

International Journal of

Sports Marketing & Sponsorship

Research Papers

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Sports spectator segmentation: examining the differing psychological connections among spectators of leagues and teams	95
Increasing sponsorship effectiveness through brand experience	112
Value creation: assessing the relationships between quality, consumption value and behavioural intentions at sporting events	126



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Abstracts

**Professional niche sports sponsorship:
an investigation of sponsorship selection criteria** 77

Greg P. Greenhalgh T. Christopher Greenwell

This study surveys professional niche sports sponsors in an effort to empirically understand what selection criteria these companies deem important when evaluating professional niche sports sponsorship proposals. Findings suggest that professional niche sports properties may possess unique attributes on which sponsors place very high levels of importance, such as cost effectiveness, flexibility in assisting sponsors achieve their objectives, a more targeted fan-base and decreased sponsorship clutter. Pragmatically, findings provide professional niche sports managers with tools that may be useful when competing for sponsorship funding against more established mainstream sports properties. Theoretically, the current study begins to fill a gap in the sports sponsorship literature which has primarily focused on mainstream professional sports, major intercollegiate sports and elite amateur sports such as the Olympic Games.

**Sports spectator segmentation: examining the
differing psychological connections among
spectators of leagues and teams** 95

Jason P. Doyle Thilo Kunkel Daniel C. Funk

The results from this study extend previous research by empirically testing the involvement based Psychological Continuum Model (PCM) segmentation procedure on sports spectators. To date, the procedure has only been verified using sports participants, although the PCM was developed with a broader range of sports consumers in mind. The validity of the procedure is confirmed using two online surveys, which gather data from spectators at both the league (n=761) and team (n=623) level. A three-step segmentation procedure then places respondents into the PCM stages – awareness, attraction, attachment and allegiance. ANOVA tests indicate that the four groups significantly differ from one another on attitudinal and behavioural measures for both league and team spectators. Findings suggest that the PCM is an appropriate framework to investigate

fan development at both league and team levels. Thus sports marketers are provided with a research segmentation tool capable of helping them to better understand their heterogeneous consumer bases and thus guide marketing decisions.

**Increasing sponsorship effectiveness through
brand experience** 112

Marieke L. Fransen Thomas J. L. van Rompay
Daan G. Muntinga

This quasi-experimental field study examines whether companies can improve the effectiveness of their sponsorship investments by creating a brand experience. Data were collected among participants of a sponsored marathon. During this event participants had the opportunity to engage in an experience orchestrated by one of the main sponsors of the event. We compare the data of participants who ran the marathon and also engaged in the experience with those who solely ran the marathon. The results reveal that participating in the experience increases top of mind awareness, brand recall and attitudes towards the sponsoring brand, compared to just running the marathon. Additionally, within the experience condition, brand experience and flow predict brand attitudes.

**Value creation: assessing the relationships between
quality, consumption value and behavioural
intentions at sporting events** 126

Masayuki Yoshida Jeffrey D. James J. Joseph Cronin Jr

Throughout this study, the authors sought to identify the antecedents and consequences of a multidimensional consumption-value construct. Data were collected from sports spectators in Japan (n=372) and the United States (n=396). The results indicate that three quality dimensions (functional, technical and aesthetic quality) have a significant impact on their respective value dimensions in the context of sporting events. Moreover, the constructs of entertainment and community prestige have positive effects on customers' behavioural intentions.



Editorial

Professor Michel Desbordes, ISC School of Management, Paris, & University Paris Sud 11, France
Tel: +33 (0)1 69 15 61 57 Fax +33 (0)1 69 15 62 37 Email: mdesbordes@iscparis.com



2013 is more about the everyday

First, I'd like to wish all readers a belated Happy New Year and I hope that 2013 will be a prosperous and exciting time for all of us. On that note, it is probably a good moment to look at what the year might bring to our realm of interest.

2013 is a strange year in the world of sport, with no major international events (no Olympics, no soccer World Cup). In this respect it actually gives us the opportunity to consider the industry in what scientists might consider to be 'test conditions'. We will be able to see how everyday sports properties are marketed and how sponsorships are activated without mega-events clouding our judgements, impacting TV viewing figures or dominating press and online coverage.

For those conducting research into sports marketing, 2013 is therefore a valuable year and I would urge you to formulate your programmes to take this into account.

In terms of sponsorship, the industry has seen an upheaval in recent years, with rights fees to prime properties rocketing and sponsors trying to get to grips with using social media to activate their rights.

Our sister publication, *Sponsorship Today*, recently produced research showing that more than \$2 billion was invested annually in acquiring rights to international federations. Given that this investment doesn't give these sponsors a direct link to the sports stars, as realised through individual endorsement deals and, in many cases, team sponsorships, I think the year ahead will see some questions asked about such major rights fees.

Could Adidas get more marketing leverage from spending its FIFA rights fee on social media? Could Coca-Cola make more from creating its own events, as has Red Bull, than it sees delivered via its portfolio of global sponsorships? The answer, in both cases, might well be 'No', but it shows the pressure that major rights holders could come under in the future. Sponsors want content that they can use to engage their target

audience. The days of paying big money for basic brand exposure are gone.

Federations, therefore, need to work hard to ensure that sponsors can use their assets to engage with fans in a cost-effective way. Of course they have content, and of course they have a communication channel with fans. But consider the music video *Gangnam Style*. It had no global superstars, no pre-existing database of fans, no website regularly viewed by millions, no major TV contracts to broadcast it around the world. It was put on *YouTube* and within five months had been viewed by more than one billion people. It shows the power of electronic word of mouth: people find content they like and pass it on.

Brands are keen to use similar techniques, and any rights holder who considers that they only need official links and communication channels to enable success for their sponsors is living very dangerously. Federations and clubs will therefore have to work a lot harder to ensure that their sponsorship offerings can help brands to meet their objectives. This will mean social media strategies that can adapt to the rapidly changing media environment.

One of the key roles of the *Journal* is to stimulate research and debate and I would recommend that researchers look at this area in particular over the next year; at present it is the subject that is closest to the hearts of all major sponsors.

Michel Desbordes

Professor Michel Desbordes, Editor
Email: mdesbordes@iscparis.com



Editorial board

Editor Professor Michel Desbordes

ISC School of Management, Paris, France & University Paris Sud 11, France
Tel: +33 (0)1 69 15 61 57 Fax +33 (0)1 69 15 62 37 Email: mdesbordes@iscparis.com

EDITORIAL PANEL

Wladimir Andreff

Université Paris I, France
andreff@club-internet.fr

Artemisia Apostolopoulo

Robert Morris College, USA
apostolopoulou@rmu.edu

Dr Kathy Babiak

University of Michigan, USA
kbabiak@umich.edu

Dr Carlos Barros

Instituto Superior de Economia e Gestao
Portugal
cbarros@iseg.utl.pt

Dr Sue Bridgewater

Warwick Business School, UK
Sue.Bridgewater@wbs.ac.uk

Matt Brown

University of South Carolina, USA
MTBROWN@mailbox.sc.edu

Prof Simon Chadwick

Coventry University, UK
simon.chadwick@coventry.ac.uk

Dr Laurence Chalip

University of Texas at Austin, USA
lchalip@mail.utexas.edu

Prof Dae Ryun Chang

Yonsei University, Korea
drchang@yonsei.ac.kr

Dr Nicolas Chanavat

University Paris Sud, France
nicolas.chanavat@u-psud.fr

Chen-Yueh Chen

University of Taiwan
chenchenyueh@hotmail.com

Prof Bettina Cornwell

University of Oregon, USA
tbc@uoregon.edu

Nigel Currie

BrandRapport, UK
ncurrie@brand-rapport.com

Geoff Dickson Ph.D

AUT University, New Zealand
geoff.dickson@aut.ac.nz

Prof Harold Dolles

University of Gothenburg, Sweden
harald.dolles@handels.gu.se

Dr Liu Dongfeng

Shanghai University of Sport, China
donalddf@hotmail.com

Dr Jan Drengner

Chemnitz University of Technology, Germany
drengner@wirtschaft.tu-chemnitz.de

Prof Frank Go

RSM, Erasmus University, Netherlands
fgo@rsm.nl

Paolo Guenzi

Universita Bocconi, Italy
paolo.guenzi@sdabocconi.it

Christopher Hautbois

Université Paris Sud 11, France
christopher.hautbois@u-psud.fr

Dr Jörg Henseler

Nijmegen School of Management
Netherlands
joerg@henseler.com

Adrian Hitchen

Sponsormetrix, UK
adrian.hitchen@lineone.net

Youngjin Hur

University of Central Missouri, USA
youngjinhur@gmail.com

Craig Hyatt

Brock University, Canada
chyatt@brocku.ca

Jeffrey James

Florida State University, USA
jdjames@fsu.edu

Dr Kihan Kim

Seoul National University, Korea
kihan@snu.ac.kr

Paul Kitchen

University of Ulster, UK
pj.kitchen@ulster.ac.uk

Hyungil Kwon

Chung-Ang University, Korea
hkwon@cau.ac.kr

Dr Heath McDonald

Swinburne University, Australia
heathmcdonald@swin.edu.au

Tony Meenaghan

University College Dublin, Ireland
tony.meenaghan@ucd.ie

Yue Meng-Lewis

Bournemouth University, UK
ymeng@bournemouth.ac.uk

Dr Frank Pons

Université Laval, Canada
frank.pons@fsa.ulaval.ca

Dr Pascale Quester

University of Adelaide, Australia
pascale.quester@adelaide.edu.au

Dr André Richelieu

Université Laval, Canada
andre.richelieu@mrk.ulaval.ca

Prof Sten Söderman

Stockholm University, Sweden
sod@fek.su.se

Prof David Snyder

Tompkins Cortland Community College
profdnsnyder@gmail.com

David Stotlar

University of Northern Colorado, USA
david.stotlar@unco.edu

Marijke Taks

University of Windsor, Canada
mtaks@uwindsor.ca

Prof Tracy Taylor

University of Technology, Sydney, Australia
Tracy.Taylor@uts.edu.au

Björn Walliser

Université de Nancy, France
bjorn.walliser@univ-nancy2.fr

Darin White

Brock University, Canada
dwhite1@samford.edu

Dr Bradley Wilson

RMIT University, Australia
brad.wilson@rmit.edu.au

Prof Herbert Woratschek

University of Bayreuth, Germany
hj.woratschek@uni-bayreuth.de



Professional niche sports sponsorship: an investigation of sponsorship selection criteria

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Greg P. Greenhalgh

Director of Student Services and Outreach Center for Sport Leadership
Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia, USA
Email: gpgreenhalgh@vcu.edu
Tel: +1 804 827 5148

T. Christopher Greenwell

Professor, Department of Health & Sport Sciences,
University of Louisville, Mississippi, USA

Peer reviewed

Abstract

This study surveys professional niche sports sponsors in an effort to empirically understand what selection criteria these companies deem important when evaluating professional niche sports sponsorship proposals. Findings suggest that professional niche sports properties may possess unique attributes on which sponsors place very high levels of importance, such as cost effectiveness, flexibility in assisting sponsors achieve their objectives, a more targeted fan-base and decreased sponsorship clutter. Pragmatically, findings provide professional niche sports managers with tools that may be useful when competing for sponsorship funding against more established mainstream sports properties. Theoretically, the current study begins to fill a gap in the sports sponsorship literature which has primarily focused on mainstream professional sports, major intercollegiate sports and elite amateur sports such as the Olympic Games.

Executive summary

All sports properties are faced with the pressure to acquire sponsorship. Some are more reliant on this funding source than others. Specifically, professional niche sports require funding from sponsorship to cover day-to-day operations (Lough & Irwin, 2001). Professional niche sports are defined in this study as any professional sports in North America, other than the National Football League (NFL), National Basketball Association (NBA), National Hockey League

(NHL), Major League Basketball (MLB), National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) and Professional Golfers Association (PGA) Tour.

One of the most elementary steps in securing sponsorship funding is to develop an in-depth understanding of what potential sponsors value when evaluating sponsorship opportunities. A number of studies have indicated that professional niche sports properties may offer sponsors unique benefits that



mainstream sports properties are unable or unwilling, to provide. These unique benefits may include cost effectiveness, more targeted fan bases, decreased sponsorship clutter and flexibility in assisting sponsors achieve their sponsorship objectives. However, these potential competitive advantages are based on speculation, as no empirical evidence is currently available that measures the sponsorship selection criteria that professional niche sports sponsors deem important.

For this study surveys were emailed to 352 corporate sponsorship decision-makers at companies known to engage in sports sponsorship. Respondents were provided with the definition of professional niche sports (as above) and asked if they had previously engaged in a sponsorship relationship with one of these types of sports properties. Those indicating that they had sponsored a professional niche sport were then asked to identify which niche sport they had sponsored and then refer to this particular relationship for the remainder of the questionnaire. The reason sponsors were asked to refer to one particular relationship was to help ensure responses were as realistic as possible and not based on a hypothetical or best/worst case scenario. Respondents were then asked to rate the level of importance they placed on each of 34 selection criteria when they evaluated the latest niche sport they had sponsored on eight-point scale, ranging from 1=Not Important to 8=Extremely Important.

Overall, sponsors indicated that they take many criteria into consideration when evaluating professional niche sports sponsorships, as 32 of the 34 selection criteria were given a mean value greater than 4.5 on the 8-point scale. Respondents also indicated that those potentially unique benefits professional niche sports provide are very important. The selection criteria that respondents place the highest level of importance on include: cost effectiveness, company image fit within the target market of the sports, the flexibility of the sports property, spectator demographics, and the company's product/service image fit with the sport's image.

These findings empirically demonstrate the following. Firstly, that professional niche sports sponsors accept and value those (previously anecdotal) claims that professional niche sports may provide unique benefits to sponsors. Secondly, that professional niche sports properties should be acutely aware of their fan base, what their fans look like from a demographic and psychographic perspective and how this matches a potential sponsor's target market/image. Finally, due to the fact that potential sponsors place such high importance on selection criteria, professional niche sports properties may be wise to customise each sponsorship proposal to indicate how a relationship could achieve the potential sponsor's goals.

Introduction

Sponsorship has been described as the financial backbone of many sports properties and can be the central element in the image of an event. Within North America, an unsponsored sporting event is often viewed as second rate and of little significance (Lamont & Dowell, 2007). Therefore, the attainment of sponsorship support is among the most critical tasks of any sports manager.

While sponsorship support is crucial at all levels of sport, professional niche sports may be the most reliant on this form of funding. Commonly, the term 'professional sports' conjures up visions of major league, elite-level sport played in front of tens of thousands of fans and broadcast to millions nationally or internationally. However, the North American professional sports landscape includes a variety of niche, non-mainstream, fringe, minor league, non-traditional or emerging professional sports. Several researchers have provided examples of professional niche sports, including the National Lacrosse League – NLL (Hanas, 2007; Livingstone, 2009; Tedesco, 2009), Professional Bull Riders – PBR (Livingstone, 2009; McCarthy, 2006; Tedesco, 2009), Association of Volleyball Professionals – AVP



(Tedesco, 2009), Extreme/Action Sports (Hochman, 1999; Mickle, 2010), Women's National Basketball Association – WNBA (Livingstone, 2009; Tedesco, 2009) and Women's Professional Soccer league – WPS (Livingstone, 2009; Tedesco, 2009). While this is but a small sampling of North American professional niche sports, it demonstrates the variety of professional sports which is sometimes forgotten, or at least not top of mind, when most people envision professional sports. For the remainder of the current study, this collection of sports will be referred to as 'professional niche sports'.

Funding from sponsorships is viewed as vital capital for operations within professional niche sports (Lough & Irwin, 2001) as these sports do not receive the revenues from media contracts and gate receipts that their more affluent mainstream counterparts do. Stotlar (2009) noted three examples of professional niche sports events that have been cancelled purely due to a lack of sponsorship funding – an international badminton tournament, the Chicago stop on the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) tour and the Women's World Doubles Championship in Fort Lauderdale. A number of Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) events have also been cancelled due to lack of sponsorship support (Ballard, 2009). More recently, the Sand Creek Pro XCT (professional mountain biking) event had to be cancelled as organisers could not secure the sponsorship support needed to hold it (Bate, 2011).

There is an essential need for sponsorship revenues to remain financially viable and sustainable. In addition, all sports properties are competing for the same finite pool of sponsorship funding. This combination creates a sense of urgency for professional niche sports properties to produce sponsorship proposals with the greatest chance of acceptance. This urgency is exacerbated by the vast number of sponsorship proposals many companies receive on a regular basis. For example, Verizon and US Airways have both indicated that they receive thousands of

sponsorship requests each year (Verizon, 2011; US Airways, 2011).

The innate need for sponsorship support in order to produce viable sports products forces many sports managers to pay heed to the reasons that companies engage in sports sponsorship. Sports sponsorship provides benefits to both the sponsor and the sports property. The vast number of sports sponsorship proposals submitted provide potential sponsor companies with the ability to intensely scrutinise each potential sports sponsorship opportunity.

Practitioners and academics have anecdotally claimed that professional niche sports can provide sponsors with benefits not found within mainstream sports sponsorship (cost effectiveness, more refined target market, flexibility and decreased clutter). However, there is a lack of empirical evidence as to what sponsors look for when assessing professional niche sports sponsorship opportunities. Considering sponsorship funding is crucial for the very existence of most professional niche sports, there exists a fundamental need to determine why companies choose to support these types of sports, what they aim to achieve from the relationship and how they go about selecting which sports properties they are going to support. From this information, professional niche sports properties should then be able to refine their sponsorship proposals to better address these issues – thereby significantly enhancing the probability that a company will choose to support their property.

The purpose of this study was two-fold. Firstly, it attempted to identify the selection criteria that sponsors deem important when evaluating professional niche sports sponsorship opportunities. Secondly, it empirically tested the importance sponsors placed on the four selection criteria anecdotally identified as potential competitive advantages for professional niche sports.



Sponsorship selection criteria

As noted by Weight et al (2010), previous sports sponsorship research has focused on two distinct areas: sponsorship proposals and sponsorship evaluation. The current study focuses on the former. This is because much existing sports sponsorship research fails to address the reasons companies engage in sponsorship (Weight et al, 2010), opting instead to investigate sponsorship outcomes such as recall and recognition rates. Professional niche sports properties must therefore focus on securing sponsorship support before they can evaluate this relationship.

Companies use a variety of selection criteria to screen sponsorship opportunities, including: the cost of the sponsorship opportunity, the demographics of the sports property's fan base, and hospitality opportunities. Sponsorship selection criteria may also be linked to a specific sponsorship objective or may be stand-alone. An example of a stand-alone criterion is the cost of the sponsorship. This factor may not be directly linked to a corporate marketing, communications or public relations objective but it certainly influences an organisation's decision to embark on a given sponsorship opportunity.

Other selection criteria may be tied to a specific sponsorship objective. For example, opportunity for corporate signage at an event is a selection criterion associated with a sponsorship objective. While signage opportunities are not likely to be a stand-alone marketing, communications or public relations objective, increased awareness may be – and signage at an event would certainly assist in achieving his. Sponsorship selection criteria is an area of growing importance and sports managers able to understand key influences in the selection process will increase their probability of creating a successful sponsorship proposal (Aguilar-Manjarrez, Thwaites & Maule, 1997). By understanding the selection criteria which a potential sponsor deems important, sports managers can create a sponsorship proposal more closely aligned with the prospective company's requirements,

subsequently enhancing the proposal's acceptability (Copeland et al, 1996; Fullerton, 2010; Jowdy & McDonald, 2002; Lamont & Dowell, 2007; Lough et al, 2000; Mueller & Roberts, 2008; Sam et al, 2005; Stotlar, 2009). As noted earlier, a large number of selection criteria have been identified by several researchers. A sampling of the most commonly cited selection criteria are presented in Table 1.

Research has indicated that sponsors do not use identical guidelines to evaluate all sponsorship opportunities (Copeland et al, 1996; Irwin & Sutton, 1994; Kuzma et al, 1993; Lough, et al, 2000; Lough & Irwin, 2001). In fact, different companies sponsoring the same event may do so for entirely different reasons (Irwin & Sutton, 1994). Interestingly, the majority of research conducted on corporate sponsorship selection criteria within North America has been conducted at the mainstream, major professional, Division I college or Olympic levels (Wartella, 2009). Yet an entire sub-section of profession sports (professional niche sports) exists in relative abundance within North America. Understanding that companies view sports properties as unique ventures capable of achieving distinct objectives, and that companies assess sponsorship opportunities distinctly from each other, professional niche sports would be well served to understand how they are being evaluated by potential sponsors. In addition, professional niche sports may be able to offer unique opportunities not provided by other sports properties.

Professional niche sports sponsorship

The current study views professional niche sports through a North American 'lens'. Professional niche sports vary based on region and culture and the current study is therefore limited to North America. Miloch and Lambrecht (2006) stated that professional niche sports could best be classified as sports that are not mainstream and do not appeal to a mass audience. Rosner and Shropshire (2004) classified professional niche sports into four distinctive categories: (a) minor leagues, (b) emerging sports that represent the top level of competition in their



TABLE 1 Common sponsorship selection criteria

SELECTION CRITERIA	AUTHOR
MEDIA COVERAGE AT THE LOCAL, REGIONAL AND RATIONAL LEVEL ABILITY TO REACH A SPECIFIC AUDIENCE (DEMOGRAPHICS/PSYCHOGRAPHICS)	ABRATT, CLAYTON & PITT, 1987 CROWLEY, 1991 IRWIN ET AL, 1994 SCOTT & SUCHARD, 1992 THWAITES ET AL, 1998 WITCHER, CRAIGEN, CULLIGAN & HARVEY, 1991
ABILITY TO REACH A SPECIFIC AUDIENCE (DEMOGRAPHICS/PSYCHOGRAPHICS)	IRWIN ET AL, 1994 MACK, 1999 MEENAGHAN, 1991 THWAITES ET AL, 1998
HOSPITALITY OPPORTUNITIES	CROWLEY, 1991 IRWIN ET AL, 1994 MCCARTHY & IRWIN, 2000 MEENAGHAN, 1991 SCOTT & SUCHARD, 1992
AUDIENCE SIZE, BOTH ON-SITE AND OFF-SITE	IRWIN ET AL, 1994 MEENAGHAN, 1991
SPORT/SPONSOR PRODUCT FIT	IRWIN ET AL, 1994 THWAITES ET AL, 1998
COST OF THE SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY	IRWIN ET AL, 1994 MEENAGHAN, 1991

respective sports, (c) indoor variations of traditionally outdoor sports, and (d) gender specific leagues which offer women the opportunity to participate in their own league. These four categories, while not necessarily exhaustive for all professional niche sports, provide insight into the fact that the term 'professional niche sports' encompasses a vast array of sports. For the purposes of this study, professional niche sports were operationally defined as all North American professional sports not including the NFL, NBA, NHL, MLB (collectively referred to as the 'Big 4'), NASCAR or the PGA.

Central to most sports sponsorships is the exchange between the sponsor (company providing assistance to the sports property) and the sports property (sports team, league, tour, event or individual athlete). McCarville and Copeland (1994) noted that successful

sponsorships are based on the assumption that each party (sponsor and sports property) will provide a resource valued by the partnering organisation and that this will be reciprocated. Clearly, in order to attract sponsors, sports properties must identify the benefits they can provide a potential sponsor, and those which the potential sponsor will value. These benefits may be exchanged for money, goods or services provided by the sponsor to the sports property. Benefits provided by sponsorship can often mean the difference between a successful or unsuccessful sporting event, team, league or tour.

While professional niche sports may not be able to provide sponsors with the mainstream media attention or large-scale crowds of the NFL, NBA and MLB, many major companies have engaged in sponsorship relationships with professional niche sports. Brenner



(2003) noted the Core Tour, Long Drivers of America, Wal-Mart FLW Outdoors Tour and the International Mountain Bike Association have been able to draw many major corporate sponsors, including Re/Max International, Fuji Film USA, Nokia and Subaru of America. The lack of empirical research on professional niche sports sponsorship has led to anecdotal claims, by both academics and practitioners, as to the rationale for companies' engagement in professional niche sports sponsorship relationships.

