

# **(SP) THE INITIAL FINDINGS OF A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW INTO THE MOTIVATIONS AND BEHAVIOURS OF TRAVELLING SPORTS SPECTATORS**

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## **Introduction**

Since 1998 there has been call for the development of informed multidisciplinary research in the sports tourism area (Gibson 1998). More recently this call has been expanded as it is felt that this area is developing in an ad hoc manner and not being developed upon (Gibson 2002, Weed and Bull 2004). Weed (2006) has shown that the sports spectator literature does not fall into a distinct subject area and is dispersed across a range of disciplines. The information is reported at a micro and macro level. Micro issues are concerned with the individual spectator or specific groups of spectators and the macro issues tend to address societal implications of spectatorism, such as commodification and globalisation (Crawford 2004). As the importance of understanding the sports spectator has been emphasised by several authors such as Wann, Melnick, Russell and Pease (2001), Weed and Bull (2004) and Crawford (2004). The purpose of this paper is, therefore, to assess the field of knowledge pertaining to sports spectators.

## **Method**

This paper uses the systematic review approach to evaluate the existing literature pertaining to the motivations and behaviour of sports supporters. Systematic reviews only report on the information and themes that are contained within the articles and documents that are returned by the predetermined strict search and exclusion criteria. The systematic review process is said to reduce bias through the selection of literature and the literature review process (Tranfield, Denyer and Smart, 2003).

An initial search of 15 databases, (5 social sciences, 4 multidisciplinary, 1 general science, 1 geographic and 4 management based databases), returned 625 unique potential articles for inclusion. The full paper will show how these articles were subjected to a further set of exclusion criteria and then report the main themes that emerge from the literature as to the motivations and behaviour of sports spectators.

## **Results**

Initial returns from the review are:

- 624 potential publications for inclusion.
- 465 publications came from the social science databases, 119 from the multidisciplinary databases and 40 from the management databases, there were no returns from the geographic or the general science database after the removal of duplicates.
- One key 1<sup>st</sup> author was identified with 44 publications, with the majority of the other authors only producing a single publication.
- Publication dates of the 626 returns range from 1963 to 2006.
- Publication sources consist of books, conference proceedings, thesis's and 125 different journals.

- The main keyword themes are currently, attendance, professional sports, spectator motivations and behaviour.

## Discussion

The initial findings of the review show that the information relating to the motivations and behaviour of sports spectators have been published in a range of disciplines and in a range of journals. This spread in the literature is across International, European and North American publications with sociology, psychology, sport management, sports marketing, social behaviour, sports tourism and sports economics being the dominant areas for publication. Across each of the subject disciplines the predominant focus is to report on sports spectators of British and American male professional sports. Sociologically this is based around deviant behaviour and the macro issues such as consumerism, commercialisation and commodification of sport. While the psychological literature used identification and motivational models and scales that focus on the micro issues of the individual sports spectator. Economic impact studies are also a major area of work which is usually quantitative in nature providing information such as spending patterns, visitor numbers and estimating the amount of money that has been brought into an area due to an event. The full paper will expand on these themes further and discuss the gaps in the literature and thus, the key areas for future research. It is intended that these findings will be used to inform future research aims and objectives.

## References

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