

**Constraints and Motivators in Spectator Sport: Application and Extension of Constraints Theories.**

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Spectator sport, at both the collegiate and professional level, is one of the most popular leisure segments in the United States. For instance, the 2006 season for NCAA Division I-A football and men's basketball attracted 37 million and 27 million spectators respectively (NCAA, 2007). The four major professional sport leagues in America (NFL, NBA, MLB, & NHL) were attended by more than 170 million during the 2007 and 2006-2007 season (ESPN, 2008). Accordingly, it is critical for collegiate and professional teams to understand the various factors influencing spectators' decision to attend sport events. This includes motivators for attending spectator sport as well as the constraints that prevent people from attending spectator sport. Of the two areas, an extensive body of literature only exists for motivators (Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995) while very little research has been conducted about constraints. This is especially unfortunate since often times negative factors dominate the decision making behaviors much more so than positive factors (Kanouse, 1984). As a result, the purpose of the present research is to identify the various constraints on leisure participation within the spectator sport context as well as to investigate the role of constraints and motivators in leisure participation (i.e., sport spectating) decisions.

Past constraint research has reported such factors as financial cost (Zhange, Pease, Hui, & Michaud, 1995) and weather (Hansen & Gauthier, 1989) to be negatively correlated with attendance. Although useful, a limitation of the previous constraint research is its primary focus on what Crawford and Jackson (1987) termed: structural constraints; largely ignored is the presence of intrapersonal and interpersonal constraints, which are considered to be more influential in leisure participation decisions than structural constraints (Crawford, Jackson, & Godbey, 1991). Additionally, past constraint research of spectator sport has also lacked a theoretical framework based on leisure constraint's theories, such as Crompton, Jackson, and Witt's (2005) proposed comprehensive constraints model which compiled previous constraints models (e.g., hierarchical model of leisure constraints) and more recent propositions (e.g., negotiation and balance propositions).

In response to these limitations, the researchers used Crompton et al.'s (2005) model as a foundation to develop a conceptual framework that proposes motivators and constraints as antecedents to behavioral intention. This conceptual model has four hypothesized dimensions: internal motivators, internal constraints, external motivators, and external constraints. This internal-external model differed from the original constraints model proposed by Crawford et al. (1991), which had only three constraint dimensions. It is believed that this additional dimension provides less ambiguity and will reduce dual-categorization of constraints (i.e., constraints categorized as both intrapersonal and interpersonal). Therefore, the present study contributes to the sport marketing literature through the development of a theory-based model describing how motivators and constraints influence spectator attendance behaviors, which is then empirically tested within an applied sport setting.

Data was collected from members of a booster club in an NCAA Division I-A university. The athletic department emailed an invitation that asks to complete an online survey to all the members of the booster club. Out of over 17,000 emails sent out, 963 usable questionnaires were completed, for a response rate of 5.7%. The questionnaire was divided into four main categories: internal motivators (Robinson & Trail, 2005), internal constraints (Trail, Robinson, & Kim, 2008), external motivators (Fink, Trail, Anderson, 2002), and external constraints (Trail, Anderson & Fink, 2002).

Prior to the main analyses, the critical assumptions (e.g., outliers, normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and singularity) of structural equation modeling (SEM) were investigated. Due to the issue of non-normality, the Satorra-Bentler scaling method (SB  $\chi^2$ , 1994) was employed for the SEM analyses. The measurement model fits the data well (SB  $\chi^2 = 1164.28$ , RMSEA = .03, CFI = .97, SRMR = .03). Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the factors revealed good internal consistency, ranging from .53 to .93. The average variance explained values also indicated good construct reliability, ranging from .39 to .82. The  $\chi^2$  difference tests provide evidence for discriminant validity indicating all the correlations between the factors did not approach 1.0 (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Overall, the results provide empirical support for the theoretical classification of organizing constraints and motivators into four dimensions.

The structural model which investigated the influence of internal motivators, internal constraints, external motivators, and external constraints on attendance intentions fit the data well (SB  $\chi^2 = 1507.21$ , RMSEA = .04, CFI = .95, SRMR = .06).

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Consistent with the hypothesized model, internal motivators, internal constraints, and external constraints each had a significant impact on attendance intention; they explained 7%, 8%, and 3% of variance in attendance intention respectively controlling for the other three dimensions. Interestingly, external motivators did not have a significant effect on attendance intentions controlling for the other three dimensions while it explained more than 10% of the variance in attendance intentions without considering the influence of the other dimensions.

Six hypotheses presented were supported. For example, hypothesis 2 predicted that internal motivators would positively influence attendance intention and internal motivators' factor was positively correlated with attendance intention and shared 23% of the variance. This result adds to a body of research that offers support for the major role of Internal Motivators (Vicarious Achievement, Team Identification, Escape, Social Interactions, Women's Sport Opportunity, and Aesthetics) on spectators' attendance decisions (Madrigal, 1995; Wann, 1995). Additionally, hypothesis 6 proposed that each dimension of constraints and motivators had a unique impact on attendance intention.

Our results generally support the hypothesis with an interesting exception. Consistent with our prediction, Internal Motivators, Internal Constraints, and External Constraints had significant effects on attendance intention and explained 7%, 8%, and 3% of variance in attendance intention respectively when controlling for the other three dimensions. Our results are in line with the previous research suggesting that constraints and motivators have sub-dimensions with unique antecedents and consequences (Crawford et al., 1991). Overall, the research results indicated that Internal Motivators, Internal Constraints, External Motivators, and External Constraints were distinct dimensions, each with a unique influence on attendance intentions. A critical implication for the practitioner is that there are several constraints preventing people from attending sporting events and those are equally, if not more, influential in the attendance decision. Therefore, teams should invest resources to identify crucial constraints for their potential spectators and to develop strategies to alleviate those constraints as well as strengthen the motivators.