

# Segmentation of sports fans using the experiential value scale

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## Aim of paper and research questions

Market segmentation is the process of dividing a large, heterogeneous market into more homogeneous groups of people, who have similar wants, needs, or demographic profiles, to whom a product may be targeted (Mullin et al., 2007). Segmentation generally employs the four variables of demographics, psychographics, product benefits and product usage and a variety of research has been conducted in the field of sport marketing (i.e. Bennet et al., 2003; Trail et al., 2002). However, no previous research attempts to segment sports fans using the hypothetical construct called “experiential value” gained from watching sporting events. This study, therefore, focuses on experiential value that sports fans demand of spectator sports in order to develop an “Experiential Value Scale for Sport Consumption (EVSSC)” and to segment spectators using the EVSSC.

## Literature review

Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), who presented a divergent opinion concerning the theory of consumer information processing during the 1980s, believed that the consumer was easily influenced by state of mind and emotions in the product selection process. They also believed that the things the consumer experiences during shopping and experiences in treatment and attitude of sales personnel were contributing factors in the ultimate decision to purchase. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) defined experiential value as “various emotions and enjoyment experienced by the consumer in the process of consuming,” and classified hedonic values into “extrinsic values” and “intrinsic values.” Focusing on the functional aspects of experiential values advocated by Holbrook (1994), Mathwick et al. (2001) named these “active values” and “reactive values.” He created a 2 x 2 table, labelled the four quadrants as “aesthetics, playfulness, service excellence, and customer return on investment (CROI)” respectively. He called this the “Experiential Value Model.” Research of experiential value in recent years includes research of Deighton and Grayson (1995), who pointed out that pleasure includes the ability to create experience that remains in memory which can alter attitude and relationship with customers, and research of the relationship between flow and pleasure as part of research on experiential value concerning Internet websites (Novak et al., 2003; Mathwick & Rigdon, 2004).

## Research design and proposed data analysis

The research described in this paper first of all involved constructing a hierarchical hypothetical model by adding items particular to watching sporting events extracted from an investigation involving interview of fans to the Experiential Value Scale (EVS) used by Mathwick et al. (2001). For this study, 846 valid replies were collected from a home game of the J League Division 1 Kawasaki Frontale in 2008. After confirming the reliability and validity of the EVSSC scale, fans were segmented using the EVSSC. Forming the upper level concept for EVSSC, the synthetic variables of aesthetics, flow, service excellence and CROI were standardised by converting to Z scores, and when non-hierarchical cluster analysis (k average

method) was conducted, they were successfully sorted into five clusters. Cluster A, for which all of its values were negative values was labelled “Obligatory”; Cluster B, for which positive values were indicated for all items other than service was labelled “Fringe Fans”; Cluster C, which particularly low values were indicated for CROI was labelled “Non-CROI”; Cluster D, for which all its values were high positive values, was labelled “Core Fans”; Cluster E, for which particularly low values were indicated for flow, was labelled “Non-flow.” Follow-up multiple comparison testing was subsequently conducted in order to conduct a comparison of clusters, to test for equality of variance, to test for difference among clusters on the whole, and to determine between/among which clusters there was a difference after conducting one-way analysis of variance.

### Discussion

Reliability and validity were an acceptable fit for the EVSSC. Segmentation by EVSSC, furthermore, could probably be thought of as a standard that combines the benefits of psychographic and action variable standards, rather than as geographic, demographic, psychographic or action variable standards (Kotler & Armstrong, 1989) that have served as standards for market segmentation up to now. The segmentation described herein shows a distinct difference in fans that may appear to be a core fans at first glance, such as those that sensed and those that did not sense the flow of the game. Fans that sensed the flow of the game although they did not watch frequently could also be potential customers. The results of the research shows that EVSSC is effective as a scale for measuring experiential value for sports, and suggest it could potentially be used as a new segmentation variable for promotion strategy implemented by sports marketers.

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