There are many potential reasons that sponsors engage in professional niche sports sponsorship relationships. Four stand out: cost effectiveness (Fullerton, 2010; Hanas, 2007; Williams, 2001); a more refined target market (Brenner, 2003; Greenwald & Fernandez-Balboa, 1998; Milne et al, 1996; Stotlar, 2009; Tripodi, 2001); professional niche sports property flexibility (Hanas, 2007; Jones, 2008; Livingstone, 2009; Rovell, 2009; Williams, 2001); and decreased niche sponsorship clutter (Amis et al, 1999; Greenwald & Fernandez-Balboa, 1998; Lough, 1996; Lough & Irwin, 2001; Maxwell & Lough, 2009; Shank, 2005; Tripodi, 2001). Further explanation of these unique, and potentially valuable, criteria follows.

Cost effectiveness

In order to be a corporate partner of the Super Bowl, the NBA or a team like the New York Mets, sponsors often pay several thousands (sometimes millions) of dollars. This fact alone eliminates a number of companies which simply lack the financial wherewithal to take on such an endeavor. Many companies that do not have multi-million dollar marketing or public relations budgets may still see value in sports sponsorship. For these companies, professional niche sports may provide a viable alternative to the highly priced sponsorship packages offered by mainstream professional sports properties. As opposed to the million dollar sponsorship deals found within mainstream sport, Hanas (2007) determined that, for about \$10,000, a company could sponsor an entire season of the National Dodgeball League, World Kickball Association, Professional

Beach Tennis or Pro Sand Soccer. According to Fullerton (2010), many marketers use extreme sports or the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) as a cost-effective alternative to mainstream sports and are still able to reach their target markets. Professional niche sports properties have become aware of this gap and have realised that they can offer more value for less cost when compared to their mainstream sports competitors (Williams, 2001).

The current economic crisis, which started with the collapse of the financial sector in 2008, has also profoundly affected sports sponsorship. The year 2009 marked a historic point in sponsorship history as, for the first time in 25 years, sponsorship spending levels were lower than the previous year's (IEG, 2010). Sports sponsorship spending within North America declined one per cent from \$11.4 billion in 2008 to \$11.28 billion in 2009 (IEG, 2010). However, according to Livingstone (2009), some professional niche sports, such as the WNBA and PBR, view this economic downturn as an opportunity rather than a threat. These organisations believe that they are able to provide sponsors with more value for their dollar than other sports properties.

More refined target market

Although professional niche sports typically lack the mass media appeal of mainstream sports, they do offer sponsors the opportunity to be more targeted with their sponsorship message (Greenwald & Fernandez-Balboa, 1998; Tripodi, 2001). Professional niche sports often attract a more homogeneous fan base than the broad fan bases of more popular mainstream sports, with respect to demographics (age, gender, education, socio-economic class and ethnicity) and psychographics (attitudes, beliefs and feelings) (Stotlar, 2009), (Milne et al, 1996). Some marketers believe that sponsorship of mainstream sport won't help them reach their target audiences. Subaru, for example, stated the reason that it doesn't advertise during the Super Bowl is because only ten per cent of its viewership matches the demographics and psychographics which align with its brand. Instead,



Subaru prefers to sponsor the International Mountain Bike Association, whose 32,000 members nearly all fit the demographics and psychographics of Subaru customers (Brenner, 2003). Numerous marketers have indicated that the more tightly targeted audience of professional niche sports may be a substantial lure for sponsors (Brenner, 2003; Fullerton, 2010; Hanas, 2007; Kojima, 2010; Milne et al, 1996).

Sports property flexibility

A further reported benefit from sponsorship of professional niche sports is the flexibility it affords sponsors. Most professional niche sports properties are willing to work with sponsors to help attain their sponsorship objectives (Jones, 2008). Some professional niche sports, such as the National Lacrosse League (NLL), have overtly stated they are more flexible than the big four sports (NFL, NBA, MLB and NHL) (Hanas, 2007). Sponsors would not be permitted to display their company logo on a NFL game jersey. It was actually big news when the NFL allowed one small corporate logo on the teams' practice jerseys (Rovell, 2009). However, the NLL and WNBA have both incorporated relatively large corporate logos on their jerseys (Hanas, 2007; Rovell, 2009). Professional niche sports also offer sponsors perks that many mainstream sports properties are not willing to offer. The Arena Football League is open to allowing sponsors to take their employees' friends and families onto the field after the game to play touch football (Williams, 2001). The NLL mandates that all players must attend an informal post-game reception at a local restaurant (usually with a sponsor of the team) after all home and away games. NLL fans, sponsors and guests are also encouraged, via the public address system at the game, to attend the post-game reception and interact with the players (Livingstone, 2009).

Decreased niche sponsor clutter

Sports sponsorship was originally believed to be a form of uncluttered advertising (Stotlar, 2009).

However, the increasing number of companies involved in sports sponsorship has led to a sports marketing landscape which has replicated the cluttered advertising environment sponsors were trying to escape (Maxwell & Lough, 2009). Many academics have noted that mainstream sports are so cluttered with sponsors that they are reaching a point of sponsorship saturation (Amis et al, 1999; Greenwald & Fernandez-Balboa, 1998; Shank, 2005; Tripodi, 2001). Parallels have been drawn between the corporate shift from traditional advertising to mainstream sports sponsorship (in a quest for relief from advertising clutter) to the current shift of many sponsors from mainstream sports sponsorship to professional niche sports sponsorship to escape that same clutter, which is now pervading numerous mainstream sports (Lough, 1996; Lough & Irwin, 2001; Shank, 2005; Tripodi, 2001). The contemporary realisation is that professional niche sports may offer sponsors a safe harbour away from the sponsor clutter found in traditional advertising and, more recently, in mainstream sports sponsorship.

While anecdotal claims have been made, a need exists to empirically understand the reasons companies choose to engage in sponsorship relationships with professional niche sports. Professional niche sports properties, like all sports properties, face high levels of competition when attempting to secure sponsorship funding. Most realise they cannot compete for sponsorship funding head-to-head against mainstream sports as they typically do not possess the media coverage or large-scale audiences that mainstream sports do. Combining these facts with the understanding that professional niche sports properties require sponsorship as vital capital for day-to-day operations, the aim of this study was to identify the selection criteria that sponsors deem important when evaluating professional niche sports sponsorship opportunities. It also aims to empirically test the importance sponsors place on the selection criteria anecdotally identified as potential competitive advantages.



Methodology

This study featured a survey design, with both closed and open-ended questions exploring the sponsorship selection criteria employed by companies sponsoring North American professional niche sports. A purposive sample of corporate sponsorship decision-makers was surveyed to procure this information. The survey design allows for a relatively quick and economical snapshot of any given phenomenon (Dillman, 2007).

The survey population included professional niche sports sponsors within North America. The current study utilised the 2010 Sports Business Journal Resource Guide and Fact Book (RGFB). Specifically the Corporate Sponsors section of the directory was used, which included contact information for several decision-makers and key contacts within organisations known to engage in sports sponsorship within the US and internationally. This particular resource was selected based on its breadth of contact information for known corporate sponsors, downloadable format, up-to-date information and compatibility with online survey creation and distribution resources.

Within each company outlined in the 2010 Sports Business Journal RGFB, contact information was provided for several different executives. As suggested by Aguilar-Manjarrez et al (1997) and McCook et al (1997), company contacts with titles pertaining to sponsorship were preferred for inclusion within the sampling frame. As noted by Thwaites et al (1998), sponsorship decision-making is often the responsibility of the marketing department. Therefore, if a company listed within the 2010 Sports Business Journal RGFB did not have a sponsorship specific contact, a marketing executive was included in the sampling frame. Finally, if neither position was published (sponsorship or marketing related), the contact with the highest-ranking title, usually chief executive officer (CEO) or president, was then included in the sampling frame. These individuals make the critical decisions concerning which sports sponsorships to support and which opportunities the organisation chooses to reject. In an effort to prevent skewed or biased results, only

one participant per organisation was included within the sample.

The instrument used in the study was a derivative of the revised Sports Sponsorship Proposal Evaluation Model (SSPEM) (Irwin et al, 1994). Derivatives of the revised SSPEM have been used by a number of researchers investigating the objectives and/or selection criteria of sports sponsors (e.g. Irwin & Sutton, 1994; Lough, 1996; Lough et al, 2000; Lough & Irwin, 2001; McCarthy & Irwin, 2000).

The survey was divided into two sections. In the first section, respondents were given the operational definition of professional niche sports (any professional sports outside of the 'Big 4', NASCAR or PGA Tour) and were asked if their company had engaged in a sponsorship relationship with a North American professional niche sports property. If they answered yes, respondents were prompted, via an open-ended question, to identify the most recent North American professional niche sports their company had sponsored and indicate the level of the sponsorship (league, tour, team, event, individual athlete or other [open-ended]).

Respondents were also given the option of indicating that they had never sponsored a professional niche sports property. Data were still collected for these respondents. However, they were not included in any subsequent analysis. At the end of the first section, respondents were instructed to refer to the sports property identified as their most recent professional niche sports sponsorship for all subsequent questions. Requiring respondents to reflect on one specific sponsorship relationship was intended to enhance the collection of actual sponsorship evaluation data, as opposed to hypothetical or ideal situations. The second section of the survey asked respondents to indicate the level of importance they had placed on each of the presented selection criteria when they evaluated the most recent professional niche sports sponsorship opportunity.

A link to the online survey was sent, via email invitation, to 352 corporate sponsorship decision-makers known to engage in sports sponsorship within North America. Surveys were sent to just one



representative from each company, thus ensuring each company had an equal chance of being represented. Respondents were given five weeks to respond. Firstly, email notifications were sent to potential respondents, alerting them to the purpose of the study and informing them that a follow-up email would be sent in five days time containing a link to the survey. After this initial email, a follow-up was sent to any non-respondents, which included links to the survey. Follow-up reminders were sent to non-respondents four times in all (three days after initial survey distribution and then at intervals of approximately five days).

Results

Eighty-nine surveys were collected, a response rate of 25.3%. Of those 89 respondents, 60 indicated that they were professional niche sports sponsors and a total of 32 completed surveys were deemed adequate for analysis. Those surveys deemed unacceptable for analysis were inadequate due to missing data.

While many researchers strive for a response rate of 50% or more, rates within sports sponsorship literature are typically quite low. This is because these studies often use companies as their sample rather than general consumers/fans. Baldauf et al (1999) stated that response rates of 15% have been deemed acceptable when surveying organisations. A response rate of 25% could be considered typical among companies involved in sports sponsorship as previous studies within the sports sponsorship literature have yielded similar rates (e.g. Lough and Irwin (2001) 21.5%; Mack (1999) 20.5%; Thwaites et al (1998) 20.5%; Scott and Suchard (1992) 21%; and Weight et al, (2010) 25%).

Previous sports sponsorship researchers have also had usable sample sizes similar to the 32 obtained in this study. Chadwick and Thwaites (2004) obtained 37 usable responses; Daniels et al (2007) analysed 32 usable responses; Lough and Irwin (2001) had 16 usable responses; Ludwig and Karabetsos (1999) completed a study with 11 usable responses; and Weight et al (2010) secured 15 responses. Therefore,

the 25% response rate and 32 usable responses attained within the current study appeared to be reasonable of this type of research.

An analysis of early versus late respondents was conducted to determine if the sample was representative of the population for the current study, as late respondents typically closely resemble non-respondents. As suggested by Siebert (2006), a series of one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted to determine if early and late respondents differed significantly. No statistically significant differences were found between early and late respondents for any sponsor selection criteria ($p = .051 - .943$). Overall, these results indicated that the sample within this study appears to be representative of the population for the current study.

Of the 32 usable professional niche sports sponsor responses, 14 (44%) sponsored professional niche teams, 10 (31%) sponsored at the league level, four (12.5%) sponsored professional niche sports tours, four (12.5%) sponsored professional niche sporting events, and no respondent companies sponsored individual professional niche sports athletes. Additionally, four (12.5%) of these respondents indicated that they sponsored multiple levels of professional niche sports (i.e. team and league).

An investigation of corporate demographics revealed that the majority of respondents 14 (44%) were international companies with 11 (34%) being at national level. In addition, four (12.5%) regional and two (6%) statewide companies were represented. No companies claimed to be local in scope. Overall, respondents represented quite large companies as 18 (56%) reported having gross annual revenues in excess of \$500m, five (15%) \$251m-\$500m, three (9%) \$101-\$250m, three (9%) \$51m-\$100m and two (6%) \$11m-\$20m. No companies reported gross annual revenues in the categories \$21m-\$50m, \$5m-\$10m or less than 1 million,

A variety of industry segments were represented in the study. Respondents in the study included an airline, auto dealers, banking/financial/investments firms, beverage companies, a communications company, a health care provider, a print media



TABLE 2 Means and standard deviations of sponsorship selection criteria (n=31)

SELECTION CRITERIA	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
COST EFFECTIVENESS (AUDIENCE REACH)	7.55	0.88
COMPANY IMAGE FIT WITHIN TARGET MARKET	7.29	0.97
FLEXIBILITY OF SPORTS PROPERTY	7.22	1.02
SPECTATOR DEMOGRAPHICS	7.19	1.24
COMPANY PRODUCT/SERVICE IMAGE FIT WITH SPORTS IMAGE	7.16	1.21
POTENTIAL PRESENCE OF NEW CUSTOMERS	6.93	1.26
SPONSOR EXCLUSIVITY	6.90	1.81
AFFORDABILITY	6.87	1.43
PRODUCT/SERVICE UTILITY WITH SPORT	6.61	1.58
SPORTS PROPERTY PROFILE	6.54	1.54
SPECTATOR PSYCHOGRAPHICS	6.41	1.73
SIGNAGE	6.41	1.80
LOCAL MEDIA COVERAGE	6.38	1.47
POTENTIAL PRESENCE OF CURRENT CUSTOMERS	6.13	1.82
SPONSORSHIP OF AN ESTABLISHED SPORT	6.10	1.94
SALES/RETAIL TIE-IN OPPORTUNITIES	6.03	1.76
NON-ATTENDING DEMOGRAPHICS	6.03	2.02
LONG-TERM SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY	6.03	2.18
OPPORTUNITY TO BE MAJOR SPONSOR	6.03	1.96
SPONSOR CLUTTER	5.97	1.62
SPORT FAN LOYALTY	5.97	1.61
COMPLEMENTARY ADVERTISING (E.G. EVENT PROGRAMME)	5.68	1.99
NON-ATTENDING AUDIENCE SIZE	5.42	2.17
IMMEDIATE AUDIENCE SIZE	5.39	1.72
NON-ATTENDING PSYCHOGRAPHIC PROFILE	5.35	2.17
COOPERATION OF ATHLETES	5.26	2.22
NATIONAL MEDIA COVERAGE	5.19	2.52
SOCIAL MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES	5.19	1.89
HOSPITALITY OPPORTUNITIES	4.90	2.28
OPPORTUNITY TO BE TITLE SPONSOR	4.64	2.44
PROMOTIONAL LICENSING	4.64	2.61
CORPORATE STAFF KNOWLEDGE/INTEREST IN SPORT	4.58	1.87
COMPETITION'S AMBUSH MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES	3.90	2.31
COMPETITION'S INTEREST IN SPORT	3.87	2.22



TABLE 3 Response frequencies of sponsorship selection criteria (n=31)

SELECTION CRITERIA	NOT IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT (3 OR 4)	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT (5 OR 6)	EXTREMELY IMPORTANT (7 OR 8)
COST EFFECTIVENESS (AUDIENCE REACH)	0	1	2	28
COMPANY IMAGE FIT WITHIN TARGET MARKET	0	0	5	26
COMPANY PRODUCT/SERVICE IMAGE FIT WITH SPORT IMAGE	0	3	2	26
FLEXIBILITY OF SPORTS PROPERTY	0	0	7	24
SPECTATOR DEMOGRAPHICS	0	2	5	24
SPONSOR EXCLUSIVITY	1	3	4	23
AFFORDABILITY	0	3	7	21
POTENTIAL PRESENCE OF NEW CUSTOMERS	0	1	9	21
SPORTS PROPERTY PROFILE	1	2	9	19
SIGNAGE	2	3	7	19
LOCAL MEDIA COVERAGE	1	3	9	18
PRODUCT/SERVICE UTILITY FIT WITH SPORT	1	3	9	18
SPECTATOR PSYCHOGRAPHICS	1	4	8	18
LONG-TERM SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY	3	4	6	18
SPONSORSHIP OF AN ESTABLISHED SPORT	3	2	10	16
POTENTIAL PRESENCE OF CURRENT CUSTOMERS	1	4	10	16
NON-ATTENDING DEMOGRAPHICS	2	4	9	16
OPPORTUNITY TO BE THE MAJOR SPONSOR	2	5	9	15
SALES/RETAIL TIE-IN OPPORTUNITIES	1	5	11	14
SPONSOR CLUTTER	2	5	10	14
SPORT FAN LOYALTY	1	4	13	13
NATIONAL MEDIA COVERAGE	6	6	6	13
NON-ATTENDING AUDIENCE SIZE	5	4	11	12
NON-ATTENDING PSYCHOGRAPHIC PROFILE	4	5	10	12
COMPLIMENTARY ADVERTISING	3	6	12	10
COOPERATION OF ATHLETES	5	5	11	10
PROMOTIONAL LICENSING	9	6	6	10
IMMEDIATE AUDIENCE SIZE	2	8	12	9
HOSPITALITY OPPORTUNITIES	6	5	11	9
OPPORTUNITY TO BE TITLE SPONSOR	8	6	10	7
SOCIAL MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES	5	3	17	6
COMPETITION'S AMBUSH MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES	10	10	5	6
CORPORATE STAFF KNOWLEDGE/INTEREST IN SPORT	5	8	14	4
COMPETITIONS INTEREST IN SPORT	9	11	11	4



organisation, several companies in the retail trade industry, sporting goods companies, an apparel company, companies within the energy (power) industry, a real estate firm and several retail focused companies. Respondents reported the relative importance of each sponsorship selection criteria on an eight-point scale (from 1 = Not Important to 8 = Extremely Important). Findings revealed cost effectiveness ($M=7.56$, $SD=0.87$) to be the most important selection criteria in this study. The other top selection criteria were: company image fit within the sports target market ($M=7.31$, $SD=0.96$); the flexibility of the sports property in helping achieve sponsor objectives ($M=7.25$, $SD=1.02$); spectator demographics ($M=7.21$, $SD=1.24$); and company product/service image fit with the sport's image ($M=7.19$, $SD=1.21$) formed. Table 2 provides a comprehensive report of the relative importance respondents' placed on each of these five selection criteria.

Response frequencies were also calculated to help provide further evidence to the relative importance of each selection criteria. The relative importance placed on each selection criteria were grouped into pairs. Table 4 reports how frequently each selection criteria was reported to be extremely important, somewhat important, somewhat not important and not important.

Similar to the findings reported above, the most important professional niche sports sponsorship selection criteria within the study sample were reported as: cost effectiveness; company image fit within the target market of the sports property; company product/service image fit with the image of the sport; and sports property's flexibility to assist in the achievement of sponsorship objectives and spectator demographics.

Discussion

These findings demonstrated that professional niche sports sponsors, within the current study, took a lot into consideration when evaluating a proposal. Of the 34 selection criteria, 32 were reported to be closer to extremely important than to not important. Although respondents indicated that almost all of the selection criteria were important, five specific criteria were consistently reported to hold the greatest level of importance. Analyses of means and frequencies found the same selection criteria to be deemed most important by the professional niche sports sponsors within the current study. Findings indicated that the five most important selection criteria were: cost effectiveness; company image fit within target market; flexibility of sports property; spectator demographics; and company product/service image fit with sports image.

Findings from the current study indicated that North American professional niche sports sponsors considered the cost effectiveness of professional niche sports sponsorships to be very important. Empirical findings from the current study reinforced previous anecdotal claims concerning professional niche sports sponsorship cost effectiveness. Intuitively, sponsors were likely to want all sponsorships to be cost effective. However, the findings of the current study empirically confirmed that this was of the most important selection criteria sponsors used when screening professional niche sports sponsorship opportunities.

Professional niche sports properties must, therefore, emphasise the cost effectiveness they can provide within their sports sponsorship proposals. A cost effective sponsorship requires more than simply asking for less monetary or in-kind support. The fact that professional niche sports sponsorships have been deemed cost effective is due to their perceived ability to achieve sponsorship objectives (such as reaching a specific target audience) for a relatively low cost.



A low cost sponsorship of any property is only cost effective if sponsorship objectives are achieved through that sponsorship. Sponsorships unable to achieve a sponsor's objectives are not cost effective, no matter the actual cost incurred by the sponsoring company.

The current economic turmoil within North America may have also contributed to respondents indicating such high levels of importance on the cost effectiveness of their professional niche sports sponsorships. Sponsorship consultants IEG (2010) noted that 2009 represented the first year sports sponsorship spending in North America decreased compared to the previous year's spending. Perhaps the increased emphasis placed on professional niche sports cost effectiveness was partially due to sponsors' increased scrutiny of sponsorship opportunities due to budget restrictions in response to the economic downturn. According to Livingstone (2009), some professional niche sports properties have viewed the economic collapse as an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to achieve sponsors' objectives in a cost effective manner, as compared to mainstream professional sports.

Professional niche sports properties were also considered to provide potential sponsors with a refined target market. While professional niche sports properties may not attract the vast number of fans found within mainstream sports, they have been found to attract a relatively homogeneous collection of fans (Stotlar, 2009). Professional niche sports tend to attract fans with similar demographic and psychographic profiles (Stotlar, 2009), allowing sponsors to create very targeted selling messages (Brenner, 2003; Fullerton, 2010; Greenwald & Fernandez-Balboa, 1998; Hanas, 2007; Kojima, 2010; Lough, 1996; Miloch & Lambrecht, 2006; Milne et al, 1996; Tripodi, 2001).

Three of the five most important selection criteria within the current study were related to the target market of the sponsor. Respondents reported company image fit within the target market, spectator demographics and company product/service image fit with sports image as some of the most important

North American professional niche sports sponsorship selection criteria. These findings demonstrated that the high level of importance respondents placed on understanding the professional niche sports property's fan base and ensuring a match exists between fans and the company's target market. Findings supported the theoretical assertion that not only were professional niche sports properties able to provide potential sponsors with a more refined target market, but sponsors found this attribute to be very important when screening professional niche sports sponsorship opportunities.

Many practical implications can be gleaned from these findings. Firstly, it is imperative that professional niche sports managers understand the demographic composition of their fan base. Without a clear understanding of fan demographics professional niche sports managers cannot demonstrate a match between their fans and a potential sponsor's target market. Professional niche sports properties would also be well served to have a strong understanding of potential sponsors' target markets. Demonstrating a match between a professional niche sports property's fan base and a potential sponsor's target market may be the most important feature a professional niche sports could emphasise within a sponsorship proposal. Professional niche sports properties may be able to increase their efficiency by focusing their efforts on soliciting sponsorship support from companies and demonstrating a match between the sports property's fans and the prospective sponsorship company's target market.

Professional niche sports have also claimed to provide an environment of decreased sponsor clutter (Lough, 1996; Lough & Irwin, 2001; Shank, 2005; Tripodi, 2001). Many researchers have noted that mainstream sports are reaching a point of sponsorship saturation (Amis et al, 1999; Greenwald & Fernandez-Balboa, 1998; Shank, 2005; Tripodi, 2001), creating a situation where fans could no longer discern sponsors from non-sponsors due to the vast amount of signage and overall selling messages from such a large number of sponsors at mainstream sporting events.



The current study's findings indicated sponsor clutter to hold a relatively moderate level of importance to North American professional niche sports sponsors. Surprisingly, sponsor clutter was reported to be approximately the 20th most important selection criterion. However, upon further review of the findings, respondents had reported sponsor exclusivity to be seventh most important. While sponsor clutter and sponsor exclusivity are not synonymous, they are closely related. Sponsor exclusivity can be analogous to a higher order level of decreased sponsor clutter. In essence, decreased sponsor clutter ensures there are not too many sponsors of any one sports property. However, 'not too many' sponsors is quite subjective and could hold very different meanings for sponsorship companies than for sports properties. Sponsor exclusivity ensures only one sponsor is present within each industry/category (Mullin et al 2007). Therefore, from a theoretical perspective, the findings of the current study suggest North American professional niche sports sponsors may have replaced the importance of decreased sponsor clutter by placing a higher level of importance on exclusivity.

