question read, "What is your current rank/grade? Retirees, please indicate your military rank at retirement" (Air Force Services Market Survey, 1996).

Programs and Activities. The bulk of the survey included multiple-choice, closed-ended questions relating to participants' use of specific Services programs and activities. Sections were as follows: (A) Dining; (B) Clubs/ Entertainment; (C) Bowling and Golf; (D) Fitness; (E) Sports; (F) Outdoor Recreation; (G) Skills Development (Arts and Crafts/Hobby Centers); (H) Library; (I) Youth Programs; (J) Information, Ticket, & Tour (ITT); (K) Community Activity Center; (L) Resale Activities; and (M) Information. In addition to querying participants about their use of Services facilities, CORPORATE PRISM asked about their use of similar off-base facilities. In the club section (Section B), questions included, "Are you currently a member of your installation's NCO (Enlisted), Officers' or Consolidated/Collocated Club?" and "In the past 12 months while at your current base, for which of these services/activities did YOU or your FAMILY use the Enlisted, Officers', or Consolidated Club facilities? For each area marked, HOW OFTEN do you and your family use ON-BASE club facilities for these reasons?" (Air Force Services Market Survey, 1996).

Additional Sections. As a supplement to the main survey, there were seven questions that participants could answer to request detailed information on Services activities and offerings. In this section, respondents could fill in their names, addresses, phone numbers, and population subsections to be added to a direct mail database.

Whether or not they chose to be added to the database, participants could also elaborate on any of their answers in an included full-page comment section. All comment pages were forwarded to their specific bases of origin so base level marketing directors and activity managers could take direct action on the comments.

### PRISM III Data Collection

All questionnaire booklets were distributed through direct mail and were accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The front of the booklet also served as an introductory cover letter. There were no incentives, reminders, or follow-up letters sent out, as a pilot study showed that the cost of these methods outweighed the additional response rates attained. The Systems Research and Applications (SRA) Corporation, a government contractor from Arlington, Virginia, was hired to perform this interesting pilot study. Initially, PRISM questionnaires were sent to five bases between November of 1989 and January of 1990. Based on the response rates generated by this initial mailing, a follow-up experiment was designed. Four equal groups were created: those who received no follow-up; those receiving a postcard reminder; those with a second survey mailing; and those getting both a postcard and a second survey. Resulting response rates and additional costs per completed survey are outlined in Table II. In addition, SRA conducted a concurrent study at a single base focusing on the impact of incentives on survey response rate. Half of the survey packets included four \$1 coupons as an incentive for subjects to complete and return the questionnaire. In this study, the packets with coupons generated a 62% response as opposed to the 60% generated without. Although this effect was positive, it was not statistically significant (Systems Research and Applications Corporation, 1990).

Table IV

SRA Corporation Results

Group	Results		
	Response Rates	Unit Cost	Cost Per Complete
No Follow-up	43%	n/a	n/a
Postcard Reminder	50%	\$0.15	\$2.62
Second Survey Mailing	57%	\$1.08	\$9.41
Postcard and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Survey	65%	\$1.23	\$6.78

The PRISM III questionnaires were sent to six to eight bases each month to balance the workload for the surveyors and allow for the most timely feedback to the bases. The turn-around time—the time from survey mailing until final results were sent in disk format to individual bases—ranged from 75 to 90 days. The entire cycle for PRISM III was the 18-month period between June of 1996 and December of 1997. Each base received its respective data, as well as any completed comments sections. Regional, or “Command” marketing departments received the data for all bases in the Command, while Air Force Services retained a copy of all bases’ data. Response rates for PRISM III are shown in Table V (AFSVA, 1997b).

Table V

CORPORATE PRISM Response Rates

Group	Population Subsection				Total
	Enlisted	Officer	Civilian	Retiree	
Grand Total Sample	85,407	43,614	48,767	64,460	242,248
Grand Total Returns	26,019	14,932	18,253	18,611	77,815
Grand Total % Returns	30.46%	34.24%	37.43%	28.87%	32.12%

Analysis of Data

CORPORATE PRISM data for each base was analyzed by the marketing department of the Air Force Services Agency before being forwarded to base-level marketers. Once all data was collected, the researcher analyzed raw data files for the current research study.

PRISM Data

To get useful information to individual bases, raw data had to be converted to the Windows format described above. To enable the conversion, variables were assigned to each answer and placed in a sideways spreadsheet, where individual records were listed as columns, aligning data for each variable in rows. This type of spreadsheet facilitated expeditious information searches for individual bits of information; the more common column-style spreadsheet would have required the computer to scan each of the over 70,000 rows to get complete data on a specific variable like gender.

## Current Study

For the purpose of this particular project, however, individual records were necessary in order to have complete data files from PRISM respondents. Responses selected were limited to those of active duty officers stationed at CONUS bases. Applicable records were determined from responses to the PRISM base information question and questions 1 and 2 regarding status and rank (Air Force Services Market Survey, 1996). Of the 77,815 total respondents, 13,186 individuals met the criteria. For those respondents, only data from the demographic and club sections of the questionnaire were retained (AFSVA, 1998c).

