Psychological Factors Associated with Professional Baseball Consumption: A Comparison of Cultural Difference and Level of Consumption

Li-Wen Hsieh, National Taipei University
Tracy L. Wisdom, USA Field Hockey

Session 23: Marketing Presentation (25-minute)
Saturday, June 2, 2007 8:30 AM - 8:55 AM

Sport spectator consumption involves people’s behaviors of attending a game and watching a game on television. Researchers who study spectator consumption behavior often tend to explore three major spectator’s psychological factors: fan identification, spectator motivation, and perceived social influence (Funk et al., 2002; Judson & Carpenter, 2005; Robinson et al., 2005; Trail & James, 2001; Wakefield, 1995; Wann, 1995; Zhang et al., 1996). These factors may help sport marketers understand and portrait their customers. While sport consumption related psychological factors has recently received more attention among sport marketers, there remains little in the literature on such topics outside of US markets. This is remarkable considering that cross-national marketing research has received greater attention in the academic and business literature (Craig & Douglas, 2001; Drost et al., 2002). The current study investigated whether there were cultural differences in city community’s psychological factors for professional baseball consumption.

Data were collected using a written questionnaire using a convenience sample of subjects from the Denver metro area (n = 217) and Hsinchu city in Taiwan (n = 204). The primary focus of the study was to examine the underlying differences of professional baseball consumption, spectator motivation, fan identification, and social influence between two city communities. In addition, the study sought to compare the aforementioned traits among different level of consumption (non-spectator, media spectator, occasional attendee, and frequent attendee). Data were analyzed using rank order, cross table analysis and MANOVA. Among seven spectator motives, drama, physical skills, and aesthetic motives (Ms 3.69, 3.57, and 3.20, respectively) were ranked high in the US community, and drama, achievement, and knowledge (Ms 3.63, 3.52, and 3.38, respectively) in the Taiwanese community. Based on the results of the cross table analysis, significantly proportional difference of level of consumption were found between Denver and Hsinchu, $\chi^2(3) = 41.44, p < .05$. The Taiwanese community proportionally tended to have more media spectators and the US community more occasional and frequent attendees. A two-way MANOVA suggested that different spectator consumption motives, sport fan identification, and social influence were significant affected by country of residence, Wilks Lambda = .61, $F(10,399) = 25.57, p < .05$, and as well as by level of consumption, Wilks Lambda = .57, $F(30,1171) = 8.31, p < .05$. Subjects from Taiwan showed stronger baseball fan identification, had more friend influence, and felt more motivated by achievement and knowledge from professional baseball games. Subjects from the U.S. were more motivated by physical skills of teams and players. People who do not watch baseball games had low spectator motivation, baseball fan identification, and social influence. Frequent attendees showed the highest scores on aforementioned traits. Media spectators showed little difference from occasional attendees, however, their escape motivation was low. Further discussion of the implications of professional baseball consumption behavior by geographic and culturally diverse communities will be discussed.