A Comparison of Sport Consumption Motives Between American Students and Asian International Students

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Sport spectating has been a popular leisure activity in the United States (Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2000). One of the most popular spectator sports is college football. Although a large number of spectators attend college football games, according to Fulks (2008), a majority of Division I intercollegiate athletic programs do not generate a profit. Therefore, sport marketers need to acknowledge the important factors that drive individuals to attend sporting events (Robinson & Trail, 2005). There are some market segments remaining unexamined in sport. One of the untapped target markets is international students. Although Kwon and Trail (2001) suggested the usefulness of international students at intercollegiate sporting events as a potential market, even among international students, various ethnic and cultural backgrounds should be considered (Won & Kitamura, 2007).

The number of international college students continues to increase in the United States (Wang, 2006). Further estimates suggest that 623,805 international students attended universities and colleges in the United States in the 2007/8, with almost 57% of these international students being from Asia (Wang, 2006). Interestingly, although the total number of Asian international students at colleges and universities has been increasing continuously in the United States, researchers and practitioners have paid little attention to the Asian international student segment.

The purpose of this study was to explore the differences between American students and Asian international students’ previous spectating behavior, motivation, team identification and future behavior to attending intercollegiate sporting events. The research questions that guided this study were: 1) what motivation factors influence Asian international students and American students to attend football games? 2) Do significant differences exist between American students and Asian international students in previous spectating behavior, motivation, team identification and future behavior?

The data were collected from a southwestern university in the United States. The survey was distributed to 300 Asian international students who held F-1 visa, and 203 (83 females and 120 males) usable questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 67.3%. The survey was also sent to 300 American students, and 229 (112 females and 117 males) usable questionnaires were collected, a response rate of 76.3%. Mall intercept methods were used at the several places on campus. Participants were asked to respond to team identification with the football team (Wann & Branscomb, 1993), motivations (Funk et al., 2002), future spectating behavior (Fink, Trail, & Anderson, 2002; Trail et al., 2003), and demographic variables. Previously developed scales (SII) were used to measure fan motives. For the study, one latent factor (i.e., support women's opportunity) is excluded from the SII. The seven items of team identification were adopted from the Scale for the Team Identification Measure by Wann and Branscombe (1993). For measuring intention for future sport consumption behavior, three items of the future behavior scale constructed by Trail et al. (2003) were selected.

A chi-square analysis was utilized to identify whether there were significant differences for demographic variables between Asian international students and American students. There were significant differences for frequency of attending ($\chi^2 = 150.671, df = 4, p < .001$), frequency of watching ($\chi^2 = 19.695, df = 4, p < .001$), education ($\chi^2 = 175.763, df = 7, p < .001$), income ($\chi^2 = 62.205, df = 6, p < .001$), and marital status ($\chi^2 = 18.406, df = 2, p < .001$). No significant difference was identified for gender.

Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha$) values were greater than the .70 standard (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), ranging from a low of $\alpha = .82$ (customer service) to a high of $\alpha = .95$ (excitement or escape) for motivation factors. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) revealed the data adequately fitted the seventeen motivational factor model. The chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 2111.35, N = 432$) divided by the degrees of freedom ($df = 1088$) was $1.94, p < .05$, signifying a close fit (Kline, 1998). The RMSEA value of 0.051 was within the 0.05-0.08 range for an acceptable model fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hair et al., 1998). The NNFI (0.93) and CFI (0.95) measures were both above the 0.90 benchmark (Bentler, 1990). The SRMR (0.04) was below the recommended 0.10 ceiling indicating an adequate fit (Kline, 1998).
The means for each construct on Asian international students ranged from 2.88 for Interest in Players to 5.01 for Drama, while standard deviations ranged from 1.27 to 1.72. On the other hand, the means for each construct on American students ranged from 2.24 for Interest in Players to 5.85 for Excitement. Standard deviations ranged from 1.29 to 1.87. The bivariate correlations are examined. The inter-correlations among the motives were moderate. Moreover, ten of the relationships are high (r ≥ .52), while demonstrating a strong relationship between the motivation factors (Cohen and Cohen, 1983).

Simultaneous multiple regression analysis was used to examine the effects of motives on future behavior for two groups (Asian international students and American students). Concerning the case of Asian international students, 60% of the variance (ΔR2 = .60, p < .001) in future behavior was explained by aesthetics, vicarious achievement, wholesome environment, and escape. Examination of the beta (β) weights indicated that aesthetics (β = .17, p = .035), vicarious achievement (β = .19, p = .020), wholesome environment (β = .21, p = .007), and escape (β = .25, p < .001) were significant positive relationships with future behavior at the .05 level, controlling for the other variables. The squared semipartial (part) correlations (sr2) were examined. The results revealed that aesthetics accounted for 10% (sr2 = .10), vicarious achievement accounted for 10% (sr2 = .10), wholesome environment accounted for 12% (sr2 = .12), and escape accounted for 18% (sr2 = .18). In the case of American students, 64% of the variance (ΔR2 = .64, p < .001) in future behavior was explained by interest in football, school pride, excitement, entertainment value, and escape. Examination of the beta (β) weights indicated that interest in football (β = .17, p = .006), school pride (β = .19, p < .001), excitement (β = .26, p < .001), entertainment value (β = .18, p < .001), and escape (β = .12, p = .03) were significant positive relationships with future behavior at the .05 level, controlling for the other variables. The squared semipartial (part) correlations (sr2) were examined. The results revealed that interest in football accounted for 11% (sr2 = .11), school pride accounted for 14% (sr2 = .14), excitement accounted for 16% (sr2 = .16), entertainment value accounted for 13% (sr2 = .13), and escape accounted for 9% (sr2 = .09). Concerning the multicollinearity, the regression models were appropriate for the data, because the value of tolerance was larger than .20 and VIF values were smaller than the common threshold of 3.0, except one motive (i.e., interest in team (VIF = 3.62)) (Hair et al, 2006).

A GLM-Multivariate procedure was utilized to examine whether differences existed by group (American students and Asian international students). The dependent variables were the seventeen motivation subscales, the team identification subscale, and the future behavior subscale. The multivariate effects of group, Wilks’ Λ = .69, F (19, 412) = 9.92, p < .001, on the set of attitudinal and behavioral measures were significant. The results reflected a large association between groups and the set of attitudinal and behavioral measures (η2 = .31) (Cohen and Cohen, 1988). The univariate tests procedure for the motivation factors indicated that the two groups differed on fifteen subscales of seventeen motive subscales. American students scored significantly higher on the fifteen subscales than Asian international students. The univariate tests procedure for the team identification factor showed that American students (M = 4.67) scored significantly higher on the team identification than American students (M = 3.70). The univariate tests procedure for the future behavior factor revealed that American students (M = 5.43) scored significantly higher on the barrier than Asian international students (M = 4.53).

In accordance with the foregoing, at this presentation I will discuss (a) discussion and marketing implication in this study, (b) conclusions and limitations.