APPLYING SOCIAL MARKETING AND DIFFUSION OF INNOVATION THEORIES: AN ANALYSIS OF THE MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES OF PERFORMING ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

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APPLYING SOCIAL MARKETING AND DIFFUSION OF INNOVATION
THEORIES: AN ANALYSIS OF THE MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the marketing and communication activities of performing arts groups in Ohio and Pennsylvania and analyzed whether these activities could be categorized into concepts related to two communication theories: diffusion of innovation and social marketing. These two theories have traditionally been applied to health communication programs, but a review of the literature suggests their applicability to other social causes. Nine concepts were defined and examined in this study: communication channels, attribute, homophily, innovation-decision, opinion leaders, program development, audience segmentation, pre-program data gathering, and evaluation. An electronic survey instrument created by the researcher was distributed in August 2007 to the 2006 grant recipients from the Ohio Arts Council and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. Results from the survey found that eight of the nine theoretical concepts were used by a majority of arts organizations. Further, computed correlations found that the use of these concepts was not contingent on the size of the organization, which was defined to include the number of employees or the size of the annual operating budget. Additionally, those organizations who rated themselves as “effective organizations” demonstrated a higher use of five of the nine concept categories over those organizations who rated themselves as “ineffective.” This study was in follow-up to a pilot study conducted by the researcher in May 2007 in which the survey
instrument was tested and then revised to improve reliabilities. A discussion of the findings, study limitations, and implications for future research are included in this analysis.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Obtaining a Master’s degree has been a personal goal since completing my undergraduate study nearly twenty years ago. My opportunity to study communications and the culminating work of this thesis would not have been possible without the support of many people. First, many thanks to Dr. Young Lin, my thesis committee chairman and advisor who patiently guided me through the research process. Dr. Lin’s expertise was extremely valuable to me and his interest in this project was greatly appreciated. Also, thanks to my committee members, Dr. Carolyn Anderson and Dr. Heather Walter for their time and comments which have provided greater perspective and insights. My greatest love and appreciation goes to my husband Scott for his unwavering support and encouragement and for helping me balance life during the busy times. And finally, much love and thanks to my four children, Zach, Josh, Carly, and Jacob whose patience and love for their mom was needed and much appreciated. Any accomplishment I have achieved is a result of my family’s inspiration.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The dramatic increase in the U.S. ethnic population over the past 20 years has significant implications, both on a social and economic level. These changes in the compositional make-up of our society have raised questions about the efforts of policy-makers and performing arts groups to present art that represents the diversity of American culture and to make such programs appealing to a broad population. The current research examined the communication and marketing activities of performing arts groups in the states of Ohio and Pennsylvania. Specifically, the research analyzed whether the marketing and communication activities of arts organizations could be categorized into concepts related to two communication theories: diffusion of innovation and social marketing.

Historically, performing arts audiences have been comprised of individuals with nearly identical social, ethnic, and economic characteristics. In each of the benchmarking activities measured by the National Endowment for the Arts (jazz, classical music, opera, musicals, non-musical plays, and ballet), the majority of participants were women, with the exception of jazz which has been nearly equally attended by both women and men. In age categories, 45-65 year olds are most likely to attend performances. Regarding socioeconomic levels, education is clearly the most influential factor in participation
levels. And with respect to ethnicity, the majority of participants listed “White” in describing their cultural background (SPPA, 2002). Although the cultural landscape of our country is rapidly changing, it appears that performing arts audiences have been immune or unaffected by such changes.

Another interesting issue related to participation patterns is discretionary time. Beginning with the 1992 SPPA, individuals were asked about their leisure time activities. It was assumed that a relationship existed between levels leisure time and arts participation. Although the government reports found no significant changes in reported leisure activities since the 1992 report, many scholars have argued and presented evidence that there has been a decline of leisure time in America because of an increase in annual work hours. According to a study by Burtless (1999), this decrease in leisure time has affected individual and family times for relaxation, sports, hobbies, socializing, and entertainment. This data is significant in that many arts organizations must now offer ways for individuals to participate in light of declining levels of free time.

The decrease in leisure time and the increase in population diversity offers unique challenges to arts organizations. Such challenges require arts managers to develop communication strategies and offer programs that meet the cultural tastes and scheduling requirements of the populations they serve. For many organizations, diffusion of innovations and social marketing theory have offered scholars and practitioners a framework by which to develop programs and implement targeted communication strategies for groups with unique characteristics.
Diffusion of innovation and social marketing theories have traditionally been applied to the marketing of social changes, primarily in health-related campaigns. According to Koetler and Roberto (1989), social marketing theory was originally applied only to social development, health, and environmental issues. More recently, however, scholars and practitioners have applied its values in a variety of fields including community development, public transportation, education and training, crime prevention, agriculture, and the arts. Over the past four decades, Rogers (1995) noted that diffusion of innovation research had grown from 400 publications in 1962 to 4000 publications in 1995. This growth in diffusion research came from developing countries or communities who desired to change social behaviors using communication channels. The diffusion framework provided a useful way to monitor and evaluate these changes. According to Rogers, diffusion is defined “as the process by which alteration occurs in the structure and function of a social system. When new ideas are invented, diffused, and are adopted or rejected, leading to certain consequences, social change occurs” (p. 6). Social marketing involves the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs designed for target adopters to encourage change and acceptance of social idea or practice. Both social marketing and diffusion models share concepts that encourage change by using targeted communication strategies and consumer or client relationship development. According to Dearing (1996), the theories “complement each other” by recognizing the importance of both mass media communication and interpersonal communication in the persuasion process (p. 344).
The current research tested the applicability of concepts from both social marketing theory and diffusion of innovations theory in a non-health setting, namely the performing arts organization. Extension of these theories to the arts is appropriate given the emphasis that government and other funding organizations are giving to what Mulcahy (2006) calls the “democratization of culture.” Mulcahy stated that “high culture should not be the exclusive preserve of a particular social class or of a metropolitan location. Rather, the benefits of the highest reaches of cultural excellence should be made available broadly and widely” (p. 323). Both social marketing and diffusion of innovation theories implement concepts to educate target populations and influence behaviors to benefit and improve societies. As noted by Cummings and Katz (1987), governments have supported the arts and culture “for their intrinsic value to the fulfillment of human potential of their citizens. Art and culture are, from this perspective, essential elements to a life that is worth living” (p. 351). Given these definitions, it would seem both appropriate and important for arts organizations to apply concepts from these two theories in their efforts to make programs available to the broader populations within their respective communities.

For the purpose of this study, several key terms must be defined to provide a context to the data presented in this analysis. The “performing arts” included opera, ballet, dance, theater, jazz, classical music, and choral groups. It is noted that other forms of art contribute to the definition and philosophy of art, however they are outside of the scope of this research. “Arts participation” was defined as actual attendance at a live
performing arts event. And finally, “audience diversity” refers to the act of broadening the audience base to include non-traditional arts attendees, including ethnic individuals.

The current research identified nine concepts, four from social marketing theory and five from diffusion of innovations theory and analyzed whether these concepts were utilized in the communication and marketing activities of performing arts organizations (PAO). Further, the data was analyzed to determine whether the frequency of usage of these concepts was related to the size and resources of the organization. And finally, the research included questions to assess the effectiveness of each organization’s efforts to broaden its’ audience base. An analysis of the organizations’ perceived effectiveness and the relationship of the use of social marketing and diffusion concepts was included in the discussion of the results.