The research question selected for analysis dealt with respondents' rank, gender, club membership, and club member usage. The four PRISM questions that best corresponded to the research question were as follows (Air Force Services Market Survey, 1996):

Question #2. What is your current rank/grade?

Question #5. Are you: Male? Female?

Question #15. Are you currently a member of your installation's NCO (Enlisted), Officers', or Consolidated/Collocated Club?

Question #22. *Members Only*: What is the MAIN reason you USE your base NCO, Officers' or Consolidated/Collocated Club?

This pertinent data then had to be reconfigured in the more traditional columnar format and converted to numeric data. For each of the four pertinent questions, all responses—including non-responses—were assigned a value. The values for gender, for example, were (1) Male, (2) Female, and (3) No Response. This data was placed in a Microsoft

Excel spreadsheet and imported into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) statistical program for chi-square analysis. Results of these analyses are discussed in detail in Chapter IV.

## CHAPTER IV

### Results and Discussion

#### Introduction

Clubs need to know and understand their members and prospective members in order to best satisfy their customer (Zeithaml et al., 1990). Air Force clubs, in particular, have experienced a wane in membership (Black, 1997). With the ever-changing face of the military, it is important for club managers to know not only who their prospective customers are, but also what these prospects are looking for in a club.

#### General Results

Chi-square analysis of the data indicated that both rank and gender did have a significant impact on both club membership and member usage of the officers' club at USAF bases in the CONUS. Chi-square analyses were run on each of the comparisons to determine these results. Chi-square is defined as "the sum of the squares of independent, normally distributed variables with zero means and unit variances" (Steel, Torrie, & Dickie, 1997, p. 55).

#### Methodology

Data analysis began with the restricted raw data files in Excel format. Even though this data was limited to active duty officers at CONUS bases, additional screening had to be accomplished before analysis could begin. As previously mentioned, each response option was assigned a value, as in the case of gender: (1) Male, (2) Female, and (3) No response. Since gender was an integral part of this study, records that did not include a response for gender were then rejected from analysis. Furthermore, data regarding club membership was also critical. Those individuals that chose not to clarify

whether or not they were members were also omitted from the analysis. Finally, since the question about club usage pertained only to club members, non-responses were not analyzed. For this reason, the total numbers of each comparison vary.

In SPSS, the assigned data variables were recoded into new variables in order to remove non-responses and categorize similar answers. For example, there were five possible values to question #15 regarding club membership: four answers to the question and a non-response option. The first answer was negative (not a club member) and was assigned a value of "1." The remaining three answers were affirmative and were all assigned a value of "2." Finally, those not responding were coded as "system-missing" so they would be excluded from the analyses. Once the variables had been appropriately recoded, chi-square analyses were accomplished using the Crosstabs function of SPSS.

#### Club Membership Data

Once fully screened, data from CORPORATE PRISM was analyzed using traditional chi-square protocol. The hypotheses were addressed in succession, beginning with the two relating to club membership.

#### Hypothesis #1

Hypothesis #1 stated: Officer gender has no significant impact on officers' club membership at USAF in the CONUS. Since 132 individuals failed to indicate either their gender or membership status, only 13,054 records were considered in this analysis. The information relating the two variables of gender and club membership was analyzed in a standard 2x2 contingency table with one degree of freedom:



Table VI

Club Membership vs. Gender; Actual and Expected Data

Gender	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Non-Member			
Actual	3,913	1,018	4,931
Expected	4,046	885	4,931
Member			
Actual	6,798	1,325	8,123
Expected	6,665	1,458	8,123
Total			
Total	10,711	2,343	13,054*

\* $\chi^2 (1, N = 13,054) = 39.121, p < 0.0005$

Based on the chi-square analysis at a 5% significance level, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis that gender does not affect club membership. The chi-square value computed for these variables was 39.121. With one degree of freedom, the associated p-value was less than 0.0005.

Hypothesis #2

Information relating rank to club membership was analyzed in a 2x6 contingency table with 5 degrees of freedom. Total number of individuals used in this analysis was 13,095, because 91 didn't respond to the question of membership. All individuals used in this analysis responded to the question of rank because only officers' data were included

from the raw PRISM data provided by AFSVA. Individuals who indicated they were members of enlisted clubs were also included in these responses.

Table VII

Club Membership vs. Rank, Actual and Expected Data

Club Membership	Rank						Total
	O-1	O-2	O-3	O-4	O-5	O-6	
<b>Non-Member</b>							
Actual	470.0	734.0	2,197.0	937.0	523.0	81.0	4,942.0
Expected	427.6	577.8	1,953.8	988.0	725.0	269.8	4,942.0
<b>Member</b>							
Actual	663.0	797.0	2,980.0	1,681.0	1,398.0	634.0	8,153.0
Expected	705.4	953.2	3,223.2	1,630.0	1,196.0	445.2	8,153.0
<b>Total</b>							
Total	1,133.0	1,531.0	5,177.0	2,618.0	1,921.0	715.0	13,095.0*

\* $\chi^2 (5, N = 13,095) = 430.086, p < 0.0005$

The researcher rejected null hypothesis #2: Officer rank has no significant impact on officers' club membership at USAF Bases in the CONUS. With a chi-square value of 430.086 and five degrees of freedom, the associated p-value was less than 0.0005. This inordinately small value shows that rank and club membership are related. As demonstrated in Table VII above, there is a greater probability that officers will be club members as they advance in rank.

