

## Exploring the Effects of Curiosity and Openness to Experience of the Big Five Traits on Sport Media Consumption Behaviors

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Curiosity is broadly defined as a "reaction and desire that motivates human exploratory behaviors in order to seek and acquire new knowledge and novel stimuli" (Park, 2007, p. 13). Researchers in psychology and education have argued that curiosity is a critical and prerequisite motive for human exploratory behaviors (Loewenstein, 1994; Voss & Keller, 1983). In a sport context, Park, Andrew, and Mahony (2008) first examined the relationship between trait curiosity and the spectatorship of novel sports in order to illuminate how a non-fan of sport is initially attracted to and becomes interested in a sport. The work by Park et al. (2008) is an important step in helping us better understand the initial attitudes toward and behaviors related to certain sports, teams, and players. One limitation of the study, however, is that it did not examine the learning process associated with consuming novel sport products. Before consumers purchase a product, they typically seek out and learn information about the attributes and benefits of a product (Lehmann, 1994; Urban, Weinberg, & Hauser, 1996). Searching for and gathering information is expected to be an essential and prerequisite step for the consumption of novel sports. Additional work is needed to advance our understanding of the learning processes associated with the consumption of novel sports.

A number of studies have found that those seeking new information or consuming new products (i.e. early adopters) usually have a wider range of interests as well as a personality that is open to various stimuli (Dollinger, Ross, & Preston, 2002; Park, 2007). An individual's unique personality, which has been examined by a number of studies based on various theoretical perspectives, consists of several traits that represent enduring ways in which a person feels, thinks, and acts (Park et al., 2008). A widely used framework for studying personality traits is the Big Five Inventory (BFI) which is used to classify and describe different attributes of personality traits (Goldberg, 1992). The BFI is regarded as one of the most efficient and succinct measurements of five personality traits: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness to Experience (OE) (John, Donahu, & Kentle, 1991).

Curiosity and the Big Five framework share similar characteristics in that curiosity is one of the facets in Openness to Experience (OE). Specifically, OE refers to a broad range of intellectual interests such as ideas, knowledge, creativity, intellect, and aesthetic inclinations (John & Srivastava, 1999). Similarly, intellectual curiosity (i.e., epistemic curiosity) is a state evoked by complex conceptual vagueness or complicated ideas that facilitate the quest for knowledge and information (Berlyne, 1960). Therefore, intellectual curiosity has been regarded as a key variable associated with seeking and gathering information, facilitating the learning process, and motivating consuming behavior (Park, 2007). In addition to a conceptual similarity, the literature supports that curiosity is related with OE (see Kashdan, Rose, & Fincham, 2004). Therefore, it is believed that both curiosity and OE simultaneously influence sport fan's consumptive pattern in relation to intellectual activities such as searching for information and knowledge about a sport, team, or player through various media platforms.

Investigating sport fans' information and knowledge seeking via media platforms is deemed important for both practitioners and researchers for several reasons. First, television, radio, internet, magazine, and newspaper are major mediums through which sport fans obtain information and knowledge. Second, behaviors related to media consumptions are regarded as "triggers for sport fans to know more about, and make them interested in, a sport" (Park, 2007, p. 9). Third, examining sport fans' media consumption has consistently served to assess various sport fan behaviors in the literature. Fourth, facilitating sport fans' media consumptions of a certain sport-derived product has also been regarded as an important way to increase their involvement in the product (Wann, Melnick, Russell, & Pease, 2001; Park, 2007) because it facilitates learning that "plays a major role in behavior" (Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2000, p. 68). Given that a goal of sport marketers is to develop new sport fans and to encourage them to become loyal sport fans (Park et al., 2008), the investigation of how sport fans consume media and which factors influence the media consumptive behaviors is important for better understanding sport fans and achieving marketing goals based on the understanding acquired.

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the relationships among sport fan's intellectual curiosity, Openness to Experience (OE), and sport media consumption. A total of 657 participants were recruited from three large urban universities. The participants were asked to complete surveys containing measures of demographic characteristics and sport media

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consumption, the Sport Fan Specific Curiosity Scale (SFSCS; Park, 2007), and the OE portion of the Big Five Inventory (BFI; John & Srivastava, 1999). The 11-item SFSCS was developed to measure "curiosity that seeks specific and cognitive information about sports, players, sport teams, or facilities that leads people to become involved in various sport fan behaviors" (Park, 2007, p. 173). The 10-item OE of the BFI was also chosen due to the relationship with curiosity. The items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale. Finally, sport media consumption was measured based on frequency of watching TV and using the Internet (see Park & Kim, 2008).

The authors hypothesized that those who are characterized by intellectual curiosity and are open to new experiences would be more likely to watch sporting events and games on TV and search for sport information on the Internet. Since no studies have investigated the relationship between OE and sport fan media consumption behaviors, the authors also hypothesized that OE, as a mediator, would positively influence sport media consumption. Finally, while previous research has made some progress in identifying the impact of sport fan curiosity on sport fan behaviors, no work to date has been done which examines the relationship between intellectual curiosity and sport media consumption behaviors (cf. Park, Mahony, & Greenwell, 2008). Therefore, it was also hypothesized that curiosity would have a significant, positive influence on sport media consumption. Since this study is in progress now, structural equation modeling using Mplus 5.1 will be utilized to examine the hypotheses. Results and implications of this study will be presented, and ideas for future research will be also discussed.