The current analysis was patterned after a pilot study of 293 Illinois arts organizations that was conducted by the researcher in May 2007. The pilot study tested the reliability of a new survey instrument that was written to measure the applicability and use of the social marketing and diffusion concepts within these organizations. Based on the results from the pilot study, revisions were made in the survey instrument to increase the reliabilities in a few of the concept categories. The current research instrument was also amended to include questions to measure the organizations’ perception of its effectiveness in broadening their audiences. Correlations between the use of each of the nine social marketing and diffusion concepts and perceived program effectiveness was also discussed in this paper.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the past century, the United States has experienced dramatic changes in the population of society. In 1900, 1 out of 8 Americans was of a race other than Caucasian. By 2006, 1 out of every 3 Americans was a race other than Caucasian. From 1980 to 2000, the Hispanic population more than doubled. Three states—California, Hawaii, and New Mexico, and the District of Columbia now have majority minority populations (U.S. Census, 2000). In a recent report issued by the U.S. Census (2007), nearly one in every 10 of the nation’s 3,141 counties has a population that is more than 50 percent minority. Similar trends are expected to continue and ethnic populations are predicted to reach 47% by the year 2050 (U.S. Interim Projections, 2004). These trends have social and economic implications that affect life at all levels of society. In response to these population changes, companies and organizations have introduced strategies such as differentiated marketing, tailored advertising, and market segmentation in hopes of communicating with and promoting products and ideas to a diverse set of consumers.

Historically, cultural arts groups have marketed to the “traditional” arts attendee: the white, educated, professional with a higher than average income. Generally, arts organizations have tailored their advertising messages and developed programming for this specific target group. However, within the past two decades much more attention has
been given to building diversity in the arts; a likely result of population changes and what McCarthy and Jinnett (2001) identified as arts policy “shifting its focus from influencing the supply and quality of arts to increasing the public access to and experience with the arts” (p. xi).

Pankratz (1993) also noted the changes in arts policies brought about by ethnic population growth and stated that:

Multiculturalism as a societal ideal has taken a prominent place in the complex policy context of the arts. This increased attention has been generated by strong and visible advocates for increased public support for the production and distribution of the arts of diverse cultures. (p.2)

Government and scholarly research has found that socioeconomic variables such as education, income, arts socialization, gender, and race are indicators of arts participation, with education level being the strongest predictor of participation. Past research has also determined that participation is influenced by preferences in art form, noting that different ethnic groups demonstrate preferences for certain art forms. However, ethnicity alone is not a strong predictor of attendance. Rather, ethnicity combined with educational attainment, occupation and gender influence behaviors of participation. A 1992 study by DiMaggio and Ostrower, which utilized data from the 1982 and 1985 Surveys of Public Participation of the Arts (SPPA), confirmed this finding and stated that the greatest barriers to arts participation for African Americans and Hispanics were socioeconomic. They concluded by stating: “these barriers reduce minority participation by making it difficult for less well-off Americans to satisfy their demands” (p. 109).
In addition to these socioeconomic variables, the SPPA measured participation in leisure activities in hopes of understanding changes in arts participation. According to the most recent SPPA in 2002, leisure activity has remained at fairly consistent levels since 1982. Beginning with the 2002 SPPA, respondents were asked to report about their leisure activities for both art and non-art activities. The survey found that the demographics for individuals participating in arts activities were similar to those individuals who participated in non-arts activities. Individuals with higher incomes and more formal education were more likely to participate in all leisure activities. Although the SPPA has not measured levels of leisure time and its’ subsequent effect on participation, it appears that there is a relationship between and individual’s demographic characteristics and participation in leisure activities, both arts related and non-arts related.

In 2003, the Bureau of Labor Services began sponsoring a time use survey that measured the amount of time that people spend doing various leisure and non-leisure activities such as work, child care, and socializing. Since 2003, there has been a minimal decline in reported leisure time activities from 5.11 hours to 5.09 hours each day (Bureau of Labor Services, 2006). In sharp contrast, scholarly research has stated that there has been a significant decline in actual leisure time for Americans. An analysis of the literature has found that scholarly research has measured data over a longer research period by analyzing work trends from as far back as 1890 (Costa, 2000). In a study by Schor (1994) the data demonstrated that 45 percent of Americans work more than 45 hours per week, and since 1960, American workers have added 160 hours of work to their annual schedules.
Based on scholarly research, it appears that while Americans continue to participate in leisure activities, they have less discretionary time to do so. This data is significant to organizations who market social and entertainment events to their publics. In terms of the arts, it appears that not only do performing arts organizations compete for new audiences, but they compete against a variety of leisure options in the face of a decline in leisure time.

Unlike socioeconomic factors which are largely outside of the control of arts organizations, PAO’s can encourage broader participation by developing programs or events which reflect not only the cultural diversity of the communities they serve, but the diversity of needs within those communities. Such a strategy is critical in a competitive market of entertainment options.

Diffusion of innovation and social marketing theories advocate the use of population segmentation, communication channels, programming strategies, and program evaluation to communicate messages of social change to target populations. Before addressing the relevance of these theories, it is important to provide a brief historical perspective on arts participation research and present a review of literature from both a government and scholarly perspective.

*History of Participation Research*

Arts participation research began in the 1920’s with museum visitors’ studies. In the decades that followed, studies became more comprehensive and inclusive of other artistic disciplines. In the 1980’s, research began to identify the characteristics of arts attendees. Demographic and socioeconomic factors such as gender, education, occupation/profession, age, race, income, and artistic socialization were studied as
individual variables and combined variables to identify the profile of arts attendees. It was during this time that researchers, policy-makers, and arts organizations became interested in ways to diversify and broaden their arts patron audiences. This interest was likely the result of the significant growth in ethnic populations during the 1980’s and the unique variables that accompanied that growth.

Historically, government research has primarily measured the socioeconomic and demographic variables associated with participation. In contrast, scholarly research, while dependent on government studies, has expanded the study of participation to include issues related to consumer behavior and individual motivations. A subset of participation research has come from private foundations whose interest in arts participation has funded studies that analyze programs that encourage outreach to underrepresented or marginalized populations.

**Government Research.** In 1982, The National Endowment for the Arts began sponsoring the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA). The surveys have repeated on a five-year rotation and coincide with the National Crime Survey or the U.S. Economic Census. The reports provide a socioeconomic and demographic profile of arts participants. In addition, issues related to arts preferences, attendance frequency, participation via the media, and other personal participation behaviors have been addressed (SPPA, 2002).

Based on the most recent SPPA, 39 percent of U.S. adults of all ethnic groups attended an arts activity during the year, which included jazz, classical music, opera, musicals, plays, ballet, and art museums. Approximately one-third of U.S. adults reported attending a live performing arts event which includes dance, plays, and music
events. Comparing data from a decade earlier, rates of attendance for arts activities has remained relatively constant between 1992 and 2002 (SPPA, 2002).

Additionally, over the 20 research period findings with regard to gender, education, and income have remained consistent. Two variables of note, education and income level, were the most strongly related to participation. The 2002 SPPA reported that 76 percent of individuals who participated in at least one arts activity during the year were in categories of “some college,” “college graduate,” or “graduate school.” The report concurred with earlier studies that found that “more than any other demographic factor, going to arts events and art museums is highly correlated with an individual’s educational attainment. Education is much more predictive of arts attendance than is household income” (p. 19). However, the effects of income cannot be ignored. Approximately 60 percent of individuals who participated in one arts activity during this same year reported incomes of $50,000+ which was listed as the second highest income bracket.

Beginning with the first SPPA in 1982, race/ethnicity was included as a participation variable in addition to income, gender, and education. Survey results from the 2002 report confirmed earlier studies that found that race and ethnicity contributed to and influenced certain patterns of participation. The report noted that ethnic groups demonstrated preferences for different art forms (see Table 1). In all categories, with the exception of jazz, white participants were the majority of the audience members. However, the survey found that groups in the “Other” category were interested in musicals and classical music concerts, but less interested in ballet. African Americans and Others/Non-Hispanic categories had similar attendance rates at musicals, and both
shared a lower interest in opera and ballet. Hispanics had the lowest rates of participation among all ethnic groups, but within their group showed a preference for jazz, musicals, and non-musical plays. These statistical differences demonstrated that art form preferences do exist and that, in part, these preferences accounted for differences in participation rates among these groups.

