Gender Differences in the Motivations and Constraints of Sport Twitter Participants

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With the advance of modern technology, Twitter has rapidly become a popular online communication tool in the sport industry (Clavio & Kian, 2010) and has played a crucial role in sharing news regarding both professional and collegiate sports (Sanderson, 2011). In addition, as sport organizations have come to recognize the significant impact of social media on attracting fans and consumers, Twitter is now being used as an effective marketing tool to build brands (Pegoraro & Jinnah, 2012).

While a great deal of research into the motivations for web-based online sport consumption has been conducted (e.g., Browning & Sanderson, 2012; Hur, Ko, & Valacich, 2007; Seo & Green, 2008; Suh, Lim, Kwak, & Pedersen, 2010), only limited research has been carried out on the motivating factors for Twitter usage, even though the importance of Twitter usage in sport marketing and communication has been increasingly emphasized by both academicians and practitioners (e.g., Browning & Sanderson, 2012). Furthermore, as women comprise a majority of Twitter users (59%) (Skelton, 2012), it has become more important to identify whether there are statistically meaningful differences between the major factors affecting male and female Twitter users. If differences exist, sport marketers will then be able to develop more effective gender-based marketing strategies aimed at Twitter participants. To date, studies in terms of gender differences in social media usage have been conducted, but they have been limited to motivation and usage patterns (e.g., Clavio & Kian, 2010; Clavio, Walsh, & Coyle, 2013; Haferkamp & Eimler, Papadakis, & Kruck, 2012; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008). Because studies of consumer behavior have also identified constraints, more studies on constraint factors for Twitter users behaviors are needed.

The purpose of this study is to identify gender differences among sport fans who utilize Twitter, and subsequently build a valid and reliable tool for measuring important motivation and constraint elements based upon any observed differences. Thus, the research questions of this study are as follows:

RQ1) Do different gender groups cause differences in the reason for participating or not participating in the use of Twitter?

RQ2) Are there significant differences in motivational factors for sport-focused Twitter consumption when comparing subjects by gender?

RQ3) Are there significant differences in constraint factors for sport-focused Twitter consumption when comparing subjects by gender?

In order to identify which factors strongly motivate respondents to use sport-related Twitter and which keep them from using it, data will be collected using an online survey of male and female college sports fans enrolled at a large public university in the Midwestern United States. First, students will be asked to provide demographic information, including gender, and then respond to questions about motivation and constraints. The survey form is divided into two parts to assess four types of motivation and constraints, respectively. Based on existing studies, the motivation and constraints scale will examine four areas of motivation (i.e., information, entertainment, pass time, and fanship) and four areas of constraints (i.e., accessibility, economic, skill, and social constraints) using a five-point Likert-type scale made up of three items each. The data analysis will be conducted using SPSS 20.0 and AMOS 20.0. In addition, the model fit for the constructs will be tested by CFA while a SEM will be employed to investigate the relationship between the participants’ motivation and consumption behavior factors and their sport Twitter consumption. In order to examine the goodness-of-fit of the model, several fit statistics will be reported, including a Chi-square test with related degrees of freedom (df), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Normed Fit Index (NFI), the Incremental Fit Index (IFI), and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI).
By the end of 2013, all data will be collected and analyzed. The results of this study and a discussion of its implications for sport marketing and communication scholars and practitioners will be presented. This study’s findings will play an important role in the continued development of theory surrounding Twitter usage in sport, by engaging in statistical analysis aimed at better understanding the motivations and constraints present in Twitter usage through an important demographic lens. From an industry perspective, the results of this study should provide meaningful insight into the presence or absence of gender-related differences in sport Twitter consumption, as well as how to develop more specific sport marketing activities through Twitter.

References