### Member Usage Data

Data addressing member usage of clubs was a little more difficult to analyze. Since there were 19 possible choices relative to member usage—as well as a non-response option—raw data was aggregated for more meaningful analysis. The final categories were divided as follows: professional; social; dining related; financial; personal; beverage related; product related (for non-consumption products), and other. Within these categories, responses were arranged as shown in Table VIII.

Table VIII

#### Categories of Member Usage

Category	Related Response(s)
Professional	Official meetings
Social	Socialize with co-workers
	Socialize with friends/family
Dining related	Dining
Financial	Happy hours/complimentary food
	Costs less than off base
	Check cashing/ currency exchange
Personal	Get away from home/dorm
	Relax/relieve stress
	Feels more comfortable than off-base
	More convenient than off-base

(table continues)

Category	Related Response(s)
Beverage related	Have a drink (alcoholic)
	Have a drink (nonalcoholic)
Product related	Better quality than off-base
	Entertainment
	Dancing/music
	Only facility available
Other	N/A
	Other

Non-responses were not included in these analyses; since this question was only intended for club members, a high number of non-responses was expected. It should be noted, however, that, although only 4,942 PRISM respondents indicated that they were not members and another 91 chose not to answer the membership question, 5,559 respondents did not respond to this question. In other words, over 500 members chose not to answer this question as well.

### Hypothesis #3

Data for hypothesis #3 relating gender and member usage was analyzed in an 8x2 contingency table with seven degrees of freedom. Since 5,589 individuals failed to answer the either the gender question or the club usage question, analysis only included 7,597 cases.

Table IX

Member Usage vs. Gender, Actual and Expected Data

Member Usage	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Professional			
Actual	2,004.0	437.0	2,441.0
Expected	2,049.3	391.7	2,441.0
Social			
Actual	1,861.0	311.0	2,172.0
Expected	1,823.5	348.5	2,172.0
Dining Related			
Actual	726.0	115.0	841.0
Expected	706.1	134.9	841.0
Financial			
Actual	504.0	113.0	617.0
Expected	518.0	99.0	617.0
Personal			
Actual	364.0	77.0	441.0
Expected	370.2	70.8	441.0

(table continues)

Member Usage	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
<b>Beverage Related</b>			
Actual	152.0	13.0	165.0
Expected	138.5	26.5	165.0
<b>Product Related</b>			
Actual	94.0	13.0	107.0
Expected	89.8	17.2	107.0
<b>Other</b>			
Actual	673.0	140.0	813.0
Expected	682.5	130.5	813.0
<b>Total</b>			
Total	6,378	1,219.0	7,597.0*

\* $\chi^2 (7, N = 7,597) = 27.788, p < 0.0005$

A chi-square analysis of the above data yielded a value of 27.788. With seven degrees of freedom, the resulting p-value was, once again, less than 0.0005. The researcher rejected null hypothesis #3, Officer gender has no significant impact on officers' club usage among club members at USAF Bases in the CONUS. Women were more likely than men to use the club for professional, financial, personal, and unspecified ("other") reasons. Men, on the other hand, tended to predominate in the social, dining, beverage, and other product categories.

#### Hypothesis #4

Finally, hypothesis #4 attempts to analyze the relationship between rank and reasons for member usage of the club. Data is presented in 8x6 contingency tables with 35 degrees of freedom. Only those who responded affirmatively to the club membership question were supposed to reply here. However, as mentioned above, several others chose not to respond as well. The total number of records analyzed was 7,628.

Table X

#### Member Usage vs. Rank, Actual and Expected Data

Member Usage	Rank						Total
	O-1	O-2	O-3	O-4	O-5	O-6	
<b>Professional</b>							
Actual	165.0	204.0	856.0	494.0	471.0	263.0	2,453.0
Expected	195.8	238.0	901.4	513.9	411.3	192.6	2,453.0
<b>Social</b>							
Actual	208.0	233.0	829.0	422.0	350.0	140.0	2,182.0
Expected	174.2	211.7	801.8	457.7	365.9	171.3	2,182.0
<b>Dining Related</b>							
Actual	57.0	78.0	326.0	200.0	121.0	60.0	842.0
Expected	67.2	81.7	309.4	176.4	141.2	66.1	842.0

(table continues)

Member Usage	Rank						Total
	O-1	O-2	O-3	O-4	O-5	O-6	
<b>Financial</b>							
Actual	75.0	82.0	198.0	132.0	97.0	34.0	618.0
Expected	49.3	60.0	227.1	129.5	103.6	48.5	618.0
<b>Personal</b>							
Actual	32.0	44.0	164.0	100.0	67.0	37.0	444.0
Expected	35.4	43.1	163.2	93.0	74.4	34.9	444.0
<b>Beverage Related</b>							
Actual	16.0	29.0	73.0	22.0	21.0	5.0	166.0
Expected	13.3	16.1	61.0	34.8	27.8	13.0	166.0
<b>Product Related</b>							
Actual	8.0	6.0	39.0	27.0	18.0	10.0	108.0
Expected	8.6	10.5	39.7	22.6	18.1	8.5	108.0
<b>Other</b>							
Actual	48.0	64.0	318.0	201.0	134.0	50.0	815.0
Expected	65.1	79.1	299.5	170.7	136.7	64.0	815.0
<b>Total</b>							
Total	609.0	740.0	2,803.0	1,598.0	1,279.0	599.0	7,628.0*