Table 1
Rates at Which U.S. Adults Attend by Demographic Group, 2002
(Percentage Participating at Least Once in a 12-Month period ending August 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Any benchmark activity</th>
<th>Jazz</th>
<th>Classical music</th>
<th>Opera</th>
<th>Musicals</th>
<th>Non-musical Plays</th>
<th>Ballet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALL ADULTS</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENDER</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RACE/ETHNICITY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (non-Hispanic)</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
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In summary, government findings of arts attendance have remained fairly consistent since the SPPA82. Although new definitions of art have evolved, participation
studies sponsored by government agencies continue to focus on the core socioeconomic and demographic variables of attendees. Recent population changes and the projected ethnic population growth suggest the need for arts marketers to develop strategies to communicate with diversified audiences. Data also suggests the need for arts organizations to offer programming that accommodates patron schedules as levels of discretionary time decrease. Such strategies will be critical to the financial viability and the future success of arts organizations.

**Scholarly and Other Research.** Much of the scholarly research on arts participation has relied heavily on the findings of the Government’s SPPA reports. There are relatively few scholarly studies that rely solely on independent data. While many studies identify the demographic variables that characterize arts attendees, scholars note a lack in research regarding the individual incentives to participate. McCarthy and Jinnett (2001), identified two weaknesses in current arts participation literature. First, they noted that most studies have focused on socioeconomic variables as the key determinants of participation and have failed to address less tangible variables such as personal motivation. Secondly, the authors believe that the literature has provided an oversimplified explanation of the decision to participate and assumes that decisions involve a one-step process which are unaffected by outside factors. In an earlier report funded by the Center For Arts and Cultural Policy Studies, researchers stated that participation data was accessible but not necessarily in useful forms. They noted that much of the data was too detailed and outdated which made the results useless and unreliable (DiMaggio, Rivkin-Fish, Kaple, & Morris, 1996).
In a study of arts audiences, Morison and Dalgleish (1993) found that although numbers of arts participants have grown slightly since arts studies began, “demographically, arts audiences are almost exactly the same as they have always been: far above the national average in education, income and…occupations represented” (p. 54). The authors further stated that PAO’s eventually reach a “plateau” in growth because of their inability to reach beyond this traditional audience.

McCarthy and Jinnett (2001) suggested that while art institutions cannot influence socioeconomic variables, they can implement strategies to diversify and broaden their audience base by use of motivation. The authors stated that: “if arts institutions are to design effective engagement strategies, they must know where their target populations are in the decision-making process with regard to arts participation, what motivates their participation and specifics about their lifestyle and programmatic interests” (p. xii).

One such example came in a study by Kolb (2002) who examined the art form preferences of different ethnic groups. Kolb concluded by stating:

The under representation [at arts events] may result from the ethnic group having the same interest in attendance, but being kept from attending by a real or perceived obstacle…or the under representation may be caused by differences in taste in cultural activities, and therefore a lack of interest in attending. It can be seen that the art forms vary in their ability to attract a representative diverse audience. (p. 174)

In another study, Scheff (1999) found that programming and event scheduling were the most important variables in people’s decision to attend performances. Scheff’s research also determined that arts organizations could capitalize on new markets and
recapture past subscribers by offering an option that gave the arts patron the ability to choose programming based on scheduling preferences. Participants were asked why they were attending fewer performances or why they had stopped purchasing season subscriptions. Fifty percent of the single-ticket buyers listed “prefer to select own programs to attend, rather than a series” as the most common reason for non-attendance. Scheff noted that patrons preferred a flex-plan option that allowed them to attend programs without the restrictions of scheduled performances. Scheff concluded by stating that “following programming in importance is the fact that, with patrons’ changing lifestyles and more competition for their leisure time, they find it increasingly difficult to schedule in advance. People prefer to select their own programs to attend” (p.26). Such findings provide valuable insight for arts marketers. Other arts participation studies from scholars and granting institutions have found that arts organizations who offer programming options based on the preferences of their patrons and then develop communication strategies to reach target populations are more successful in increasing participation in their arts programs (Carr, Radbourne, Rentschler & Rickard, 2001; McPherson & Trachtenberg, 1997; Performing Arts Research Coalition, 2004; The Wallace Foundation, 2002).

As the literature suggests, scholarly research is shifting from a purely demographic profiling of arts consumers to more directed studies of consumer behaviors and preferences. Such a shift in focus lends itself to the application of key concepts found in both social marketing and diffusion of innovation theories. As the cultural landscape of our society changes and as individuals voice their preferences with regard to
programming, arts audiences must actively respond with communication and marketing strategies that appeal to a broader base of the population.

Theoretical Discussion

The following section will identify and define diffusion of innovations and social marketing theory and discuss their applicability to marketing and communication programs of arts organizations.

*Diffusion of Innovations.* Diffusion of innovations is defined as “the process through which an innovation, defined as an idea perceived as new, spreads via certain communication channels over time among the members of a social system” (Rogers, 2004, p. 13). Conceptually, diffusion theory has been applied to a variety of academic disciplines and cultural contexts since the early 1970’s. In 2004, there were nearly 5000 documented diffusion studies in a variety of organizational structures. Diffusion of innovations is a unique kind of communication in which the messages are about a new idea. The idea itself may not be original, but to the adopter or target audience, the concept is new-found.

The diffusion model focuses on the role of social networks and opinion leaders and their ability to influence change among potential adopters (Rogers, 1995). The primary channels by which messages are communicated involve interpersonal and smaller group relationships. Dearing (2004) suggested that the diffusion of innovation paradigm can be explained by three concepts that ultimately influence adopter decision making and change. The concepts included: 1) what individuals think about the innovation, 2) what they think others think about the innovation, and 3) what individuals
think about the innovation in comparison to other innovations. Dearing concluded by stating:

When consequential innovations spread rapidly, it means they have been accorded a high degree in approval by influential people within a social network, in which members are connected to each other through patterned flows of face-to-face and mediated interpersonal communication or in a social sector, in which members do not comprise an interconnected network, but do share common demographic, situational, or behavior characteristics. (p. 27)

Clearly, in the diffusion process, the influence and persuasive power of a change agent or opinion leader cannot be underestimated. In an earlier study by Dearing et al. (1996), the researchers noted that the interpersonal influence of change agents is required to persuade potential adopters to accept a new idea or innovation particularly when such change is perceived as risky, expensive, or difficult to understand.

In an analysis of 40 years of diffusion research, Haider and Kreps (2004) suggested that diffusion involves four interacting factors which ultimately encourage social change. These four areas are: 1) the innovation, 2) communication channels, 3) social systems, and 4) time. Within this context, these researchers emphasized the importance of understanding the innovation-decision process, which Rogers (1995) outlined as steps in the process of adopting change. The steps included: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. Knowledge occurs when an individual learns about the innovation and gains some understanding of the function. Persuasion occurs depending on a favorable or unfavorable reaction to the innovation. Decision is the individual’s activities that lead to choices to adopt or reject the
innovation. Implementation occurs when an individual utilizes or participates in the innovation. And lastly, confirmation is the final stage in which an individual fully utilizes the innovation or chooses to not pursue or adopt the innovation. Haider and Kreps summarized by stating: “The DOI model has made significant contributions to the understanding and promotion of behavioral change. Diffusion of innovation research makes it possible for people to improve and customize important innovations to fit their unique cultural needs” (p. 6).

The advancement of the diffusion model since its introduction in 1943 has helped scholars and other researchers understand the communication processes of messages in a variety of contexts. As Rogers (2004) stated: “scholarly research on diffusion of innovations knows almost no boundaries. This fact is a kind of affirmation that the generalizability of the diffusion model has been born out by history” (p. 18). It is with this assertion that the current research analyzes the communication activities of arts organizations in an attempt to determine whether concepts of diffusion are utilized when communicating messages to new audiences.

