

The demand for watching sport – What matters?

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Aim of paper and research questions

This aim of this paper is to learn more about the characteristics of fans of various sports. What distinguishes those who are interested in the sports from those who are not?

Literature review

The literature on the demand for sport has distinguished between the direct- and derived demand. Types of *direct demand* are demand for live attendance at sporting contests or on pay-per-view basis, for ex. on TV or Internet. *Derived demands* can for example includes TV, radio and Internet broadcasters seeking inputs to the production of a programming content, to sell to advertisers and/or to sell on a subscription of pay-per-view basis to individuals and organizations, as well as organizations seeking input to marketing campaigns, to establish or enhance the brand name and reputation of their products through advertising and/or sponsorship. See Borland & Macdonald (2003), Buraimo (2006), Gratton & Solberg (2007), Hammervold & Solberg (2006), Hoehn & Lancefield (2003), Kèsenne (2007), Simmons (2006), Wann, Melnick, Russel & Pease (2001) for an overview of research.

Research design and data analysis

The data came from a telephone survey of 925 Norwegians. The respondents graded their interest for 14 different sports (1 = very little interested, 10 = very interested) by means of a scale from 1 to 10. The data were collected by Norfakta Markedsanalyse AS (a Norwegian research marketing company). The target group was people that were interested in sport above a certain level, i. e. graded their interest at 3 or more. A total of 20.889 calls were conducted, and we got in touch with 7.744 persons. Of these, 1.057 satisfied the target group definition and were willing to be interviewed. In total, 925 persons completed the interviews. This constitutes a response rate of 16%, which is normal for the general population. On basis of this, the sample is regarded representative for the Norwegian population 15 years or older, who are interested in sport according to the above definition. In the logistic regression analysis, the dependent variables distinguish between those who were less interested than average in the sport in question and those who were more interested than average.

Results

Table 1 presents the results from the regression- and logistic regression analysis. The dependent variables build upon the categorisation of sport interest (factor analysis). The sample was grouped according to reported interest in 14 sports. The following dimensions were reported in our factor analysis:

- *Individual winter sports* (biathlon, cross-country skiing, speed skating, ski-jumping, alpine skiing);
- *Action sports* (boxing, motorsport);

- *Team sports* (football, ice hockey, handball);
- *Sports popular among youths* (snowboard, basketball);
- *Individual summer sports* (athletics, cycling).

The (average) interest for these five categories were used as *dependent variables*, while the *independent variables* come from the factor analysis that was based on the motives for watching sport, supplemented with demographic variables.

Variables ⁸ :	Traditional individual winter sports ³		Action sports ⁴		Traditional team sports ⁵		Youth sports ⁶		Traditional individual summer sports ⁷	
	Reg.	LR	Reg.	LR	Reg.	LR	Reg.	LR	Reg.	LR
Age	0,001	0,001	0,001	0,001	n.s.	n.s.	0,001	0,001	0,001	0,001
Gender	0,05	0,001	0,001	0,001	0,001	0,001	n.s.	n.s.	0,001	0,001
Entertainment	0,001	0,001	0,05	0,05	0,001	0,001	n.s.	n.s.	0,001	0,1
Performance	0,1	0,1	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	0,1	n.s.	n.s.	0,05
Social/family	0,001	0,5	n.s.	n.s.	0,05	0,05	0,05	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Uncertainty	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Aesthetical	n.s.	n.s.	0,05	n.s.	0,05	n.s.	0,001	0,05	0,001	0,05
Calculative	n.s.	n.s.	0,001	0,05	0,001	0,05	0,05	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Pride/emotion	0,001	0,001	n.s.	n.s.	0,001	0,001	0,05	0,05	0,001	0,001

Table 1: Variables influencing the interest for sport: Regression- and logistic regression^{1,2}.

Table notes:

- 1 Reg. = regression analyses, LR = logistic regression analysis.
- 2 Read/italic indicates negative correlation. For the gender variable, read indicates that men were more interested in the sport in question than women.
- 3 Ski-jumping, cross-country skiing, alpine skiing, biathlon, speed-skating
- 4 Boxing and motor-sports
- 5 Football, handball and ice-hockey
- 6 Snowboard and basket ball
- 7 Athletics and cycling
- 8 Reg. = linear regression analysis, LR = logistic regression

Discussion and conclusion

The older people were, the more interested they were in individual winter- and summer sports, and the less interested they were in action sports and “youth sports”. Men were more interested in all sports than women, with the exception of “youth sports”. Those who emphasised the *entertainment motive* tended to be more interested in all sports than others, with the exception of “youth sports”. The *quality of the performance* only moderately distinguished those who were interested from the others. Surprisingly, no differences were discovered between the two groups with regards to the importance of *the uncertainty of outcome*, a pattern that applied to all the fourteen sports. Various sport wise patterns were unveiled with regards to the importance of the *aesthetical-*, *calculative-*, and *pride/emotional motives*.

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