

## Development of a scale measuring event sport tourism intention

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Abstract 451**

Sport tourism has received much attention from both the academic field and industrial sectors due to its potential of significant social and economic impacts (Gammon & Robinson, 2003). Gibson (1998) provided one of the most comprehensive definitions of sport tourism: "leisure-based travel that takes individuals temporarily outside of their home communities to participate in physical activities (i.e., active sport tourism), to watch physical activities (i.e., event sport tourism), or to venerate attractions associated with physical activities (i.e., nostalgia sport tourism)" (p. 49). Sport tourism plays an increasing role in generating revenue and contributing social and economic benefits to host cities, regions, and countries.

The ultimate goal for a sport marketer is to generate revenue through consumer's active behavior, which is generally taken the forms of participating, spectating, and visiting. An imperative work for a sport marketer is to accurately measure the behaviors of consumers in order to calculate their marketing effectiveness, which can be translated into ultimate profits. However, accurately measuring actual consumption behaviors has been a challenging task because measurement can hardly be made at the moment of purchasing. Behavioral intention has been frequently used as a predictor of actual behavior (Daigle, Hrubes, & Ajzen, 2002; Hrubes, Ajzen, & Daigle, 2001). Although intentions can change over the course of time due to unforeseeable events or time intervals, measuring behavioral intentions generally allows a reasonable prediction of ensuing behaviors (Ajzen, 1971; Conner, Sheeran, Norman, & Armitage, 2000). Numerous researchers have found that purchase intention represents actual consumption behavior well (Ajzen, 2005). Despite the fact that a growing effort has been made to study spectating sports, no systematic attempts have been made to develop a reliable and valid scale measures event sport tourism intention. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to develop the Event Sport Tourism Intention Scale (ESTIS). As a guiding theory, the researchers used Oliver's (1999) conative loyalty theory in this current study.

Methods: Through a comprehensive review of literature, a preliminary ESTIS that included 12 items was developed, which covered three conceptual areas: Intention to (Re)Visit, Recommend to Other, and Intention to Attend Events (Chalip, Green, & Hill, 2003, Lee, Lee, & Lee, 2005). A Likert 7-point scale was adopted (1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree). A content validity test was conducted by a panel of six experts. In addition, a pilot study involving 40 undergraduate students was conducted to examine the items' relevance, representativeness, and clarity. The preliminary scale was modified accordingly based on the experts' and students' feedbacks.

Using a systematic random sampling, the researchers selected 2,000 participants for this study from an inquiry list, provided by a local tourism bureau. A total of two surveys were conducted in which the researchers mailed to potential respondents a packet that included a questionnaire, a self-addressed and stamped envelope. A second mailing, which was a reminder postcard, was sent out to those who had not returned their initial survey in three weeks as a follow-up procedure (Dillman, 2000). As a result, 236 questionnaires were returned, of which 199 questionnaires were deemed useable for subsequent model tests. Data were found to have no violation of normality. Using a regression imputation, the missing data were imputed.

SPSS was utilized to examine descriptive statistics and normality of variables. AMOS 7.0 (Arbuckle, 2006) was used to examine psychometric properties of scale through a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) employing the Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimation (Bollen, 1989). To examine overall model fit, several fit indexes were utilized, which consisted of  $\chi^2$ ,  $\chi^2/df$ , RMSEA, SRMR, ECVI, and CFI.

Tests of reliability included Cronbach's alpha, Construct Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The recommended .70 cut-off value was adopted to determine internal consistency ( $\alpha$ ) and CR (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). A benchmark value for AVE was .50 suggested by Bagozzi and Yi (1988). A test of construct validity (i.e., convergent and discriminant) was also conducted. To evaluate construct validity, factor loadings and critical ratios were used. To establish discriminant validity, the researchers adopted two methods: (a) examination of the interfactor correlations; and (b) comparing squared correlation of any of two latent constructs with AVE value (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

CFA revealed that overall model did not fit data well ( $\chi^2 = 265.31$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 5.20$ , CFI = .91, ECVI = 1.76, RMSEA = .147, 90% CI = .130 - .164, and SRMR = .089), indicating a need for possible model respecification. Based on substantive theoretical and empirical considerations, revised model was respecified that included three factors with nine items

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and three items per subscale. Overall goodness of fit of the revised ESTIS fit the data superiorly well ( $\chi^2 = 58.25, p < .001, \chi^2/df = 2.43, RMSEA = .085, 90\% CI = .057 - .113, SRMR = .042, ECVI = .60, \text{ and } CFI = .98$ ). Following a series of reliability tests, it was found that the ESTIS had robust reliability. Cronbach's alpha values were very high, ranging from .85 to .95. CR values were all well above the recommended cut-off criterion, ranging from .85 to .95. All AVE values for the revised ESTIS were greater than the .50 suggested standard, ranging from .64 to .86. Various tests related to construct validity also supported robust factor structures of the revised ESTIS. All factor loadings were significant at  $p < .001$  and were greater than the suggested standard (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988), ranging from .75 to .95. All critical ratio values indicated that the factors showed good convergent validity. For discriminant validity, it was found that none of the interfactor correlations were greater than the suggested threshold (i.e.,  $> .85$ ), indicating good discriminant validity. No squared correlations were greater than any of the AVE values in the ESTIS, indicating a strong discriminant validity of the scale.

Discussion: The ESTIS scale is a reliable and valid analytical tool to assess event sport tourism intentions. The scale has great potential for adoption because it contains only nine items. Moreover, the scale was developed through a solid conceptualization and rigorous analyses involving a national sample. Researchers and practitioners of sport tourism and event management may utilize the scale to examine the relevance of various marketing, service, and social psychology related variables and how they function together to enhance sport tourism behaviors.

Key Words: event sport tourism, confirmatory factor analysis, scale development

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