*Social Marketing.* Social marketing emerged in 1971 and was defined by Kotler and Zaltman as “the design, implementation, and control of programs calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving considerations of product planning, pricing, communication, distribution, and marketing research” (p. 5). Initially, the extension of traditional commercial marketing practices to the non-profit sector was met with mixed reaction among scholars and marketing professionals. In its earliest forms, Kotler and Zaltman noted the differences between traditional marketing and social marketing and stated:
Social marketing typically has to deal with the market’s core beliefs and values, whereas business marketing often deals with superficial preferences and opinions. Social marketing must search harder for meaningful *quid pro quos* to gain acceptance or adoption of its products. Social marketing has to work with channel systems that are less well-defined and less pecuniarily motivated. (p. 11)

As definitions of social marketing began to evolve, Andreasen (1994) emphasized that marketing, whether social or commercial, is about human behavior—changing, reinforcing, and encouraging it. Andreasen’s belief was that the earliest definitions of social marketing were problematic in that they suggested that social marketing activities were designed only to influence the acceptability of social ideas. Andreasen noted that most scholars believe that social marketing involves much more than ideas; rather it is the activities that initiate action and cause target adopters to accept, abandon, or modify their attitudes or behaviors. With this assertion, Andreasen proposed the following definition: “Social marketing is the adaptation of commercial marketing technologies to programs designed to influence the voluntary behavior of target audiences to improve their personal welfare and that of the society of which they are a part” (p. 110).

Social marketing theory utilizes the concepts of market segmentation, consumer research, directed communication, facilitation, and program evaluation to increase the acceptability of a specified social practice. In social marketing, a “target” consumer is identified and placed at the center of the marketing process. This target consumer is identified based on specific needs and preferences and, in some cases, involves an underrepresented or marginalized population. Andreasen (1995) stated that target consumers “become the focus for distinctive programs, separate budget allocations, and
even different emphasis for the duration of the project.” Marketing and communications strategies are then designed to “influence the voluntary behavior of target audiences in order to improve their personal welfare and that of their society” (p. 17). Throughout this process, programs are evaluated for effectiveness and restructured or redefined as necessary.

Social marketing has played a prominent role in the field of health communication. In an article by Albrecht and Bryant (1996), they noted that the effectiveness of communication regarding health issues was largely influenced by the practice of audience segmentation, a key component of social marketing. If audiences were meaningfully segmented, messages could be carefully and strategically designed to influence change. Hastings (2003) cited various studies and identified specific social marketing strategies that have been used in health-related programs such as tobacco control, sexual health, and infant care which have been successful in bringing about individual as well as institutional social change. Hastings added that scholars and organizations must now seriously look at a relational component in future social marketing campaigns and suggested that relationships with consumers, not transactions should be paramount in social marketing programs.

Diffusion and Social Marketing Combined. As noted, diffusion theory relies heavily on the interpersonal and small group aspects of communication to persuade individuals to adopt change. Social marketing theory relies on the use of target audience segmentation, feedback and program evaluation, and a careful analysis of the competition to create effective change programs. In an article by Dearing, Maibach, and Buller (2006), the authors proposed a convergence of diffusion and social marketing principles
as an approach to building physical activity programs. An earlier study by Dearing et al. (1996) suggested that using concepts from both social marketing and diffusion theories could increase the effectiveness of HIV/AIDS prevention programs. In their assessment of both theories, Dearing, Maibach, and Buller (2006) stated:

Diffusion scholars sought to describe and explain social change. Social marketing scholars sought to demonstrate how to change behavior in prosocial directions. But as soon as one seeks to apply the more validated and actionable diffusion principles to affect a rate of change, the two approaches look a lot alike and are quite compatible. The ‘technology push’ emphasis in diffusion studies compliments the ‘technology pull’ emphasis of marketing science. (p. 13)

The purpose of the current study will seek to determine whether concepts from social marketing and diffusion of innovation theories can be applied to marketing of the arts. As noted, arts attendees have traditionally been white, educated, professionals with higher than average income levels. And traditionally, arts groups have marketed their programming to this exclusive population. However, as discussed earlier, population and lifestyle changes have created the opportunity for arts organizations to re-evaluate their communication programs to determine if they are reaching these emerging audiences. McCarthy and Jinnett (2001) stated that art institutions need to place a greater emphasis on the service they provide to the community as a whole.

Art institutions have looked to provide greater service to their communities and reach out to local populations that traditionally have not participated in their activities. Their goal is not just to expand their market and increase their
revenues, but also to broaden their definition of art and reinvigorate themselves.

(p. 3)

The current study was patterned after a study by Dearing et al. (1996) entitled “Strategies of HIV Programs.” In the Dearing study, the research team identified concepts from both social marketing and diffusion theory that they felt “captured the essence of [the] two models.” The Dearing study utilized content analysis methodology and trained coders to identify the presence of these concepts in both effective and non-effective organizations. The present study identified five concepts from diffusion theory and four concepts from social marketing theory and surveyed arts organizations as to their use of these concepts in their marketing and communications activities. The five diffusion concepts included: communication channels, innovation-decision process, homophily, attribute, and opinion leaders. The four social marketing concepts included: program development, audience segmentation, pre-program data gathering, and program evaluation. Resource management, a social marketing concept measured in the Dearing study, was omitted from the current research because of its difficulty to quantitatively measure.

For the purpose of this study, the four social marketing and five diffusion of innovation concepts were defined in the following ways: program development is the design of a social product while considering the product, price, place, and promotion; audience segmentation is the identification of one or more target audiences within a population; pre-program data gathering is the investigation of factors prior to the design of a campaign or program; program evaluation is systematic assessment of a program to determine its value; communication channels are the means by which messages are
transferred between people or organizations; *innovation-decision process* is the sequence that target members must pass through when adopting a new idea; *homophily* is the extent to which two or more people who communicate perceive that they are similar, and as such, will behave similarly; *attribute* is the perceived characteristics of an innovation that either positively or negatively affects the target member’s decision to adopt a new idea; and *opinion leaders* are people who are respected by others for their knowledge about a particular topic. As such, the following research questions were advanced:

**RQ1:** Have concepts of diffusion of innovations theory been applied in the marketing and communication activities of performing arts organizations?

**RQ2:** Have concepts of social marketing theory been applied in the marketing and communication activities of performing arts organizations?

**RQ3:** What is the relationship between the size of the organization and the frequency of usage of social marketing and diffusion of innovation concepts in performing arts organizations?

**RQ4:** Do organizations who assess themselves as “effective” utilize concepts of diffusion of innovations more than those organizations who assess themselves as “less effective”?

**RQ5:** Do organizations who assess themselves as “effective” utilize concepts of social marketing more than those organizations who assess themselves as “less effective”?
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Pilot Study

In April 2007, a pilot study of the 2006 grant recipients from the Illinois Arts Council was conducted to test the reliability of a new survey instrument. The grantee list included 292 organizations in the performing arts that represented theater, dance, jazz, symphonic, and choral groups. The list of grantees was obtained and used by permission from the Illinois Arts Council.