Pragmatically, sponsors have still relayed the message that they are looking to ensure that their sponsorships (and related advertising/communications messages) are not lost in a sea of sponsorship clutter. Findings also indicated that North American professional niche sports sponsors may not be satisfied with proposals that simply emphasise decreased sponsor clutter. Therefore, professional niche sports properties would be wise to create sponsorship exclusivity categories within their proposals to appease potential sponsors. Some of the largest North American professional niche sports have already implemented this strategy. The WNBA ensured Lee Jeans exclusivity throughout the first three WNBA seasons (Mullin et al, 2007). Understanding the importance that sponsors place on exclusivity could be the tipping factor in a property successfully securing a sponsorship.

The final unique sponsorship attribute associated with professional niche sports was their flexibility to assist sponsors achieve their sponsorship objectives.

Professional niche sports properties have demonstrated their flexibility through a number of means. Sponsors have been granted access to the game field (Williams, 2001) and meet and greets with players (Livingstone, 2009). Sponsors within the current study reported professional niche sports property flexibility to be highly important. Respondents indicated this to be the third most important selection criteria. These findings revealed that the anecdotal claims were accurate and professional niche sports sponsors highly valued the flexibility professional niche sports properties provide.

North American professional niche sports, therefore, should respect the importance placed on their perceived flexibility and ensure their management structure is conducive to flexibility. Rigid sponsorship policies, such as signage restrictions or preventing sponsors from providing product trials/samples, would not be likely to be well received by sponsors. Professional niche sports properties should also highlight their flexibility within their sponsorship proposals. Furthermore, professional niche sports properties may choose to demonstrate their flexibility by providing potential sponsors with a variety of sponsorship options within the proposal; so long as they remain cognisant of the potential sponsor's target market, cost effectiveness and company objectives.

Overall, the current study's findings gave several indications. Firstly, that professional niche sports sponsors decision makers took a great deal into consideration when evaluating professional niche sports sponsorship opportunities. Secondly, that the anecdotally claimed unique benefits of professional niche sports were empirically supported. Thirdly that North American professional niche sports placed the highest level of importance on three of the four unique attributes associated with professional niche sports – cost effectiveness, more refined target market and professional niche sports property flexibility. The only deviation found within the current study indicated that sponsors were more focused on sponsor exclusivity than decreased sponsor clutter. Therefore, it would be wise for professional niche sports managers to pay particular attention to their sponsorship proposals,



ensuring they customise these to a specific company's needs and emphasise their abilities to provide potential sponsors with these unique benefits.

Limitations

As with all research, certain limitations existed within the current study. Due to the lack of a generally accepted definition of professional niche sports, respondents were allowed to include any professional sports within North America other than the NFL, NBA, MLB, NHL, NASCAR or PGA. In essence, the current study allowed respondents to provide their own definition of professional niche sports with very limited constraints. The different types of professional niche sports included in this study were not controlled for since respondents were self-selected based solely on their current, or previous, sponsorship of a professional niche sports property.

The relatively low response rate and number of usable responses may be attributed to the fact that respondent company policies may have precluded them from engaging in the current study. Some companies may have specific policies preventing sponsorship decision-makers from providing proprietary information. Others may prevent employees from engaging in surveys of any kind. Respondents may have also refrained from responding, as they may be afraid the study could be a cover created by a competitor to receive proprietary information.

Overall, the companies represented within the current study were relatively homogeneous with respect to size and scope. Most companies conducted business at national or international level and had gross annual revenues of \$500m or more. The lack of small companies within the current study may also have affected results.

Collectively, these limitations indicated the results of the current study should not be over generalised. Generalisation to the accessible sample of 352 seemed appropriate as respondents appeared to be representative of the accessible population.

Future studies

The exploratory nature of the current study has laid the groundwork for a variety of future studies. Such future studies could be designed to mitigate the limitations of the current study. Future researchers should try to secure a larger, more heterogeneous group of professional niche sports sponsors. To accomplish this task, future researchers could implement the use of a variety of sampling strategies. Snowball sampling could be used to gain a larger number of respondent companies. Other sampling strategies may include sampling sponsors of specific professional niche sports. This would provide a better perspective of the types of companies professional niche sports attract. A blending of these two sampling strategies may be the best solution. Sampling from a frame similar to that used in the current study provides insight into the different types of professional niche sports particular companies support. Alternatively, sampling all sponsors from a set variety of professional niche sports provides better insight into the different types of companies involved in professional niche sports sponsorship. However, this strategy limits the number, and types, of professional niche sports represented. Therefore, a blending of the two sampling strategies may produce the most holistic sample of professional niche sports and the companies sponsoring professional niche sports.

The current study focused on North American professional niche sports. However, professional niche sports, and the subsequent selection criteria, may differ regionally. Future research could compare and contrast the importance of selection criteria for sports in different regions of the US. Moreover, an international study could illuminate the sponsorship selection criteria from a variety of different areas.

Finally, possibly the most logical extension of the current study would be to conduct a further study to understand what professional niche sports currently focus on within their sponsorship proposals. Professional niche sports sponsors indicated they use a variety of very important selection criteria when screening professional niche sports sponsorship



opportunities. However, if professional niche sports properties are unaware of these selection criteria, they may be creating proposals destined for failure.

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Biographies

Greg P. Greenhalgh is director of student services and outreach at the Centre for Sport Leadership at Virginia Commonwealth University. His research interests are in marketing niche, or non-mainstream, sports and the use of new social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, and their effects on the dissemination of sports information.

Chris Greenwell is an associate professor in the Sport Administration Programme at the University of Louisville. His research interests are in the area of customer satisfaction.

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Sports spectator segmentation: examining the differing psychological connections among spectators of leagues and teams

Keywords

spectator segmentation
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Jason P. Doyle

Doctoral Student, Department of Tourism, Leisure, Hotel and Sport Management, Griffith Business School, Griffith University, Gold Coast Campus, Parklands Drive, Southport, Queensland 4215, Australia
Email: Jason.doyle@griffith.edu.au
Tel: +61 7 5552 7672.

Thilo Kunkel

Doctoral Student, Department of Tourism, Leisure, Hotel and Sport Management, Griffith University, Australia

Daniel C. Funk

Professor, School of Tourism and Hospitality Management Temple University, Philadelphia; Griffith Business School Griffith University, Australia

Peer reviewed

Abstract

The results from this study extend previous research by empirically testing the involvement based Psychological Continuum Model (PCM) segmentation procedure on sports spectators. To date, the procedure has only been verified using sports participants, although the PCM was developed with a broader range of sports consumers in mind. The validity of the procedure is confirmed using two online surveys, which gather data from spectators at both the league (n=761) and team (n=623) level. A three-step segmentation procedure then places respondents into the PCM stages – awareness, attraction, attachment and allegiance. ANOVA tests indicate that the four groups significantly differ from one another on attitudinal and behavioural measures for both league and team spectators. Findings suggest that the PCM is an appropriate framework to investigate fan development at both league and team levels. Thus sports marketers are provided with a research segmentation tool capable of helping them to better understand their heterogeneous consumer bases and thus guide marketing decisions.

Executive summary

This research broadens the understanding of sports spectator segmentation by providing evidence of validity for a segmentation tool which groups sports spectators into stages of increasing psychological connections. Specifically, this research uses the Psychological Continuum Model (PCM) (Funk &

James, 2001; 2006) and the involvement based PCM segmentation process (Beaton et al, 2009) to form a basis for understanding subsets of consumers that exist among sports spectator populations. The PCM has been acclaimed and used in various sports, leisure and tourism research streams to understand



the psychological connections consumers develop with various sports and leisure objects (Beaton et al, 2009; Beaton et al, 2011; Funk et al 2011; Filo et al, 2011). However, although the PCM is widely employed as a theoretical framework, the related segmentation procedure has, to date, only been empirically validated on sports participants. Further validation is needed, as the PCM was developed to be appropriate for a wide range of applications in sports and leisure, including sports spectator segmentation (Funk & James, 2001). This paper therefore extends previous research by empirically testing the involvement-based segmentation procedure on sports spectators.

Data is collected using two online studies which focus on consumers at both the league and team level. This decision was made as spectators may follow a specific league without focusing on one particular team, or vice versa (Branscombe & Wann, 1991), and in order to increase the generalisability of results. Study 1 focuses on spectators $n=761$ of Australia's two most popular football leagues, the National Rugby League (NRL) and the Australian Football League (AFL). Study 2 utilises spectators with links to teams within either of these codes ($n=623$). Both studies collect data assessing the respondents' involvement with the sports organisation, attitudes towards the organisation and behaviour exhibited towards supporting the organisation. Data analyses explored the subset of consumers that exist within each sample, as well as their reported differences in terms of attitudes and behaviours.

For both samples, the established three-step PCM segmentation procedure (Beaton et al, 2009) places respondents into the defined PCM stages of awareness, attraction, attachment and allegiance. ANOVA with Games-Howell post-hoc tests indicates that the four groups are significantly different from one another on attitudinal and behavioural measures. Specifically, the likelihood of an individual possessing durable positive attitudes and displaying behaviours supportive of their chosen sports organisation increases in line with the PCM hierarchy (i.e. from awareness to attraction, from attraction to attachment and from

attachment to allegiance). Findings support the theoretical perspective offered by the PCM and its proposed stages of fan development. Findings also provide preliminary evidence that the segmentation tool is appropriate for use with spectator samples, and can help sports marketers better understand their diverse consumer bases. After segmenting spectators into the PCM stages, sports marketers can develop targeted marketing campaigns with the specific wants and needs of each group in mind. Efforts geared at satisfying each spectator segment, and moving spectators onto the next level of psychological connection, should be embraced by sports marketers at both the league and team level.

Introduction

Sports spectatorship represents an important facet of leisure behaviour (Woo, Trail, Kwon, & Anderson, 2009) and one which has a prominent role in society (Laverie & Arnett, 2000). Strong television and attendance figures provide merit to this claim. For example, half of Australia's 40 most watched programmes on free-to-air television during 2010 were sports programmes, including eight of the top 10 (ThinkTV, 2010). Additionally, the 2010 FIFA World Cup attracted over three million attendees to the tournament's matches (FIFA, 2010). However, those who watch and attend sporting events are not all alike; sports consumers differ in their needs, wants, attitudes and behaviours (Quick, 2000). The ability to segment larger spectator populations into meaningful groups has been described as crucial for sports organisations who, by gaining a further understanding of their consumer markets, can become better placed to serve their needs (Woo et al, 2009). Thus, practical segmentation tools embedded in theoretically sound frameworks are valuable to sports researchers and to practitioners wishing to understand more about their consumers.

One such theoretical framework is Funk and James' (2001; 2006) PCM. Using the PCM as a theoretical



foundation, recent research has investigated leisure involvement in the form of sports participation. Much of this work has been driven by the work of Beaton and colleagues studying physically active leisure – a term used to describe leisure pursuits in the form of various active participant sports (e.g. playing golf) (Beaton & Funk, 2008; Beaton et al, 2009; Beaton et al, 2011; Funk et al, 2011). A key outcome of this research includes verifying a method to segment participants into meaningful groups. The segmentation procedure is able to create diverse, hierarchical segments that display dissimilar attitude strengths and behavioural characteristics; the benefits of segmentation being that a better understanding of consumer wants and needs can be garnered and more effective marketing approaches developed for each segment (Gibson et al, 1998). Though theorised to be applicable to participatory and spectator sports contexts, at present the PCM method of segmentation has only been validated on sports participants. Through the current research, the authors tested the applicability of the tool on sports spectators.

Literature review

There is acknowledgement that sports consumers consist of various cohorts that display a wide range of attitudes and behaviours towards the sports objects they support (Quick, 2000; Stewart et al, 2003). However, segmentation tools remain limited. As such, sports organisations currently may have no other option than to conduct generic marketing campaigns which might not be effectively received by their consumers. The authors address this gap by testing a segmentation tool which would allow sports organisations to identify distinct markets within their supporter bases and tailor marketing activities towards each segment (e.g. Hunt et al, 1999; Woo et al, 2009). The implication is that more targeted marketing actions are likely to elicit increased favourable responses from consumers. In the case of sports spectators, these responses involve increased positive attitudes towards a certain sports

object, as well as an increase in behaviours that impact revenue streams. In their review of existing segmentation approaches, theorised or applied to sports spectators, Stewart and colleagues (2003) identified three distinct sports consumption typologies that have emerged in the sports segmentation literature – dualistic, tiered and multi-dimensional typologies. The following section discusses and critiques examples of segmentation typologies that fall within these classifications.

Dualistic typologies are those which seek to polarise and contrast two categories of sports spectator based on segmentation by fan behaviour attributes. Stewart and colleagues (2003) cite studies classifying respondents into segments, such as rational and irrational (Ferrand & Pages, 1996), expressive and submissive (Hughson, 1999) and die-hard and less-loyal (Bristow & Sebastian, 2001). While dualistic-based segmentation allows for formative differentiation, the polarised categorical nature of this differentiation neglects to accurately describe many spectators. Indeed, spectator sports consumers are such a diverse group comprised of many cohorts (Quick, 2000) that it would be more appropriate to attempt to categorise them between two polarised segments. However, being able to place individuals correctly in-between two extreme poles may describe a current connection, yet it does not explain underlying facets of the individual's connection towards the sports object. Tiered typologies, reviewed next, are extensions of dualistic typologies, which offer a more detailed breakdown of sports spectator groups.

Tiered typologies further differentiate sports spectators by ranking identified groups based on the strength of the beliefs and behaviours of each group (Stewart et al, 2003). Hierarchical rankings provide further insight into the differences that exist among spectator groupings, by suggesting that individuals in higher ranked groups possess stronger connections towards sports objects than those in lower ranked groups. One popular scale which has been used to distinguish sports spectators along a continuum is the Sport Spectator Identification Scale (SSIS) (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). The SSIS offers the ability to differentiate spectators based



on their level of identification with a sports object. The SSIS has been adapted in numerous studies into sports spectatorship, and is commonly used to classify individuals based on low, moderate and high identification splits (e.g. Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Although tiered typologies begins to address groups more relevant to the real world, they have been criticised for their lack of ability to look for differences within each step and to explain what facilitates movement from one stage to the next (Stewart et al, 2003). These omissions are important, given that becoming a team fan follows a developmental process (Funk & James, 2001; 2006). Tiered typologies, none the less, do provide a basis for more theoretically sound and useful segmentation strategies based on multiple dimensions.

Multi-dimensional typologies provide the most academically developed and practically relevant frameworks for spectator research. Multi-dimensional segments are derived from multi-faceted dimensions and address some of the shortcomings of tiered typologies. These approaches acknowledge that consumers possess a wide range of motives, beliefs, and attitudes towards sports objects, which influence their connection (Stewart et al, 2003). Examples of multi-dimensional typologies include; Mahony et al (2000) low, latent, spurious and true loyalty segments; Hunt and colleagues' (1999) temporary, local, devoted, fanatical and dysfunctional fans; and, Funk and James' (2001) awareness, attraction, attachment and allegiant classifications.

In concluding, Stewart and colleagues (2003), suggested further empirical testing of the above typologies as a valuable area of future research. Stewart and colleagues singled out Funk and James' (2001) PCM framework for its developmental perspective, ability to explain mobility between groups, solid theoretical grounding and understanding of motives related to behaviour. Given the recommendations of Stewart and colleagues (2003) and the use of the PCM in segmenting sports participant samples, the PCM has been selected to guide this investigation. A review of the PCM now follows.

The psychological continuum model (PCM)

The PCM is a theoretical framework that integrates psychology, marketing and consumer behaviour literature to explain the varying levels of psychological connection an individual may have with a sports object (Filo et al, 2008). Employed extensively as a theoretical framework to understand spectatorship, the PCM has been used as a guide in numerous studies, including: understanding the development of team identification (Lock et al, in press); exploring the reasons behind non-attendance (Lock & Filo, 2012); analysing one individual's developed team bond (de Groot & Robinson, 2008); and understanding non-local team support (Hyatt & Andrijiw, 2008).

Essentially, the PCM posits that a range of psychological and sociological factors combine to mediate the strength of connection an individual holds towards a sports object. Once an individual is aware of a sports object, progression through three additional hierarchical stages of psychological connection becomes possible. This development is predicated on favourable inputs and processes within each stage combining to facilitate outcomes. It is proposed that, as an individual moves onto the next stage, their psychological connection with the sports object increases (Funk & James, 2001; 2006). This may be characterised by the formation of stronger attitudes as well as an increase in behaviours supporting the team (e.g. Funk et al, 2011). Thus, the PCM provides a practical basis for meaningfully segmenting sports spectators based on sound theory explaining the underlying influential factors contributing to sports spectatorship. The following section includes an explanation of the four stages of PCM development; awareness, attraction, attachment and allegiance.

Awareness

Before developing any sort of emotional connection or bond with a sports object, an individual must have knowledge of what that sports object represents. Individuals in the awareness stage have gained



knowledge of the sports object but have not yet developed a preference (Funk & James, 2001). As such, these individuals are expected to have a low psychological connection to a given sports object, and are still learning about it and its alternatives (Funk & James, 2001). This knowledge is usually gained through socialising agents, such as friends, family, work colleagues and the media (Filo et al, 2008). The outcomes of the awareness stage are that an individual possesses information relevant to sports consumption options. These outcomes serve as inputs into the attraction stage.

Attraction

It is in the attraction stage that individuals have used their knowledge of available options and developed a liking for a specific sports object. For instance, a person may use their knowledge of the American National Football League (NFL) to develop a preference for the Dallas Cowboys. An individual's progression to the attraction stage is primarily driven by the team's attributes satisfying the individual's hedonic motives, personal needs and becoming congruent with their social situational factors (Filo et al, 2008). Examples of this would include a person following Paris Saint-Germain after moving to Paris from another city, as a result of the team providing an exciting playing style, or after a Ligue 1 championship victory. Although individuals in the attraction stage have developed a preference, their connections are not necessarily resilient or stable, as their motives for support are primarily extrinsically motivated (Funk & James, 2001). However, this low level connection of attraction may develop into a stronger, more meaningful connection characterised by the attachment stage.

Attachment

Progression to the attachment stage occurs with an individual develops a more stable and enduring connection toward the sports object. It is argued that intrinsic, rather than extrinsic, processes motivate those in the attachment stage, as the connection to

the sports object takes on more personal meaning (Funk & James, 2001; 2006). Specifically, individuals in the attachment stage have begun to internalise associations linked to the sports object into their own self-concept (Filo et al, 2008) where physical and psychological associations linked to the team are linked to the individual (Gladden & Funk, 2002). Individuals in the attachment stage are resistant to alternate options and more likely to overcome potential barriers preventing them from following a given sports object (Beaton et al, 2011). For example, poor team performances and work commitments are less likely to affect an attached individual's willingness to follow their team. Consequently, the motives of being involved with the sports object are less reliant upon external factors as in the attraction stage. Although strong and established in the attachment stage, a further level of psychological connection termed allegiance may yet be achieved.

Allegiance

Allegiance characterises the final stage of the PCM framework, representing the highest attainable level of psychological connection with a sports object. Progression to allegiance illustrates that a consistent and enduring connection with the sports object has been formed. Upon reaching the allegiance stage, an individual displays a high level of loyalty to the sports object in question (Funk & James, 2001). High levels of loyalty influence the attitudinal and behavioural outcomes in this stage of the hierarchy. Firstly, the attitudes of allegiant individuals are said to remain stable over time, be resistant to change, and positively bias cognition (Funk & James, 2001). More specifically, an allegiant individual is more likely to remain a passionate fan of their team regardless of performance and display biases which favour their team. Secondly, individuals in the allegiant stage are said to participate in behaviours, such as watching team events more frequently compared to those in the lower stages (Funk & James, 2001; 2006). Moreover, those in the allegiant stage will exhibit a greater range of these behaviours for a longer duration.



PCM segmentation procedure

Recent advancements have seen a method put in operation to segment sports consumers into the four PCM stages using the involvement construct. Involvement represents an individual's psychological connection with an object "based on inherent needs, values, and interests" (Zaichkowsky, 1985, p.342). Involvement was considered a suitable variable to place people into the theorised PCM stages based on the construct's previous stability across recreational research (Beaton et al, 2009). Within the PCM framework, involvement is conceptualised as a three-dimensional construct. These three dimensions represent facets of pleasure, centrality and sign.

Pleasure represents the hedonic value derived from the sports object (Beaton et al, 2009). Among spectators, varying levels of pleasure ascribed by the sports object may be observed. For example, while one spectator may cheer boisterously another may display little emotional response in the event of team victories. Thus, pleasure as a PCM facet is concerned with the level of positive affect ascribed from the sports object. Centrality symbolises the central role the sports object has in the spectator's life (Beaton et al, 2009). Varying degrees of centrality are evidenced among sports spectator groups. For example, some fans may never miss a match and choose to plan important social events around being able to watch their favourite team play, while others may be less concerned about the team. Sign measures the symbolic value of the sports object, by assessing how close the individual views the sports object's image in relation to their own image (Beaton et al, 2009). Previous research suggests certain spectators may rate their role as a team fan as an important part of their image more highly than others (Cialdini et al, 1976).

Assessing involvement using multiple dimensions allows valuable information that would be lost were a one-dimensional conceptualisation to be retained (Havitz & Dimanche, 1997; Kapferer & Laurent, 1993). For example, despite two individuals having the same overall score, their involvement might be

driven by different dimensions. One individual may score high on the pleasure dimension and low on the centrality and sign dimensions, because s/he primarily values the hedonic benefits of following a sports object. Another individual may score high on the centrality and sign dimensions but low on the pleasure dimension. For this individual, the sports object has a central part in their life but the pleasure associated with the sports object is low due to some external factor (e.g. the team is performing poorly). Therefore, utilising a profile-based system rather than a uni-dimensional approach provides the ability to account for the theoretical meaning inherent in each dimension. The PCM segmentation procedure, discussed next, adopts this multi-dimensional approach and consists of three steps which are detailed in the analysis section.

PCM segmentation in spectator sports

Despite the PCM being originally developed "to provide researchers with a platform for the systematic study of sports spectators and sport fans" (Funk & James, 2001, p.120), the staging mechanism is yet to be empirically tested on spectators. Currently, empirical research utilising the PCM segmentation procedure has been confined to sports participant samples using Rugby League players, marathoners, skiers and golf participants (Beaton et al, 2009; Beaton et al, 2011; Funk et al, 2011). No application to passive sports consumption scenarios has yet been conducted (e.g. Rugby League spectators). The current research aims to address this gap in the literature by empirically testing the validity of the procedure on spectator sports samples.

Replicating previous work (Beaton et al, 2009; Beaton et al, 2011; Funk et al, 2011), the validity of the staging tool may be tested by comparing attitudinal and behavioural outcome variables across the PCM stages where differences can then be observed. The attitudinal variable used in this case was provided by the Pritchard et al (1999) Resistance to Change (RTC) measurement which has been used previously to confirm the validity of the segmentation procedure



(Beaton et al, 2009; Beaton et al, 2011). Spectator behaviour was measured by the frequency to which an individual follows the sports object via television. This aspect of behaviour was chosen as the media enables spectators to consume their favourite league or team regardless of geographical restrictions which are present for other forms of consumption such as live attendance (Nicholson, 2007). Considering these variables and the PCM's theorising, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: There will be a statistically significant increase in reported scores on RTC towards the sports object from awareness to attraction, from attraction to attachment and from attachment to allegiance.

H2: There will be a statistically significant increase in reported scores assessing the consumption of the sports object via television from awareness to attraction, from attraction to attachment and from attachment to allegiance.

Methodology

Two samples of spectator sports consumers drawn from the Australian population were examined to test the hypotheses. The first sample was drawn from consumers of sports leagues; the second sample focused on consumers of sports teams. The decision to use two samples, at the league and team level, was made to increase the applicability of findings, and was based upon the knowledge that individuals who follow a particular sport or league may not necessarily develop a preference for any specific team (Branscombe & Wann, 1991). For example, a person may be a devoted follower of soccer's English Premier League without holding a specific preference for any one team (e.g. Arsenal) or vice versa. The participants, materials and procedures used to gather data are now discussed.

