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Despite the success of intercollegiate basketball, there is a big discrepancy in revenue between power five conferences and other conferences. In 2015, the power five conferences recorded approximately $6 billion in revenue, whereas $2 billion for all other schools combined (NCAA, 2015). Thus, sport marketer’s interest in searching for strategies to influence spectator behavior increased more so for mid-size and smaller institutions.

The purpose of current research is to compare three universities from different sized conferences to see how they react to the proposed model. The model posits that Psychic Income (i.e., collective self-esteem, excitement, social bonding, emotional involvement, and pride towards university) mediates the relationship between Point of Attachment (i.e., player, team, coach, sport (basketball), and university) and Behavior Intention (i.e., word-of-mouth and attendance behavior). In the past, fan motives and points of attachment had a strong impact on fan behavior. It has been examined that spectators’ attachment to player, coach, community, university, level of sport, or sport itself led to various fan behavior based on the level of conferences (Spinda, Wann, & Hardin, 2016). In addition, there is a growing attention has been focused on the Psychic Income of spectators (Kim & Walker, 2012). Psychic Income is defined as “emotional and psychological benefit residents perceive they receive and, even though they do not physically attend sports events and are not involved in organizing them” (Crompton 2004, p181).

633 data were collected from three different universities in the U.S. including one from power five conference (A) and two from mid-major conferences (B and C). A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to evaluate psychometric properties of the scales. The result of measurement model indicated that the S-B/df ratio (S-B x2/df = 3.447, p<.05) reached an acceptable level with an acceptable fit with the data (CFI = .943; SRMR = .058; RMSEA = .062). All reliability coefficients were greater than .70. All factor loadings were significant in the predicted direction. Discriminant validity of the constructs was achieved using AVE (AVE >.50).

Lastly, to compare the model among three different universities, we performed a measurement invariance test and reached partial invariance (A/B (x2diff (40)=52.5, p=.089); A/C (x2diff (40)=50.2, p=.129; B/C (xdiff2 (40)=83.5, p=.001))(Byrne et al., 1989). We tested the moderating effect of university on the proposed model using structural equation modeling using 2,000 bootstrapped samples. The fit indices suggested good fit to the data (S-B x2/df =2.538, p<.05, CFI = .885; SRMR = .082; RMSEA = .061). University B and C (mid-major conference schools) showed a full mediation of PI on the relationship on POA and BI (B: indirect effect=.54, 95%CI= .20 - 1.45; direct effect=.16, 95%CI=ns) (C: indirect effect=.98, 95%CI= .46 - .98; direct effect=.19, 95%CI=ns). Whereas, university A (power five conference school) did not show an indirect effect of PI on the relationship between POA and BI (A: indirect effect=.00, 95% CI=ns; direct effect=.74, 95% CI=.23-1.78).

Discussions and implications will be presented at the conference.