

Construction and Validation of the Sport Spectacle Experience Search (SSES) Scale

Patrick Bouchet, SPMS, University of Burgundy, France, patrick.bouchet@u-bourgogne.fr

Guillaume Bodet, SSES, Loughborough University, UK

Iouri Bernache-Assollant, Université de Franche-Comté, France

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Abstract

Research Question

Who are sport spectators and what do they look for in sport spectacle ?

Theoretical Background

Sport spectacle can be consumed by different people in different ways organised around four dimensions which are interactive play, integration, classification and lived experience according to Holt (1995).

The characteristics and practices of sport spectacle consumption seem to show that sport spectators look for individual and/or interpersonal (adjacent or shared), reactive (spectator) and/or active (fans) experiences, with strong affective and hedonic dimensions. Therefore, the consumer behaviour in the sport spectacle field does not only rely on extrinsic motivations based on utilitarian criteria, this research aims to emphasize the role played by the experience search aspects and the primary processes of pleasure, entertainment, imaginary and sensorial stimulation (Holbrook et Hirschman, 1982). This research aims to better understand the consumer decision-making process in line with sport spectacle and particularly the role played by emotional and symbolic dimensions. Consumption experience is based on the encounter between a sport display and the consumption practices in a specific context (on or out of site), then, there is a stake for managers who want to create a specific experience to identify and to offer adjusted actions or services in accordance with the consumption modes of sport spectators.

Methodology

The construction of the Sport Spectacle Experience Search Scale is the last step of a long research process initiated by several works and authors.

A first qualitative work based on two collective interviews and conducted by Bouchet and Bourgeon (2001) in 2000 aimed at understanding the reasons for sport attendance and non attendance. In 2001, Bourgeon, Bouchet and Pulh (2003) conducted a second work based on the observation of rugby union spectators (more than 500) in the city of Dijon in order to put in correspondence the profiles and the characteristics of sport

spectators with the motives of frequentation and the values associated with sport spectacle.

After that, Bouchet and Pulh (2006) observed and interviewed 12 rugby union spectators classified according to the four different profiles identified by Bourgeon et al. (2003) during 5 games. Based on these studies, four profiles of sport spectators corresponding to four experience search patterns were identified: aesthetic-respectful, supporter, opportunist-interested, and recreational-interactive.

Based on this previous work and their personal and distinct expertise in relation to sport spectacle object (i.e., sociology, marketing-management and social psychology) the authors created a psychometric scale in order to quantify the degree of each experience search pattern presented by one individual or a group of spectators. 24 items were generated (6 items per dimension) and they allowed the measurement of the sport spectacle experience search in different contexts: within a stadium, within a fan village, around a giant public screen, within a bar, at home).

Results

The psychometric validation with Exploratory and Confirmatory Factorial Analysis is planned. The administration and the collection of questionnaires with the SSES scale have started and the authors will be able to present the psychometric validation soon.

Conclusion

After its validation, the SSES scale should allow sport managers to identify and segment sport spectators according to the dominant pattern of experience search in regards with specific social and physical contexts. Specifically, thanks to the strong grounded process of construction, the SSES scale offers an enrichment for the managerial strategies by integrating the different elements of the offer of sport spectacle. Indeed, this offer has to be perceived as multidimensional, i.e gathering the core product (which type of spectacle?), the physical aspect of the consumption (which role for the place of spectacle or the place of viewing?), the social context (how integrating the different social logics of the different social actors expressed during a sport event?), and the temporal context (extending or not the length of the event, the pre and post-event manifestations

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