\* $\chi^2$  (35,  $N = 7,628$ ) = 151.507,  $p < 0.0005$

Hypothesis #4 stated that officer rank has no significant impact on officers' club usage among club members at USAF Bases in the CONUS. Chi-square analysis revealed a value of 151.507. With 35 degrees of freedom, the resulting p-value was less than 0.0005. The



researcher rejected this hypothesis. In this study, lieutenant colonels (O-5) and colonels (O-6) tended to use the club for official meetings, while company grade officers (O-1 to O-3) focused on social aspects. Interestingly, only 166 officers claimed to use the club for alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverage consumption. However, over 70% of those respondents were company grade officers.

#### Summary

Statistically, the factors of rank and gender are related to both club membership and use of officers' clubs by club members at Air Force bases in the CONUS. Although these two factors alone cannot explain differing needs of club members, they can certainly help club managers better understand their customers' needs. With this added understanding, appropriate programs and services can be developed to enhance member satisfaction and increase customer retention.

## CHAPTER V

### Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

#### Introduction

Air Force officers' clubs must address membership recruitment and retention issues in order to counter a recent decline in membership (Black, 1997). Since an ideal method of addressing such issues involves understanding customer needs and expectations (Zeithaml et al., 1990; Zeithaml & Bitner, 1997), this research study focused on club customers. In particular, the factors of officer rank and gender were addressed in an attempt to better understand these customer segments. Specifically, it addressed the effects each factor had on club membership and the effects each had on members' reasons for use of clubs in the Continental United States. The chapter that follows discusses the results of that study, highlights study limitations, provides suggestions for future studies, and offers recommendation for officers' club improvements.

#### Discussion of Research

The data analyzed in this study was originated for an Air Force Services marketing study called CORPORATE PRISM (AFSVA-a). Since this data was intended to provide information for individual Air Force installations, the overall sample sizes generated were much higher required for the overall population. However, the large sample sizes and large amount of data available provided the researcher with statistically sound data from which inferences could safely be made. PRISM questionnaires were sent to over 242,000 Air Force officers, enlisted members, retirees, and civilian personnel. Nearly 78,000 individuals responded to the PRISM questionnaire (AFSVA, 1997b), but not all were eligible for inclusion in the current research study. To be included in the current study,

respondents had to be active duty officers stationed at Air Force CONUS bases; 13,185 of the original respondents met these conditions. Respondents' data were assigned numerical values and organized into a Microsoft Excel data file.

The Excel data file was imported into SPSS for analysis and manipulation of data. The 13,185 applicable records were first restricted to respondent's answers to specific survey questions. These questions included #2, #5, #15, and #22 (Air Force Services Market Survey, 1996) and were selected because of their direct application to the research question. Specifically, these questions related to rank, gender, club membership, and members' reasons for club usage. The responses to these questions were then recoded to link similar responses and eliminate non-responses. Once the variables were recoded, chi-square analyses were performed using the SPSS Crosstabs function. An analysis of each hypothesis was accomplished.

#### Discussion of Hypotheses

The research question addressed in this study was: Does either rank or gender have an effect on officers' club membership or member usage of club facilities at Air Force clubs in the CONUS? Each of the hypotheses analyzed sought to address a specific component of this question. Specifically, the four null hypotheses were as follows:

1. Officer gender has no significant impact on officers' club membership at USAF bases in the CONUS.
2. Officer rank has no significant impact on officers' club membership at USAF bases in the CONUS.
3. Officer gender has no significant impact on officers' club usage among club members at USAF bases in the CONUS.

4. Officer rank has no significant impact on officers' club usage among club members at USAF bases in the CONUS.

Chi-square analyses each of the four hypotheses generated p-values less than 0.0005. All four were rejected.

### Conclusions

Although each hypothesis was rejected, each has individual significance. The relationships identified in each comparison and analysis suggest distinct conclusions about the research question.

#### Club Membership Data

Data analysis suggests that membership at Air Force clubs is significantly affected by officer gender and rank. As in private civilian clubs, men become officers' club members at a greater frequency than women. Also like their civilian counterparts, Air Force clubs tend to attract members of higher rank structures and social statuses. These findings are important because of the purchasing power of the non-member groups.

Gender and club membership. As the Air Force becomes a more diverse organization, it more accurately reflects the composition and diversity of society at large. With this expanded diversity, the percentage of women in the military is certain to rise as it has over the past several decades (Weible, 1998). Increased attention should be given to this ever-growing pool of prospective members.

Rank and club membership. It is also important to direct marketing attention to junior officers. Company grade officer club membership was significantly less than that of their superiors, but they represent the largest subgroup of officers. In 1997, officers in these first three ranks outnumbered the seven ranks above them by a factor of three to two

(Mehuron, 1998). By providing programs and services directed at this large segment of officers, the club has an extraordinary opportunity to attract an abundance of new members.

