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Sport Spectator Preferences - What is their motivation to watch sports on mobile devices?

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Introduction

Spectators have the choice between different media channels for watching sport broadcasts. Mobile devices (e.g. smart phones) are such a kind of media channel. All kinds of media channels represent different business and revenue models according to certain spectator needs and motivations. Marketing and media management have to identify the most suitable channel to meet existing needs and motivations. Therefore, it is necessary to understand spectator motivations for the usage of different media channels. Here, the focus is on motivations for watching sports on mobile devices, as this channel is rarely analysed. The research question of this paper is: What are the spectator motivations for watching sports on mobile devices?

Literature Review

The “Sport Fan Motivation Scale” (Wann et al. 2001) and the “Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption” (Trail/James 2001) take a deeper look into motivation. Further literature in the field is primarily focussed on gate attendance (e.g. Czarnitzki/Stadtmann 2002) and the demand for sports on television (e.g. Schafmeister 2007; Solberg/Hammervold 2004). Scientific research on mobile devices is missing.

The literature review and theoretical considerations allow the development of a long list of possible motivations sport broadcasts in general. Clusters of such a long list are: entertainment, eustress, social, self-esteem, aesthetics, escape, family, and economics. They are the starting point for the analysis of spectator motivations due to the lack of specific research in the field of mobile devices.

Method

An analysis of motivations with a special focus on motivations for watching sports on mobile devices is necessary. The research questionnaire is developed based on existing motivation analyses. It contains a battery of motivation statements. Additional questions on consumption patterns for media channels, unmet needs, and demographics complete the questionnaire. The evaluation procedure is based on an online survey. An online survey is appropriate, as the study is dealing with motivations for watching sport online on mobile devices. Hence, an online survey reaches the target group.

Results

The study is based on a representative sample from an online panel in Germany (n = 406). 27% are generally interested in sport broadcasts on mobile devices. 24% used mobile devices already to watch sports, 6% are using mobile devices at least frequently to watch sports. In terms of motivations, the group of persons who is interested in sport broadcasts on mobile devices (Group A) differs significantly (p = 0.01) across all motivation statements from the group of persons who is not interested in sport broadcasts on mobile devices (Group B). Group A has stronger motivation ratings than group B. A factor analysis identifies four motivation factors for both groups. On first sight, this result seems to report similarities. But a closer look at the factor loadings shows severe differences, as the same motivation statements are associated with different factors. Group A shows sophisticated and well developed sport specific motivations. Group B is generally interested in sports to some degree but not more. In terms of the broadcasts, group A prefers longer broadcasts over highlights. 29% of group A would even prefer live broadcasts (full length). Group A has also a positive willingness to pay. 50% of group A says that the current price level of their supplier is reasonable. If it comes to different types of sports, group A prefers to watch soccer (72%), formula one racing (34%), and skiing events (34%). All in all, the most specific motivation to watch sports on mobile devices is to see any detail of what is happening.

Discussion

The study demonstrates an approach to develop customer insights for a successful sale of sports on mobile devices. Mobile devices are a media channel for sport enthusiasts at the moment. This gives three clear indications for sport marketers and media management for the product or service package. First, it has to be a type of sport which is well known, because only a small part of the population is so much interested in sports that they will ask for broadcasts on mobile devices. Second, these sport enthusiasts are interested in live coverage. Highlight streaming is not their favourite. They want to see everything in real time. Third, the existing willingness to pay for broadcasts on mobile devices is an example for a new revenue model while e.g. pay TV is not very successful in Germany.

References

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