Participants

Study 1 – sports league consumers

Participants for Study 1 were sourced from four major Australian metropolitan areas – Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney and the Gold Coast. These regions were chosen as they are known for their strong sports cultures and all host National Rugby League (NRL) and Australian Football League (AFL) franchises. These two leagues were selected for this research as they represent the highest attended team sports in Australia (ABS, 2009). Respondents (n=761) were almost evenly distributed according gender (51.9% female; 48.1% male) and favourite league (53.9% NRL; 46.1% AFL). Most respondents (65.8%) were aged between 25 and 54; while close to one-third (32.2%) reported an average annual of between \$35,001 - \$65,000 Australian dollars (AUD). Reports from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) identify the average Australian to be 37 years old (2009), earn an annual income of \$42,172 AUD (2008) and be primarily female (50.5%) (2010a). Thus, sample demographics were determined to closely fit with current Australian population data.

Study 2 – sports team consumers

Participants for Study 2 were gathered from the Gold Coast, Australia, which served as one collection point for Study 1. The Gold Coast was deemed an appropriate research catchment as the region supports a professional NRL team (Gold Coast Titans) and a professional AFL team (Gold Coast Suns). A total of 623 usable responses were received. Sample demographics revealed that most respondents were female (56%) and aged between 25 and 54 (61.7%). Close to one-third (30.5%) reported a household income of between \$35,001 and \$65,000 AUD per annum. These data were compared with Gold Coast demographic data (ABS, 2010b) and the researchers concluded the sample closely fits the demographic profile of the city's residents.



Materials

Both studies used online questionnaires to gather quantitative demographic, attitudinal and behavioural data. Demographic items included respondent age, gender and income. Involvement was measured using nine items representing the pleasure, centrality and sign facets, which were adapted to suit the sports spectator context. The constructs have previously demonstrated good reliability, reporting Cronbach's alphas ranging between .82 and .86 (Beaton et al, 2011). Three of Pritchard and colleagues' (1999) RTC items were included as the confirmatory attitude measure. Past research using RTC has yielded acceptable Cronbach's alpha scores ($> .70$), suggesting the construct possesses internal reliability (Beaton et al, 2011; Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004). The PCM and RTC items were measured using 7-point scales anchored with 1 = Strongly Disagree and 7 = Strongly Agree. Behaviour was measured using an item assessing the frequency of watching the league/team via television and was anchored with 1 = Never to 7 = Frequently. For a list of the items used in the studies and their reported reliabilities please see Appendix 1.

Procedures

Participants for both studies were recruited via email lists purchased from a reputable external market research company located in Australia. A total of 13,000 invitations to participate in the research were distributed via email and directed participants to the online questionnaire developed for Study 1 ($n=5,000$; response rate = 15.2%) or Study 2 ($n=8,000$; response rate = 7.8%). For Study 1, respondents were instructed to choose their favourite football league from a variety of options. Those who chose either the AFL or the NRL were retained and included in the analyses. In Study 2, individuals were instructed to nominate their favourite sports team from any code. Half (50.9%; $n=623$) of the

respondents indicated a preference for an AFL or NRL team and were retained for subsequent analyses. The relatively low response rates reported may be attributed to the research invitation being sent to the general population, rather than targeted sports fans, and the inclusion of only AFL and NRL fans. Though these factors reduced our overall response rates, the appropriateness of our sample was improved, which offset any negative implications of our sample size (e.g. McDonald, 2010). All respondents were then asked to answer the attitudinal and behavioural questions relevant to the study. The treatment of the data is discussed in the following analysis section.

Analysis

Data from both samples were analysed using SPSS 19.0. First, descriptive statistics were computed to establish the demographic make-up of our samples. Then the scale items selected to represent the pleasure, centrality and sign facets of involvement were assessed on reliability and validity criterion to ensure the items accurately captured what they are purported to measure (Netemeyer et al, 2003). Finally, the three-step segmentation procedure developed by Beaton and colleagues (2009) was employed to place spectators into the four PCM stages.

The first step of PCM segmentation consisted of computing a mean score for each respondent's pleasure, centrality and sign involvement facets. Next, the mean scores for each dimension were ranked as either high (> 5.65), medium (4.5 - 5.65) or low (< 4.5), consistent with the guidelines set by Beaton and colleagues (2009). These cut-points were developed so that an individual must rate at least 75% of the items as high (6-7 on the seven-point scale) in order to be considered high on that dimension, with similar boundaries set for the low and medium classifications. Based on their respective scores, each respondent was allocated a dynamic involvement profile (e.g. H, L, H) used for segmentation.



The last step of the PCM staging procedure involved classifying respondents using a decision-tree developed using theoretical consideration of the involvement characteristics represented at each stage (c.f. Beaton et al, 2009; Funk & James, 2001). For example, Funk and James (2001) suggested the attraction stage would be characterised by high levels of pleasure, but with low levels of centrality and sign, whereas strong centrality would be apparent in higher stages. Appendix 2 illustrates the 27 unique profiles classified within each PCM stage based on this theorising. Following PCM staging, both hypotheses were addressed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests. To test for between-group differences, the stringent Games-Howell post-hoc test was selected based on the uneven sample sizes reported across the PCM groups (Field, 2005).

Results

Descriptive analyses of both samples indicated respondents from Study 1 and Study 2 were both likely to be female, aged between 25 and 54 and earn between \$35,000 and \$65,000 AUD per annum (see Table 1).

The Cronbach's alpha scores for the involvement dimensions are reported in Appendix 1. The data provide evidence of each dimension's internal consistency. The scores for the pleasure, centrality and sign dimensions and resistance to change exceeded Nunnally and Bernstein's (1994) recommended cut-off point of .70. A review of the correlations among the dimensions provided evidence that the pleasure, centrality and sign dimensions were moderately related, but distinct, components of an underlying construct (e.g. Beaton et al, 2009). The dimensions were deemed to possess acceptable discriminant validity, as the correlations between each construct (reported in Table 2) did not exceed the .80 threshold, thus minimising the possibility of multi-collinearity (Holmes-Smith, 2011; Kline, 1998). The item properties were comparable to previous research

TABLE 1 Demographic profile of respondents

	STUDY 1	STUDY 2
GENDER		
FEMALE	51.9%	56.0%
MALE	48.1%	44.0%
AGE	5.2%	5.6%
18-24	17.3%	14.0%
25-34	26.7%	22.0%
35-44	21.8%	25.7%
45-54	21.8%	17.3%
55-64	7.2%	13.6%
65 +	-	1.8%
PREFER NOT TO SAY		
ANNUAL INCOME		
< \$20,000	8.3%	7.9%
\$20,001-\$35,000	12.4%	13.2%
\$35,001-\$50,000	14.2%	18.6%
\$50,001-\$65,000	18.0%	11.9%
\$65,001-\$100,000	28.6%	20.7%
> \$100,000	16.4%	20.6%
PREFER NOT TO SAY	2.1%	7.1%

utilising the PCM segmentation procedure (Beaton et al, 2009) and therefore deemed suitable to use for segmentation.

The three-step PCM segmentation procedure resulted in the following stage-based distributions. For Study 1, segmentation resulted in 23.4% of the respondents (n=178) being placed in the awareness stage, 38% (n=289) in the attraction stage, 26.4% (n=201) in the attachment stage and 12.2% (n=93) in the allegiance stage. A similar distribution was found in Study 2 with 25.2% of respondents (n=157) being placed in the awareness stage, 34.2% (n=213) in the attraction stage, 25% (n=156) in the attachment



TABLE 2 Construct correlations

	STUDY 1			STUDY 2		
	PLEASURE	CENTRALITY	SIGN	PLEASURE	CENTRALITY	SIGN
PLEASURE	1			1		
CENTRALITY	0.63	1		0.72	1	
SIGN	0.64	0.78	1	0.71	0.78	1

TABLE 3 Stage-based mean scores and standard deviations

	PCM STAGE	N	PLEASURE	CENTRALITY	SIGN	RESISTANCE TO CHANGE	MEDIA CONSUMPTION
STUDY 1	AWARENESS	178	3.51*	1.96*	2.63*	3.82*	3.53*
	(SD)		(0.80)	(0.92)	(0.94)	(1.19)	(1.30)
	ATTRACTION	289	5.36*	2.57*	3.24*	5.29*	5.10*
	(SD)		(0.61)	(0.94)	(0.84)	(1.22)	(1.05)
	ATTACHMENT	201	5.84*	4.08*	4.88*	6.16*	5.50*
	(SD)		(0.73)	(1.00)	(0.62)	(0.90)	(1.12)
	ALLEGIANCE	93	6.53*	5.92*	5.92*	6.62*	6.49*
(SD)		(0.49)	(0.73)	(0.65)	(0.61)	(0.70)	
	*P < .05	761	F(3,757) = 540.07	F(3,757) = 471.85	F(3,757) = 517.10	F(3,757) = 200.13	F(3,757) = 173.5
STUDY 2	AWARENESS	157	3.49*	2.16*	2.70*	3.41*	4.16*
	(SD)		(0.89)	(1.00)	(1.00)	(1.29)	(1.59)
	ATTRACTION		5.39*	2.95*	3.48*	4.89*	5.47*
	(SD)	213	(0.55)	(0.95)	(0.82)	(1.28)	(1.03)
	ATTACHMENT		5.92*	4.12*	4.90*	5.78*	5.84*
	(SD)	156	(0.72)	(0.94)	(0.58)	(0.96)	(0.79)
	ALLEGIANCE	97	6.59*	5.96*	5.99*	6.44*	6.16*
(SD)		(0.44)	(0.67)	(0.60)	(0.66)	(0.70)	
	* P < .05	623	F(3,619) = 525.41	F(3,619) = 386.14	F(3,619) = 444.26	F(3,619) = 180.14	F(3,619) = 88.21



stage and 15.6% (n=97) in the allegiance stage. The distribution across both samples suggested that the majority of respondents possessed a low to moderate psychological connection to their chosen sports league or team.

ANOVA tests were subsequently run to assess the validity of the PCM staging tool on our samples and to test our hypotheses. As Table 3 illustrates, significant differences were reported between all stages for the three involvement facets, and for the selected attitudinal and behavioural outcome variables. The three involvement facets, RTC and television viewership frequency increased from awareness to attraction, from attraction to attachment and from attachment to allegiance in both studies. Games-Howell post-hoc comparisons revealed the differences between the stages were significant ($p < .05$) for all assessed measures. Results indicate that the attitudinal and behavioural outcomes assessed operated as hypothesised.

Discussion

The purpose of the research was to empirically test a segmentation tool suggested, but never proven, to effectively segment sports spectators. Replicating and extending previous research conducted in participatory leisure contexts (Beaton et al, 2009; Beaton et al, 2011; Funk et al, 2011), we sought to provide value to both academics and practitioners concerned with better understanding sports spectators. Spectators at both league and team level were examined, as spectators may follow a league in general rather than one specific team (Branscombe & Wann, 1991). Overall, results provided support for our hypotheses, advocating the use of the PCM segmentation procedure within spectator sports research contexts.

Hypothesis 1 addressed the assumption that the derived groups would possess increasingly favourable attitudes toward a particular sports object in line with the PCM's hierarchy. Using Pritchard and colleagues' (1999) RTC measurement, results indicate that

attitudes become increasingly strengthened, from awareness to attraction, attachment and allegiant stages. This finding is in line with previous research with leisure participants (Beaton et al, 2009; Beaton et al, 2011; Funk et al, 2011). With Hypothesis 2 it was proposed that behaviour directed toward the sports object would also increase in line with the PCM stages. Results suggested the groups increasingly consumed their favourite league or team's matches on television in accordance with the PCM hierarchy. Based on these results, both hypotheses were supported.

In summary, based on results, the authors concluded that the PCM segmentation tool can be employed with spectator samples to derive groups which display increasingly positive attitudes and behaviours towards sports objects. However, the results should be considered preliminary given the large allocation of respondents to the awareness stage in both samples. Such allocation indicates the cut-point levels used to create the involvement profiles may need adjusting to maximise the segmentation tool's effectiveness within spectator research contexts. Specific suggestions for future research that may improve the procedure for use on spectator samples are provided following a discussion of the theoretical and managerial implications offered below.

Theoretical implications

By addressing calls from published research suggesting the PCM segmentation procedure should be tested in a variety of settings (Funk et al, 2011; Stewart et al, 2003), two theoretical contributions were provided. The first contribution concerns providing empirical support for the PCM within the sports spectator context. Despite PCM being developed with relevance to both participants and spectators (Funk & James, 2001), previous empirical work has focused solely on sports participants. Collectively, our findings confirm and extend the PCM as a conceptual framework and validate the PCM segmentation procedure for use on spectator samples. Thus, research on spectators,



at both the league and team level, may be valuably informed by adopting the PCM as either a theoretical model, or by using the PCM segmentation procedure for more applied research. Consequently, this research provides new opportunities for PCM to be used by sports academics who may wish to conceptualise the process of fan development as consisting of these escalating levels of psychological connection.

The second contribution is derived from the large allocation of individuals to the awareness group in both studies. Funk and James (2001, p.139) stated: "When an individual consciously decides that they have a favourite sport or team, they have reached the second level – attraction". Although our studies clearly asked respondents about their favourite league or team, approximately one quarter of our total number of respondents were placed in the awareness stage. This finding adds knowledge to the PCM by highlighting the consumptive differences that exist between participants and spectators. Rather than treating sports participants and spectators the same, PCM research should consider the inherent differences between participatory sports and more passive sports consumption (e.g. spectator sports) (Beaton et al, 2009). Given that the low, medium and high boundaries were developed with participants in mind, the use of lower cut-points would likely better reflect the passive nature of spectator consumption.

Managerial implications

As noted by Stewart and colleagues (2003), marketing strategies employed by sports organisations to draw individuals to their sports products can benefit from robust segmentation tools. The results of this research provide practical direction for sports marketers at both the league and team level. By including the nine involvement items in communications, sports organisations can employ an easy method to accurately segment their spectator bases. This may augment traditional segmentation strategies (e.g. targeting females only) by application as a

secondary segmentation tool to better understand these predefined markets, or be used as a stand-alone strategy on larger spectator bases (e.g. targeting all spectators). Targeted marketing programs for each segment could then be formulated and implemented. Ultimately these programmes would be devised with the intention of moving spectators on to the next stage of connection, based on meeting the needs and wants of individuals at each stage of the PCM (e.g. Beaton et al, 2011). Given the differences that exist between PCM groups, this type of targeted marketing would probably be more effective than a mass media marketing approach hoping to connect with all spectators. This is of particular importance given the significance sports organisations need to place on attracting, retaining and developing fans (James et al, 2002) and the positive attitudinal and behavioural consequences related to stage progression (Funk et al, 2011).

To move individuals in the awareness stage to the attraction stage, marketing activities that encourage game attendance, such as two-for-one tickets, could be promoted (Funk & James, 2001). Likewise, marketing materials should be designed to illustrate the hedonic benefits (e.g. fun, social engagement with friends) that are associated with attending the team's games, as pleasure is the most important facet for these people (Beaton et al, 2011). These strategies may assist individuals to develop a preference for the team by satisfying certain needs and allowing them to receive benefits through their support (Funk & James, 2006). Similar efforts directed at moving individuals from attraction to attachment and attachment to allegiance could also be formulated. In facilitating progression to attachment, attempts to foster sign and centrality aspects of the sports object should be made to extend the interaction between spectator and sports object beyond game day and on into more avenues of an individual's life, so that it takes on personal meaning (Funk, 2008). This could be achieved by inviting fans to training sessions where they could meet players and get merchandise autographed. Finally, to facilitate continued progression to the allegiance



stage, marketing activities should be consistent and focused on offering personalised service (Funk, 2008). Opportunities for individuals to be involved in club decisions (e.g. vote on team jersey designs) or have access to personalised email information and loyalty programmes may be effective in this regard.

Limitations and future research

Although results are encouraging, further research is needed to validate these findings. One limitation of this research is the restricted sample frame which was drawn for the studies. Both were conducted within Australia and focused only on two professional sporting competitions and their respective teams. Although this is a useful starting point, future research should test the PCM segmentation procedure using spectators from different countries to increase the generalisability of our findings (Theodorakis et al, 2010). Additional efforts should be made to examine spectators across a range of differing sports (e.g. basketball, soccer, hockey), at different levels (e.g. amateur, collegiate, professional) and consider certain demographic characteristics (e.g. males vs. females, specific aged cohorts). Another limitation concerns the selected behavioural outcome variable used. Our behavioural variable was a single-item measure which may be considered appropriate for an exploratory study but should be supplemented with additional measures which characterise fan behaviour (e.g. attendance, merchandise purchasing) in subsequent studies.

Overall, future efforts to validate the PCM staging procedure, using a wider range of multi-item attitudinal and behavioural variables, are encouraged. Future research should also track the same individuals as they progress through the PCM, rather than the cross-sectional approach taken by this paper. Longitudinal research of this nature would be more suited to discovering stage-based differences and would also enable the key drivers of change to be identified (Beaton et al, 2011; Stewart et al, 2003).

Future research should also take steps to validate

the PCM staging mechanism itself and develop the procedure to better study sports consumers at the spectator level. Despite indicating a preference for a league or team, a trait indicative of the attraction stage, a large proportion of our respondents were placed within the awareness stage. Although this could be explained by respondents indicating a favourite despite not having any real preference for the sports object, a more likely cause is the current cut-point boundaries. Thus, the applicability of the current cut-point levels which determine whether a given involvement facet rates low (<4.50), medium (4.50-5.65) or high (>5.65) needs further validation. As these cut-points were developed with a focus on participatory leisure pursuits, they may not be entirely appropriate to spectator samples. One suggestion would be to test alternate classification boundaries which account for the more passive consumption of spectator sports when compared to participant sports. Given each facet is measured on a 7-point scale, future research may wish to employ boundaries that consider mean scores below the midpoint (4.0) as low and adjust medium and high ratings accordingly.

Finally, for reasons of parsimony (e.g. Funk et al, 2009), efforts should also be made to test if the number of items needed to segment into the PCM stages can be reduced. Future research should test the accuracy of the staging mechanism when using two, or even single, item measures for the involvement dimensions. If a reduced item staging procedure performs similarly to the nine item method, sports organisations will be offered a more concise and easily implementable tool.

Conclusion

The PCM segmentation procedure successfully identified four unique segments of spectator sports consumers, at the league and team level. The four segments differed in their attitudes towards their preferred sports object and showed an increase in consumption behaviour related to the sports object.



Results are consistent with previous research on sports participants and congruent with the theorising of the PCM framework. Consequently, sports organisations are provided with an effective tool to segment their spectator bases. Accordingly, marketing strategies formulated to better serve the full range of sports consumer typologies may be implemented to build allegiant spectator bases and subsequently increase revenues.

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Biographies

Jason P. Doyle is a doctoral student within the department of Tourism, Leisure, Hotel and Sport Management at Griffith University, Queensland, Australia. His research interests include sports fan development and the marketing of new sports teams.

Thilo Kunkel is a doctoral student within the department of Tourism, Leisure, Hotel and Sport Management at Griffith University, Queensland, Australia. His research focuses on the development and marketing of sports brands and the relationships between leagues and their teams.

Daniel C. Funk PhD, is a Professor in the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management at Temple University and in the Griffith Business School at Griffith University, Queensland, Australia. His research focuses on sports involvement.

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APPENDIX 1 Survey items and reliabilities

CONSTRUCT	ITEMS	RELIABILITIES (α)	
		STUDY 1	STUDY 2
PLEASURE	WATCHING THE [LEAGUE/TEAM] IS ONE OF THE MOST SATISFYING THINGS I DO.	0.84	0.86
	I REALLY ENJOY WATCHING [LEAGUE/TEAM] MATCHES.		
	COMPARED TO OTHER ACTIVITIES, WATCHING THE [LEAGUE/TEAM] IS VERY INTERESTING.		
CENTRALITY	I FIND A LOT OF MY LIFE IS ORGANISED AROUND FOLLOWING THE [LEAGUE/TEAM].	0.92	0.89
	A LOT OF MY TIME IS ORGANISED AROUND FOLLOWING THE [LEAGUE/TEAM].		
	FOLLOWING THE [LEAGUE/TEAM] HAS A CENTRAL ROLE IN MY LIFE.		
SIGN	WATCHING THE [LEAGUE/TEAM] SAYS A LOT ABOUT WHO I AM.	0.76	0.81
	YOU CAN TELL A LOT ABOUT A PERSON BY THE [LEAGUE/TEAM] HE/SHE FOLLOWS.		
	WHEN I WATCH THE [LEAGUE/TEAM], I CAN REALLY BE MYSELF.		
RESISTANCE TO CHANGE	TO CHANGE MY PREFERENCES FOR MY FAVOURITE [LEAGUE/TEAM] WOULD REQUIRE MAJOR RETHINKING.	0.81	0.81
	EVEN IF CLOSE FRIENDS RECOMMENDED FOLLOWING ANOTHER [LEAGUE/TEAM], I WOULD NOT STOP FOLLOWING MY FAVOURITE [LEAGUE/TEAM].		
	MY PREFERENCE FOR SUPPORTING THE [LEAGUE/TEAM] WOULD NOT WILLINGLY CHANGE.		
MEDIA BEHAVIOUR	HOW OFTEN DO YOU WATCH THE [LEAGUE/TEAM] ON TELEVISION?	-	-



APPENDIX 2 Involvement profiles within each PCM stage

AWARENESS			ATTRACTION			PLEASURE			ALLEGIANCE		
P	C	S	P	C	S	P	C	S	P	C	S
L	L	L	M	L	L	L	L	M	M	H	H
			H	L	L	L	L	H	H	H	M
						L	M	L	H	M	H
						L	M	M	H	H	H
						L	M	H			
						L	H	L			
						L	H	M			
						L	H	H			
						M	L	M			
						M	L	H			
						M	M	L			
						M	H	L			
						M	M	M			
						M	M	H			
						M	H	M			
						H	L	M			
						H	M	L			
						H	M	M			
						H	L	H			
						H	H	L			

Source: Beaton et al, 2009.



Increasing sponsorship effectiveness through brand experience

Keywords

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Marieke L. Fransen

School of Communication Research, University of Amsterdam
Kloveniersburgwal 48, 1012 CX Amsterdam, Netherlands
Email: m.l.fransen@uva.nl

Thomas J. L. van Rompay

Department of Industrial Design Engineering
University of Twente, Netherlands

Daan G. Muntinga

School of Communication Research
University of Amsterdam, Netherlands

Peer reviewed

Abstract

This quasi-experimental field study examines whether companies can improve the effectiveness of their sponsorship investments by creating a brand experience. Data were collected among participants of a sponsored marathon. During this event participants had the opportunity to engage in an experience orchestrated by one of the main sponsors of the event. We compare the data of participants who ran the marathon and also engaged in the experience with those who solely ran the marathon. The results reveal that participating in the experience increases top of mind awareness, brand recall and attitudes towards the sponsoring brand, compared to just running the marathon. Additionally, within the experience condition, brand experience and flow predict brand attitudes.

Executive summary

This research investigates whether creating a brand experience during a sponsored event can add to the success of that sponsorship. It is posited that a direct brand experience might harvest its own intrinsic benefits by intensifying consumers' direct contact with the sponsoring brand. To examine this proposition we conducted a quasi-experimental field study. During a sponsored marathon event in April 2010 data were collected. One of the main sponsors of the event, a well known financial services company, created a brand experience in which all runners could participate. In this brand experience – the 'running

support truck' – runners could engage in activities related to running, including chat sessions with fellow athletes, free massage, information about running and diets, and a free running shirt. The sponsor's brand name was present in all activities. Two weeks after the event, runners were invited, by email, to complete an online survey questioning them about the marathon and the sponsoring brand (i.e. top of mind awareness, brand recall and brand attitude). We compared the data of participants who ran the marathon and also engaged in the brand experience with those who solely ran the marathon. The results



demonstrate that providing opportunities for a direct, interactive brand experience does indeed translate into increased top of mind awareness, enhanced brand recall and brand attitudes – measures indicative of sponsoring effectiveness. In addition to such cognitive measures, our results also show that designing an orchestrated brand experience boosts participants' affective brand experiences. Participants who visited the running support truck rated the brand as more exciting and hedonically charged than participants who solely participated in the marathon event. Therefore, integrating a direct brand experience in an otherwise ambiguous event involving multiple sponsors is a very impactful strategy. This is the case both from a managerial point of view (with the primary intention of enhancing top of mind awareness, brand recall and attitudes with sponsorship) and from a customer experience point of view (in which the pleurability of the brand experience takes precedence).

