

Sport Websites Users' Motivations and Consequence Behaviors

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Despite its short history, the Internet has already established itself as one of the most important communication tools in the world. There have been huge increases in the amount of people who use it. According to Internet World Stats, the population of worldwide Internet users in 2006 is over one billion from over 233 countries and world regions. This is more than a 200 percent increase from five years ago (Internet World Stats, 2006). Within this trend, online sport marketing is a huge revenue generating for sport organizations and companies. Mahony and Howard (2001) mentioned that successful sport managers must adopt internet marketing and other new communication technologies in order to establish positive relationships with traditional consumers.

Even though sport websites attracts attention from sport marketers as a potentially successful revenue source, there has been no systematic research in those areas and very little research conducted (Brown, 2003; Filo & Funk, 2005). Several studies have been conducted since the Internet became a part of sport media. However, Filo and Funk (2005) pointed out that most sport website research only focused on whether sport websites provide certain contents such as marketing elements (i.e., price, place, promotion, and products). The content analysis of websites can be the first step in understanding internet websites, because marketers and web designers can evaluate overall and superficial efficiency of websites based on content analysis. However, content analysis is not enough to measure the effectiveness of websites. Even though websites are designed with a great deal of content, it is all useless if the consumer is not interested and involved in it. Hence, researchers need to focus on users' behavior and consumer oriented approaches to sport websites. Understanding and analyzing user's oriented research, such as user's motivations and attitude, is critical to the success of Internet marketing communication because it is also related with psychological connections and involvement with the sport team and organizational involvement of teams (Filo & Funk, 2005).

For this reason, the main purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between users' motivations for using sport Internet websites and consequences such as attitude toward the website and website usage. As a theoretical framework, this study applied uses and gratifications (U&G) theory, because U&G theory is considered one of the most robust and functional methods to develop theoretical and conceptual models of usage on mediums such as radio, TV, and Internet. Many mass media scholars mentioned that uses and gratifications theory provides a useful framework to understand user motivation and associated behavior in the Internet (Ko, Cho, Robert, 2005; Morris & Ogan, 1996; Ruggiero, 2000).

Based on literature, researchers have identified three dimensions of U&G motivation factors: (1) entertainment, (2) informativeness, and (3) irritation (Chen & Wells 1999; Eighmey & MoCord, 1998; Eighmey, 1997; Korgaonkar & Wolin, 1999; Luo, 2002). First, the entertainment factor refers to the extent to which the website provides the user with fun, cool, exciting, and enjoyable content (Eighmey, 1997). Based on the orientation of sport, it is obvious that sport websites also need to provide the entertainment factor as prime content. Raney (2006) also mentioned that the most important motivational factor behind viewing mediated sports is for the enjoyment (p.316). Second, the information factor can be defined as the extent to which websites provide resourceful and helpful information (Chen & Wells, 1999; Ducoffe, 1996). Since part of the enjoyment of sport is to follow the vast amount of available information such as player, team, and league statistics (Milne & McDonald, 1999), the information function in the Internet is necessary. Third, the irritation factor can be defined as the extent to which the website is messy, confusing, and cumbersome to users (Eighmey & McCord, 1998; Luo, 2002). Irritation is related to the organization of websites. Irritating websites may lead users' to have anxiety and distract their attentions. For example, too many banner ads, big-size graphics, and technological functions such as multimedia and flash may produce negative influence on website usage. Based on three motivational factors, researchers investigated influences of informativeness, entertainment, and irritation on various online consumer behaviors such as attitude toward the website and web usages.

The sample of this study consisted of 386 university students who were selected and analyzed. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed to evaluate the internal consistency of predictor variables. Cronbach's alphas of all variables were higher than .82, which mean the constructs have sound reliabilities (Nunnally, 1978). Two multiple regression analyses were conducted to measure how entertainment, informativeness, and irritation were related to (1) the attitude toward sport websites and (2) website usage. Assumptions of regression (i.e., normality of data, skewness and kurtosis, multicollinearity between independent variables, and so on) were conducted and there was no violation of assumptions. The first multiple regression revealed that all three motivations: entertainment ($r=.37, p<.05$), information ($r=.33, p<.05$), and irritation ($r=-.26, p<.05$) are significantly related with

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attitude toward websites. The R² was .63, indicating that three factors explained 63% of the total variance of attitude toward the website. Hence, all three factors are significantly related to attitude toward the website. The second multiple regression showed that entertainment ($r=.52, p<.05$), and information ($r=.18, p<.05$) are significantly related with revisit rate of the sport website. The R² was .44, indicating that entertainment and information factors explained 44% of the total variance of revisit rate of the sport website. The theoretical and practical implications of the results are discussed with future research directions.