An electronic survey written and designed by the researcher was distributed to the designated contact at each organization. The survey included a description of the research project and an informed consent and took approximately 15 minutes to complete. The survey included 55 questions in total; 43 questions relating to social marketing and diffusion, nine relating to organizational background, and three open-ended response questions. Based on the results of the pilot survey, modifications were made in the current research instrument in an attempt to improve some of the concept reliabilities. The survey was first distributed electronically on April 24, 2007 and redistributed every ten days, for a total of three waves. The first two distributions produced nearly equal response rates. The third distribution produced significantly less responses and it was concluded that a fourth wave was unnecessary.
Current Study Participants

Empirical data from this study was obtained via electronic survey of the 2006 grantees from the Ohio Arts Council and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. These lists included only those organizations in the performing arts or organizations affiliated with performing arts groups. The lists included 188 grantees from Ohio organizations and 183 grantees from Pennsylvania organizations for a total of 371 potential participants. These organizations represented theater, dance, jazz, symphonic, classical music, and choral groups. The list of grantees was obtained and used by permission from both the Ohio Arts Council and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. The electronic survey was sent to the contact individual who served as the liaison between the arts council and the organization. In most cases this was the executive director, the marketing manager, or staff equivalent.

Overall, the study produced a 34 percent response rate (N=126). Five arts organizations reported web browser problems and requested that a printed survey be sent to their organization. Of the five surveys sent via mail, one was returned and used in the data analysis. Of those organizations responding, 40 were from theater groups, 39 responded to “other” categories which included small group ensembles, bands, choral groups, and children’s performing groups, 19 were from dance groups, 19 were from symphonies, 5 were from opera, and 4 were from jazz groups. Regarding organizational resources, the participants reported their annual operating budgets which varied significantly from $9000 to 260 million. Additionally, organizations were asked to report the number of full and part-time employees in their organization. Results again varied significantly from 3000 employees to organizations that were completely volunteer
staffed. Patron numbers also varied significantly with estimated annual patronage from 20 participants to 1.1 million participants.

Results from the current study were similar to results in a May 2007 pilot study of Illinois arts organizations which overall produced a 32 percent response rate (N=96). Of those organizations responding, 16 were from dance groups, 39 were from theater groups, 11 were from symphonies, 13 were from choral groups, 4 were from opera, and 13 were listed in “Other” categories which included small group ensembles, bands and children’s groups. Regarding organizational resources, the participants reported their annual operating budgets which varied significantly from $6000 to 50.1 million. Additionally, organizations were asked to report the number of full and part-time employees in their organization. Results again varied significantly from 686 employees to organizations that were completely volunteer-staffed.

Instrumentation

An on-line survey developed by the researcher was distributed electronically to the designated contact at each organization. In developing the electronic survey instrument, the researcher met with a staff member of the Learning Technology and School Services department at The University of Akron. The survey was developed using the Modern Mind Interactive System, the University’s software program for on-line survey design. The electronic distribution lists were generated by The University of Akron webmaster and compiled as list serves. The opening page of the e-survey gave a brief explanation of the project, contact information, and included an informed consent. Participants were instructed that their participation in the electronic survey would serve as their consent to participate. The questionnaire took approximately 15 minutes to
complete. The participants were asked to respond to the questions based on their experiences from the most recent performance season. The survey included 61 questions in total; 45 questions that related to concepts of social marketing and diffusion theory, four questions to assess organizational effectiveness, two open-ended response questions, and ten questions relating to organizational background (see Appendix A). The survey utilized a five-point, Likert-type response format with the categories as “Strongly Agree”, “Agree”, “Neutral”, “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree”.

The following are sample questions from the survey that correspond to the nine theoretical concepts from social marketing or diffusion of innovations theory. Program Development: “To diversify our audiences, our organization uses promotional strategies in hopes of attracting new patrons.” Audience Segmentation: “When planning the performance season, our organization identifies the characteristics of a specific audience that we wish to reach, and we develop programming based on that specific target group.” Pre-Program Data Gathering: “As an organization, we have a good knowledge of our current audience members’ characteristics such as age, gender, education level, etc. Evaluation: “We regularly evaluate our communication/marketing strategies for their effectiveness in reaching new audiences.” Communication Channels: “As an organization, we choose communication methods that effectively reach ethnic or diverse populations.” Attributes: “Our organization would be better characterized as “traditional” rather than “innovative.” Homophily: “Our patrons come to our events to socialize with others who have similar interests.” Innovation-Decision: “Individuals who are not currently attending our concerts/performances are aware of the artistic programs we offer.” Opinion Leaders: “Our organization has a spokesperson(s) who is a
community leader whose influence in the community helps to build participation in our programs.” As mentioned, four questions of organizational effectiveness were included in the survey. An example of one of these questions was: “As a result of our efforts to build audience diversity, our organization has seen an increase in attendance among those individuals who do not normally attend our events.”

The questionnaire was first distributed electronically on August 28, 2007, and redistributed every seven days, for a total of three waves. The first wave of the e-survey produced more than half (57%) of the total responses. The second wave produced 34 percent of the total responses and wave three produced the remaining 14 percent of the responses. After the responses were stored electronically, the researcher was able to manage the list serve so as not to re-send survey reminders in waves two and three to organizations who had already participated in the study.

In the first distribution of the survey, the researcher stated that results from the study would be available upon written request. Six organizations responded and requested that results from the current study be sent to their organizations.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

The present study utilized a 51-item questionnaire developed by the researcher. This survey had not been utilized in any other study. However, an earlier version of the survey was used in the May 2007 pilot study of 2006 grantees from the Illinois Arts Council to test the reliability of the questions in the instrument. Based on the results from the initial study, some questions were revised to more accurately reflect the concept being measured. Current reliabilities (Cronbach’s alpha) for seven of the theoretical concepts as well as organizational effectiveness were calculated as follows: Program Development (6-item scale) was .52 (M=24.07, SD=2.86), Audience Segmentation (3-item scale) was .51 (M=1.25, SD=.98), Pre-Program Data Gathering (4-item scale) was .83 (M=15.49, SD=2.86), Evaluation (5-item scale) was .68 (M=19.91, SD=2.81), Communication Channels (5-item scale) was .68 (M=17.60, SD=2.88), Attribute (5-item scale) was .64 (M=13.93, SD=3.15), Homophily (5-item scale) was .66, (M=17.04, SD=3.22), Innovation-Decision (4-item scale) was .73 (M=13.31, SD=2.51), and Organizational Effectiveness (4-item scale) was .65 (M=12.19, SD=2.35). Opinion Leaders (4-item scale), was not calculated for reliability as the questions regarding this concept was written to prompt either a “yes” or “no” response and attempted to determine only if an opinion leader existed in the organization. All concepts, with the exception of Audience Segmentation and Opinion Leaders were measured using a 5-point Likert-type response
format with “5” indicating “Strongly Agree” to “1” indicating “Strongly Disagree.” Audience Segmentation and Opinion Leader questions were written in “yes” or “no” response format to determine the existence or use of the concept (see Table 2).

Comparing reliabilities from the pilot study, reliabilities from the original survey instrument were as follows: Program Development was .46, Pre-Program Data Gathering was .75, Evaluation was .58, Audience Segmentation was .17, Resource Management was .17, Communication Channels was .77, Attribute was .45, Homophily was .54 and Innovation-Decision was .45. After revision of the initial survey instrument, the second survey produced higher reliabilities in all categories with the exception of Communication Channels.

Table 2
Diffusion and Social Marketing Concept Reliabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Cronbach’s (α)</th>
<th>Mean (M)</th>
<th>Std. Deviation (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication Channels</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>17.60</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribute</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>13.93</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophily</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>17.04</td>
<td>3.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation-Decision</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>13.31</td>
<td>2.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>12.19</td>
<td>2.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Development</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>24.07</td>
<td>2.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience Segmentation</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>1.25a</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Program Data Gathering</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>15.49</td>
<td>2.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>19.91</td>
<td>2.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a Variable was measured on a two-point scale.*
The first and second research questions dealt with the use of concepts from social marketing and diffusion of innovations theories. As such, frequencies were calculated on each of the nine concepts. The results are reported here as the percentages of organizations utilizing the concept or the presence of the concept in their programs. Results were as follows: communication channels (72%), attribute (27%), homophily (66%), innovation-decision (66%), opinion leaders (85%), program development (96%), audience segmentation (74%), pre-program data gathering (85%), and evaluation (90%).