Introduction

Sponsorship is increasingly acknowledged as a viable strategy in the marketing communication mix and its practice can be observed in various domains, including sport, the arts, civic causes and cultural events. The considerable investment that companies around the world make in sponsorship is expected to increase annually. For instance, it has been estimated that a total of \$3 billion was spent on sponsorships during the soccer World Cup 2010 in South Africa, compared to a total of \$1.9 billion invested in the same event four years earlier in Germany (SANEC, 2006). Increased sponsorship spending can reap rewards, as research indicates that sponsorship can generate favourable consumer reactions and enhance brand equity (Becker-Olsen & Hill 2006; Cornwell et al 2001), brand recall (Wakefield et al 2007), brand image (Gwinner 1997; Gwinner & Eaton 1999; Smith 2004), brand awareness (Cornwell et al 2006; McDaniel & Kinney 1996) and purchase decisions (Madriral 2000; 2001).

Although sponsorship is a growing phenomenon and companies spend a lot of money on it, success is not guaranteed. This is due, for example, to perceived incongruence between sponsor and event (Dardis, 2009) and sponsorship clutter (e.g. Cornwell et al 2000, 2005; Ruth & Simonin 2003). In such cases, the question then becomes how sponsorship success might be increased when having to deal with these kinds of challenges. In this research we propose that creating a brand experience during a sponsored event can add to the success of a sponsorship. It is posited that a direct brand experience may harvest its own intrinsic benefits by intensifying consumers' direct contact with the sponsoring brand. Hence, the current research proposes that creating a brand experience during a sponsored event can positively affect consumer responses, including top of mind awareness, recall and brand attitudes by intensifying real-time brand contact. To address this issue, we studied the dynamics of direct brand experiences in more detail, examining whether feelings of flow and perceptions of 'sharing the experience' can elucidate why such brand presentations positively affect brand attitudes. In doing so, the research also explores the notion (and presumed benefits) of integrated marketing communications in the context of sponsoring (i.e. integrating a brand event within a traditional sponsorship context).

Theoretical background

Brand experiences

Event, or experience, marketing is a relatively new strategy that could boost the effectiveness of sponsorships. This is defined as the staging of events by a company to get in contact with the consumer in such a way that it creates a memorable experience for the consumer (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Schmitt 1999; Fransen et al, 2011). Pine and Gilmore (1998) and Schmitt (1999) centre on events that are staged – that is, initiated, created and developed – by the sponsoring company itself (e.g. Redbull Air Race and M&M Experience), rather than the sponsored



(i.e. the company financially supporting an already existing event). However, the principles of experience marketing can also be applied to the creation of brand experience at sponsorship events. These principles include a focus on the receiver's experience of the message, rather than on the message itself, and on active audience participation. Moreover, such a brand experience involves direct contact with the brand, the company and other potential customers, as opposed to the indirect, or 'call for', contact prevalent in traditional sponsorship or advertising (Hastings 1984). Coppetti et al (2009) were the first to establish that audience participation resulted in improved sponsorship evaluations, more favourable brand attitudes and an increased image transfer from the event to the sponsoring brand. They established this by inviting visitors to a sponsored dance party and 'laboratory' where they could create their own flavours of the sponsor's product.

With respect to the consumer's experience, the beneficial effects of experiential marketing have been traced to the fact that events (and the 'designed' environments in which they take place) may inspire and heighten rich sensory experiences (Schmitt, 1999) and that brand experiences can be instructive, aesthetically pleasing and entertaining (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). On both counts, such pleasurable experiences may subsequently favourably colour overall brand perceptions. On a more fundamental level and of relevance to the current research, feelings of flow on the one hand and the social component of brand experiences on the other may also underlie positive transfer effects from 'experience' to 'brand' (cf. Novak et al 2003). Flow, in this study, follows the definition of Csikszentmihalyi (1990) and can be described as 'a highly enjoyable mental state that is characterised by a high level of absorption in an activity or experience'. Drenger et al (2008) have demonstrated that active flow experiences during a brand encounter positively affected participants' emotional experiences. Such positive effects may be understood when realising that, during experiences of flow, consumers' rational information processing pathways are bypassed and

brand elements enter the mind of the consumer in a much more intuitive and direct fashion. As a result, the brand becomes more activated in consumers' minds, which is expected to boost the level of recall and brand attitudes.

Additionally, Hoffman and Novak (1996) argue, in their conceptual model of online flow, that website interactivity enhances experiences of flow and subsequently consumer responses. Interactivity is suggested to enhance perceptions of control, engagement, curiosity, concentration and absent-mindedness (all are dimensions of flow; see also Drenger et al 2008). Similarly, it could be expected that real-life contact with a brand, through a staged brand experience, will result in comparable positive effects. In addition, it could be argued that absorption in the experience also prevents opportunities for consumer scepticism to arise (involving, for instance, the production of counter arguments). Hence, claimed brand benefits may be more readily assimilated, resulting in increased perceptions of overall brand benefits (e.g. brand effectiveness) as well. In short, feelings of flow can be considered important antecedents of positive brand evaluations. In particular, flow may positively boost transformational or hedonic brand meanings (that consumers perceive in a brand as flow) so they are experienced as a positive, affectively-laden state of mind. Hence, insights into what causes flow can assist managers in creating a desired brand image that resonates with consumers' hedonic needs.

In addition to the importance of a pleasurable individual experience, brand experiences are at the same time often social in nature. Research in social psychology (Hill, 1987) shows that people are generally motivated to seek and enjoy relationships with others. This is because other people can be a source of: pleasant stimulation (i.e. 'the more people, the more fun'); emotional support or reassurance (e.g. receiving support or feedback from others when feeling uncertain or indecisive); praise and compliments (i.e. 'well done, nice job!'); and social comparison (i.e. 'how do I do compare to others?').



In line with these notions, research in consumer psychology demonstrates that social aspects of shopping and service encounters take on increased importance, and that part of the fun of a shopping trip relates to the opportunities for social interaction and impression management (i.e. generating a positive image in the eyes of others) that fellow shoppers provide (Grove & Fisk 1997; Haytko & Baber 2004; Luo 2005). Hence, sharing an experience with others may fulfill important social needs, laying the foundation for a pleasant experience that may, in turn, translate to a positive brand attitude.

Based on the previous discussion, we expect that offering a brand experience at a (multiple) sponsored (sports) event will enhance top of mind awareness, recall and attitudes. This is because the experience will actively engage the participants and prompt them to interact with the brand. Through the additional interaction with the sponsoring brand, it will be better remembered and linked more easily to the event, resulting in positive overall brand attitudes. Integrating the more traditional marketing tool of sponsorship with an interactive brand experience is expected to result in the combined benefits of both marketing communication strategies. Thus, we hypothesise that:

- H1a: Participants who engage in the brand experience have a greater top of mind awareness than participants who do not engage in the brand experience.**
- H1b: Participants who engage in the brand experience have a greater brand recall than participants who do not engage in the brand experience.**
- H1c: Participants who engage in the brand experience have a more positive hedonic brand attitude than participants who do not engage in the brand experience.**
- H1d: Participants who engage in the brand experience have a more positive functional brand attitude than participants who do not engage in the brand experience.**

Moreover, we hypothesise a significant relationship between flow and perceptions of 'sharing the experience' and brand attitudes among participants in the orchestrated brand experience condition. Hence, we expect:

- H2a: A positive relationship between flow and hedonic brand attitudes for runners who engage in the brand experience.**
- H2b: A positive relationship between flow and functional brand attitudes for runners who engage in the brand experience.**
- H2c: A positive relationship between 'sharing the experience' and hedonic brand attitudes for runners who engage in the brand experience.**
- H2d: A positive relationship between 'sharing the experience' and functional brand attitudes for runners who engage in the brand experience.**

Methodology

Design and participants

A total of 89 marathon runners (46 male, 43 female) participated in our study; 43 of these participants engaged voluntarily in the brand experience and ran the marathon, while 46 participants just ran the marathon. Hence, participants in the experience condition were exposed to the sponsoring brand during the brand experience and during the marathon whereas participants in the marathon only condition were solely exposed to the sponsoring brand. The age of participants ranged from 16 to 65 with a mean of 37.82 years (SD=11.91).

Procedure

During a sponsored marathon event in April 2010 email addresses of runners were collected. One of the main sponsors, a well known financial services company, created a brand experience in which all runners could participate. Two weeks after the event runners were invited, by email, to complete an online survey questioning them about the marathon. After



answering some demographic questions, participants were first asked to write down: 1) the three financial services companies that first entered their mind (top of mind awareness); and 2) the sponsors of the marathon event (recall). Next, they were asked to indicate whether they had engaged in the brand experience or not. Runners who had engaged in the brand experience were questioned about this experience by measuring flow and brand experience. Next, all participants were questioned about the marathon to obscure the real objective of our study (e.g. 'Did you finish the marathon?' and 'In what time did you finish the marathon?'). Finally, attitude towards the sponsoring brand was measured, after which participants were asked whether they were clients of the financial services company (i.e. company client status).

Independent variable

Brand experience

Due to the naturalistic setting of our experiment the runners self-selected into the experience condition or the marathon only condition. Besides running the marathon, participants in the experience condition entered the running support truck created by one of the main sponsors, in which they could engage in activities related to running. For example, they could have a massage, obtain information about running and diets, receive a free running shirt or chat with other runners about their experiences. The sponsor brand name was present in all the activities. The running support truck meets with the definition of a brand experience, as defined by Pine & Gilmore (1998) and Schmitt (1999) because it incorporates the feel dimension (massage), cognition (information), relational aspect (sharing experiences with other runners), required active participation, and was set up to be a memorable event. The participants in the marathon only condition ran the without visiting the running support truck and were thus only exposed to the sponsoring brand during the marathon itself.

Dependent variables

Top of mind awareness

To measure top of mind awareness of the sponsoring brand that offered the experience, participants were asked to name the three financial services companies that first entered their mind. Thus, it was measured whether engagement in the brand experience enhanced top of mind awareness of the sponsoring brand. When measuring this variable, participants were not aware that the questionnaire included questions about the sponsors of the marathon. We aimed to measure whether the sponsoring financial company was recalled more often than other (non-sponsoring) financial companies.

Brand recall

Various companies, including the company that created the brand experience by offering the running support truck, sponsored the event. To measure whether runners who visited the brand experience had a greater brand recall of our target sponsoring brand than participants in the marathon only condition, participants who had visited the truck were asked to recall three sponsors of the marathon event in which they had participated two weeks earlier.

Overall brand attitudes

Participants' overall attitudes towards the sponsoring brand being studied (the target brand) were measured using a scale developed by Voss et al (2003). This scale measures participants' hedonic and functional attitudes towards the brand. The hedonic dimension ($\alpha=.85$) is comprised of four semantic differential response items and the functional dimension ($\alpha=.92$) is comprised of five semantic differential response items. Example items of the hedonic measure are unenjoyable/enjoyable and dull/exciting. Example items of the functional measure are ineffective/effective and impractical/practical (see appendix A for the complete scale) Participants could provide their answers on 7-point scales.



Additional variables

To examine the underlying mechanisms explaining how experiences might be effective in improving sponsorship activities, we measured how participants (who visited the running support truck) had experienced the orchestrated brand experience by adopting a measure of flow and brand experience.

Flow

A scale developed by Drenger et al (2008) comprising eight items ($\alpha=.95$) was used to measure flow. Example statements are: 'During my visit to the running support truck I had the feeling I could tackle anything' and 'My complete attention and energy were focused on the activities in the running support truck' (see Appendix B for the complete scale). Participants could rate these statements on 7-point scales (1 = Completely Disagree, 7 = Completely Agree).

Shared brand experience

We measured participants' shared brand experience by using a scale developed by Chang and Chieng (2006). Shared experience was measured by 6 items ($\alpha=.96$) rated on a 7-point scale (1 = Completely Disagree, 7 = Completely Agree). Example items are: 'The running support truck tries to remind me of activities that I can do' and 'I can relate to other people through the running support truck' (see Appendix C for the complete scale).

Results

We asked all participants whether they were clients of the financial services company that sponsored the event and organised the running support truck (the target brand). We did this to rule out the potential confounding effect of this variable. The results found that only 11.2% of our participants were clients of the financial services company. Of the runners in the experience condition, 11.6% were clients of the financial services company. Whereas 10.9% of the runners in the marathon only condition were clients

of the financial services company. We included this variable (i.e. company clientele status) in all our analyses to rule out any possible confounding effects.

To examine whether top of mind awareness for the sponsor brand was higher for runners in the experience condition, compared to runners in the marathon only condition, we conducted a logistic regression analysis (0=sponsor brand not mentioned and 1 = sponsor brand mentioned). The variable company clientele status was also included in the analysis to control for any potential confounding effects. The results yielded a significant difference between the two conditions, Wald (1)=7.90, $p < .005$, $R^2=.12$. In the marathon only condition 23.9% named the sponsoring brand whereas in the experience condition 53.3% named the sponsoring brand (Pearson's chi-square=8.23, $p < .005$). No effect was found for company clientele status, Wald (1)=.009, ns. Hence, top of mind awareness of the sponsoring brand two weeks after the event was significantly higher for the runners who engaged in the runner support truck experience than for the participants only participating in the marathon.

A second logistic regression analysis was conducted to test our hypothesis that runners in the experience condition had greater recall of the sponsoring brand than those in the marathon only. Again we controlled for the potential effect of company clientele status. The results demonstrated a significant difference between the brand experience and marathon only condition, Wald (1)=10.04, $p < .005$, $R^2=.22$. Only 6.5% of the runners in the marathon only condition named the sponsoring brand as one of the companies that had sponsored the event and 37.2% of the runners in the experience condition named the sponsoring brand as one of the companies that had sponsored the event (Pearson's chi-square=12.47, $p < .000$). Again, no effect of company clientele status was observed Wald (1)=.027, ns. These results demonstrate that engaging in the brand experience resulted in a better recall of the sponsoring brand than participating in the marathon only. Due to the low rate of recall in our marathon only condition (6.5%), it was impossible to analyse any order effects for this measure.



Taken together, the results on the top of mind and the brand recall measures suggest that the financial company brand becomes more readily available in people's minds when they have engaged in the brand experience (i.e. top of mind awareness). This is the case even when they do not always recall the financial company as a sponsor of the event (as revealed by our measure of brand recall). Nonetheless, the brand recall measure demonstrates that a sponsor is more easily recalled when people have engaged in a brand experience than when they have not.

Two ANOVA's were performed to test the hypotheses that runners who had engaged in the brand experience by visiting the running support truck had both a more positive hedonic and a more functional attitude towards the sponsoring brand than runners who solely ran the marathon. A full factorial ANOVA, with condition and company clientele status as independent variables and functional attitude as a dependent variable, revealed a significant main effect of condition ($F(1, 85)=6.25, p < .05, \eta^2=.07$). Participants in the experience condition had a higher functional attitude towards the sponsoring brand ($M=4.24, SD=1.12$) compared to participants in the marathon only condition ($M=3.39, SD=1.21$). No significant main effect of company clientele status or an interaction effect between condition and company clientele status was found. A second full factorial ANOVA on hedonic attitude revealed a similar pattern of results ($F(1, 85)=16.51, p < .000, \eta^2=.16$). Inspection of the means revealed that participants who visited the running support truck held a more positive hedonic brand attitude ($M=4.41, SD=.94$) than participants who solely ran the marathon ($M=3.46, SD=.87$). Again, no effects of company clientele status or an interaction effect between the two independent variables were observed.

To examine whether there is a relationship between flow and shared brand experience on the one hand, and functional and hedonic attitudes on the other, we conducted a series of linear regression analyses. A first regression analysis, with flow and shared experience as independent variables (company clientele status

was also included) and functional brand attitude as dependent variable only, revealed a significant relation between shared experience and functional brand attitude ($\beta=.52, t(38)=2.60, p=.05$). All other relationships were not significant. A similar linear regression analysis, with hedonic brand attitude as the dependent variable, demonstrated a significant relation between both flow and hedonic brand attitude ($\beta=.31, t(38)=2.37, p=.05$) and between shared experience and hedonic brand attitude ($\beta=.49, t(38)=2.51, p=.05$). These results indicate that shared experience is an important predictor of brand attitudes and that the construct of flow only seems to predict hedonic attitudes (see appendix D for an overview of the tested hypotheses).

Discussion

This research aimed to examine how adding a staged brand experience to a sponsorship investment might increase the effectiveness of sponsoring. The results clearly indicate that providing opportunities for a direct, interactive brand experience does indeed translate into increased top of mind awareness and enhanced brand recall – measures indicative of sponsoring effectiveness.

In addition to such cognitive measures, results show that designing an orchestrated brand experience boosts participants' affective brand experiences. Participants who visited the running support truck rated the brand as more exciting and hedonically charged than participants who participated just in the marathon event. Therefore, integrating a direct brand experience in an otherwise ambiguous event involving multiple sponsors is a very impactful strategy. This is the case both from a managerial point of view (with the primary intention to enhance top of mind awareness, brand recall and attitudes via sponsorship) and from a customer experience point of view (in which pleurability of the brand experience takes precedence). (See also Brakus et al, 2009 on how to measure customer brand experiences.)



Although our results do not warrant any firm conclusions on what type of orchestrated brand experience is best suited for enhancing brand experiences, they do demonstrate that feelings of flow particularly affected hedonic brand attitudes, whereas perceptions of 'sharing the experience' affected both hedonic and functional attitudes. Perceptions of individual experience, on the other hand, did not affect brand attitudes. These results suggest that, when designing a brand experience, it is most important to focus on social rather than on individual aspects of the experience. This is because social contact provides excitement and appeals to social needs (e.g. seeking comfort or reassurance from others) and, with respect to flow, the more participants are 'emerged' in' or 'carried away' by the brand experience, the more positive their hedonic responses (see also Pine & Gilmore, 1998, which stressed the importance of absorption in the experience).

These combined findings suggest that participants should perceive that they are part of a shared, social experience (i.e. the sense of being in there together), but at the same time have the opportunity to 'escape' from their social surroundings so as to 'undergo' the orchestrated brand experience. For future research it would be interesting to further unravel which aspects of a brand experience induce feelings of flow and connectedness amongst participants. A study of Close et al (2006) revealed that an attendee's enthusiasm and activeness in the field of the event positively affects the relation between the sponsoring company and the consumer. It seems, therefore, important to activate the consumer in a proper way in order to enhance brand relationships and brand loyalty.

In addition, exploring varying levels of arousal or stimulation, adequate pacing and alternation between episodes might prove fruitful, as may requiring active customer input, on the one hand, and episodes allowing participants to sit back and undergo the experience, on the other. As already discussed by Wood (2009), there are many different examples of brand experiences or termed more broadly 'experiential' or 'event marketing' strategies. Examples include

product launches, roadshows, exhibitions, product visitor attractions and conferences. Research has already demonstrated that activities such as PR, product sampling, client entertainment and on-site activity, may increase sponsorship effectiveness (e.g. Arthur et al, 1998; Farrelly et al, 1997). For future research, it might be interesting to examine whether these different activities (i.e. experiences) induce distinctive consumer reactions.

Apart from addressing flow, future research could focus on further examining the underlying mechanisms that explain the observed effects. Most notably, it would be interesting to investigate whether an added brand experience increases perceptions of congruence (see Cornwell et al 2005; Dardis 2009; Fleck & Quester 2007; Meenaghan 2001; Richelieu & Lopez 2008; Rodgers 2003), thereby positively affecting the success of a sponsorship. It could be argued that the interactive experience with the brand assists participants in linking the brand and the event in a coherent manner. That is, by learning how the brand relates to the event, the brand message comes across more clearly, thus enhancing perceived congruence between a brand and an event. Hence, taking into account perceived congruence as a mediating variable could further our understanding of the effectiveness of added brand experiences. This is of particular relevance because selecting an event that shows an obvious natural match to a particular company or brand is not straightforward and often results in a forged artificial link between a sponsor and sponsee (Coppetti et al, 2009; Cornwell et al, 2006; Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006). However, regardless of this difficulty, it is this type of brand/sponsorship integration (i.e. programs or brand experiences in which brands are naturally integrated in the storyline or unfolding of events) that is bound to attract sustained attention in years to come (Johnston, 2008).

In this context, it would be interesting to explore strategies that aim to maximise perceived congruence in a brand experience. For instance, in addition to merely incorporating textual brand elements (e.g. slogans or brand claims) and visual or sensory



elements (e.g. brand imagery, sounds and scents; cf. Schmitt 1999) in the orchestrated brand experience, a company's history or a brand narrative may also elucidate participants on how brand and event fit together. The former strategy, arguably, leaves much more to the participant and his or her imagination (e.g. he or she is merely prompted by brand imagery to establish a relationship between company and event), whereas, the latter strategy involves an educational element (cf. Pine & Gilmore, 1999) and takes the participant 'by the hand'. Also, such different strategies may vary in the extent to which they require active participation from the potential customer.

Another variable that may explain the favourable responses of an added brand experience on consumer responses is visibility. It is plausible that the problems associated with clutter (i.e. multiple sponsors) can be reduced by creating an interactive brand experience, as it might help people to correctly remember the sponsoring brand – thereby increasing, particularly, top of mind awareness and recall. Incorporating a measure of visibility could reveal this potential underlying mechanism. Doing this helps exclude the possibility that the observed effects might be due to variables other than the brand experience. Of course, regardless of visibility and sponsor-event fit, not all types of event may profit from adding a brand experience. For example, adding a brand experience to a sponsored art performance might disturb the actual event or harm perceived authenticity of the event and the artists involved (e.g. by highlighting a commercial motivation), thereby decreasing people's assessments of the sponsorship and the brand.

In the present research we focused on marathon runners as the target of study. It would, however, be of great interest to examine how the spectators of such an event react to an added experience. This probably depends on the type of brand experience (see Wood, 2009). The spectators of the marathon event in our study would probably not have been very interested in the running support truck as it focused particularly on runners of the marathon and their needs (e.g. to share athletic accomplishments). Hence, for spectators

there was no relation (fit) between the event (watching a marathon) and the brand experience. In addition, participants, as opposed to spectators, might have generally displayed higher levels of involvement with the event and the sponsors involved. After all, they intensively prepared for the event and, to them, the event was associated with strong emotions or feelings such as pride, achievement and empowerment. Regardless of whether an added brand experience differentially addresses participants' or spectators' needs, varying levels of emotional involvement might make a difference when both undergo an added brand experience. Arguably then, (positive) effects of an added brand experience are most pronounced for participants in the event. On the other hand, such effects may vary depending on the outcome of the event. For example, a strong, satisfactory performance (exceeding expectations) may inspire more positive brand feelings than a disappointing performance.

Besides distinguishing between consumers, based on their respective roles in the event and their situational needs, future research could also incorporate more fundamental consumer needs, or characteristics, such as sensation seeking and openness to experience. Strategies that require cognitive effort, draw on creative problem-solving capabilities and require active participation may be particularly appreciated by open-minded, excitement-seeking participants. Whereas a more passive experience is likely to appeal to more conservative target groups.

Finally, it should be noted that, in the present research, consumer attitudes were measured at an overall level, since it was expected that the brand experience under investigation (i.e. the running support truck) would generate overall positive feelings, resulting in more positive overall attitudes (on both the functional and hedonic dimension). However, it could be argued that a brand experience focusing on specific attributes of the brand would particularly affect perceptions related to this specific attribute, rather than perceptions related to other functional (i.e. ease of use or price) or transformational (e.g. innovativeness



or brand prestige) brand attributes. For example, a company with credibility as an attribute could highlight its long-standing history or consistent quality positioning throughout the years.

On a managerial level, it's important to realise that offering a brand experience at an existing 'off-the-shelf' event has the benefit of significant cost reductions, as compared to taking full control of an event, as in event or experience marketing, where a company sets up an event revolving around a specific brand (Meenaghan & Shipley 1999). There are undoubted benefits to not being (financially) responsible for the whole event and not facing the challenge to stage an event that is meaningful and hence worth participating in. As well as the costs (and subsequent financial risks) involved, it is quite a creative challenge to stage a brand experience that brings in large numbers of potential consumers. Mass events, such as marathons, on the other hand, are bound to draw large crowds anyway. Managers should also take into account that, compared to traditional sponsoring, the type of 'augmented sponsorship' discussed in this study allows for control over the brand experience and offers the possibility to emphasise and explain the relationship between the company and the event (Mau et al, 2006) It is quite true that this type of integrated marketing communications combines the best of both worlds.

