The Influence of Temporal Distance on the Spectator Motivation

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A central question in sport management is why people attend sport events. Answering this question is crucial for creating values for sport consumers and ensuring academic relevance of sport management research. Thus, ample research has investigated the degrees to which a variety of factors (e.g., motives, identification levels, relationship quality) influence sport consumer spectating behaviors (e.g., Funk & James, 2006; Kim, Trail, & Ko, 2011; Wakefield & Sloan, 1995). A substantial body of knowledge about sport consumption has been accumulated, which benefits from myriad books, theoretical treatises, conceptual frameworks, and empirical studies. Yet, despite the important contributions of previous research on sport consumption behaviors, insufficient academic attention has been given to the influence of timing. An implicit assumption of the previous research on motives (or constraints) is that the nature and strength of the motives is constant across time from the past to the present. However, it is reasonable to challenge this assumption and question if the timing or the temporal distance alter the nature and strength of the relationship between motives and sport consumption behaviors.

In addition, construal level theory suggests that construal levels of people for the same events are different depending on their psychological distance. According to construal level theory, the more distant future events would be construed in higher-level, with more abstract terms while the closer events would be construed in lower-level with more concrete term. In this context, temporal distance from future sporting events systemically changes individual responses to those events. One way to examine the impact of temporal distance on sport consumption decision making process motives can be categorized in two parts, based on construal level theory: feasibility factors and desirability factors. Feasibility factors include characteristics related to abstraction and purpose, while desirability factors include characteristics related to concrete and means. Thus, this research has three main objectives: (1) to examine the moderating effect of temporal distance from the sporting event on the relationship between desirability factors and sport consumption intention; (2) to examine the moderating effect of temporal distance from the sporting event on the relationship between feasibility factors and sport consumption intention; (3) to compare the desirability and feasibility factors across time.

Economic factors, escape from everyday life, entertainment, aesthetics, group affiliation and family needs emerge from the literature review as primary motives. In this study, we categorize those various factors into desirability factor and feasibility factor by their characteristics. Desirability factors are abstract and they put emphasis on results, not process and means. We selected achievement, joy, escape, and aesthetic as desirability factors. Feasibility factors are concrete and they focus on procedure and means, not result and purpose. We selected cost, time, companion and accessibility as feasibility factor in this study. Also, we define 4~5 weeks before the event as far-future while 1~2 days before the event as near-future. We developed survey questionnaire targeting people over 18 years old who watch baseball game regularly. We conducted the survey to total of 350 fans (far-future group : 175, near-future group : 175). The questionnaire is made up of 5 questions for each spectator decision factors, total 40 questions and a question about spectator intention.

To assess the psychometric properties of the scales, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The measurement model fit the data well ($S-B\chi^2/df = 369.75/224 = 1.65$, $CFI = .96$, $SRMR = .05$, $RMSEA = .05$). All reliability coefficients, factor loadings, and average variance extracted (AVE) were sufficient, demonstrating good convergent validity and reliability (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, and Tatham, 2006). Additionally, correlations for all pairs of latent factors were significantly different from 1.0, rendering support for discriminant validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The hypothesized model was tested using multiple group analysis. The overall fit measures of the model indicate good fit of the model to the data ($S-B\chi^2/df = 218.69/120 = 1.65$, $CFI = .97$, $SRMR = .05$, $RMSEA$...
According to the result of multiple group confirmatory factor analysis, there is no significant difference between two groups, which verifies measurement equivalence between groups. Regarding result of desirability factor, achievement factor has significant difference between two groups. The influence of achievement factor is greater on the far-future group than near-future group (far-future group, $\beta=.48$, near-future group, $p<.05$). Joy factor was statistically insignificant in both group, and had no significant difference between two group (far-future group, $p<.05$, near-future group, $p<.05$). Regarding escape factor, even there is no significant difference between two group, the influence of escape factor is great in both group (far-future group, $\beta=.59$, near-future group, $\beta=.71$). Aesthetic factor has significant difference between two groups, and it shows greater influence on near-future group than far-future group (far-future group, $p<.05$, near-future group, $\beta=-.69$). With regard of feasibility factor, cost factor has significant difference between two groups, and it has greater impact on near-future group than far-future group (far-future group, $\beta=-.33$, near-future group, $\beta=-.63$). Accessibility factor has no significant difference between two groups, and statistically insignificant in far-future group (far-future group, $p<.05$, near-future group, $\beta=-.63$). Time factor has significant difference between two groups and the influence of time factor is shown greater on near-future group than far-future group (far-future group, $p<.05$, near-future group, $\beta=-.49$). Companion factor has no significant difference between two groups, and it was statistically insignificant on both groups (far-future distance group, $p<.05$, near-future group, $p<.05$). As expected from hypothesis, achievement factor showed less influence in near future, while cost and time factors showed greater influence in near future. On the other hand, aesthetic factor showed greater influence in near future, which does not correspond with characteristics of desirability factor. In addition, result showed that influence of joy, accessibility, and companion factors were insignificant in certain time period, which has not been found in previous research.

One main contribution of this study lies in providing a knowledge about the influence of temporal distance on motives. We examined the impact of each spectator motives, based on the temporal distance. In this process, we can figure out whether certain factor is influenced by temporal distance, or not. Through this findings, we can provide differentiated marketing strategies according to temporal distance. As a result, our research can contribute to maximize the value for the sport consumer and promote academic accomplishment in sport management.