Personal Values and Sport Consumer Motives: An Exploratory Study

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Gate revenues, as one of the largest income generators for sport organizations, are projected to exceed $20 billion annually in North America by 2020 (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2016). Given their importance, scholars have devoted attention to the study of attendance motives and their role in drawing fans to sport events (e.g., Kim & Trail, 2010). Only a few sport management researchers, however, have investigated the role of values in the consumption decision (Gau, & James 2014); with values discussed conceptually (e.g. Wann, Melnick, Russell, & Pease, 2001), focused on participation (e.g. Kurpis, Bozman, & Kahle, 2010), or for market segmentation purposes (e.g. Kahle, Duncan, Dalakas, & Aiken, 2001). Through the present research we seek to assess the role of an individual’s values in their decision to attend sport events.

Values

Values are defined as “desirable transsituational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or other social entity” (Schwartz, 1994, p.21). Rokeach (1973) explains that “values are guides and determinants of social attitudes and ideologies on the one hand and of social behavior on the other” (p.24). At the individual level, values have been recognized as a fundamental determinant in attitudes (e.g. Homer & Kahle, 1988), and drive behavior (e.g. Williams, 1979). The (Refined) Schwartz Theory of Basic Values provides a framework for examining an individual’s values, their associated priorities, and the related motivational goal expressed by each value (Schwartz, 2012; Schwartz et al., 2012). Values serve as criteria to simulate and guide motivation toward a behavioral response, and the structure of the refined theory “arises from the social and psychological conflict or congruity between values that people experience when they make everyday decisions” (Schwartz, 2012, p.664).

The Refined Values Theory (Schwartz et al., 2012) contains 19 distinct human values that serve as “critical motivators of behaviors and attitudes” (Schwartz, 2012, p.17). This notion is reinforced in multiple fields, with scholars linking values to a consumers’ motives and behaviors, including car purchases, leisure activities, and vacation decisions (c.f. Madrigal & Kahle, 1994). In addition, scholars have shown that “values impact the types of decisions that individuals make, and evidence that they impact behavior” (Parks & Guay, 2009, p.680); and that differences in an individual’s value priorities can help us to understand differences in behavior (deMooij, 2003).

Motives

Motives While values have been considered similar to the concepts of motives, needs, desires and goals, scholars have provided a clear distinction between each (e.g. Chan, 2013). Solomon (2004) defines a motive as “an internal state that activates goal-oriented behavior” (p.599). Kluckhohn (1951) distinguishes between these two concepts, stating: “a given value may have a strength that is relatively independent of any particular motive” (p.425). We assert that motives pertain to the reduction or elimination of a state of deficiency; in contrast, values guide individuals in understanding the needs they experience, irrespective of any form of deficiency (Kilmann, 1981).

Consumer motives “reflect the energizing force that activates behavior and provides purpose and direction for that behavior” (Hawkins, Best, & Coney, 2004, p.354). Born from the work of Sloan (1989), the study of what factors attract individuals to attend sport events has addressed the individual motives themselves (e.g. Milne, & McDonald, 1999; Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2000). While there is substantial theoretical support for each individual motive, Gau (2007) notes the literature “is unable to support a comprehensive and exhaustive exploration of fan motivations” (p.63). The 13 motive subscales identified by Milne and McDonald (1999) provide an example of this, with the motives generated based on Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs. While the motive subscales may identify a motive to attend a sport event—this may only describe that the individual seeks to reduce or eliminate a deficiency in their lives.
Purpose and Proposition
Given the extant literature supporting the notion of a distinct difference between the concepts of values and motives, through this study we explore the relationship between values and motives with respect to sport consumer behavior. Specifically, we address whether the pattern of values identified by Schwartz et al. (2012) can be replicated with the sample of sport consumers; and if so, how do the individuals’ value orientation relate to sport consumer motives? As an exploratory study, we do not propose directional hypotheses in this relationship, however we do anticipate group differences to exist between each sport consumer motive among the four value segments. Additionally, we investigate whether, and to what level, congruence exists between the 19 individual values proposed by Schwartz et al. (2012) and the 12 sport consumer motive subscales operationalized for this study.

Measures
Individual values, such as tradition, stimulation, or conformity-interpersonal, will be measured using the PVQ-RR (Schwartz et al., 2012), consisting of 57 items to measure the 19 individual values (3 items for each value). Each item will be measured on a six-point scale ranging from 1 (not like me at all) to 6 (very much like me), based on the recommendations of Schwartz et al. (2012), and the replications by Cieciuch, Davidov, Vecchione, Beierlein, and Schwartz (2014) and Schwartz and Butenko (2014).

Sport consumer motives will be examined using a modified MSSC based on the work of James and Ross (2004). We will examine both sport- and team-related attendance motives using 12 subscales (3 items for each motive). The wording of each item will be modified to address and ensure that (a) each item refers to either a sport or a specific team (with two separate team and sport scales being used); and (b) each item articulates an attendance behavior. Items will be measure on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Participants will also be asked to provide basic demographic information, and report their fan/spectator status using a single-item measure (Trail & James, 2001).

Analysis
Analysis will be conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics (version 25), with correction for scale use bias (Olsen, Atkin, & Thach, 2016). Cluster analysis will be conducted to assess whether sport consumers replicate the four-segment value structure identified by Schwartz et al. (2012). Analysis of variance (ANOVA) will be used to identify individual value membership in each of the value segments, and to determine if the value segments differ on the 12 motive subscales, with Duncan’s post-hoc test employed in both analyses to determine which groups differ. Congruence between sport consumer motives and individual values will be analyzed through a correlation analysis using the centered value scores for the 19 values and the 12 motive subscales.

Implications
We anticipate the findings will have implications for academics and practitioners. As Stewart, Smith, and Nicholson (2003) state: “more work also needs to be undertaken on methodologies that can assist practitioners in designing [marketing] strategies” (p.214), which we address by examining the underlying factors that hold the potential to motivate an individual and direct them toward specific behaviors. For academics, this study will address sport consumer behavior from a different conceptual framework which has been used in numerous fields to develop an understanding of an individual’s consumption behavior more thoroughly. For marketers, sponsors, and other practitioners in the field, this study may provide a framework for obtaining a deeper knowledge of their consumer base, providing information that could be used to segment markets based on the consumers’ value type, and guiding them toward a behavioral response through directed marketing campaigns.