#### Club Usage Data

The reasons members cited for using Air Force clubs were also significantly related to gender and rank. Male club members cited different reasons for patronizing their clubs than their female contemporaries; junior-ranking officers also specified reasons unlike their superiors.

Gender and club usage. Male club members tended to use the officers club for the everyday products and services provided, including socializing, dining, beverages, and other products. Traditionally, the reasons men cited for frequenting the club are those that are commonly mentioned in club marketing and promotions. Female club members, on the other hand, preferred to use the club for less ostensive purposes like official meetings, financial benefits, and personal reasons. This finding is important because women don't tend to frequent the club for traditional reasons. In order to appeal to their desires and expectations, clubs may need to look at new marketing approaches.

Rank and club usage. As officer rank changed, so did the reasons cited for using clubs. Lieutenant colonels (O-5) and colonels (O-6) claimed to use the club for professional meetings, while company grade officers (CGOs) looked to the club for social reasons. Interestingly, professional and social reasons were the reasons most often cited for club use. The third most popular reason for club usage was dining. Sixty-two percent of the officers who provided that reason were captains (O-3) and majors (O-4). Officers spend the majority of their careers in these two ranks and often are raising families as they

progress through the ranks. Perhaps these officers are taking advantage of club dining facilities to feed and entertain their families. Although few officers admitted to using the club primarily for the beverages served, the vast majority of those who did were CGOs. Club marketing efforts to attract members of this enormous customer group could benefit from focusing on the club's beverages and social activities.

### Limitations

This study was constrained by several limitations, including the fact that it involved secondary data. Other limitations included any non-response bias, time dependence, and the military rank structure. Since the researcher analyzed data collected by another organization, the reliability and validity of the survey instrument and the accuracy of data collection had to be assumed. These factors were inferred from an in depth review of PRISM protocol (AFSVA-b).

With no ability to determine individuals' reasons for not replying, the impact of any non-response bias is impossible to measure. The huge sample size, however, provided statistically sound data regardless of non-response or incomplete data. Although any time dependence associated with this survey instrument is not discernable with the single iteration available, temporal stability was enhanced by the extended 18-month administration of the survey.

Another limitation to this study involves the reliance on the honesty of respondents. Some may have omitted answers or given politically correct answers for fear of identification or reprisal. For example, heavy drinking is no longer as acceptable as it once was, so people may have been afraid to list that as their main reason for frequenting the club. The socio-political environment at the time of the study may also have impacted

responses. Finally, the questionnaire itself presented a limitation by restricting respondents to only one answer to the question of club usage. This restriction may have forced respondents to select between two equally important reasons. Such a problem could lead to a misrepresentation of member usage. Future survey iterations might want to allow members to select three responses or to rank their answers.

### Recommendations

Several recommendations can be inferred from this study and its conclusions. The study itself suggests ideas for future research studies and analyses. The conclusions and data analyses provide options for improving Air Force clubs, attracting new members, and retaining existing members.

### Future Research

With a basic understanding of the gender and rank composition of clubs in the CONUS, the Air Force can continue to focus on closing Gap 1 (not knowing what customers expect) by determining the specific expectations of these member groups (Zeithaml et al., 1990). The next question for analysis should relate to improvements of club activities. Specifically, this analysis could be completed with a focus on question #23 regarding members' reasons for not using the club more frequently (Air Force Services Market Survey, 1996). Other analyses could address other variables such as age, marital status, number of children, distance from the base, or a combination of these factors. After current membership is fully addressed, it would benefit clubs to analyze the reasons non-members cite for not joining clubs. Each of these analyses could also be accomplished using data from enlisted members.

Future analysis could also look at overseas bases or bases within a specific command. Bases in Air Education and Training Command (AETC), for example, often have a large number of CGOs in pilot, navigator, satellite, or missile training. Since CGOs responses were significantly different from officers of higher ranks, such analysis might suggest changes specific to AETC. Finally, once the PRISM IV data is collected, this analysis could also be repeated to compare data and determine changes over time.

### Club Initiatives

The results of this study suggest marketing opportunities for Air Force clubs, particularly to their underrepresented female and junior officer populations. Targeted programs could be designed to attract and retain members from these populations and bolster club membership and participation. Attempts should be made to identify and provide products and services that appeal to the Air Force's growing female population. Female club members must be invited to join club advisory boards and make recommendations for club improvements.

Senior leadership involvement is key to junior officer participation. If senior leaders are using the clubs primarily for official meetings and their subordinates are using them for social reasons, the tradition of mentoring and training cannot be sustained. Ranking officers need to promote club membership and its important role in officership and tradition. Club managers need to be empowered to make changes to attract the large CGO population. Although it is important for commanders to take an active interest in club operations, they cannot force clubs to adapt to their personal preferences. Study results showed that officer rank and reasons for club usage are significantly related, so it follows that a commander's desires might not satisfy junior officer members. In addition



to these areas for improvement implied by study results, other improvement areas were identified or suggested by the literature review and research.

