

Conceptualizing the Role of Hope in Sport Consumption Behavior

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Understanding consumers' behaviors in a spectator sport context is essential in the realm of sport management studies. Moreover, emotional values have always been key constructs for research in social science. Particularly, motives for sport consumption studies have respectively dealt with various emotional factors (e.g., James & Ross, 2004; Robinson & Trail, 2005). Interestingly, despite the numerous studies that have explored the constructs of spectator sport consumption, one of the most common emotional values has still not been studied in the realm of sports: the construct of hope.

Hope, as a common emotional value (Shimanoff, 1984), helps people to pursue their most suitable goals as an emotional set that implies agency and pathway components (Snyder, 2002). Further, MacInnis and Mello (2005) argued that one of the primary functions of hope is to serve as a motivating factor that facilitates a strong yearning in consumers. Therefore guiding the focus of this study is the role of hope in context to spectator motives. The focus on hope altering the motivation of spectators leads this proposed framework to analyze the construct of hope within the spectator context. The inclusion of the hope construct in this study is important because, as a common value, hope may help explain other key concepts of motivation relative to sport consumer consumption behavior.

Moreover, the lack of hope within motive can lead to anticipating that some common explanation of the phenomenon of spectator motive exists. For example, hope could better explain why fans with high level of team identification maintain high motivation for sport consumption while their team's performance and other motivational factors' level are low. Therefore, identifying the role of hope as a moderator of sport consumption motives may be a way to significantly enhance researchers' and managers' understanding of spectator consumption behavior.

Motivational theories in sports has expanded from Harris's (1973) explanation that motives are derived from psychological satisfaction by watching the sporting event. Sloan (1989) has categorized motivational theories based on social and psychological needs, and numerous studies have analyzed various factors (e.g., Funk, Mahony, & Ridinger, 2002; Milne & McDonald, 1999; Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2000; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995). However, the construct of hope has not been recognized in sport consumption studies. In particular, no research has examined hope among spectator motives. Snyder (2002) stated that, "Hope is defined as perceived capability to derive pathways to desired goals, and motivate oneself via agency thinking to use those pathways" (p. 249). In the psychology discipline, researchers have developed hope as a measurable construct, and examined that people with 'high-hope' carry a better mentality than those of 'low-hope' in the arenas of academics, athletics, physical health, psychological adjustment, and psychotherapy (Snyder, 2002). In the area of marketing, MachInnis and Mello (2005) have acknowledged the moderating role of hope in product evaluation, and consumer's choice. Yet, despite the interest that has been paid to the concept of hope in these disciplines, there has been little to no attention paid to the hope construct in research about sport spectator behavior.

To date, the authors know of no research have successfully examined and developed hope in context to sport consumer behavior (cf. Curry et al., 1997; Kaplan, Nadeau, & O'Reilly, 2011). Although there have been multiple research efforts conducted to improve or extend existing motive scales (e.g., Funk et al., 2003; James & Ross, 2002; Mahony et al., 2002), these studies have not provided evidence of the successful development of a hope construct. Identifying hope as a driving concept on pursuing goals can explain the different motivation of sport consumption. Hope can improve the explanation of motives that spectators' derive through pathways to desire achievement, and motivate oneself via agency thinking to experience their goal. For example, the motivation of fans that are highly committed to a team with poor performance can be explained with the additional variable of hope.

Relative to motivational literature and cognitive theories, Snyder (2002) studied hope as a construct and defined it as a "perceived capability to derive pathways to desired goals, and motivate oneself via agency thinking to use those

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pathways” (p. 249). Hope, as an emotional set that implies agency and pathway components, helps people to pursue their most suitable goals (Snyder, 2002). Snyder differentiated hope theory from theories of learned optimism, optimism, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. Evidence that hope relates to higher outcomes in academics, athletics, physical health, psychological adjustment, and psychotherapy was provided in the study. The author appends three individual differences scales of hope and presents its employments. Snyder suggested implications of hope into various fields while emphasizing how hope can elevate people’s lives.

Maclnnis and Mello (2005) used appraisal theory to define hope. By the appraisal dimension of hope, they posited that hope plays a moderating role in the relationship of product evaluation and choice. They referred to the motivational theory of emotions in advertising (Rossiter & Percy, 1987) to address the functions of hope, and criticized previous studies for their lack and failure to address the concept of hope. The authors argued that hope is relevant to consumer behavior, marketing, and public policy.

Further, Maclnnis and Mello (2005) distinguished the concept of hope from the constructs of expectation and involvement. For instance, hope differs from involvement and expectation because it generates less disappointment when a goal is not met. They also suggested consumers are motivated to preserve the feelings of hope when their hope is strong. In other words, higher hope brings directionality in process, and consumers reduce the uncertainty in the direction of possibility of the outcome. As a result, hope is differentiated with motivation by objective reasoning, which seeks for an accurate conclusion. In short, hope involves a motivation to arrive at a yearned-for conclusion. Thus, a higher level of hope motivates customers to process information in a way that suggests its possibility. Overall, Maclnnis and Mello (2005) concluded the concept of hope has rich potentials for future research in both theoretical and empirical ways, as well as by providing insight into consumer behavior, marketing practice, and public and social policy.

Carrying on this body of research, we apply the construct of hope to the field of sport management by synthesizing Maclnnis and Mello’s (2005) propositions with Trail and James’s (2011) model of spectator sport consumption. Accordingly, we suggest that hope will moderate the following relationships: (1) influence of internal motivations of the attitude toward the sport consumption; (2) consumers’ psychological connection on intentions for initial consumption; (3) effects of external activation (e.g., market demand factors; Byon, Zhang, & Connaughton, 2010) on the actual consumption; (4) the outcome valence by the (dis)confirmation of expectancies of the actual consumption; and (5) behavioral outcomes such as BIRGing/CORFing (Wann & Branscombe, 1990) and repatronage intentions. Detailed analysis of the conceptual framework and further discussion of future research will be addressed in the presentation.