

## Spectator Motives: Why Do We Watch if our Favorite Team is Not Playing?

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Reports indicate that nearly \$11 billion is spent annually in the United States by spectators attending sporting events (Lee, 2002). Additionally, the amount of television broadcasts dedicated to sporting events has increased exponentially in the past 20 years and according to Neilson ratings, the National Football League (NFL) offers America's favorite television programming (Heistand, 2006). Therefore, it is not surprising that a considerable amount of research has focused on understanding spectator motives (e.g., James & Ridinger, 2001; Funk, Mahony, Nakazawa, & Hirakawa, 2001; Robinson & Trail, 2005; Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2000) as determining reasons for sport spectator consumption enables sport marketers to develop marketing strategies aimed directly at viewer motives, and allows advertisers buying air time during televised sporting events to - connect-" with these motives (Madrigal, 200X; Robinson & Trail, 2005).

However, the majority of previous research centers on spectators viewing games in which their favorite team is playing. Yet, for a sport league to truly flourish, people must be enticed to consistently watch games which do not feature their favorite team. Therefore, this research sought to examine motives for consuming sport when one's favorite team is not playing in comparison to consumption motives when one's favorite team is playing.

Sloan (1989) suggested that sport spectator motives fulfill social or psychological needs and watching sports provides pleasurable characteristics that are reinforcing to the spectator. Sloan contended that nearly all motives for watching sporting events would fall under one of the following theories: achievement seeking, stress and stimulation, catharsis and aggression, salubrious effects, and entertainment. Using this initial work by Sloan (1989), Trail and James (2001) developed the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC) which measures nine motives for sport consumption: achievement, aesthetics, acquisition of knowledge, drama, escape, family, physical skills, social interaction, and physical attractiveness. A variety of studies related to sport fan motivation have used these motives to better understand sport spectators (e.g., James and Ridinger, 2002; Trail, Fink & Anderson, 2001; Robinson & Trail, 2005).

While most of the literature focuses on consumption motives of a favorite sport team, it stands to reason that if sport spectators are driven to fulfill social or psychological motives as Sloan (1989) suggests, then spectator motives for watching a game in which their favorite team is playing would differ substantially from their motives for watching a game in which their favorite team is not involved. That is, some motives might be more relevant when one's favorite team is playing (e.g. achievement) but less relevant when watching games featuring other teams. This leads to the first hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Scores for motives will differ significantly for games featuring participants' favorite team than games featuring other teams.

Further, a number of authors have found gender differences in spectator motives (e.g., James and Ridinger, 2002; Robinson & Trail, 2005; Wann, 1995). To effectively market a sport, or market products through sport, these gender differences must be recognized and accounted for. As Robinson & Trail (2005, p.59) suggested, these gender differences, - Kwould imply, for example, that either males and females have innately different motives, or that society implicitly or explicitly teaches males and females to have different motives-". Thus, we would anticipate differences in spectator motives due to gender and would expect these differences to hold regardless of whether or not their favorite team was playing. This leads to the second and third hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2: There will be gender differences in sport spectator motives among participants.

Hypothesis 3: There will be no interaction effect between gender and type of game (favorite team playing, favorite team not playing) on participants' motive scores.

To test the hypotheses, 150 students in general physical activity classes at a large Midwestern institution were asked to complete a short demographic questionnaire and the MSSC scale (Trail & James, 2001). First, participants were asked to complete the scale relative to their motives for watching their favorite NFL team and later were asked to complete the scale relative to their motives for watching NFL games when their favorite team was not involved. This allowed us to compare their motives across the different game situations.

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The MSSC demonstrated good reliability and validity in both situations. Cronbach alpha scores ranged from .81 to .94 and all items had item-to-total correlations of above .55 while each correlated higher with its own dimension than others. Mean scores ranged from 6.02 (drama) to 2.90 (physical attractiveness) for motives for watching one's favorite NFL team while mean scores for motives for watching any NFL game ranged from 5.89 (drama) to 2.99 (physical attractiveness).

A repeated measures MANOVA was conducted with the independent variables of gender (within group variable -V male; female) and game-type (between group variable-V favorite NFL team playing; not playing) and the 9 motives serving as the dependent variables. The gender main effect was significant,  $F(9,106) = 15.31, p < .001$  (eta squared = .57). Thus, across game-types, gender explained 57% of variance in scores on motives for watching NFL games. The game-type main effect was also significant  $F(9,106) = 10.67, p < .001$ , and the type of game watched explained 48% of the variance in motive scores (eta squared = .48). However, the gender X game-type interaction was not significant,  $F(9,106) = 1.81, p = .07$ .

Follow-up univariate tests revealed significant gender differences in motive scores for drama,  $t = 9.30, p < .003$ ; aesthetics,  $t = 17.97, p < .000$ ; skill,  $t = 18.95, p < .000$ ; knowledge,  $t = 32.68, p < .000$ ; family,  $t = 7.63, p < .007$ ; and physical attractiveness,  $t = 44.16, p < .000$ . Women scored significantly higher than men on the family and physical attractiveness motive, while men scored significantly higher on the drama, aesthetics, skill, and knowledge motives. Univariate tests also revealed significant differences due to game-type in the motives of achievement,  $t = 92.18, p < .000$ ; skill,  $t = 11.47, p < .001$ ; and knowledge,  $t = 19.45, p < .000$ . Mean scores for the motives of achievement and skill were higher for those watching their favorite NFL teams, while the mean score for knowledge was significantly higher for those watching an NFL game when their favorite team was not involved.

Results of the study suggest consumers do indeed have differing motives for consuming games which involve their favorite team and games in which their favorite team is not involved. Additionally, gender plays a significant role in determining which motives are most salient. The results of the study will be explained fully, linked to existing literature, and utilized to build upon existing theory. Further, practical applications for sport marketers will be provided.