

Segmenting sport TV viewers based on consumption experience: Enhancing the Sport Event Experience Search (SEES) scale

Contact details

Name author(s): Patrick Bouchet (1), Guillaume Bodet (2) & Iouri Bernache-Assollant (3)
Institution(s) or organisation(s): University of Burgundy (1); University of Loughborough (2); University of Franche-Comté (3)
City and country: Dijon, France (1); Loughborough, UK (2); Besançon, France (2)
Email address for correspondence: g.s.p.bodet@lboro.ac.uk

Aim of paper and research questions

Testing and validating an enhanced version of the Sport Event Experience Search scale in an indirect sport spectatorship context.

Literature review

The characteristics and practices of sport event consumption seem to show that, like direct spectators and fans, sport TV viewers look for individual and/or interpersonal (adjacent or shared), reactive (spectator) and/or active (fans) experiences, with strong affective and hedonic dimensions and not only for utilitarian value based on extrinsic motivations. This research aims to underline the role played by the aspects of experience search and the primary processes of pleasure, entertainment, imaginary and sensorial stimulation (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Consumption experience is based on the encounter between a sport display and the consumption practices in a specific context (on or off site). Indeed, sport events can be consumed by different people in different ways organised around four dimensions or metaphors which are interactive play, integration, classification and lived experience according to Holt (1995). Although much work has been conducted in relation to sport direct attendance, very little has been done on indirect attendance, through TV broadcasting. However, according to some frameworks such as Bale (1998) and Weed (2006), it seems that indirect collective attendance presents strong communalities with direct spectatorship. For instance, Weed (2006) spoke about a “collective enjoyment” of “shared communal experience”, which “is closer to that of actually attending the match in person than it is to watching at home”. As such, it appears relevant to investigate the experience of sport TV viewing and to determine if it can be analysed such as the direct sport spectatorship experience.

Research design and proposed data analysis

Following the work done by Bouchet, Bodet and Bernache-Assollant (2008) regarding both direct and indirect sport spectatorships, it appeared necessary to enhance the sport event scale they developed in order to better fit the indirect spectatorship context and then increase our understanding of the indirect sport spectatorship consumption experience. The construction of the Sport Event Experience Search (SEES) scale fitting with TV viewers is the last step of a long research process initiated by several frameworks. Based on several qualitative studies (interviews and observations) using different scientific approaches, Bouchet and Bourgeon (2001), Bourgeon, Bouchet and Pulh (2003), and Bouchet and Pulh (2006) analysed the sport spectatorship experience and identified four sport spectator profiles: aesthetic, supporter, opportunist and interactive. Based on these previous frameworks and their personal and distinct

expertise in relation to sport event object (i.e., sociology, marketing-management and social psychology), Bouchet, Bodet and Bernache-Assollant (2008) developed a psychometric scale to quantify the degree of each experience search profile presented by one individual or a group of sport spectators. Although the goal of these authors was to validate a tool for both direct and indirect spectatorship, they were only able to validate their instrument in the direct context. Based on this limitation, we enhanced the SEES scale in order to better match the indirect spectatorship context by theoretically refining the spectator profiles (i.e., aesthetic-respectful, supporter, opportunist-interested, and recreational-interactive) and by generating new items corresponding to these definitions. 27 items were generated (3 items per seven dimensions) and they allowed the measurement of the sport event experience search in different contexts (within the stadium, around a giant public screen, within a pub, at home). Because of the limitation of the previous version of the scale and because of the lack of knowledge regarding sport TV spectatorship, the authors of this study decided to test the SEES scale among TV spectators of French rugby union and football teams. The questionnaire was composed of the SEES scale and several measures of behavioural and socio-demographic characteristics. An electronic administration using a snow-ball process was conducted with sport management students as a starting point. The final sample is composed of 284 indirect football and rugby viewers which allowed for Exploratory Factorial Analysis and Confirmatory Factorial Analysis based on Structural Equation Modelling.

Discussion of progress

Globally, the SEES scale should allow sport managers to identify and segment sport spectators according to the dominant profile of experience search in regards with specific social and physical contexts. More specifically, the SEES scale represents an accurate managerial trigger to adjust sport event offers with customer expectations. Indeed, these offers have to be perceived as multidimensional gathering numerous service components such as the core product, the physical environment in consumption, the social context, and the temporal context which defines for instance the length of the event.

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