

**Moderating effects of hedonic and utilitarian dimensions of consumer attitude on acceptance of sport web portals**

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Youngjin Hur University of Central Missouri Yong Jae Ko University of Florida Reasons for visiting a sport web portal vary across individuals. Some sport fans simply want to find their favorite sport teams or players' game results on a sport web portal (e.g., espn.go.com) whereas others enjoy watching a video streaming of a player's interview or today's best goal or shot. Research in the field of consumer behavior has identified such individual differences in consumption behaviors as hedonic and utilitarian values (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994; Batra & Ahtola, 1990; Crowley, Spangenberg, & Hughes, 1992; Okada, 2005; Voss, Spangenberg, & Grohmann, 2003). The hedonic dimension captures consumers' evaluation about a brand/product with regard to the fun or pleasure involved in use of a product. The utilitarian dimension is related to consumers' evaluation about the function performed by the product (Batra & Ahtola, 1990; Voss et al., 2003). In addition, utilitarian products are considered a means of obtaining benefits in day-to-day life whereas hedonic products are treated as a means of improving the quality of life (Dhar & Werternbroch, 2000).

However, hedonic and utilitarian dimensions are not necessarily two divergent ends (Voss et al., 2003). Okada (2005) stated that the hedonic or utilitarian value of a product can be 'primarily' or 'relatively' more hedonic-oriented or more utilitarian-oriented. Some products may have high hedonic and high utilitarian values simultaneously (Crowley et al., 1992). For example, a sport fan may seek both hedonic and utilitarian values on a sport web portal. He/she may enjoy visual images on the portal that may lead to hedonic value, and at the same time, may need to find his/her favorite team's game scores from the website that may lead to utilitarian value. Although scholars have examined individual differences in use of a product, limited scholarly efforts have been made to examine sport fans' online consumption behavior, particularly individual differences in using sport web portals. Accordingly, the purpose of this study was to examine moderating effects of sport consumers' value orientation on the adoption of sport web portals. More specifically, we examined multi-group effects on sport fans' acceptance of sport web portals across value orientation and gender. For this purpose, we revised and adapted the Sport Website Acceptance Model (SWAM) developed by Hur, Ko, and Claussen (2007). The model was developed based on the technology acceptance model (Davis, 1989; Davis et al., 1989). The SWAM includes causal relationships among seven psychological constructs and a behavioral construct to predict sport fans' use of sport-related websites: (a) perceived usefulness, (b) perceived ease of use, (c) perceived enjoyment, (d) perceived trustworthiness, (e) sport involvement, (f) psychological commitment to a team (PCT), (g) intention to use the website, and (h) actual website usage. The scale instrument of this study consists of 36 items to measure the eight constructs within the model. We adapted Voss et al.'s the HED/UT scale to measure a hedonic and utilitarian value. The scale consists of ten semantic differential response items (five items for hedonic and five items for utilitarian dimensions).

The researchers employed a convenience sampling method and directly administered the instrument to students who were enrolled in business and sport management classes at a large university located in the Northwest region of the United States from April 30 through June 7, 2007. Of a sample of 368, a total of 337 respondents completed the survey instrument. The sample consists of 198 (58.8%) males and 139 (41.2%) females. The majority of the respondents were 19 – 25 years old (80.4%), and Caucasian (White: 71.2%). To split 337 respondents into a hedonic- or a utilitarian-oriented group, summated mean scores of hedonic and utilitarian dimensions were compared. If a respondent's mean score on the hedonic dimension was relatively greater than that on the utilitarian dimension, he/she was categorized into a hedonic-oriented group. After the mean comparison, the hedonic-oriented group consisted of 80 respondents and the utilitarian-oriented group had 202. Respondents (N = 55) who had the same mean on both dimensions were excluded from the moderating effect analysis.

For a multi-group analysis, structural equation modeling was used and three steps were employed as suggested by Jöreskog and Sörborm (1993): a) developing a baseline model, b) developing a constrained model, and c) conducting a chi-square difference test. The result of the chi-square difference test between the baseline model and the constrained model revealed that there was a significant group difference between hedonic and utilitarian groups ( $1499.23 - 1465.60 = \Delta \chi^2 = 33.63, \Delta df = 14, p < .01$ ). Thus, a series of comparison models were tested by allowing each path coefficient to be freely estimated. The results of the chi-square tests showed that a moderating effect of hedonic and utilitarian groups on seven path coefficients was found to be significant. Among seven path coefficients, the causal relationship between psychological commitment to a team and perceived trustworthiness had the largest chi-square difference across hedonic and utilitarian groups ( $\Delta \chi^2 = 17.39, \Delta df = 1, p < .01$ ). There was no significant difference across gender in the model. Most respondents in this study seek both hedonic and utilitarian

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value from sport web portals. All four paths from PCT to the beliefs (i.e., perceived ease of use, usefulness, enjoyment, and trustworthiness) significantly differed according to the hedonic and utilitarian groups. These four path coefficients are significantly greater in the hedonic group than in the utilitarian group. This result implies that the four beliefs are more important factors for the hedonic group than the utilitarian group. To date, studies of online sport consumer behavior (e.g., Brown, 2003; Filo & Funk, 2005) have been merely descriptive, and there has been little research built on a strong theoretical foundation that attempts to explain and predict online sport fan behavior. Therefore, this study provides a theoretical foundation for understanding sport consumer behavior in the online context. The authors will also discuss practical implications in the presentation.