

## Why do people play fantasy sports?

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Abstract 263**

Fantasy sport has grown tremendously since the development of Rotisserie League Baseball in 1980 (Williams, 2006). Currently, 19.4 million people aged 12 and above are actively playing fantasy sports in the U.S. and Canada. Over 34 million North Americans report having played fantasy sports. (FSTA, 2007). Fantasy sports have a \$1-2 billion annual impact for the fantasy sports industry, but also a \$3-4 billion annual impact on the sports industry (FSTA, 2006). From a sport consumer behavior perspective, fantasy sport provides a mixed experience of participatory sport and spectator sport. Clearly, fantasy sport is a unique experience, quite different from more traditional sport consumption experiences (Lomax, 2006).

Accordingly, many professional sport organizations now consider fantasy sports participants an attractive market segment. Compared to the general fan, they attend more games and watch more sport television (FSTA, 2006). Moreover, for media companies (e.g. Yahoo, ESPN), fantasy sport is a key financial resource, since they can sell fantasy sports participants premium fantasy packages. Moreover, by offering free games, they draw more traffic and more advertising revenue. However, despite the popularity and economic impact of fantasy sports, few studies have been conducted regarding why people play fantasy sports. The purpose of this study was to determine the key motives for participating in fantasy sport, and to develop a scale to reliably measure dimensions of motivation for fantasy sports participants. This task is important as many professional sport leagues are using fantasy sports as marketing and communication tools to attract new fans from other sport leagues and to retain their current fans.

Following a review of the sport and fan motivation literatures, and the fantasy sport consumption literature, this study used a three-step procedure to develop an instrument for measuring motives for playing fantasy sports. First, qualitative research was used to generate responses to the question, "Why do you play fantasy sport?" The question was posted on fan forum websites of several fantasy sports providers (e.g., Yahoo fantasy sports). Based on the responses from the participants, a review of literature, and subsequent expert review, 51 items were generated for 13 potential dimensions of fantasy sport motivation: (1) Game interest, (2) General manager, (3) Love for sport, (4) Prize, (5) Competition, (6) Cost, (7) Bonding with friends or family, (8) Social interaction, (9) Gambling, (10) Knowledge application, (11) Fun, (12) Escape, and (13) Substitute for a losing team. These items were measured on a six-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (6). A link to a web survey of the 51 items was posted to 5 fantasy sports fan websites. Two hundred eighty-three surveys were collected (138 for fantasy baseball and 145 for fantasy football). An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to identify dimensions representing the items. Data were subjected to a principal components analysis with varimax (orthogonal) rotations. The 13-component extraction accounted for 69% of total variance. Total variance close to or above 70% is considered very appropriate (Stevens, 1996). Although the analysis supported the existence of a 13 dimension solution, the original 13 factors were not upheld. Items for gambling motivation did not group together. Item analysis, in conjunction with interactive factor analyses, was used to condense the scale. Items were deleted based on multiple loadings (i.e., two or more loadings above .40). Further items were deleted based on their strength of loading. As a result, 12 dimensions containing 36 items remained: Game interest (3), General manager (3), Love for sport (3), Prize (3), Competition (3), Cost (3), Bonding with friends or family (3), Social interaction (3), Knowledge application (3), Fun (3), Escape (3), and Substitute for a losing team (3).

A new sample of 376 respondents (215 for fantasy baseball and 161 for fantasy football) was collected via fantasy sport websites that were not used in Step 2. CFA was employed using AMOS 5 to verify the internal consistency and the construct validity of the fantasy sport motivation scale. The results of the CFA showed that the data are a good fit to the model (RMSEA = .052, CFI = .921, SRMR = .079). The final solution explained 76% of the variance. Item loadings ranged from .69 to .96 on their respective factors. All dimensions were internally consistent. The reliabilities for all 12 dimensions were satisfactory, ranging from .80 to .89 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The 36 item, 12 dimension scale is a reliable measure of motivation for fantasy sports consumption. Potential uses of the scale are discussed.