Club card system. Even though management of the club card system is contracted to the First National Bank of Commerce in New Orleans, that agency's actions impact club operations and members' perceptions of the club. Recent bank initiatives have been aimed at the non-member instead of the current member. Recalling that it costs five times as much to recruit new customers as to retain existing ones (Kotler, 1997; Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996), the bank is focusing on the wrong segment. It is difficult for club members to understand why non-members are offered more benefits—like a lower percentage rate or complimentary dues—when current members have loyally supported the bank and the club without such rewards. Therefore, further marketing efforts should be focused on current members in order to build and strengthen member loyalty.

Member value pricing. Even though member value pricing was developed to appeal to club members and persuade non-members to join, its negative connotation seems to drive non-members off base. Clubs might benefit from putting a positive emphasis on the surcharge concept by offering member discounts. At events where members are admitted for free and non-members are charged the surcharge, the surcharge could instead be called a “cover charge” that would be waived for club members. The majority of the military is composed of junior officers and enlisted members. Many of these members are accustomed to regularly paying cover charges off base and might find this approach preferable. If officers' clubs maintained the image of exclusivity that is enjoyed by many private civilian clubs, they could afford to alienate non-members. Since they don't currently have that status, they should instead look for ways to attract non-members.

Family Programs. The high percentage of married members in the military suggests that many military members have families, a factor that may impact club membership and participation. To attract these families, clubs could offer activities, promotions, and services targeted to today's families. Ideas can include childcare; children's menus, games, and entertainment; dinner dates for couples; family dinner specials; to-go or delivery meals; and special children's programs.

Expanded benefits. Air Force clubs can use their focus on tradition (AFSVA-c), to assemble the many amenities that were associated with the first messes and clubs (Trefry, 1986). Club members could be allowed discounted family memberships at base pools, priority tee times at golf courses, 2-for-1 bowling at bowling centers, and specially priced programs and rentals at outdoor recreation facilities. These members-only benefits could change the view of clubs as merely food and beverage facilities. They would add value to club membership and serve both to satisfy current members and attract new members.

#### Concluding Comments

Although this data and analysis were related specifically to Air Force officers' clubs in the CONUS, applications can be made to other military clubs—both stateside and abroad—and to private civilian clubs. Any private club that wishes to improve customer satisfaction and increase member recruitment and retention can use the steps outlined. By providing quality service through continual evaluation of members' expectations, Air Force and other private clubs can become more competitive and profitable operations. With a few customer-focused adaptations, Air Force clubs can look forward to a loyal membership and an exciting future in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

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APPENDIX A

AIR FORCE MARKET SURVEY, USAF SCN 96-17

USAF SCN 96-17

Air Force Services

# Market Survey



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
HEADQUARTERS AIR FORCE SERVICES AGENCY

Dear Survey Participant

Please take a little time to complete this survey about your base Services programs. You were randomly selected as part of a representative sample of active duty, DoD civilians, and retirees for your base. We value your opinions and appreciate the time you take to accurately complete this survey. Program decisions and improvements will be made based on the survey results directly impacting Services programs for you and your family.

Sincerely

*Gary C. Bradham*  
GARY C. BRADHAM  
Colonel, USAF  
Commander

## Instructions for completing this survey

1. Use No. 2 pencil only. No ink pens please!
2. Mark the oval that corresponds to your answer. Making heavy black marks that completely fill the oval. Erase clearly any answers you wish to change.
3. Every section follows the same format. If first asks you which programs you use. If you do not use an activity (e.g. you or your family does not bow or play golf) you will be directed to skip to the next section.

Use No. 2 Pencil Only



## BASE INFORMATION

Please indicate which ONE of the following is "Your Air Force Base."

**Active duty and civilians:** In this survey, "Your Air Force Base" is the installation to which you are currently assigned as an active duty, DoD civilian, or DoD contractor. Please refer to this ONE base when answering ALL questions concerning your participation in on-base Services (formerly MWRS) programs and activities.