Research question three asked about the relationship between the size of the organization and the usage of the concepts from social marketing and diffusion of innovations. In this context, “size of the organization” was measured in two ways: the number of full and part time employees and the annual operating budget. The correlation between these variables was computed using the Pearson coefficient. For both the annual operating budget and number of employees, extreme scores were not included in the analysis. Regarding annual operating budget, no significant correlations were found between an organization’s annual operating budget and the use or existence of any of the nine theoretical concepts. Regarding the relationship between number of employees and the use of the concepts, a weak correlation was found in program development \( (r=.23, p < .05) \) and pre-program data gathering \( (r=.18, p < .05) \). No significant correlations were found between number of employees and the other seven concepts.

Interestingly, several moderate to strong relationships were found among variables. They included the relationships between communication channels and program development \( (r=.49, p <.01) \), communication channels and evaluation \( (r=.47, p <.01) \), evaluation and innovation-decision \( (r=.42, p<.01) \), and evaluation and pre-program
development \( (r=0.60, p<0.01) \). A negative relationship was found to exist between communication channels and attributes \( (r=-0.42, p<0.01) \). Weaker relationships were also noted between opinion leaders and innovation-decision \( (r=0.31, p<0.01) \), opinion leaders and program development \( (r=0.33, p<0.01) \), opinion leaders and evaluation \( (r=0.39, p<0.01) \), communication channels and innovation-decision \( (r=0.37, p<0.01) \), communication channels and pre-program development \( (r=0.39, p<0.01) \), and homophily and attributes \( (r=0.36, p<0.01) \). And finally, it was noted that a weak negative correlation existed between attributes and program development \( (r=-0.33, p<0.01) \).

Research questions four and five dealt with the relationship between organization’s self-perceived effectiveness and the use of the concepts of social marketing and diffusion of innovation. The survey included four self-assessment questions to measure the effectiveness of organizations in their activities to build audience diversity. “Effective” organizations were identified as those groups who scored at and above the median score \( (\text{Mdn}=12) \) as determined by the computed frequency of scores. “Ineffective” organizations were identified as those groups who scored below the median score. Of those participants responding to the effectiveness questions, 64 percent \( (N=70) \) were categorized as “effective” and 36 percent \( (N=39) \) were categorized as “ineffective”. The difference in number of responses and actual study participants was due to missing values.

To calculate any differences between effective and ineffective organizations and their use of social marketing and diffusion of innovation concepts, multivariate tests utilizing MANOVA were conducted. The results showed a significant difference in mean scores in two social marketing concepts, program development \( (F=15.77, p<0.000) \)
and pre-program data gathering ($F=4.53, p<.05$) and three diffusion of innovation concepts, communication channels ($F=18.68, p<.000$), opinion leaders ($F=4.59, p<.05$), and attributes ($F=7.74, p<.05$). The value of Wilks’ Lamda was .78, $p<.05$. In each of the five areas, effective organizations demonstrated a higher use of these concepts over those organizations that scored themselves as ineffective, with the exception of attributes and homophily. However, the attribute questions were written to assess the organization’s approach to tradition, not the organization’s innovativeness. The homophily questions surveyed the organizations as to the similarities between patrons rather than the diversity among patrons. No significant differences between groups could be found for audience segmentation, evaluation, homophily, or innovation-decision (see Table 3).
### Table 3
Effective and Non-Effective Group Variances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean (M)</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication Channels</td>
<td>Effective</td>
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<td>18.59</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ineffective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13.21</td>
<td>14.85</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18.68** .000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribute</td>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td>17.74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ineffective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13.66</td>
<td>12.97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7.74** .006</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophily</td>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.53</td>
<td>7.74</td>
<td>.104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ineffective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.53</td>
<td>7.74</td>
<td>.104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation-Decision</td>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15.36</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ineffective</td>
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<td>12.97</td>
<td>14.85</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.59* .034</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Opinion Leaders</td>
<td>Effective</td>
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<td>1.39</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ineffective</td>
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<td>1.13</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15.77** .000</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Development</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>15.83</td>
<td>14.62</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.53* .036</td>
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<td>Audience Segmentation</td>
<td>Effective</td>
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<td>20.30</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>3.36 .069</td>
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</table>

*Note. Wilks’ Lambda value was .781, F=3.09. *p<.05. **p<.01.*
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the applicability of concepts from two theories, social marketing and diffusion of innovation, to the communication and marketing activities of performing arts organizations. The majority of research regarding these theories has been rooted in the advancement of health and social programs designed to improve the lifestyle of individuals and societies. However, it is the generalizability of these theories that may encourage professionals from other fields to more closely examine the benefits that may be gained by utilizing concepts such as program development, opinion leaders, communication channels, and evaluation to influence behavior change.

We have already seen an extension of diffusion theory from its’ earliest application in Ryan and Gross’ 1943 hybrid seed corn study to a variety of disciplines that utilize diffusion concepts to the benefit of many. According to Rogers (2004), there are few behavior science disciplines (perhaps there are none) that do not study diffusion. In geography, scholars investigate the diffusion of innovations through space. Political scientists study the diffusion of policies. Anthropologists explore the diffusion and consequences of technological innovations like the snowmobile in Finland. Some have studied the diffusion of news events like the
news of September 11, 2001, and terrorist attacks, educational innovations, and public health innovations. (p. 17)

Social marketing, too has evolved as the application of time-tested commercial marketing concepts to non-profit and government groups. Social marketers have successfully influenced change in programs as varied as decreasing substance use to programs aimed at increasing safer driving (Hastings, 2003). Social marketers have used targeted marketing strategies to bring about individual as well as group social change.

Dearing (2004) offered the following:

Studies [of diffusion] have tended to operationalize only one concept at a time, or have been more concerned with the identification of diffusion processes rather than tests of concept application. It is reasonable to conclude that combinations of these concepts, designed and implemented in concert, may produce even more impressive diffusion results. (p. 25)

The current study was successful in not only measuring multiple concepts of diffusion, but also successfully measured multiple concepts of social marketing; two theories which appear to be complimentary and inter-related.

Based on the results of the Illinois pilot study as well as the current assessment of Ohio and Pennsylvania organizations, the researcher felt that several critical objectives were accomplished which included the creation, implementation, and testing of a new research instrument. Additionally, strong empirical evidence was found to support the relevance of diffusion of innovation and social marketing theories in the communication programs of arts organizations. The following section will identify the objectives achieved during the study followed by a discussion of each of the five research questions.
Research Objectives

A major contribution of this study was the creation of a new instrument designed to measure the applicability of the two theories in a unique organizational context, namely the performing arts organization. Very few studies have attempted to measure the application of these concepts to programs or organizations with a non-health focus. Additionally, the majority of studies have not measured the applicability of these theories between similar organization types; rather, the research has tended to analyze one specific program and offer evidence that said concepts were or were not implemented (Griffin & Dunwoody, 2000; Harris & Toledo, 1997; Rudd, Goldberg & Dietz, 1999).

