Examining antecedent factors of sport consumption motivation: Personality, normative beliefs, and fan identification in the sport industry

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Background

Investigating the various motives involved in sport consumption behaviors has been an interest of sport management scholars (e.g., Trail & Jams, 2001, Wann, 1995) over the past couple decades. For the most part, sport consumption behavioral motives vary as a function of consumption type (i.e., product purchase vs. media consumption) and of consumer characteristics. Although examining the motives has been increasingly popular as a research topic, there is a need for motivation studies to expand their investigations by explaining the development of certain types of motivations. This is important because it is vital for sport management professionals and sport marketers to fully understand the factors that influence motives. Previous studies suggest that individual factors such as personality influence media consumption (Lim et al., 2010), while other studies suggest that self-identification and personal belief also influence sport consumption behaviors (Kwak et al., 2010; Levin, 2008). Thus, for the present study it was hypothesized that the factors noted above also influence sport consumers' motivations.

Objectives

Based on the study published by Kim et al. (2008) – which found 10 primary motives of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) consumption – the current study adds to the body of literature in sport management by providing a conceptual model of consumption by MMA consumers. Further, this study sought to identify antecedent psychological factors which influence sport consumers' motivations. The antecedent factors examined included risk taking tendency, normative belief about aggression, and fan identification.

Methods

The purposive sample of 18-year-old and older college students ($N = 324$) was collected for the study. Personality (i.e., risk taking tendency), individual belief (i.e., normative belief about aggression), self identification (i.e., MMA fan identification), and MMA motives were examined by using the self-report online survey method. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed to evaluate the measurement model. Hypotheses were built around existing research in this area and the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique was utilized in order to examine the proposed conceptual model.

Results

The data analysis revealed that all the scales adopted in the study reached satisfactory reliability levels ranging from .80 to .98. The chi square test showed that the proposed conceptual model was found to have a good fit (χ^2/df = 2.10, p < .05). It was also supported by the model fit indexes. For instance, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was .91, while Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and Standardized Room Mean Square Residual (SRMR) reached .05 and .07 respectively. All those scores are better than cut-off points suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999). More importantly the influences of the antecedent variables were significant in that the path coefficient from risk taking to motivation was .26 (p < .05), the coefficient from fan identification to motivation was .46 (p <.05), and the coefficient from normative belief about aggression to motivation was .12 (p < .05).

Conclusion

This investigation is one of the first attempts to examine antecedent factors of sport consumption motivation. All the antecedent factors had significant influences on motivations. Further, the present study found that fan identification is the most important predictor of MMA consumption motivation. Thus, sport management practitioners and sport marketing professionals should build better marketing strategies to enhance fan identity. Further, it is important for sport marketers to consider consumers' personal profiles in target marketing and market segmentation. The applied and theoretical implications of the results will be discussed, along with future directions for research in this area.