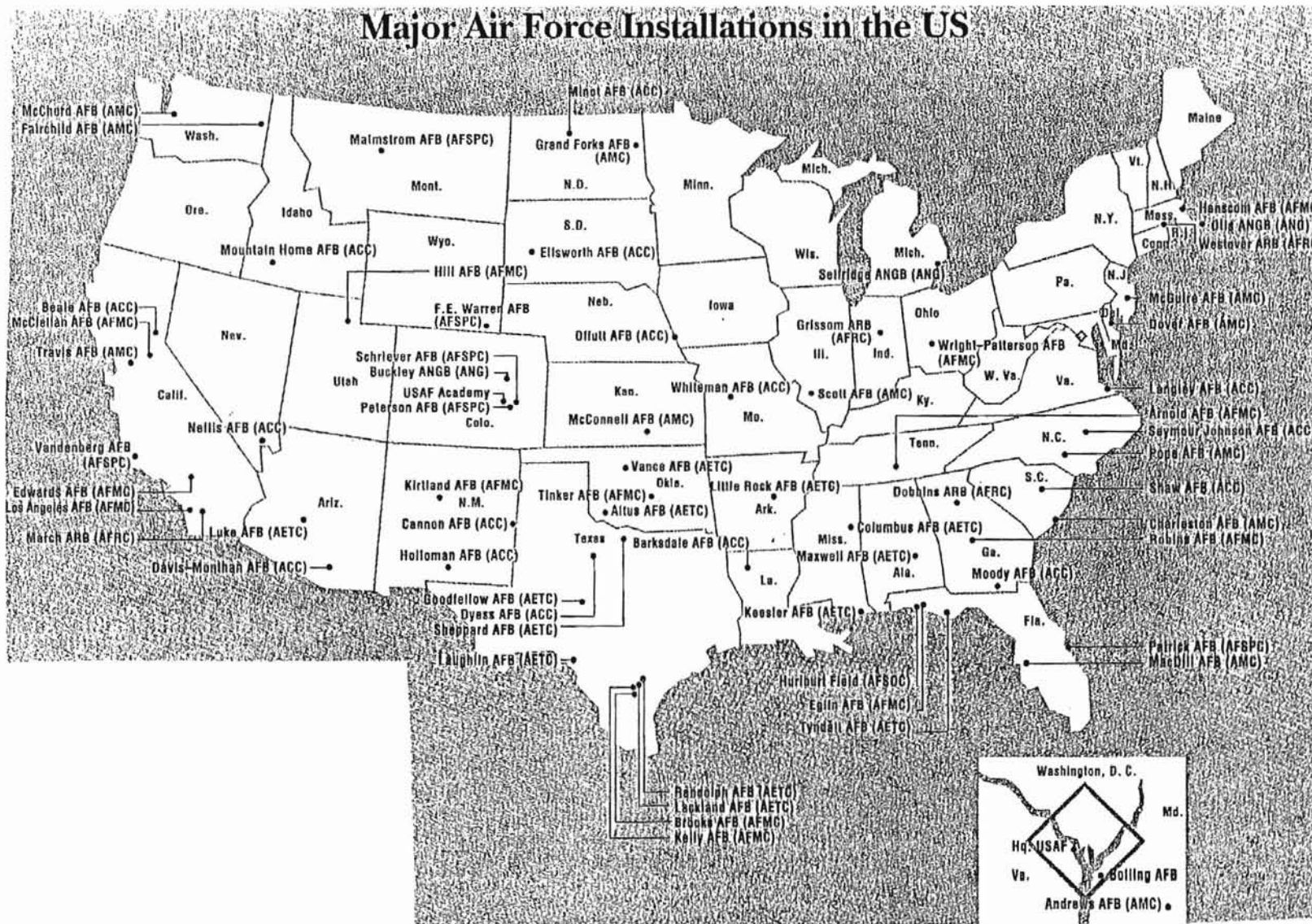
**Retirees:** In this survey, "Your Air Force Base" is the one Air Force base in your local area that you USE MOST FREQUENTLY. Please refer to THIS ONE BASE when answering ALL questions concerning your participation in on-base Services (formerly MWRS) programs and activities.

**Important Note to All Survey Respondents:** Please help us to capture accurate information about use of Services programs and activities ONLY at the installation you select below. Use of Services facilities at other than "Your Air Force Base" (while on TDY, leave, or vacation) should NOT be included in your "ON-BASE" participation. Likewise, use of another base's or service's (Air Force, Army OR Navy) facilities in your local area should not be included as ON-BASE use. Rather, this use should be considered OFF-BASE participation.