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Biographies

Marieke L. Fransen is assistant professor at the department of Persuasive Communication at the Amsterdam School of Communication Research (University of Amsterdam). Her work focuses on experience marketing, consumer resistance and automatic processes and has appeared in publications including *Journal of Business Research*, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *Communication Research and Environment and Behavior*.

Thomas J. L. van Rompay is assistant professor at the department of Industrial Design Engineering, University of Twente, the Netherlands. He is particularly interested in the attribution of symbolic, affective meanings to consumer products, (service) environments and related media such as advertisements and product packaging. His work is published in academic journals including *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, *International Journal of Design and Psychology & Marketing*.

Daan G. Muntinga is a doctoral candidate at the Amsterdam School of Communication Research, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands. His research concerns sponsoring and consumers' online brand activities. He has published in *International Journal of Advertising and Advances in Advertising Research*.

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APPENDIX A Overall attitude towards the brand

ITEMS

FUNCTIONAL

INEFFECTIVE/EFFECTIVE

UNHELPFUL/HELPFUL

NOT FUNCTIONAL/FUNCTIONAL

UNNECESSARY/NECESSARY

IMPRACTICAL/PRACTICAL

HEDONIC

NOT FUN/FUN

DULL/EXCITING

NOT THRILLING/THRILLING

UNENJOYABLE/ENJOYABLE

Note: these scale items are based on Voss et al. (2003)

APPENDIX B Flow

ITEMS

DURING MY VISIT TO THE RUNNING SUPPORT TRUCK , I HAD THE FEELING I COULD TACKLE ANYTHING

IN THE RUNNING SUPPORT TRUCK, I KNEW WHAT I HAD TO DO

IN THE RUNNING SUPPORT TRUCK, I WAS ALWAYS AWARE IF I WAS DOING WELL OR NOT

THE PLAYING INSTINCT CONTROLLED MY BODY

MY THOUGHTS AND MY BODY FORMED A WHOLE DURING THE TIME I SPENT IN THE RUNNING SUPPORT TRUCK

IN THE RUNNING SUPPORT TRUCK, I FORGOT THE TIME. I HAD NO IDEA HOW LONG I HAD BEEN THERE

IN THE RUNNING SUPPORT TRUCK, I WAS FREE FROM THOUGHTS OF WHETHER I WAS BETTER OR WORSE THAN OTHER PLAYERS

MY COMPLETE ATTENTION AND ENERGY WERE FOCUSED ON THE ACTIVITIES IN THE RUNNING SUPPORT TRUCK

Note: these scale items are based on Drenger et al (2008).



APPENDIX C Shared brand experience

ITEMS

- THE RUNNING SUPPORT TRUCK TRIES TO MAKE ME THINK ABOUT MY LIFESTYLE
- THE RUNNING SUPPORT TRUCK TRIES TO REMIND ME OF ACTIVITIES I CAN DO
- THE RUNNING SUPPORT TRUCK GETS ME TO THINK ABOUT MY BEHAVIOR
- THE RUNNING SUPPORT TRUCK TRIES TO MAKE ME THINK ABOUT BONDS
- I CAN RELATE TO OTHER PEOPLE THROUGH THE RUNNING SUPPORT TRUCK
- THE RUNNING SUPPORT TRUCK TRIES TO GET ME TO THINK ABOUT RELATIONS

Note: these scale items are based on Chang and Chieng (2006).

APPENDIX D Summary of this study's findings

RESULTS PER HYPOTHESIS

PRÉCIS OF HYPOTHESES		CONFIRMED
BRAND EXPERIENCE		
H1a	... INCREASES TOP OF MIND AWARENESS	✓
H1b	... INCREASES BRAND RECALL	✓
H1c	... INCREASES HEDONIC BRAND ATTITUDES	✓
H1d	... INCREASES FUNCTIONAL BRAND ATTITUDES	✓
FLOW		
H2a	... POSITIVELY RELATES TO HEDONIC BRAND ATTITUDES	✓
H2b	... POSITIVELY RELATES TO FUNCTIONAL BRAND ATTITUDES	x
SHARED EXPERIENCE		
H2c	... POSITIVELY RELATES TO HEDONIC BRAND ATTITUDES	✓
H2d	... POSITIVELY RELATES TO FUNCTIONAL BRAND ATTITUDES	✓



Value creation: assessing the relationships between quality, consumption value and behavioural intentions at sporting events

Keywords

Value creation
consumption value
service quality
hedonic consumption
sporting events

Masayuki Yoshida

Assistant Professor of Sport Management, Biwako Seikei Sport College
1204 Kitahira, Otsu, Shiga 520-0503 Shiga, Japan
Tel: +81 77 596 8475
Email: yoshida-m@bss.ac.jp

Jeffrey D. James

Professor of Sport Management, Florida State University, USA

J. Joseph Cronin Jr

Professor of Marketing, Florida State University, USA

Peer reviewed

Executive summary

Among scholars, divergent conceptualisations of value creation exist. One of the most notable gaps in the literature concerns the development of a conceptualisation of consumption value that includes more than simply cognitive assessments of the trade-off between what is given up (e.g. money and time) and what is received (e.g. quality). There are three items of particular note to consider regarding this topic. Firstly,

Abstract

Throughout this study, the authors sought to identify the antecedents and consequences of a multi-dimensional consumption-value construct. Data were collected from sports spectators in Japan (n=372) and the United States (n=396). The results indicate that three quality dimensions (functional, technical and aesthetic quality) have a significant impact on their respective value dimensions in the context of sporting events. Moreover, the constructs of entertainment and community prestige have positive effects on customers' behavioural intentions.

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the contemporary conceptualisation of consumption value depends primarily on customers' cognitive evaluations; and it largely ignores the hedonic and symbolic aspects that are specifically important in the context of hedonic value-dominant sports settings. Secondly, little work has explored the details of the complex relationships between the multi-dimensional constructs of quality (i.e. functional, technical and



aesthetic quality) and consumption value (i.e. utilitarian, symbolic and hedonic value). Thirdly, what needs to be examined are the simultaneous effects of the value dimensions on behavioural consequences; this will explain a greater share of the variance in customers' behavioural intentions.

The purposes of this study are to: (1) redefine the concept of consumption value, basing it not only on utilitarian value but also on hedonic and symbolic value; (2) identify the antecedents and consequences of consumption value; and (3) examine the impact of consumption value on behavioural intentions in the context of sporting events. Two quantitative studies (n=372; n=396) validate the multi-dimensional conceptualisation of consumption value and investigate the hypothesised relationships between the proposed constructs. The results indicate that consumption value can be best described using six dimensions related to three categories: utilitarian, hedonic and symbolic value. It is also evident that the value dimensions are strongly influenced by their respective quality dimensions (i.e. functional, technical and aesthetic quality). Furthermore, an examination of the structural model indicates that the constructs of entertainment and community prestige have a positive impact on customers' behavioural intentions.

From a managerial standpoint, the model allows sports marketers to more fully understand what goods/services are viewed as valuable in light of the utilitarian, symbolic and hedonic aspects of consumption value. In practice, it is difficult to manage the quality of the core sports product, which is not under the control of sports marketers. Therefore, the current study highlights the importance of managing the controllable dimensions of quality (i.e. functional and aesthetic quality) as these dimensions help sports marketers enhance customers' assessments of utilitarian- and hedonic-value factors. For example, practitioners can expect that high levels of functional quality are derived from superior services – such as accessibility of seats, allocation of seat spaces and the attitudes and behaviours of stadium employees – and that these services are eventually perceived

as conveniently valuable to the customers. It is also important to note that customers would be more likely to attend future sporting events, recommend the team to their friends and remain loyal to the team if they highly value the entertainment and prestige aspects of sports consumption. This suggests that sports marketers should be vigilant in managing those aesthetic qualities (i.e. game atmosphere and crowd experience) that are controllable and useful for improving the entertainment value of sporting events and consumers' behavioural intentions. These ideas merit further research with respect to formulating an explanation of what factors contribute most to behavioural intentions, based on customers' quality and value assessments.

Driven by increasingly heterogeneous customer demands, global competition and technological development, companies are becoming more market-oriented in their efforts to provide innovative and valuable goods and services to customers (Flint et al, 1997). In today's highly competitive business environment, many sports organisations view value creation as a critical element in the development of customer-firm relationships, which are needed in order to build unique and long-term advantages over competitors. Professional sports teams, for example, sell highly experiential goods and services and allow the customer to become a co-producer of his or her experience (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). A customer's participation in activities that create value for the goods and services he or she purchases is part of the customer's direct involvement with service delivery (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). In the quest to build strong relationships between sports organisations and their customers, value creation in customer-firm interactions has become a widely-agreed upon marketing activity (Flint et al, 1997).

There is much to learn about how consumption value is formed from the customer's perspective. To conceptualise value creation from a customer perspective, academics have used various terms, such as perceived value (Zeithaml, 1988), customer value (Flint et al, 1997), service value (Bolton & Drew,



1991; Cronin et al, 2000), shopping value (Babin et al, 1994) and consumption value (Sheth et al, 1991). From a cognitive perspective, Zeithaml (1988) defines perceived value as what customers get (benefits) relative to what they give up (money, time and effort). Based on Zeithaml's work, Bolton and Drew (1991) define service value as a trade-off between perceived quality, monetary costs, non-monetary costs, customer tastes and customer characteristics. It is important to note, however, that previous discussions have focused primarily on the cognitive, functional and utilitarian aspects of consumption value. Past work has not examined the importance of higher-order values, such as the hedonic and symbolic values, that help customers achieve higher goals in their everyday lives (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Gutman, 1982). However, other researchers question Zeithaml's (1988) conceptualisation, paying greater attention to hedonic and symbolic consumption and considering emotional and social values to be distinct dimensions of consumption value in retail stores (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001) and tourism settings (Petrick, 2002). In the current study, the term 'consumption value' – rather than 'perceived (cognitive) value' – is used because sports consumers' value assessments are thought to be based on both cognitive and affective responses to goods/services (Funk & James, 2001; Keller, 1993; Sheth et al, 1991).

A review of the relevant literature indicates that there is no commonly acknowledged conceptualisation of value creation (see Table 1). The conceptualisation of value creation is widely divergent, with the number of value dimensions ranging from one to six (Chandon et al, 2000; Cronin et al, 2000; Keller, 1993; Petrick, 2002; Sheth et al, 1991; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001; Zeithaml, 1988). Another significant gap in the literature concerns the role of perceived quality. Although scholars have identified perceived quality as a component of consumption value (Petrick, 2002; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001; Rust et al, 2004), Gutman's (1982) means-end chain theory indicates that viewing perceived quality as an antecedent of consumption value provides a better understanding of the causal

order of the relationship between perceived quality and value. In the sports marketing literature, the effects of quality dimensions on value dimensions have rarely been examined in a comprehensive manner (see Table 1). Previous research only investigates the separate impact of quality on utilitarian (Han & Kwon, 2009), hedonic (Wakefield et al, 1996) and symbolic values (Bauer et al, 2008) in sports settings. It is also important to note that no study has previously tested a multi-dimensional value construct in sports settings (see Table 1). Therefore, a gap in the literature should be filled by examining both quality and value dimensions in a multi-dimensional fashion. This is because sports consumers' value perceptions are complex in relation to the utilitarian, hedonic and symbolic aspects of sports consumption that can be derived from core sports products and ancillary services (Funk & James, 2001). It is still unclear if the proposed comprehensive model demonstrates an acceptable fit to the data, and whether the relationships found in previous studies are statistically significant when the simultaneous effects of the quality dimensions on the value dimensions are examined. To fill this void, the authors view both quality and consumption value as multi-dimensional constructs and they test the effects of the quality dimensions on the respective value dimensions. Furthermore, only a few researchers have examined the effects of different facets of consumption value on behavioural consequences (e.g. Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). A more thorough analysis of the antecedents and consequences of consumption value is warranted.

The shaded area in Figure 1 illustrates the relationships that are tested in the current study. The study focuses on the antecedents and consequences of value creation because these relationships have not yet been critically assessed. The processes of symbolic and hedonic value creation have been ignored to a great extent by academics. There are two particular items of note to consider regarding this study. Firstly, unlike previous research, the current study examines the effects of quality dimensions on respective dimensions of consumption value (i.e. utilitarian, symbolic and



hedonic value). Secondly, it analyses the effects of the value dimensions on behavioural consequences. Studying the effect of value creation on behavioural consequences is necessary in order to ascertain which value dimensions play key roles in customer retention. The purposes of this study were to: (1) redefine the concept of consumption value, basing it not only on utilitarian value but also on hedonic and symbolic value; (2) identify the antecedents and consequences of consumption value; and (3) examine the impact of consumption value on behavioural intentions in the context of sporting events.

Conceptual background

Among marketing researchers, the growing interest in the conceptualisation of value is a result of wanting to understand the complexity of consumers' purchase decisions (Sheth et al, 1991). Traditionally, the central assertion about customers' decision making is that influencing customers' allocation of money, time and effort causes purchase behaviours (Zeithaml, 1988). However, in today's service-dominant economy, customers' purchase decisions are driven not only by the allocation of extrinsic costs (i.e. money, time and effort), but also by intrinsic costs (i.e. affective, social and expressive devotion) (Vargo & Lush, 2004). Research dealing with multiple consumption values suggests that researchers should conceptualise customers' value assessments based on the emotional and social benefits that customers receive in addition to utilitarian benefits (Funk & James, 2001; Keller, 1993; Sheth et al, 1991). In this study, consumption value refers to customers' overall assessments of the utilitarian, hedonic and symbolic benefits relative to both extrinsic and intrinsic costs in their consumption behaviours.

Utilitarian, hedonic and symbolic value

The current study extends previous research by incorporating three different consumption values into the conceptualisation of value creation: utilitarian,

hedonic and symbolic value. One perspective of consumption value is provided by Zeithaml (1988) and Bolton and Drew (1991). Viewed broadly, there are five major definitions of value: (1) value is low price; (2) value is the set of benefits that are provided by a service; (3) value is a trade-off between received quality and monetary costs; (4) value is what is received for all sacrifice components (i.e. money, time and effort); and (5) value is what is important in terms of customer characteristics (e.g. demographics). Other researchers define utilitarian value as an instrumental, functional and cognitive benefit based on the extent to which goods or services have useful and convenient characteristics, functions and performance (Rust et al, 2004). Taken together, it seems that utilitarian value is comprised of monetary price and convenience. In the current study, monetary price refers to customers' subjective price perceptions of products based on sacrifice components, such as money, time and effort. Convenience refers to customers' perceptions of the ease and speed of achieving desired consumption experiences compared to time and effort spent.

Another view of consumption value is derived from the distinction between utilitarian and hedonic values (Babin et al, 1994). Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) suggest that emotions, such as pleasure, arousal and fantasy, play key roles in the aesthetic and experiential aspects of consumption. These researchers emphasise that hedonic products, such as novels, movies and sporting events, are largely associated with intangible and subjective features that influence consumers' patronage decisions. Babin et al (1994) developed a scale for measuring hedonic and utilitarian value. An examination of the scale indicates that hedonic value is based on the festive, ludic and party-like aspects of shopping value, which reflect potential entertainment and emotional worth. Collectively, hedonic value is defined in the current study as the non-instrumental, experiential and affective benefits generated from the utility of a good or the experience of a service. Additionally, the vast literature on positive affect indicates that hedonic value has two sub-dimensions – entertainment and exploration (e.g. Chandon et



TABLE 1 Comparing the Proposed Consumption Value model with existing models

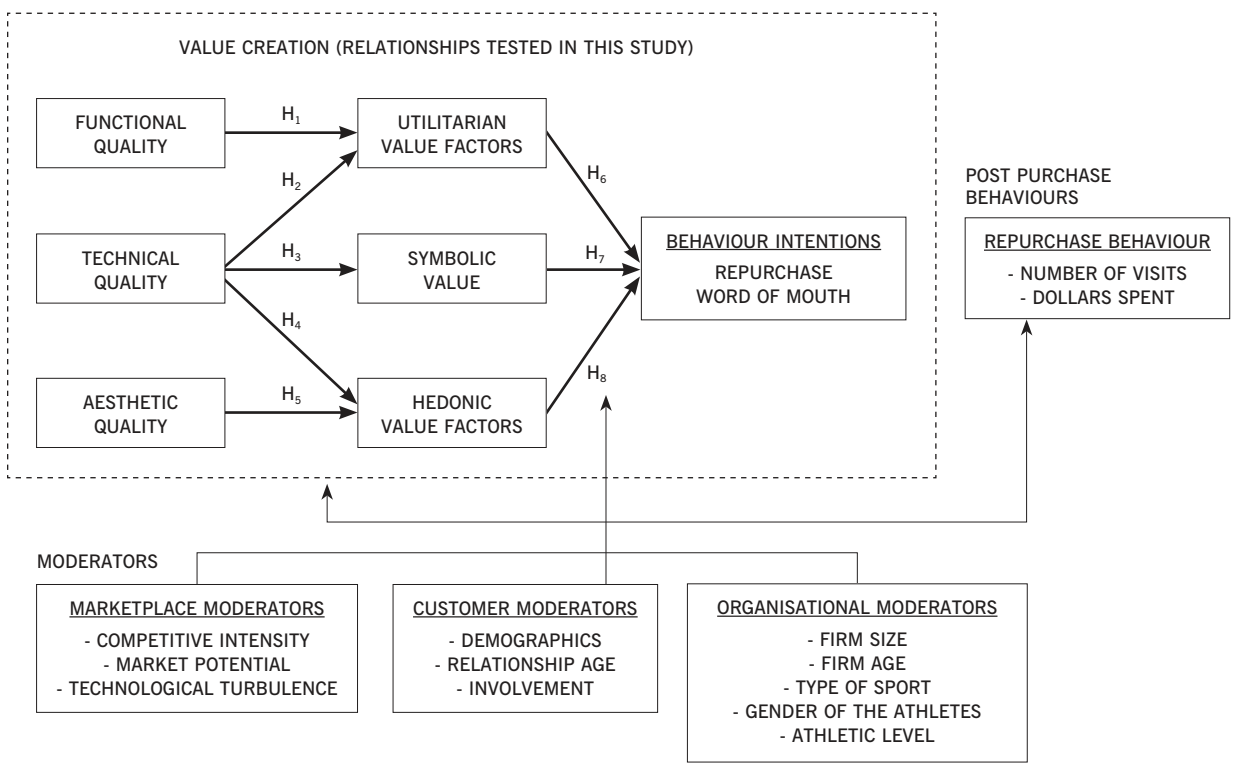
AUTHOR	DIMENSIONALITY	ANTECEDENTS	CONSEQUENCES	EMPIRICAL TEST	SPORTS SETTING
ZEITHAML (1988)	YES (INTRINSIC, EXTRINSIC, MONETARY, AND NON-MONETARY VALUE)	YES (PERCEIVED QUALITY AND SACRIFICE)	YES (PURCHASE BEHAVIOURS)	NO	NO
BOLTON AND DREW (1991)	YES (MONETARY AND NON-MONETARY COSTS)	YES (SERVICE QUALITY)	YES (NOT TESTED) (REPURCHASE INTENTIONS)	YES	NO
SHETH ET AL. (1991)	YES (FUNCTIONAL, SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, EPISTEMIC AND CONDITIONAL VALUE)	NO	NO	NO	NO
KELLER (1993)	YES (FUNCTIONAL, EXPERIENTIAL, AND SYMBOLIC BENEFITS)	NO	YES (BRAND ASSOCIATION)	NO	NO
BABIN ET AL. (1994)	YES (UTILITARIAN AND HEDONIC VALUE)	NO	NO	YES	NO
WAKEFIELD ET AL. (1996)	NO (PLEASURE)	YES (SPORTSCAPE FACTORS)	YES (DESIRE TO STAY)	YES	YES
FLINT ET AL. (1997)	YES (VALUE, DESIRED VALUE, AND VALUE JUDGMENTS)	YES (SUPPLIER, CUSTOMER, AND ENVIRONMENT LOCATED CHANGES)	YES (CUSTOMER SATISFACTION)	NO	NO
CHANDON ET AL. (2000)	YES (SAVINGS, PERCEIVED QUALITY, CONVENIENCE, VALUE EXPRESSION)	NO	NO	YES	NO
CRONIN ET AL. (2000)	NO (SERVICE VALUE)	YES (SERVICE QUALITY AND SACRIFICE)	YES (SATISFACTION AND BEHAVIOURAL INTENTIONS)	YES	YES
SWEENEY AND SOUTAR	YES (EMOTIONAL VALUE, SOCIAL VALUE, PRICE, AND PERCEIVED QUALITY)	NO	YES (BEHAVIOURAL INTENTIONS)	YES	NO
PETRICK (2002)	YES (EMOTIONAL RESPONSE, MONETARY PRICE, REPUTATION, NON-MONETARY PRICE, AND PERCEIVED QUALITY)	YES (NOT TESTED) (SERVICE EXPERIENCE)	YES (NOT TESTED) (BEHAVIOURAL INTENTIONS)	YES	NO
BAUER ET AL. (2008)	NO (BRAND BENEFITS)	YES (PRODUCT-RELATED AND NON-PRODUCT-RELATED ATTRIBUTES)	YES (BRAND ATTITUDES)	YES	YES



TABLE 1 Comparing the Proposed Consumption Value model with existing models (cont.)

AUTHOR	DIMENSIONALITY	ANTECEDENTS	CONSEQUENCES	EMPIRICAL TEST	SPORTS SETTING
HAN AND KWON (2009)	NO (PERCEIVED VALUE)	YES (BRAND NAME, PERCEIVED QUALITY, AND COUNTRY OF ORIGIN)	NO	YES	YES
CURRENT STUDY	YES (UTILITARIAN, SYMBOLIC, AND HEDONIC VALUE FACTORS)	YES (FUNCTIONAL, TECHNICAL, AND AESTHETIC QUALITY)	YES (BEHAVIOURAL INTENTIONS)	YES	YES

FIGURE 1 A Framework for Examining the Antecedents, Consequences and Moderators of Value Creation



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al, 2000). Entertainment value is described as the positive emotional benefits resulting from experiencing amusing physical goods or services. Exploration value is described as an intrinsic need for the excitement inherent in seeking a variety of information, physical goods, services and experiences (Chandon et al, 2000). For example, exploration value at sporting events may be rooted in locker-room tours, museum tours, giveaway-seeking behaviours and browsing in the concourse area.

More thorough conceptual models are identified by Keller (1993) and Sheth et al (1991). Keller (1993) suggests benefits that accrue from consumption behaviours can be divided into three distinct categories: functional, experiential and symbolic benefits. Sheth et al (1991) further indicate that consumption value is comprised of five distinct dimensions: functional, social, emotional, epistemic and conditional value. Clearly, these researchers acknowledge the importance of the symbolic or social dimension of consumption value above utilitarian and hedonic value. Symbolic value is conceptualised as being rooted in personal meaning, self-esteem, social image, status and prestige (Keller, 1993; Sheth et al, 1991). Highly visible or easily differentiated sports products, such as professional sporting events, often acquire a positive or negative symbolic value (Sheth et al, 1991). Given this connection, it is suggested that the self-esteem and prestigious aspects of sports products might be considered symbolic facets of consumption value. Symbolic value is defined in this study as an expressive, prestigious and respectful benefit derived from the symbolic role of a good or service.

The literature on organisational identification (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Mael & Ashforth, 1993; Sutton et al, 1997) and social value (Keller, 1993; Richins, 1994; Sheth et al, 1991) indicates that symbolic value consists of two distinct dimensions: organisational identification and community prestige. In sports, one of the strongest indicators of customer-company connectedness is a sports consumer's identification with a sports team that helps him or her

obtain self-definition benefits (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Funk & James, 2001; Sutton et al, 1997). Another important sub-dimension of symbolic value is the social, expressive and prestigious aspect of symbolic products (e.g. the World Series), which enhances the recognition of sports consumers within a consumption community (e.g. the Boston Red Sox's fan community) (James et al, 2002; Richins, 1994). In this study, we define organisational identification as a customer's self-definition benefits that derive from a sense of belonging to a socially attractive sports team and from the internalisation of its success and failure. Community prestige refers to a customer's collective benefits that are generated from social bonds in a positively perceived consumption community. In the next section, the relationship between perceived quality and consumption value is explained based on a review of the relevant literature.

