

Comparison of Latino and Non-Latino Samples on the Model of Sport Spectator Conative Loyalty at a Professional Baseball Game

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Over a five year period (2000–2004), Latino sport fandom in the United States has increased for some sports, and this growth is expected to continue as the Latino population in the U.S. grows ("The changing," 2006). Recognizing this potential market segment, professional sports have been actively marketing to the Latino population. For example, National Football League (NFL) teams celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month with festivities at multiple games in an effort to attract the Latino market (NFL News, 2006). As companies have increasingly recognized the need to market to Latinos, marketing research efforts have consequently increased (Deshpande, Hoyer, & Donthu, 1986; Mulhern & Williams, 1994; Shepherd, Tsalikis, & Seaton, 2002). Previous research (Singh, Kwon, & Pereira, 2003) within the field of marketing and psychology examined group differences among three ethnic groups (Asian Americans, Hispanics, and African Americans) in terms of personal and media influences. They found that for young adults significant differences existed for their socialization influences. When Berkowitz, Bao, and Allaway (2005) studied differences between Hispanic and Non-Hispanic consumers, they found no significant differences in terms of store brand versus national brand purchases. However, their results showed a significant difference existed between Hispanics and Non-Hispanics when buying specific product types (i.e., utilitarian versus hedonistic).

Within the sport management literature, Harrolle and Trail (2007) suggested that a comparison should be made between Latinos and Non-Latinos to see if any significant differences existed in terms of sport consumer behaviors. While an escalating amount of consumer research within the marketing literature has studied the Latino population (e.g., Berkowitz et al., 2005; Donthu & Cherian, 1994; Korgaonkar, Karson, & Lund, 2000; Mulhern & Williams, 1994; Torres & Briggs, 2005; Torres & Gelb, 2002), the sport marketing and management field has neglected to study this particular market segment in detail nor have they examined the differences between Latino and Non-Latino consumer behaviors. Trail, Anderson, and Fink (2005) proposed and tested three distinct, but related, sport consumption behavior models (Model of Sport Spectator Conative Loyalty-MSSCL) and chose Model B, which depicted the relationships among disconfirmation/confirmation of expectancies, team identification, mood, self-esteem responses, and conative loyalty. They suggested future research test the MSSCL on different samples.

The purpose of our study was to test the MSSCL-Model B on a Latino sample and compare the model to a Non-Latino sample. Using an intercept method, 400 questionnaires were distributed at a Major League Baseball Game. After removal of incomplete questionnaires, there was a 62.5% completion rate. The respondents were Non-Latinos ($n = 186$) and Latinos ($n = 127$). The sample was 46% female and 54% male. A majority was married (65%) and the average age was 44. The questionnaire was comprised of the Team Identification Index (Trail & James, 2001), (Dis)Confirmation of Expectancies Scale (Trail et al., 2005), Affective State Index (Trail, Fink, & Anderson, 2003), Self-Esteem Maintenance Behavioral Scale (Trail et al., 2003), and Intentions for Sport Consumption Behavior Scale (Trail et al., 2003). All of the scales were shown to be reliable ($\alpha = .75$ to $.95$) and valid (AVE = $.47$ to $.86$) in this data.

Using SEM, the MSSCL Model B was tested for goodness of fit using EQS (2005). The Latino sample showed mediocre fit ($\epsilon_a = 0.094$; $\chi^2/df = 1.88$) and 17.3% of the residuals exceeded $.10$. The Non-Latino sample showed reasonable fit ($\epsilon_a = 0.075$; $\chi^2/df = 2.04$), but 25.2% of the residuals exceeded $.10$. For the Latino sample, (Dis)confirmation explained 62.7% of the variance in Affective Responses. Affective Responses ($\beta = .34$) and Team Identification ($\beta = .50$) explained 32.6% of the variance in Self-Esteem. The model explained 73.5% of the variance in Conative Loyalty. For the Non-Latino sample, (Dis)confirmation explained 64.0% of the variance in Affective Responses. Affective Responses ($\beta = .37$) and Team Identification ($\beta = .61$) explained 50.8% of the variance in Self-Esteem. The model explained 44.5% of the variance in Conative Loyalty. Generally, the paths among the latent constructs for both the Latino and Non-Latino samples were very similar except for the relationships between Self-Esteem and Conative Loyalty, and between Team Identification and Self-Esteem. Latinos ($\beta = .86$) demonstrated a stronger relationship between Self-Esteem and Conative Loyalty than Non-Latinos ($\beta = .67$). Non-Latinos ($\beta = .61$) demonstrated a stronger relationship between Team Identification and Self-Esteem than Latinos ($\beta = .50$). This may be due to the cultural differences between the groups. As a minority group, Latinos face racial prejudice and thus might possess lower self-esteem (Wells, 2001), therefore Latinos may have a stronger need than Non-Latinos to increase their self-esteem through BIRGing. Interestingly, for Latinos the (Dis)confirmation of the Quality of Play ($\beta = .94$) was more central in explaining the (Dis)confirmation construct than (Dis)confirmation of the Outcome of the Game ($\beta = .81$). In addition, Satisfaction with the Quality of Play ($\beta = .98$) was more central in explaining the construct of Satisfaction than Satisfaction with

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the Outcome of the Game ($\beta = .79$). Conversely, for Non-Latinos the (Dis)confirmation of the Outcome of the Game ($\beta = .89$) was more central in explaining the (Dis)confirmation construct than (Dis)confirmation of the Quality of Play ($\beta = .83$). Furthermore, Satisfaction with the Outcome of the Game ($\beta = .90$) was similar in explaining the construct of Satisfaction than Satisfaction with the Quality of Play ($\beta = .87$).

Marketers need to be aware of the differences in the relationships between the variables for Latinos and Non-Latinos. Regardless of their level of identification with the team, Latinos want to BIRG, thus marketers should provide opportunities for BIRGing behaviors. Sport marketers should also provide outlets for social interaction with fans and players. Social networking online has become a strong trend within the sport industry and sport marketing (Mickle, 2007). Teams should not only provide more opportunities for fans to engage with players online through team websites, but also through social websites (e.g., facebook.com, myspace.com). These formats are ways for fans to BIRG and to interact with other fans and hopefully athletes of the teams. The disconfirmation of expectations for Latinos is more likely to be influenced within the consumption process by the quality of play than by the quality of the outcome of the game. Therefore, when making decisions about the recruitment and hiring of players, sport managers should continue, as they always have, to focus on controlling the quality of play by having hard working, talented players who will provide quality entertainment through their athletic skills. However, when marketing to Latinos an appropriate slogan for advertising the quality of play could read, "We don't give up until the final strike!"