### PLEASE MARK ONLY ONE BASE

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Altus                  | <input type="radio"/> Homestead           | <input type="radio"/> Osan                 |
| <input type="radio"/> Andersen               | <input type="radio"/> Howard              | <input type="radio"/> Patrick              |
| <input type="radio"/> Andrews                | <input type="radio"/> Hurlburt Field      | <input type="radio"/> Peterson             |
| <input type="radio"/> Arnold                 | <input type="radio"/> Incirlik            | <input type="radio"/> Pope                 |
| <input type="radio"/> Aviano                 | <input type="radio"/> Izmir AS            | <input type="radio"/> Portland IAP         |
| <input type="radio"/> Barksdale              | <input type="radio"/> Kadena              | <input type="radio"/> RAF Croughton        |
| <input type="radio"/> Beale                  | <input type="radio"/> Keesler             | <input type="radio"/> RAF Lakenheath       |
| <input type="radio"/> Bolling                | <input type="radio"/> Keflavik AS         | <input type="radio"/> RAF Mildenhall       |
| <input type="radio"/> Brooks                 | <input type="radio"/> Kelly               | <input type="radio"/> RAF Molesworth       |
| <input type="radio"/> Cannon                 | <input type="radio"/> Kirtland            | <input type="radio"/> Ramstein             |
| <input type="radio"/> Charleston             | <input type="radio"/> Kunsan              | <input type="radio"/> Randolph             |
| <input type="radio"/> Clear AFS              | <input type="radio"/> Lackland            | <input type="radio"/> Rhein-Main           |
| <input type="radio"/> Columbus               | <input type="radio"/> Lajes Field         | <input type="radio"/> Robins               |
| <input type="radio"/> Davis-Monthan          | <input type="radio"/> Langley             | <input type="radio"/> Scott                |
| <input type="radio"/> Dobbins                | <input type="radio"/> Laughlin            | <input type="radio"/> Sembach              |
| <input type="radio"/> Dover                  | <input type="radio"/> Little Rock         | <input type="radio"/> Seymour Johnson      |
| <input type="radio"/> Dyess                  | <input type="radio"/> Los Angeles         | <input type="radio"/> Shaw                 |
| <input type="radio"/> Eareckson              | <input type="radio"/> Luke                | <input type="radio"/> Sheppard             |
| <input type="radio"/> Edwards                | <input type="radio"/> MacDill             | <input type="radio"/> Spangdahlem          |
| <input type="radio"/> Eglin                  | <input type="radio"/> Malmstrom           | <input type="radio"/> Thule AS             |
| <input type="radio"/> Eielson                | <input type="radio"/> March               | <input type="radio"/> Tinker               |
| <input type="radio"/> Ellsworth              | <input type="radio"/> Maxwell             | <input type="radio"/> Travis               |
| <input type="radio"/> Elmendorf              | <input type="radio"/> McChord             | <input type="radio"/> Tyndall              |
| <input type="radio"/> Fairchild              | <input type="radio"/> McClellan           | <input type="radio"/> US Air Force Academy |
| <input type="radio"/> Falcon                 | <input type="radio"/> McConnell           | <input type="radio"/> Vance                |
| <input type="radio"/> F. E. Warren           | <input type="radio"/> McGuire             | <input type="radio"/> Vandenberg           |
| <input type="radio"/> Gen Mitchell IAP       | <input type="radio"/> Minn - St. Paul IAP | <input type="radio"/> Westover             |
| <input type="radio"/> Goodfellow             | <input type="radio"/> Minot               | <input type="radio"/> Whiteman             |
| <input type="radio"/> Grand Forks            | <input type="radio"/> Misawa              | <input type="radio"/> Wright-Patterson     |
| <input type="radio"/> Greater Pittsburgh IAP | <input type="radio"/> Moody               | <input type="radio"/> Yokota               |
| <input type="radio"/> Grissom                | <input type="radio"/> Mountain Home       | <input type="radio"/> Youngstown           |
| <input type="radio"/> Gunter Annex           | <input type="radio"/> Nellis              |  |
| <input type="radio"/> Hanscom                | <input type="radio"/> Niagara Falls IAP   | <input type="radio"/> OTHER _____          |
| <input type="radio"/> Hickam                 | <input type="radio"/> Offutt              |  |
| <input type="radio"/> Hill                   | <input type="radio"/> O'Hare IAP          |  |
| <input type="radio"/> Holloman               | <input type="radio"/> Onizuka             |  |

# Major Air Force Installations in the US



MAP OF AIR FORCE CONUS INSTALLATIONS

## APPENDIX C

### AIR FORCE SERVICES FUNDING CATEGORIES

#### CATEGORY A ACTIVITIES:

- Fitness Centers
- Intramural Sports
- Libraries
- Recreation Centers
- Basic Recreation
- Parks
- Command and Control

#### CATEGORY B ACTIVITIES:

- Child Development Centers
- Youth Programs
- Recreational Pools
- Outdoor Recreation
- Skills Development
- Bowling Centers (with fewer than 13 lanes)
- Marinas (without resale outlets)
- Recreational Information, Tickets, and Tours

#### CATEGORY C ACTIVITIES:

- Clubs
- Golf Courses
- Bowling Centers (13 or more lanes)
- Retail Stores
- Snack Bars
- Aero Clubs
- Marinas
- Base Restaurants

APPENDIX D

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL FORM

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

**DATE:** 11-12-98

**IRB #:** HE-99-039

**Proposal Title:** A STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF RANK AND GENDER ON CLUB MEMBERSHIP AND MEMBER USAGE OF OFFICERS' CLUBS IN THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES (CONUS)

**Principal Investigator(s):** Jerrold K.J.W. Leong, C.C. M. Smith

**Reviewed and Processed as:** Exempt

**Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s):** Approved

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Signature:



Date: November 12, 1998

Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance  
cc: C.C. M. Smith

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modification to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

## VITA

C.C. M. Smith

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: A STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF RANK AND GENDER ON OFFICERS' CLUB MEMBERSHIP AND USAGE AT U.S. AIR FORCE CLUBS IN THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES

Major Field: Hospitality Administration

### Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Pomona, California, on June 5, 1973, to Bruno and Patti Masotti. Married to Trevor W. Smith of Arvada, Colorado.

Education: Graduated from the Academy of the Sacred Heart, Grand Coteau, Louisiana in June, 1990; received Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and a minor in French from the United States Air Force Academy in June 1994. Completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in Hospitality Administration at Oklahoma State University in December 1998.

Experience: Operated 307-bedspace hotel operation as an Air Force Lodging Officer, Vandenberg Air Force Base, CA; directed fitness, dining, and lodging operations as an Air Force Combat Support Flight Commander, Vandenberg Air Force Base; and managed club operations as Assistant Membership Support Flight Chief, Vance Air Force Base, OK. Served as student wine manager and server for Oklahoma State University's Distinguished Chef Series; coordinated VIP visit of Joy of Cooking's Ethan Becker to OSU; and represented OSU at National Restaurant Association and American Hotel and Motel Association National Conventions. Elected as Vice-president of Hospitality Administration Graduate Student Association at Oklahoma State University and served as guest speaker at regional Club Managers Association of America training seminar.

Professional Memberships: Oklahoma Restaurant Association, Club Managers Association of America, Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, Kappa Omicron Nu Honor Society.