Calculated reliabilities from the survey between the first distribution and the subsequent revision improved greatly (see Table 4). Related to this was the discovery that survey style methodology can be an effective way to measure the use and frequency of these theoretical concepts. A review of related research has found that few studies have used survey methodology when examining programs which apply social marketing and diffusion of innovation constructs. Additionally, the study produced a strong response rate in both the pilot (32 %) and current study (34%), suggesting that diversity in the arts is an important issue that is of interest to arts organizations. As part of the survey, participants were given an opportunity to offer feedback regarding the survey and request a written summary of findings. Six organizations requested a summary and two organizations offered the following comments:

We would like a copy of the research summary and would also like a printed copy of the survey. There are many questions in the survey that would stimulate a lot of
discussion in our group regarding communication within our community and region. (Anonymous, August 28, 2007)

I would appreciate a summary of your findings! In particular, it would be interesting to see something about the impact of education and outreach programs on diversifying attendance. You touched on that in your survey, and I strongly feel that community education can be instrumental in breaking down barriers to arts participation. (Anonymous, August, 27, 2007)

Table 4
Survey Instrument Reliabilities: Pilot Study and Current Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Pilot Study (α)</th>
<th>Current Study (α)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication Channels</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribute</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophily</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation-Decision</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Development</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.52</td>
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<tr>
<td>Audience Segmentation</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.51</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-Program Data Gathering</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.83</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>.58</td>
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*Effectiveness was not measured in the May 2007 pilot study.

Research Questions

Research questions one and two deal with the frequency of usage of nine concepts from social marketing and diffusion of innovations. The vast majority of organizations utilized eight of the nine concepts, the exception being attributes. Regarding
communication channels, 72% of the organizations felt that their communication strategies were effectively reaching current and potential patrons. Additionally, the organizations felt that their choices of communication channels were the best ways to communicate with potential patrons.

Regarding homophily, 66% of the organizations stated that they believed that their patrons have similar interests and socialize easily with one another. They also stated that they provided opportunities for their patrons to socialize with each other and that this socialization encouraged participation. Sixty-six percent of the organizations surveyed believed that they were aware of the innovation-decision process of members of their community. That is to say that the arts organizations felt that members of their community were aware of their programs and have received information that persuades them to participate.

Regarding opinion leadership, 85% of the organizations stated that they had an opinion leader who helped to build participation in their programs. These opinion leaders were defined as community leaders, celebrities, artists and performers, and/or business leaders.

Regarding program development, 96% of the organizations reported using strategies of product, price, place, and/or promotion in creating their programs. This included offering programs that were priced so as not to exclude any certain populations and offering such programming in accessible locations. Additionally, the organizations reported that their marketing and promotional efforts were directed to current as well as potential patrons, particularly those that could be considered “minority or unique populations.” Regarding audience segmentation, 76% of the organizations reported using
target audience strategies either in their programming or communication. However, based on the wording of the survey questions, organizations could have interpreted a “target audience” to mean their patrons who currently attend their programs. If this interpretation was used, audience segmentation may have occurred, but not with the purpose of broadening or expanding an audience base. This weakness will be discussed in the limitations section of the discussion.

Regarding pre-program data gathering, 85% of the organizations reported having a good knowledge of both current and potential audience member characteristics. It is assumed that such knowledge is helpful to the organizations as they develop communication and marketing programs to increase participation. And finally, regarding evaluation efforts, 90% of the organizations stated that they had some form of evaluation by which to measure the success or failures of their programs. The only concept that was not frequently identified by arts groups was attributes, which was present in only 27% of the organizations. This may be due in part to the difficulty in measuring such a concept. The survey questions asked the organizations to assess the public’s perception of their programs. These “perceptions” were termed attributes. These types of assessments can be difficult to measure as they involve answers based on second-hand perceptions.

Research question three sought to assess whether there was a relationship between the size of the organization and the use of the nine social marketing and diffusion concepts. As mentioned, “size of the organization” was measured in two ways: the number of full and part-time employees and annual operating budget. There appears to be no significant relationship between the number of employees or the operating budget...
and the use of social marketing or diffusion strategies. Such finding should be encouraging to all arts organizations as it does not preclude any organization, large or small, from implementing programs using these tested concepts. Further, this finding may suggest that it is the quality and not the quantity of staff that is most influential in creating successful programs of social change.

Research questions four and five analyzed relationship between the organization’s self-perception of effectiveness and their use of diffusion and social marketing strategies. The effectiveness questions dealt with the organization’s ability to build audience diversity, through the use of activities aimed at attracting a broader-base of audience members. Effective organizations were those groups who felt that they were successful in their efforts to diversify their audiences by attracting individuals who did not normally attend their events. Conversely, ineffective organizations were those groups who scored themselves as less successful in their abilities to diversify their audiences. Results demonstrated that five concepts (program development, pre-program data gathering, communication channels, opinion leaders, and attributes) were used more frequently by effective organizations than by ineffective organizations. The mean scores for each of these concepts were higher for effective organizations than for ineffective organizations with the exception of attributes and homophily. However, the attribute questions were written to measure the organization’s traditionalism, not its innovativeness. As such, the ineffective organizations’ mean score was higher for attributes than effective organizations, thereby offering further evidence that effective organizations are more inclined to participate in activities that promote new ideas, such as audience diversity.
Regarding homophily, the survey questions sought to determine the degree of similarities between patrons such as the similarities in artistic preferences, education, and income level. Ineffective organizations perceived that they had higher levels of homophily or similarities that did effective organizations. This again, supports the assumption that effective organizations sponsor programs which attract a more diverse set of consumers.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

It is noted however that the study presented some limitations. Because this research attempted to measure specific theoretical constructs, it was important to capture and maintain the integrity of each of the diffusion and social marketing concepts. The success of this study was dependent on the researcher’s ability to create a survey instrument that measured the true meaning of each concept. In some cases this was difficult to achieve. As mentioned earlier, the interpretation of “audience segmentation” may mean vastly different things to different organizations. Some organizations may identify their “target audience” as their current patrons. However for the purposes of this study, “target audience” was assumed to mean those individuals who were who were non-attenders and specifically those who might bring diversity to arts audiences. Although reliabilities increased significantly between the pilot and current study, revision may continue to improve the quality of the research instrument.

Based on the literature regarding audience development, it appears that many arts organizations are interested in diversifying and broadening their audience base, particularly by encouraging participation from minorities. This may be due to several reasons including government and other funding organizations emphasis on cultural
policies that are non-discriminatory. Although this current study placed some emphasis on diversity through ethnic audience development, the main purpose of the current research was to determine whether ideas from two theoretical frameworks were used in the communication activities of arts organizations in their attempts to broaden their audiences. Future studies could more specifically address the ethnicity issue. Should such a study be pursued, it would be important to conduct research in more ethnically-diverse geographic areas such as Los Angeles, Miami, or New York.

Overall, the study makes a strong case for the application of social marketing and diffusion of innovations theories in the communication and marketing programs of performing arts organizations. A new research instrument was created, tested, and shown to be an effective method by which to measure the use and frequency of these concepts. A strong response rate indicates an interest from arts organizations to better understand ways in which institutions and individuals can make the arts more accessible to a broader population. Such an understanding will benefit not only the arts organizations, but also the individuals and communities whom they serve.
REFERENCES


March 29, 2007

Susan M. Hunter
11864 Farm Creek Ave.
Uniontown, Ohio 44685

Ms. Hunter:

The University of Akron’s Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB) completed a review of the protocol entitled “Applying Social Marketing and Diffusion of Innovation Theories: An Analysis of the Marketing and Communication Activities of Performing Arts Groups.” The IRB application number assigned to this project is 20070319.

The protocol was reviewed on March 28, 2007 and qualified for exemption from continuing IRB review. The protocol represents minimal risk to subjects and matches the following federal category for exemption:

1. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information is recorded in such a manner that subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of responses outside the research would reasonably place the subjects at risk of civil or criminal liability or be damaging to subjects’ financial standing, employability or reputation.

Enclosed is a copy of the informed consent document, which the IRB has approved for your use in this research. In addition, your request for a waiver of documentation of informed consent, as permitted under 45 CFR 46.117(f)(c), is also approved.

Annual continuation applications are not required for exempt projects. If you make any changes or modifications to the study’s design or procedures that either increase the risk to subjects or include activities that do not fall within one of the categories exempted from the regulations, please contact the IRB first, to discuss whether or not a request for change must be submitted. Any such changes or modifications must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to their implementation.