The relationship between consumption value and quality

One perspective of consumption value and product quality is found in Gutman's (1982) means-end chain theory, in which value is suggested to be more individualistic and closer to buying behaviour than is quality (Zeithaml, 1988). In line with this thinking, some researchers view perceived quality as an antecedent of consumption value (Cronin et al, 2000; Han & Kwon, 2009). However, others consider perceived quality to be a component of consumption value (i.e. perceived quality, monetary price, convenience, emotional response and reputation) (Petrick, 2002; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001). Thus, there are inconsistent findings regarding the role of perceived quality in the literature. The notable confusion concerning perceived quality and value highlights the importance of developing a better understanding of the relationship between perceived quality and consumption value. Although the traditional conceptualisation of service quality is often confused with utilitarian value (Petrick, 2002; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001), Brady and Cronin (2001) and Cronin (2003) suggest that service quality is composed of functional,



technical and aesthetic quality. Cronin (2003) criticises the contemporary conceptualisation of service quality, which has primarily advanced in labour-intensive services (e.g. banks, dry cleaning, healthcare, fast food). It also fails to examine together the tangible quality of physical goods and the intangible quality of services, even though both qualities are typically service experiences (Rathmell, 1966). This suggests that researchers should simultaneously conceptualise and test the quality of physical goods and services. In this study, we define functional quality as customers' perceptions of the service-delivery process based on customer-employee and customer-service environment interactions (Brady & Cronin, 2001). Technical quality refers to a customer's overall perception of the quality of the core product, as characterised by its features and performance (Garvin, 1984). Aesthetic quality refers to a customer's overall perception of the aesthetically appealing features of secondary products. These are ancillary to the core product and include visually pleasing environmental design, promotional activities and a festive atmosphere with other customers (Brady & Cronin, 2001).

Services marketing researchers have acknowledged that service quality is a multi-dimensional, multi-level construct (Brady & Cronin, 2001). Research to date, however, has not examined the differential effects of these distinct quality dimensions on value dimensions. If perceived quality is to be conceptualised as a multi-dimensional construct, the relationship between perceived quality and value needs to be better supported theoretically. That is, the model should be based on the relationships between specific quality dimensions and the appropriate value dimensions. A theoretical base for the proposed ideas is found in Voss et al's (2003) work, which relates cognitive and affective involvement to utilitarian and hedonic attitudes, respectively. Noting that value is a type of attitude that is individualistic, experiential and closer to buying behaviour than is quality (Zeithaml, 1988), the model of Voss et al (2003) supports the theoretical rationale of linking functional quality to utilitarian value and relating aesthetic quality to hedonic value.

Furthermore, technical quality – which is related to the outcome of service production and consists not only of functional features but also of the core characteristics of a product – is expected to affect symbolic value in addition to hedonic and utilitarian value. Direct and indirect support for these relationships exists in the sports marketing literature.

Sports marketing researchers, to date, have investigated the effects of core product (technical) quality on utilitarian (Kwon et al, 2008), symbolic (Bauer et al, 2008; Madrigal, 1995) and hedonic (Madrigal, 1995) values. Research on sports product quality also indicates that functional quality has a positive effect on utilitarian value (Han & Kwon, 2009), while aesthetic quality is positively related to hedonic value (Wakefield et al, 1996). Based on the preceding, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1: Customers' perceptions of functional quality at sporting events have a positive effect on their assessments of utilitarian value factors.**
- H2: Customers' perceptions of technical quality at sporting events have a positive effect on their assessments of utilitarian value factors.**
- H3: Customers' perceptions of technical quality at sporting events have a significant positive effect on their assessments of symbolic value factors.**
- H4: Customers' perceptions of technical quality at sporting events have a significant positive effect on their assessments of hedonic value factors.**
- H5: Customers' perceptions of aesthetic quality at sporting events have a significant positive effect on their assessments of hedonic value factors.**

The consequences of consumption value

Oliver (1999) suggests that re-patronage intentions do not properly explain how deeply customers are committed to re-buying preferred goods or services because customers' variety-seeking needs weaken the satisfaction-loyalty relationship (i.e. satisfied customers are likely to buy competitors' products). In response to re-purchase intentions being an inadequate indicator of customer loyalty, Zeithaml



et al (1996) use a multi-dimensional outcome scale in order to fully understand the likelihood that a customer will remain loyal. They identify five outcome dimensions: (1) loyalty to company, (2) propensity to switch, (3) willingness to pay more, (4) external response to a problem (negative word-of-mouth) and (5) internal response to a problem (complaints to employees). Adapting this conceptualisation, Cronin et al (2000) focus on the positive aspects of outcomes and use two components – re-purchase intentions and positive word-of-mouth intentions. In the current study, customers' behavioural intentions are viewed as a multi-dimensional construct based on repeat purchase and on word-of-mouth intentions (Cronin et al, 2000). Because means-end chain theory indicates that consumption value is predictive of behavioural consequences (Gutman, 1982; Zeithaml, 1988), the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H6: Customers' assessments of utilitarian value factors at sporting events have a significant positive effect on their behavioural intentions.**
- H7: Customers' assessments of symbolic value factors at sporting events have a significant positive effect on their behavioural intentions.**
- H8: Customers' assessments of hedonic value factors at sporting events have a significant positive effect on their behavioural intentions.**

Method

Setting

In order to test the antecedents and consequences of hedonic and symbolic value in addition to utilitarian value, it is important to select a hedonic value-dominant service, such as a sporting event. The current study consists of two parts. Firstly, the survey items were refined using data from a convenience sample of professional baseball spectators in Japan. Secondly, for the main study, data were obtained from a convenience sample of spectators at two Division I-A college football games in the United States (US).

Measurement

In the current study, the researchers developed an initial pool of 89 items. The survey instrument included questions that assess customers' demographic characteristics, perceived quality, consumption value and behavioural intentions. For the antecedents of consumption value, three dimensions of perceived quality are identified: functional, technical and aesthetic quality. Functional quality consists of two sub-dimensions: customer-contact employees and facility functionality. A nine-item scale is adapted from Brady and Cronin's (2001) interaction quality scale. This scale is included in order to measure the three different dimensions of employee quality: employee attitude, behaviour and expertise. Facility functionality is measured with four sub-scales from Wakefield and colleagues' (1996) sportscape scale: seat space, layout accessibility, space allocation and information signs. These items are intended to measure the functional aspect of the service environment.

Technical quality includes player performance and team characteristics, based on Garvin's (1984) definition of quality. James and Ross' (2004) player skill and effort scale and Funk, Ridinger and Moorman's (2003) excitement scale are used to assess perceptions of player performance. For team characteristics, the items refer to the quality of the home team (Greenwell, 2001) and the opposing team (Madrigal, 1995). A five-item scale is adopted from Greenwell's (2001) core product scale to measure each team's characteristics.

Based on the conceptualisations of Brady and Cronin (2001) and Ferreira and Armstrong (2004), aesthetic quality is comprised of four sub-dimensions: facility design, atmospherics, crowd experience and promotional activities. Facility design is assessed using Wakefield et al's (1996) stadium aesthetics scale. Atmosphere is measured with Brady and Cronin's (2001) three-item scale. The scale measures perceptions of environmental cues (e.g. an appealing theme, colour, music and temperature). In order to measure crowd experience, three items for capturing



crowd density, energy and noise are developed based on the work of Ferreira and Armstrong (2004).

Little effort has been made in the sports marketing literature to generate a scale measuring promotional activities (i.e. special events, give-aways, memorabilia, player-fan interactions and various in-game activities). In order to develop a measure to capture this dimension, a free thought-listing task with 40 undergraduate students at a large southeastern university in the US was completed. Three coders specified eleven meaningful themes based on the participants' thoughts and ideas about promotional activities at sporting events. With an initial agreement of 81.8 per cent, nine themes were selected for item generation. Based on the definition of the dimension and the nine themes, nine items were created in order to measure promotional activities.

After reviewing the literature, the utilitarian, hedonic and symbolic aspects of consumption value are classified into more specific dimensions: monetary price (Rust et al 2004), convenience (Rust et al, 2004), organisational identification (Mael & Ashforth, 1992), community prestige (James et al, 2002), entertainment (Chandon et al, 2000) and exploration (Chandon et al, 2000). Monetary price is adopted from Petrick's (2002) five-item scale, because it measures customers' monetary value perceptions in a leisure setting. Convenience is assessed based on Pura's (2000) four-item scale for capturing the convenience, efficiency and ease of mobile self-services. The scale is used because it is based on Sheth and colleagues' (1991) multi-dimensional consumption value construct. Organisational identification is adopted from Mael and Ashforth's (1992) six-item scale for measuring alumni-university identification. This scale is expected to measure customers' value assessments based on their sense of belonging to their team and on the internalisation of the team's success and failure. Community prestige is adopted from James and colleagues' (2002) three-item scale, which is intended to measure the felt collective esteem of belonging to a positively perceived sports team. In order to measure entertainment, a three-item scale

is adapted from Madrigal's (2003) entertainment scale. Exploration is measured using Chandon et al's (2000) three-item scale for capturing the sense of excitement that comes from browsing, variety seeking and stimulation seeking. All survey items for capturing perceived quality and value factors are measured using a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).

Behavioural intentions are measured with Cronin et al's (2000) three item scale. These items measure customers' favourable intentions to (1) recommend the team to other customers, (2) attend future sporting events and (3) remain loyal to the team. Behavioural intentions are measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from very low (1) to very high (7).

Content analysis

In order to assess content validity, three sports marketing researchers from three different universities conducted a content analysis. Each expert received an email from the researchers, which included the purposes of the study, an explanation of the procedures, construct definitions and a list of the items. Keeping the construct definitions in mind, the reviewers were asked to evaluate the relevance of each item, using a Likert-type scale ranging from not relevant at all (1) to very relevant (7). Items evaluated as ranking more than four on the scale by two judges, and as no worse than four by a third judge, were retained. Also, the reviewers provided suggestions for changing words and phrases in the items. At this stage, 26 items were revised.

First data collection

The first data set was collected from customers of a Japanese professional baseball team with an American head coach. The selection of this team was a matter of convenience. The researchers only included survey items for measuring the value and quality of consistent sports consumption experiences that manifested in both the Japanese professional baseball setting and the US college football setting. This led to the exclusion of the facility parking dimension in the



original sportscape model (Wakefield et al, 1996) because most spectators in Japan attend sporting events using subway trains. In order to minimise the discrepancies between the original instrument and the translated instrument, back translation was conducted. The survey instrument was translated into Japanese by a bilingual sports marketing-major whose native language is Japanese. To test the equivalence between the original and Japanese instruments, back-translation into English was conducted by another native of Japan who is also fluent in English. To verify the accuracy of the translation, a third party, a doctoral student majoring in English literature, was asked to identify any differences between the original and back-translated items. A comparison of the two forms led to the conclusion that the two instruments were conceptually equivalent.

Data were collected from spectators attending a professional baseball game in the eastern Tokyo metropolitan area. Two forms of the questionnaire with a different item order were created. A proportionate sampling method, stratified by both age and gender, was utilised. Seven trained surveyors were each responsible for distributing 66 self-administered questionnaires. Of the 460 questionnaires distributed, 413 were returned, for a response rate of 89.8 per cent. Of these, 41 responses were rejected because many items were left blank. This yielded a final usable response rate of 80.9 per cent ($n=372$). Of the total sample, 67.8 per cent of respondents were male. Age was measured through a categorical variable; three age ranges accounted for 90 per cent of the respondents. More than one-third of the subjects were in the 30 to 39 age range (38.9 per cent), 26.1 per cent were between 40 and 49 years old and 25.9 per cent of the respondents were between 20 and 29 years old.

To refine the measures of the quality dimensions, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was computed using the maximum likelihood method with a rotated factor solution (Hair et al, 2006). Eight factors emerged and were interpreted as follows: (1) customer-contact

employees, (2) facility access, (3) facility space, (4) opponent characteristics, (5) player performance (6) visual appeal, (7) game atmosphere and (8) crowd experience. After eliminating the items that failed to reach the cutoff point of .50 on item-to-total correlations (Hair et al, 2006), the eight identified factors were found to be internally consistent, as evidenced by Cronbach's alpha coefficients that ranged from .80 to .95. For the value dimensions, the constructs of monetary price, convenience, organisational identification, community prestige and entertainment were internally consistent, as indicated by Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .82 to .88. However, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for exploration ($\alpha=.68$) was below the cut-off point of .70 (Hair et al, 2006). Still, due to the exploratory nature of the current study, this was deemed adequate enough to retain for further analysis. Finally, the construct of behavioural intentions was reliable as evidenced by the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .87. At this stage, the number of items was reduced to 65.

Second data collection

Eighteen trained surveyors collected data from spectators attending two Division I-A college football games at a large US university. Two questionnaires with different item orders were used to control fatigue bias. Questionnaires were distributed around the stadium and 430 attendees conveniently sampled. Of the 430 questionnaires distributed, 399 were returned, a response rate of 92.8 per cent. Of these, three were rejected because many items were left blank, yielding a usable response rate of 92.1 per cent ($n=396$). Of the total sample, 55.8 per cent of the respondents were male. With respect to age, approximately 70 per cent of the respondents came from one of three age categories. The largest number of participants, 146 (39.6 per cent), were in the 20 to 29 age range; 66 respondents (17.9 per cent) were between 30 and 39 years old and 43 participants were between 40 and 49 years old (11.7 per cent).



TABLE 2 Comparison of factor structures

DIMENSIONALITY	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	RMSEA	CFI	NNFI	AGFI	AIC
VALUE DIMENSIONS								
THREE-FACTOR MODEL	931.99	186	5.01	.112	.95	.94	.74	1192.26
FOUR-FACTOR MODEL	666.79	183	3.64	.087	.97	.96	.81	822.24
FIVE-FACTOR MODEL	560.00	179	3.13	.074	.97	.97	.84	674.46
SIX-FACTOR MODEL	474.62	174	2.73	.065	.98	.98	.87	579.42
QUALITY DIMENSIONS								
THREE-FACTOR MODEL	2442.37	557	4.38	.107	.95	.95	.65	3204.41
FOUR-FACTOR MODEL	2182.96	554	3.94	.101	.96	.96	.67	2947.66
FIVE-FACTOR MODEL	1631.11	550	2.97	.075	.97	.97	.77	1947.94
SIX-FACTOR MODEL	1349.10	545	2.48	.062	.98	.98	.81	1532.05
SEVEN-FACTOR MODEL	1244.09	539	2.31	.058	.98	.98	.82	1424.53
EIGHT-FACTOR MODEL	1239.07	532	2.33	.058	.98	.98	.82	1435.12

Results

Assessment of the dimensionality of consumption value and service quality

The dimensionality of consumption value and service quality was assessed via a series of confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) as suggested by Bagozzi et al (1991) and Colquitt (2001). Using LISREL 8.54, CFA was performed in order to compare the fits of different factor models for both value and quality dimensions (see Table 2). For the value dimensions, the first was a three-factor model, which contained utilitarian, symbolic and hedonic value dimensions. This model was identical to the model based on Keller's (1993) conceptualisation. The second was a four-factor model in which monetary price and convenience were specified as utilitarian value factors (Rust et al, 2004) along with symbolic and hedonic value. The third was a five-factor model, dividing symbolic value into organisational identification and community prestige (Richins, 1994). The fourth was the hypothesised

six-factor model, dividing hedonic value into two sub-dimensions (entertainment and exploration) (Chandon et al, 2000). The results show that the best fitting model is the hypothesised model ($\chi^2/df=2.73$; root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)=.065; comparative fit index (CFI)=.98; non-normed fit index (NNFI)=.98; adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI)=.87) (Hair et al, 2006).

The dimensionality of the quality constructs was also examined with a CFA (see Table 2). For the quality dimensions, the first was a three-factor model, with functional, technical and aesthetic quality dimensions. The modification of the four-factor model was made by dividing functional quality into customer-contact employees and facility functionality (Berry et al, 2002). For the five-factor model, functional quality was divided into customer-contact employees, facility access and facility space (Wakefield et al, 1996). For the six-factor model, technical quality was divided into opponent characteristics and player performance (Garvin, 1984).



TABLE 3 Means, standard deviations and correlations

CONSTRUCT	CORRELATION MATRIX															
	MEAN	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. CUSTOMER-CONTACT EMPLOYEES																
2. FACILITY ACCESS																
3. SEAT SPACE	4.16	1.55	.59	.46	1.00											
4. OPPONENT CHARACTERISTICS	4.98	1.05	.53	.57	.45	1.00										
5. PLAYER PERFORMANCE	4.63	1.29	.60	.47	.53	.56	1.00									
6. GAME ATMOSPHERE	5.55	.97	.63	.64	.38	.61	.56	1.00								
7. CROWD EXPERIENCE	5.83	1.10	.47	.60	.25	.47	.39	.75	1.00							
8. MONETARY PRICE	5.17	1.29	.50	.56	.44	.52	.57	.66	.55	1.00						
9. CONVENIENCE	4.92	1.11	.71	.59	.51	.43	.43	.53	.41	.54	1.00					
10. ORGANISATIONAL IDENTIFICATION	4.94	1.33	.49	.47	.41	.48	.36	.57	.46	.54	.54	1.00				
11. COMMUNITY PRESTIGE	5.51	1.16	.44	.52	.28	.54	.44	.67	.52	.58	.42	.64	1.00			
12. ENTERTAINMENT	5.68	1.06	.52	.59	.32	.56	.47	.79	.71	.66	.47	.52	.64	1.00		
13. EXPLORATION	5.11	1.14	.52	.54	.42	.54	.37	.64	.54	.56	.53	.60	.57	.61	1.00	
14. BEHAVIOURAL INTENTIONS	6.42	.96	.22	.37	.08	.29	.21	.51	.44	.32	.24	.30	.44	.54	.33	1.00

Note. SD=standard deviation; All correlation coefficients are statistically significant at the .01 significance level ($p < .01$, two tailed).

In the seven-factor model, aesthetic quality was divided into crowd experience and game atmosphere for the modification (Brady & Cronin, 2001). The final model was the hypothesised eight-factor model, which included customer-contact employees, facility access, facility space, opponent characteristics, player performance, crowd experience, game atmosphere and visual appeal based on the EFA results in Study 1. The results in Table 2 indicate that the seven-factor model had the best fit ($\chi^2/df=2.31$, $p < .05$; RMSEA=.058; CFI=.98; NNFI=.98; AGFI=.82).

Model comparisons were conducted by assessing the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) (Akaike, 1974). The AIC is a measure of the goodness of fit of an estimated model and can be used as a tool for selecting a more parsimonious model. When comparing a set of competing models for the same data, the literature suggests that one should select the model with the

lowest AIC value (Bijmolt & Wedel, 1999; Fassnacht & Koese, 2006). An inspection of the AIC values in Table 2 indicates that the six-factor model for the value dimensions is more parsimonious. In contrast, the results show that the hypothesised eight-factor model for the quality dimensions is not as parsimonious as the seven-factor model (see Table 2). These results indicate that the constructs of game atmosphere and visual appeal should load on a single factor.

Assessment of the measures

Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations and correlations) are reported in Table 3. The means of factors related to game atmosphere, crowd experience and entertainment are slightly higher than those of the other factors. The psychometric properties of the items were assessed through an examination of internal consistency. Scale statistics, including Cronbach's



TABLE 4 Summary results of measurement models

CONSTRUCT	NUMBER OF ITEMS	CRONBACH'S ALPHA	ITEM-TO-TOTAL CORRELATIONS	FACTOR LOADINGS	T-VALUES
CUSTOMER-CONTACT EMPLOYEES	6	.93	.74-.82	.75-.87	17.34-21.41
FACILITY ACCESS	4	.81	.52-.71	.64-.77	13.49-17.47
SEAT SPACE	4	.88	.77-.85	.79-.90	19.04-21.70
OPPONENT CHARACTERISTICS	4	.81	.58-.68	.67-.76	13.98-16.00
PLAYER PERFORMANCE	5	.91	.61-.87	.76-.86	17.28-21.11
GAME ATMOSPHERE	9	.90	.62-.75	.66-.81	14.40-19.40
CROWD EXPERIENCE	3	.81	.56-.74	.67-.85	14.43-20.06
MONETARY PRICE	4	.90	.74-.83	.77-.87	17.59-21.35
CONVENIENCE	4	.83	.60-.72	.64-.78	13.56-17.61
ORGANISATIONAL IDENTIFICATION	4	.84	.61-.66	.66-.74	11.41-16.28
COMMUNITY PRESTIGE	3	.82	.67-.69	.75-.81	16.54-18.36
ENTERTAINMENT	3	.79	.63-.64	.73-.76	16.19-17.06
EXPLORATION	3	.78	.57-.66	.72-.76	15.43-16.60
BEHAVIOURAL INTENTIONS	3	.81	.58-.62	.82-.87	19.03-20.84

Note. $n=396$, $\chi^2(df)=3207.67$ (1561), $\chi^2/df=2.06$, $p < .01$; CFI=.98; NNFI=.98; AGFI=.76; RMSEA=.051

alpha coefficients, item-to-total correlations, factor loadings and t-values, are presented in Table 4. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all constructs were greater than the cut-off point of .70 (Hair et al, 2006), indicating that these constructs were internally consistent (see Table 4). A CFA was employed for assessing the convergent evidence of construct validity. All items were restricted to load on their respective factors. The results in Table 4 illustrate that the factor loadings ranged from .64 to .90, indicating that the items accurately captured their respective factors (Hair et al, 2006). All t-values were greater than the critical value of 2.58 at the .01 significance level, providing evidence of convergent validity for the constructs (Bagozzi et al, 1991). At this stage, the construct facility of space was renamed seat space because, after item deletion, the four remaining

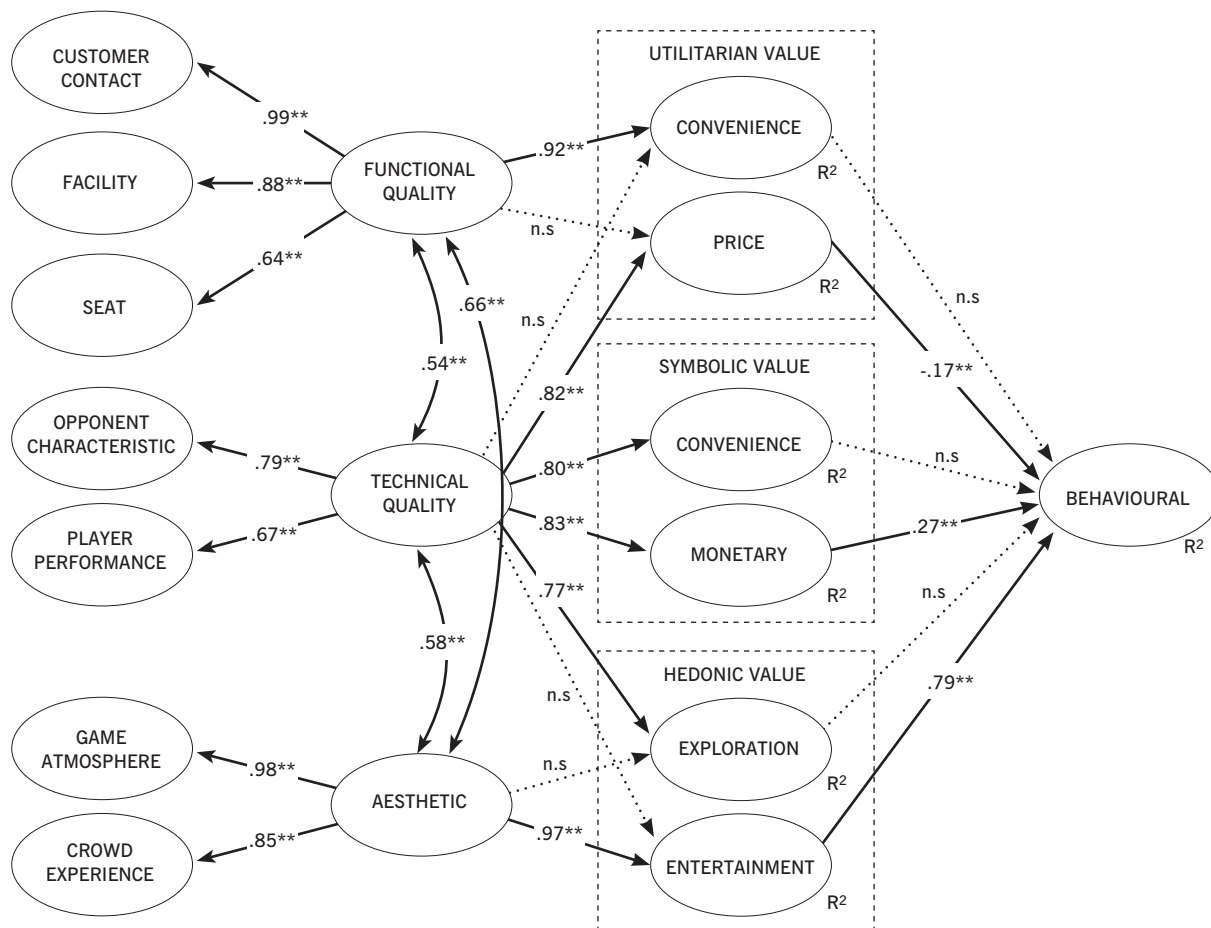
indicators of this construct were primarily related to seat space (see Table 4).

