Are Sport Consumers Happy after a Win, a Tie, or a Loss?

Jeyoon (Jamie) Kim, Syracuse University
Jeffrey James (Advisor), Florida State University

Marketing - Other (Other)  Saturday, June 3, 2017
Posters  9:40 AM
Abstract 2017-280  Room: Sopris

Sport consumption (i.e., sport participation, sport spectating, and sport media viewing) entails hedonic experiences, which affect one’s subjective well-being (i.e., ‘happiness’; one’s psychological state self-assessed based on hedonic values experienced in life; Diener, Lucas, & Oishi, 2002). Hedonic experiences such as enjoyment, pleasure, and excitement are motives of sport consumption, and satisfaction from such experiences improves one’s well-being state (Kim, Kim, & Kim, in press) and strengthens behavioral intentions (Trail & James, 2013). Satisfaction from hedonic experiences is expected when sport consumers are engaged in a winning game (Sloan, 1989). What happens then, after tied or losing games? Do sport consumers go through hedonic experiences and well-being improvements in these contexts, or experience anhedonia resulting in negative effects on well-being? We delved into these questions by examining the influence of game outcome on sport consumers’ subjective well-being state.

To better understand the relations among sport consumption, game outcome, and subjective well-being, we identified ‘need fulfillment’ as the psychological process linking sport consumption to well-being effects. According to need theorists, a need is a ‘deficit state of an organism’ fulfillment of which is “essential for ongoing psychological growth, integrity, and well-being” (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 229). Grounded on conservation of resources, entertainment theory, social identity theory, and self-determination theory (e.g., Newman, Tay, & Diener, 2014; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Sloan, 1989; Wann, 2006), four key psychological needs were identified: detachment-recovery (i.e., distancing oneself and recovering from work-related stress), autonomy (i.e., having control on one’s own behavior), achievement (i.e., feeling senses of pride, success, accomplishment), and belonging (i.e., feeling connected with others). The four psychological needs can be fulfilled through sport consumption, contributing to improved well-being. It is reasonable to expect that game outcome may influence fulfillment of the four psychological needs, particularly achievement need fulfillment (Wann, 2006). Examining and comparing what types of needs are fulfilled (or unfulfilled) in winning, tied, or losing games may provide valuable insight in learning the effects of sport consumption on well-being.

A study was conducted to (1) examine the influence of game outcome on sport participant, sport spectator, and sport media viewer’s subjective well-being state, and (2) compare how the fulfillment of four psychological needs vary after engaging in a winning, tied, or losing games. Further, (3) the link between need fulfillment and subjective well-being was assessed to verify need fulfillment as a key construct explaining sport consumer well-being.

Method
A study based on ecological momentary assessment and multi-level SEM was designed, to capture activity-induced well-being in real-time and real-life situations, and to control for individual differences on well-being (Diener et al., 2002). From a Southeastern University, 312 respondents were recruited through stratified convenience sampling. Over 9 weeks and 2-3 times per week, each respondent was signaled to report (1) the type of activity engaged in at the time of signal, (2) subjective well-being state (i.e., positive affect, negative affect and life satisfaction; based on the PANAS and SWLS scales; Diener et al., 1985; Watson et al., 1988), (3) need fulfillment experienced relative to the activity (developed based on Kwon et al., 2008; Ng et al., 2008; Sheldon & Bettencourt, 2011; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007), and (4) game outcome (if engaged in sport consumption). As a result, 242 respondents made 2,746 usable responses; 362, 362, 499, and 1,523 responses were each made in relation to sport participation, sport spectating, sport media viewing, and non-sport activities (e.g., working, studying). There were not enough responses made in three contexts: spectating a tied game, spectating a losing game, and media viewing a tied game. Accordingly, the three contexts were excluded from the data analysis. Three multi-level SEM models were tested to understand the relations among sport consumption type, subjective well-being, need fulfillment, and game outcome at level-1; trait-induced well-being and average amount of sport consumption were controlled at level-2.
Result

In model 1, subjective well-being state after participating, spectating, or media viewing a winning, tied, or losing game was assessed. Model fit was $S-B \chi^2/df = 1938.742/414 = 4.68$, RMSEA = .04, CFI = .93, TLI = .91, SRMR within = .04, SRMR between = .08. After participating in a winning game, subjective well-being improved as positive affect increased ($\gamma = .29$, S.E. = .02), negative affect decreased ($\gamma = -.05$, S.E. = .02), and life satisfaction improved ($\gamma = .07$, S.E. = .03). After participating in tied or losing games, partial effects were found as only positive affect increased ($\gamma = .15$, S.E. = .02; $\gamma = .11$, S.E. = .02). After spectating a win, positive affect increased ($\gamma = .35$, S.E. = .02), negative affect decreased ($\gamma = -.07$, S.E. = .03), and life satisfaction improved ($\gamma = .09$, S.E. = .02). Media viewing a win increased positive affect ($\gamma = .23$, S.E. = .02, $p < .01$), decreased negative affect ($\gamma = -.05$, S.E. = .02, $p = .01$), and improved life satisfaction ($\gamma = .07$, S.E. = .02). Media viewing a loss increased negative affect ($\gamma = .25$, S.E. = .03), indicating negative well-being effects.

In model 2, sport participants, spectators, and media viewers’ needs fulfillment were assessed in relation to game outcome. Model fit was $S-B \chi^2/df = 570.702/155 = 3.68$, RMSEA = .03, CFI = .98, TLI = .97, SRMR within = .02, SRMR between = .08. Detachment-recovery, autonomy, and belonging needs were fulfilled in the three activities regardless of game outcome ($p \leq .01$). Achievement need was fulfilled after a win in the three activities, and after a tie in sport participation ($p < .01$). With a loss, sport participation had no effect on achievement need fulfillment ($\gamma = .01$, S.E. = .03) and media viewing had negative effects ($\gamma = -.25$, S.E. = .03).

In model 3, the links between needs fulfillment and subjective well-being were tested. Model fit was $S-B \chi^2/df = 2876.452/774 = 3.71$, RMSEA = .03, CFI = .95, TLI = .94, SRMR within = .04, SRMR between = .17. Autonomy and achievement needs fulfillment led to increased positive affect, decreased negative affect, and improved life satisfaction. Detachment-recovery and belonging needs fulfillment only led to increases in positive affect.

Discussion

Overall, sport participation had full or partial positive effects on subjective well-being state regardless of game outcome. The consistently positive effects of sport participation can be understood in that detachment-recovery, autonomy, and belonging needs fulfillment were not affected by game outcome. Even with a loss, sport participants had plenty of sources (e.g., physical health, volition, social interaction) other than achievement (i.e., a win) to derive positive well-being effects from (Hills & Argyle, 1998). While it is difficult to judge the well-being effects of sport spectating, mixed effects were found in sport media viewing. Such mixed effects can be explained by achievement need fulfillment, which was significantly affected by game outcome and had a strong influence on subjective well-being. Perhaps, negative affects such as anxiety and stress experienced during the activity (Biddle, 2003; Sloan 1989) may have been perceived as distress, negligible, or eustress based on game outcome, resulting in negative, insignificant, or positive well-being effects (Wann et al., 2001). Based on the findings, marketing implications are suggested, to identify and target the key psychological needs that are effective for well-being improvement in certain contexts (based on activity, game outcome). In case of a loss in sport media viewing, developing a communication strategy to shift sport consumers’ attention from achievement and/or game outcome to other positive facets of the game (e.g., belonging, escape) can be effective for mitigating negative well-being effects.