Please retain this letter for your files. If the research is being conducted for a master’s thesis or doctoral dissertation, the student must file a copy of this letter with the thesis or dissertation.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Sharon McWhorter
Interim Director

Cc: Yang Lin, Advisor
    Rosalie Hail, IRB Chair
This survey has been developed by Susan Hunter, a graduate student at The University of Akron in Akron, Ohio. The information gathered from this survey will be used to analyze the communication and marketing processes of arts organizations. The survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

You are encouraged to share your perceptions about the organization for which you now work. Responses will be anonymous and data will be secured in electronic format. Results will be reported only in general form.

Participation is voluntary. There are no anticipated risks or direct benefits to participating in this survey. However, your responses will provide valuable insight about the nature and focus of marketing and the arts.

If you have any questions about this study, you may call Susan Hunter at (330) 417-7476 or Dr. Yang Lin in the Department of Communications at (330) 972-7600. This project has been reviewed and approved by The University of Akron Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call the IRB at (330) 972-7666 or 1-888-232-8790.

Your completion and submission of this survey will serve as your consent to participate. You are welcome to download and print this consent form for future reference.

Thank you for your time.
Name of Organization:
Address:
City, State, ZIP
Website address:
Title/Position of person completing this survey:
Number of Employees (full and part-time):
Estimated Number of patrons annually:
Annual operating budget (for categorical purposes only)
Year that the organization was established:
Please indicate your primary performance specialty:
  Theater
  Dance
  Opera
  Symphony
  Jazz
  Other
  Please specify:

Directions: Please indicate your choice by clicking on the corresponding space for each of the following questions. Responses should be based on your perceptions of the most recent performance season.

1. Our organization offers a variety of ticket prices to the public. That is to say that our ticket prices are priced so as not to exclude any populations that may wish to attend…

   Strongly Agree
   Agree
   Neutral
   Disagree
   Strongly Disagree

2. Our organization offers a cultural experience in a venue (location) that is accessible to the community in which we reside...

   Strongly Agree
   Agree
   Neutral
   Disagree
   Strongly Disagree
3. Our organization markets our programs primarily to current patrons...

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

4. To diversify our audiences, our organization uses promotional strategies in hopes of attracting new patrons...

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

5. Our organization sponsors events (i.e. concerts or programs) in areas of our community where minority or other unique populations might attend...

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

6. Our organization focuses on expanding our audience base by marketing our events to minority or other unique populations...

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree
7. Our organization attempts to grow or broaden our audience by creating programs that attract...(check all that apply)

   New patrons with similar characteristics as our current patrons
   New patrons with different ethnic backgrounds
   New patrons from different age groups (for example, younger patrons)
   None
   Other (Please Explain…)

8. In general, our organization is more concerned with developing an artistic product that appeals to the general population rather than a specific or target population...

   _____ Yes
   _____ No

9. When planning the performance season, our organization identifies the characteristics of a specific audience that we wish to reach, and we develop programming based on that specific target group...

   _____ Yes
   _____ No

10. As an organization, we implement communication strategies with the intent of reaching a target group…

    _____ Yes
    _____ No

11. When planning our programming, our organization considers the following characteristics of our audience members: (check all that apply)

    Age
    Gender
    Education level
    Income level
    Race/Ethnicity
    Artistic Preferences
    None
    Other (Please explain)
12. Of the following, which are the 3 most important audience characteristics you consider when planning concerts or performances...(Choose up to three)
   - Gender
   - Education level
   - Race/Ethnicity
   - Artistic Preferences of Individual
   - Age
   - Income Level
   - None
   - Other (Please explain)

13. As an organization, we have a good knowledge of our current audience members' characteristics (age, gender, education level etc.)...
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

14. As an organization, we have a good knowledge of the characteristics (age, gender, educational level etc.) of potential audience members or individuals we hope to attract to our programs...
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

15. Our organization has a method or a process to gather information regarding our patrons so that we maintain a current profile of "who" our audience is...
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Neutral
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree
16. As an organization, we have a good idea as to the kinds of individuals that attend our events (i.e. concerts and performances)...

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

17. Our organization makes programming decisions based on the successes or failures of past programming...

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

18. Our organization provides no opportunities for patrons to provide feedback regarding our artistic programs...

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

19. Our organization regularly evaluates our artistic programs to determine if they appeal to our intended markets...

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
20. Our organization regularly evaluates our communications activities for their effectiveness in reaching our intended audiences...

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

21. Our organization regularly evaluates other program features such as ticket prices and venue...

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

22. Our communication methods are effectively reaching our current patrons...

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

23. We have a separate communication/marketing strategy to reach new or potential patrons...

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
24. As an organization, we choose communication methods that effectively reach ethnic or diverse populations...

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

25. Our organization knows the best ways to communicate with potential patrons (for example: newspaper, television, website, or personal communication)

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

26. Our current promotional and marketing activities are not effectively attracting individuals who might be considered "non-traditional" audience members...

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

27. Regarding your organization’s promotional activities, rank the following items from most to least effective in terms of reaching your intended audiences…(6=most effective, 1=least effective)

Printed Media (advertisement, direct mail, newsletters)
Mass Media (radio, television)
Electronic Media (websites etc.)
Word of mouth (patron recommendation)
Outreach/Education programs
Other (Please explain)
28. Our organization would be better characterized as “traditional” rather than “innovative”…

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

29. Generally, each year our organization offers a similar performance schedule with similar artistic offerings…

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

30. We are perceived as an organization who welcomes individuals from all walks of life to participate in our events (i.e. concerts/performances)…

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

31. How do you feel about the following statement: "Our organization is committed to ethnically diversifying our audience."

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree
32. We are perceived as an organization that generally attracts individuals from certain social classes…

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

33. Overall, our patrons have similar sociodemographic characteristics such as age, income level, and educational level...

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

34. Our patrons come to our events to socialize with others who have similar interests...

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

35. Our organization offers opportunities, such as pre-show or post-show gatherings, to encourage our patrons to socialize...

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
36. In general, our patrons feel comfortable socializing with one another because they have similar interests…

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

37. Comparing our organization to other area organizations, our audiences are more ethnically diverse…

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

38. Individuals living in our community are aware of the programs that our organization offers…

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

39. Individuals who are not currently attending our concerts/performances are aware of the programs that we offer…

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
40. Individuals who do not currently attend our concerts/performances receive information regarding our organization that persuades them to participate…

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

41. Individuals in our community have information regarding our organization that effectively persuades them to attend our concerts/performances…

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

42. Our organization has a spokesperson who is a community leader whose influence helps to build participation in our programs…

[ ] Yes  
[ ] No

43. Our organization has a spokesperson who is a celebrity whose influence helps to build participation in our programs…

[ ] Yes  
[ ] No

44. Our organization has a spokesperson who is an artist/performer whose influence helps to build participation in our programs…

[ ] Yes  
[ ] No
45. **Our organization has a spokesperson who is a business/industry leader whose influence helps to build participation in our programs…**

_____ Yes  
_____ No

46. **Our organization has been effective in diversifying our audiences by attracting individuals who do not normally attend our events…**

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

47. **Our organization has been more effective in diversifying our audiences compared to other arts organizations in our community…**

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree

48. **As a result of our efforts to build audience diversity, our organization has seen an increase in attendance among those individuals who do not normally attend our events…**

Strongly Agree  
Agree  
Neutral  
Disagree  
Strongly Disagree
49. Our programs to build general audience growth are more effective than our programs to build audience diversity…

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

Your comments are very important to this study. Please respond to these final few questions based on your most recent or current performing season.

50. Please describe any activities that your organization does to attract unique or targeted populations to your events...

51. In your opinion, how important is it for arts organizations to diversify their audiences by marketing to unique populations, particularly ethnic populations? (Please explain)

Thank you for your participation.