Table 4 also presents the results of the global fit indices for assessing how well the proposed measurement model fits the data. Because of the large sample size, the chi-squares were significant. The ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom (2.06) was within the acceptable range of two to three (Hair et al, 2006). The RMSEA value was smaller than Hair et al's (2006) criterion of .08 (RMSEA=.054). CFI and NNFI were greater than the cut-off point of .90 (CFI=.98; NNFI=.98) (Hair et al, 2006). Although the AGFI was not acceptably high (AGFI=.76), the overall assessment of the fit indices indicated that the measurement model was an acceptable fit to the data. Consequently, the structural model was examined.

Comprehensive model testing



FIGURE 2 Results of hypothesis testing



Note. $n=396$; $\chi^2/df=3550.56 (1626)$, $\chi^2/df=2.18$, $p < .01$; CFI=.98; NNFI=.98; AGFI=.74; RMSEA=.056
 * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; n.s.=not significant

An examination of the hypothesised relationships was achieved through structural equation modeling (SEM) using LISREL 8.54. Figure 2 shows the results of the comprehensive model testing. The hypothesised model demonstrated acceptable fit to the data ($\chi^2/df=3550.56 (1626)$, $\chi^2/df=2.18$, $p < .01$; CFI=.98; NNFI=.98; AGFI=.74; RMSEA=.056).

Brady and Cronin (2001) suggest that customers'

service quality perceptions are represented by a multi-dimensional, multi-level model. The structural model supports this conceptualisation. The correlations between the three second order dimensions of functional, technical and aesthetic quality were positive and moderately significant, ranging from .54 to .66 (see Figure 2). Figure 2 also shows that seven sub-dimensions of perceived quality accurately loaded



on respective second order dimensions with sufficient factor loadings, ranging from .64 to .98 (Hair et al, 2006). The results provide evidence that perceived quality is a seven-factor model, which underlies the three second order dimensions identified previously: functional, technical and aesthetic quality (Cronin, 2003).

With respect to hypothesis testing, the significance of the path coefficients in Figure 2 supports the hypothesised relationships between quality, value and behavioural intentions. As expected, functional quality had a statistically significant effect on convenience ($\gamma = .92$, $p < .01$), whereas there was no statistically significant relationship between functional quality and monetary price. Thus, H1 was partially supported. The paths identified between aesthetic quality and two hedonic value factors revealed that aesthetic quality had a strong effect on entertainment ($\gamma = .97$, $p < .01$), while the relationship between aesthetic quality and exploration was not statistically significant. These findings partially supported H5. Furthermore, technical quality had statistically significant effects on monetary price ($\gamma = .82$, $p < .01$), organisational identification ($\gamma = .83$, $p < .01$) and exploration ($\gamma = .77$, $p < .01$). Thus, H2, H3 and H4 were fully supported. Lastly, the effects of the six value dimensions on behavioural intentions were examined. Community prestige ($\beta = .27$, $p < .01$) and entertainment ($\beta = .79$, $p < .01$) were found to have positive effects on behavioural intentions. While monetary price had a negative effect on behavioural intentions, the effect was statistically significant in an unexpected direction ($\beta = -.17$, $p < .05$). Collectively, H7 and H8 were partially supported.

The ability of the hypothesised model to explain variation in the six value dimensions and behavioural intentions was assessed by R2 values. The R2 values for convenience, monetary price, organisational identification, community prestige, exploration and entertainment were .75, .65, .64, .70, .72 and .92, respectively (see Figure 2). The six value factors explained 44 per cent of the variance in behavioural intentions.

Discussion and implications

The purposes of this study were to: (1) redefine the concept of consumption value, basing it not only on utilitarian value but also on hedonic and symbolic value; (2) identify the antecedents and consequences of the three value dimensions; and (3) examine the impact of consumption value on behavioural intentions. Since little effort has been made to conceptualise value creation beyond cognitive assessment, and to empirically test the antecedents and consequences in marketing research, the current study makes a significant contribution to the literature and practice in three ways. Firstly, in order to conceptualise different levels of consumption value, the researchers synthesised Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, Hirschman and Holbrook's (1982) theory of hedonic consumption and Sheth et al (1991) and Keller's (1993) conceptualisations of multi-dimensional constructs of consumption value. The classification of value dimensions starts with the distinction between utilitarian and hedonic value (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). Utilitarian value is primarily extrinsic, cognitive and instrumental, whereas hedonic value is intrinsic, affective and non-instrumental. In the current study, monetary price and convenience were identified as utilitarian value factors based on Rust and colleagues' (2004) study of customer equity; whereas entertainment and exploration were viewed as hedonic value factors (Chandon et al, 2000). Furthermore, one of the growing interests in the conceptualisation of value creation is the inclusion of symbolic value (Keller, 1993). Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs indicates that symbolic value is a higher-level need, and is primarily a reflection of customers' self-esteem and self-actualisation needs, whereas hedonic value seems to be related more to love and social needs at lower stages of the need hierarchy. Chi-square difference tests revealed that a six-factor model was the best fitting model, indicating that consumption value seems to be composed of hedonic and symbolic value dimensions in addition to utilitarian value.

Secondly, the current study represents one of the first broad frameworks attempting to explain the



relationships between perceived quality, consumption value and behavioural intentions. The proposed model examines the relative impacts of quality dimensions on six respective value dimensions. In the current study, the most important research evidence was that the six value dimensions were influenced by their respective quality dimensions (see Figure 2). Specifically, the structural model depicted statistically significant relationships between technical quality and monetary price, organisational identification, community prestige and exploration in the expected directions. The results indicated that superior quality in the core product can produce high levels of symbolic consumption value (i.e. organisational identification and community prestige), in addition to utilitarian and hedonic value. From a managerial standpoint, the model allows sports marketers to more fully understand which goods/services are viewed as valuable in light of the utilitarian, symbolic and hedonic aspects of consumption value. In practice, it is difficult to manage the quality of the core sports product, which is not under the control of marketers. On the other hand, the current study highlights the importance of managing the controllable dimensions of quality (i.e. functional and aesthetic quality): these dimensions help sports marketers enhance their customers' assessments of utilitarian and hedonic value factors.

Sports marketers can expect high levels of functional quality to be derived from superior services, such as accessibility of seats, allocation of seat spaces and the attitudes and behaviours of stadium employees, and for these to be eventually perceived as conveniently valuable to the customer.

For sports marketing practitioners, additional conclusions can be drawn in order to better inform their marketing decisions concerning aesthetic quality. Research by Wakefield and colleagues (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996; Wakefield et al, 1996) indicates that the primary determinant of stadium environment quality is the aesthetic appeal of the facility's architecture and decoration. Sports marketers could enhance customers' perceptions of aesthetic quality by painting the facility and adding decorations, such

as pictures, important slogans, historical stories and other team-related elements (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996). Although improving the visual design of stadium environments would be a major revision, sports marketers should not overlook other elements of aesthetic quality: crowd experience and game atmosphere. Our findings explain the role of fans' crowd experiences as it relates to their aesthetic quality perceptions. As shown in the factor analysis, crowd experience consists of crowd density, energy and noise, indicating that aesthetic quality would be enhanced not only by the facility architecture but also by fans' participation in the stands. Sports fans' activities, such as singing, cheering and engaging in various ritualised behaviours, could be viewed as stadium decoration. The current study also highlights the importance of game atmosphere, which includes elements such as themes, memorabilia, special events, ambient conditions and a feeling of excitement. Linked to Pine and Gilmore's (1998) idea of memorable experiences with narrative themes and memorabilia, our results indicate that bundling aesthetic elements together based on a consistent theme is helpful for creating a memorable atmosphere and increasing the quality of aesthetic experiences.

A third contribution of the current study is that it relates the six value dimensions to behavioural consequences. In the current research, community prestige and entertainment were major predictors of behavioural intentions (see Figure 2). The research evidence suggests customers will likely attend future sporting events, recommend the team to their friends and remain loyal to the team if they highly value the entertainment and prestigious aspects of sports consumption. From a managerial standpoint, this suggests that sports marketers should be vigilant in the management of game atmosphere and crowd experience, which are controllable and useful for improving customers' assessments of entertainment value and their behavioural intentions. On the other hand, the monetary price-behavioural intentions path was weak, but statistically significant in an unexpected direction ($\beta = -.17, p < .05$). This may be a reflection



of the participants' monetary value assessments of their tickets. Since the team that the participants supported did not have a good win/loss record in the current season, it is conceivable they thought their tickets were expensive relative to the benefits they obtained, even though they would likely remain loyal to the team.

Limitations and directions for future research

Several limitations and assumptions may have influenced the results of this study. The first potential limitation is the omission of important variables. For example, the researchers did not examine various moderating effects on the relationships between the proposed constructs (see Figure 1). Research dealing with moderating variables in the marketing literature (Kirca et al, 2005; Seiders et al, 2005) indicates that there are at least three different groups of moderators that may influence the hypothesised relationships in the current investigation: marketplace moderators (i.e. market potential); customer moderators (i.e. demographics); and organisational moderators (i.e. type of sports). A suggestion for future research is to examine the moderating effects of these variables on the proposed value creation model (see Figure 1). For example, it is not clear if the non-significant relationship found in this study between organisational identification and behavioural intentions would be consistent in other settings, such as that of professional sports. Sutton et al (1997) suggest that fans who highly identify with professional sports teams are likely to show a willingness to pay more, even if the cost to attend their favourite teams' games increases. If this tendency varies across professional and non-professional sports, the insignificant effect of organisational identification on behavioural intentions might be implausible in professional sports contexts.

Secondly, regarding the initial factor analysis using data from the Japanese sample, it is not known whether additional items would have loaded on the final factors if a sample from the US had been used instead of the Japanese data set. Specifically, the exclusion of items based on the results of the Japanese sample may have influenced the psychometric

properties of the service quality dimensions for the US sample. The Japanese data were used to assess the reliability and validity of the scale items that were measuring the quality dimensions. Changes were made to the original instrument without validating the factor structure across the two settings. It is possible that if the original instruments were tested using a sample from the US, the factor structure may have included additional items. It is too early to conclude that a US sample has the same factor structure with respect to quality dimensions as that found in the sample of Japanese sports consumers.

Thirdly, the current study explained 44 per cent of the variance in behavioural intentions, indicating there are still additional factors influencing customers' behavioural intentions. Although this study empirically tested an integrated model for assessing value creation, there is still a lack of evidence regarding symbiotic (social) loyalty (Oliver, 1999). Oliver (1999) indicates that firms can build a strong, stable and durable connection by building social bonds with customers. Beyond cognitive, affective, cognitive and behavioural loyalty, a strong and longer-lasting customer loyalty will stem from the combination of customers' self-image and social bonding within their consumption communities, such as travel clubs, sports fan clubs and groups on social networking websites.

The current study was driven by important research questions, including 'what consumption values exist in the experience of hedonic value-dominant services (e.g. sporting events)?' and 'what factors predict these values?' The results indicate that consumption value can be best described as six dimensions related to three categories – utilitarian, hedonic and symbolic value – and is strongly influenced by respective quality dimensions (i.e. functional, technical and aesthetic quality). The current study represents an initial effort to provide managers with a greater amount of holistic information pertaining to the factors driving sports consumption.





Biographies

Masayuki Yoshida is an assistant professor of sport management at Biwako Seikei Sport College, Japan. His research interests focus on consumer satisfaction, loyalty and engagement behaviours in spectator sports. He was selected as the winner of the student research competition at the 2008 North American Society for Sport Management conference. His work has been published in the *Journal of Sport Management*, *Sport Management Review* and the *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*.

Jeffrey D. James is a professor and the chair of the Department of Sport Management at Florida State University. His research interests include sports consumer psychology, sports consumer behaviour and sports sponsorship. His research has been published in the *Journal of Sport Management*, *Sport Management Review*, *Journal of Sport Behaviour*, *Leisure Studies*, *International Journal of Sport Management*, *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, *Journal of Business Ethics* and the *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*.

J. Joseph Cronin Jr is a professor and the John R. Kerr Research Chair in Marketing, College of Business, Florida State University. His research interests focus on issues of customer satisfaction, service quality, service innovation, sustainability and sports marketing. His articles have been published in academic journals such as the *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Retailing*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Strategic Management Journal*, *Journal of Service Research* and *European Journal of Marketing*.

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APPENDIX A The survey items in Study 2

CONSTRUCT	ITEM	λ	α
FACILITY ACCESS			.81
SIGN1	SIGNS AT THIS STADIUM HELP YOU KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING.	.77	
SIGN2	SIGNS AT THIS STADIUM GIVE CLEAR DIRECTIONS OF WHERE THINGS ARE LOCATED.	.69	
LAYOUT2	THE STADIUM LAYOUT MAKES IT EASY TO GET TO YOUR SEAT.	.78	
LAYOUT3	THE STADIUM LAYOUT MAKES IT EASY TO GET TO THE RESTROOMS.	.64	
SEAT SPACE			.91
SEAT1	THERE IS PLENTY OF KNEE ROOM IN THE SEATING AREA.	.86	
SEAT2	THERE IS PLENTY OF ELBOW ROOM IN THE SEATING AREA.	.90	
SEAT3	THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE SEATS PROVIDES PLENTY OF SPACE.	.79	
SEAT4	THIS STADIUM PROVIDES COMFORTABLE SEATS.	.81	
SPACE3	THE WALKWAYS ARE WIDE ENOUGH TO HANDLE THE CROWDS. a)		
CUSTOMER-CONTACT EMPLOYEES			.93
ATTITU1	YOU CAN RELY ON THE EMPLOYEES AT THIS STADIUM BEING FRIENDLY.	.81	
ATTITU2	THE ATTITUDE OF THE EMPLOYEES AT THIS STADIUM DEMONSTRATES THEIR WILLINGNESS TO HELP ATTENDEES.	.87	
ATTITU3	THE ATTITUDE OF THE EMPLOYEES AT THIS STADIUM SHOWS YOU THAT THEY UNDERSTAND YOUR NEEDS.	.84	
ACTION1	YOU CAN RELY ON THE STADIUM EMPLOYEES TAKING ACTIONS TO ADDRESS YOUR NEEDS.	.82	
ACTION2	THE EMPLOYEES AT THIS STADIUM RESPOND QUICKLY TO YOUR NEEDS.	.76	
EXPERT1	YOU THINK YOU CAN RELY ON THE STADIUM EMPLOYEES KNOWING THEIR JOBS. a)		
EXPERT2	THE STADIUM EMPLOYEES ARE ABLE TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS QUICKLY. a)		
EXPERT3	THE STADIUM EMPLOYEES UNDERSTAND THAT YOU RELY ON THEIR PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE.	.75	
PLAYER PERFORMANCE			.91
SKILL1	YOUR TEAM'S PLAYERS PERFORM WELL-EXECUTED PLAYS.	.81	
SKILL2	PLAYERS ON YOUR TEAM HAVE SUPERIOR SKILLS.	.76	
EFFORT1	YOUR TEAM GIVES 100% EVERY GAME.	.85	
EFFORT2	YOUR TEAM PLAYS HARD ALL THE TIME.	.82	
EFFORT3	PLAYERS ON YOUR TEAM ALWAYS TRY TO DO THEIR BEST.	.86	



CONSTRUCT	ITEM	λ	α
OPPONENT CHARACTERISTICS			.81
OPPOSE1	OPPOSING TEAMS ARE HIGH QUALITY TEAMS.	.74	
OPPOSE2	OPPOSING TEAMS HAVE STAR PLAYERS.	.67	
OPPOSE3	OPPOSING TEAMS HAVE GOOD WIN/LOSS RECORDS.	.68	
OPPOSE5	OPPOSING TEAMS HAVE A GOOD HISTORY.	.76	
GAME ATMOSPHERE			.89
DESIGN2	THIS STADIUM'S ARCHITECTURE GIVES IT AN ATTRACTIVE CHARACTER.	.66	
DESIGN3	THIS STADIUM IS DECORATED BASED ON AN APPEALING THEME.	.79	
GOODS3	THE (TEAM NAME) SELL AN IMPRESSIVE ASSORTMENT OF MEMORABILIA.	.69	
PROMO1	THE (TEAM NAME)' SPECIAL EVENTS ARE SOME OF THE BEST YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED.	.66	
ATMOS1	AT THIS STADIUM, YOU CAN RELY ON THERE BEING A GOOD ATMOSPHERE.	.82	
ATMOS2	THIS STADIUM'S AMBIANCE IS WHAT YOU WANT AT A GAME.	.71	
EXCITE2	YOU ENJOY THE EXCITEMENT SURROUNDING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PLAYERS.	.73	
EXCITE3	YOU LIKE THE EXCITEMENT ASSOCIATED WITH PLAYER PERFORMANCE.	.69	
CROWD EXPERIENCE			.81
CROWD1	BEING SURROUNDED BY THOUSANDS OF FANS AT A GAME IS A GREAT EXPERIENCE FOR YOU.	.85	
CROWD2	YOU ARE EXCITED BY BEING WITH OTHER FANS WHO ARE CHEERING, YELLING, SINGING, AND SCREAMING FOR THEIR TEAM.	.80	
CROWD3	THE CROWD ENERGY YOU FEEL AT GAMES GETS YOU EXCITED.	.67	
MONETARY PRICE			.90
PRICE1	YOUR TEAM'S TICKETS ARE A GOOD BUY.	.77	
PRICE2	YOUR TEAM'S TICKETS ARE WORTH THE MONEY.	.83	
PRICE3	YOUR TEAM'S TICKETS ARE FAIRLY PRICED.	.86	
PRICE4	YOUR TEAM'S TICKET PRICE IS REASONABLE.	.87	
CONVENIENCE			.83
CONVE1	YOU VALUE THE EASE OF USING SERVICES IN THE CONCOURSE AREA.	.78	
CONVE2	USING SERVICES IN THE CONCOURSE AREA IS AN EFFICIENT WAY TO MANAGE YOUR TIME.	.71	
CONVE3	YOU VALUE THE POSSIBILITY OF SPEEDY SERVICE FROM CONCESSION PROVIDERS.	.64	
CONVE4	YOU VALUE THE CONVENIENCE OF USING SERVICES IN THE CONCOURSE AREA.	.77	



APPENDIX A The Survey Items in Study 2 (Cont)

CONSTRUCT	ITEM	λ	α
ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION			.81
ID1	WHEN SOMEONE CRITICISES YOUR TEAM, IT FEELS LIKE A PERSONAL INSULT.	.66	
ID2	YOU ARE VERY INTERESTED IN WHAT OTHERS THINK ABOUT YOUR TEAM.	.75	
ID3	WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT YOUR TEAM, YOU USUALLY SAY "WE" RATHER THAN "THEY". a)		
ID4	YOUR TEAM'S SUCCESSES ARE YOUR SUCCESSES.	.75	
ID5	WHEN SOMEONE PRAISES YOUR TEAM, IT FEELS LIKE A PERSONAL COMPLIMENT.	.72	
ID6	IF A STORY IN THE MEDIA CRITICISED YOUR TEAM, YOU WOULD FEEL EMBARRASSED. a)		
COMMUNITY PRESTIGE			.82
PREST1	YOUR TEAM INCREASES THE STATUS OF THE HOME-TOWN AREA.	.75	
PREST2	YOUR TEAM ENHANCES THE NATION'S PERCEPTION OF THE HOME-TOWN AREA.	.77	
PREST3	YOUR TEAM ENHANCES THE COMMUNITY'S PRESTIGE.	.81	
EXPLORATION			.78
EXPLO1	YOU ENJOY TRYING NEW EXPERIENCES AT THIS SPORTING EVENT.	.72	
EXPLO2	YOU CAN AVOID ALWAYS EXPERIENCING THE SAME ACTIVITIES AT THIS SPORTING EVENT.	.76	
EXPLO3	YOU CAN GET SOME IDEAS FOR NEW EXPERIENCES BY ATTENDING THIS EVENT.	.72	
ENTERTAINMENT			.79
ENT1	GAMES YOU WATCH AT THIS STADIUM ARE REALLY ENTERTAINING.	.75	
ENT2	YOU ARE SATISFIED WITH THE ENTERTAINMENT FROM GAMES AT THIS STADIUM.	.75	
ENT3	YOU ENJOY WATCHING A GAME AT THIS STADIUM.	.73	
BEHAVIOURAL INTENTIONS			.88
BI1	THE PROBABILITY THAT YOU WILL ATTEND ANOTHER SPORTING EVENT OF YOUR TEAM IS: b)	.82	
BI2	THE LIKELIHOOD THAT YOU WOULD RECOMMEND (TEAM NAME)' GAME TO A FRIEND IS: b)	.84	
BI3	IF YOU HAD TO ATTEND THIS GAME AGAIN, THE PROBABILITY YOU WOULD MAKE THE SAME CHOICE IS: b)	.87	

a) These items were removed from the final analysis because of the low item-to-total correlations.

b) These items were measured with a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from "Very Low (1)" to "Very High (7)."



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The *Journal* welcomes the submission of academic and practitioner research papers, articles, case studies, interviews and book reviews. Submissions should aim to educate and inform and should ideally focus on a specific area that is pertinent to the subject matter of the *Journal*, as detailed below. In all instances, the editorial team seeks to publish submissions that clearly add value to theory and/or practice in sports marketing and sponsorship.

Aims and scope

The mission of the *Journal* is to bring together academics and practitioners in one forum, with the intent of furthering knowledge and understanding of sports marketing and sponsorship. The *Journal* interprets sports marketing and sponsorship broadly, to include:

- fans and customers
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- leagues and competitions
- events and stadia
- sponsors and properties
- retailers and merchandisers
- suppliers and intermediaries
- broadcasters and the media
- governing bodies and representative associations
- places, spaces and cities
- economic and social development initiatives
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We encourage submissions from a wide variety of perspectives, including marketing, all areas of management, economics, politics, history, sociology, psychology, cultural studies and anthropology.

All articles should be written primarily to inform academics and practitioners directly or indirectly involved in the sports marketing and/or sponsorship

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The Editor is willing to discuss and advise on proposed projects. This is no guarantee of publication.

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- value added by the submission to academic and practitioner understanding of sports marketing.

Format and style

Research articles should normally be no less than 4,000 and no more than 8,000 words.

Case studies of no less than 2,500 and no more than 5,000 words should be objective rather than promotional and should follow the following format: *Background / Objectives / Implementation / Results / Conclusion*. Interviews are welcomed, but should be discussed with the Editor. Book reviews should normally be less than 1,500 words.

Each article submitted for consideration should include an executive summary of up to 500 words, which gives a flavour of the article and includes the rationale for the study, methods used, key findings, conclusions and value added. A shorter abstract, of no more than 100 words, must also be included.



Footnotes and endnotes may be used but only where appropriate and as sparingly as possible.

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International Journal of Sports
Marketing & Sponsorship
ISC School of Management, Paris, France
& University Paris Sud 11, France
Tel: +33 (0)1 69 15 61 57
Fax: +33 (0)1 69 15 62 37
Email: mdesbordes@iscparis.com