

Session: **Factors Affecting the Market Demand of High School state Basketball Tournament**  
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### **Factors potentially affecting the attendance of high school state basketball tournament**

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Community support and event attendance are critical for the survival and success of high school sports in the U.S. Thus, understanding the factors that potentially affect high school basketball event attendance is necessary for formulating effective event promotion strategies. One approach to understanding the different levels of spectator game consumption is through market segmentation. According to Mullin, Hardy, and Sutton (2007) and Pitts and Stotlar (2007), market segmentation is central to the understanding of sport consumer behaviors, which would provide crucial information that better explains event attendance. Weinstein (1994) explained that market segmentation is the process of partitioning markets into groups of potential customers with similar needs or characteristics, who are likely to exhibit similar consumption behaviors. According to Zhang et al. (2007), of various segmentation procedures, sociodemographics (state of being), psychographics (state of mind), and their relationships to consumption behaviors are most often adopted approaches. Acknowledging the differences in consumer's backgrounds and consumption frequencies and grouping consumers accordingly into market segments are primary steps in the marketing process. Researchers have identified a number of sociodemographic variables that are associated with the level of sport event consumption. Attendance rates at different events are highly correlated with certain demographic segments.

Sport games are the core product function of a basketball event. Market demand of the event is a major psychographic phenomenon that specifically deals with consumer expectations towards the attributes of the core product (Zhang, Lam, & Connaughton, 2003). Essentially, it is a cluster of pull factors associated with the game that a high school basketball team can offer to its new and returning attendees (Braunstein, Zhang, Trail, Gibson, 2005; Hansen & Gauthier, 1989; Schofield, 1983; Zhang et al., 1995). Event attractiveness (e.g., individual skills, playing style, team records, record-breaking performance, and closeness of competition) and economic consideration (e.g., ticket price, event promotions, and concession cost) variables have been previously identified by researchers as affecting spectator decision making for the attendance of sport events (e.g., Hansen & Gauthier, 1989; Schofield, 1983; Zhang et al., 1995) although none of previous studies were specifically conducted for high school basketball tournament events. When operating sport events, team management usually has little involvement in this process of core product. Instead, the team management primarily works on other product functions related to event operations, particularly service activities associated with venue accessibility and enjoyment. The quality of event operations often affects the overall effectiveness of a tournament, and even promotes the consumption levels of consumers (Brooks, 1994; Stotlar, 1989; Zhang et al., 2007).

Additionally, there has been a growing recognition of the relationship between sport and tourism in recent years (Gibson 1998, 2003). Sport tourism is “leisure-based travel that takes individuals temporarily outside of their home communities to participate in physical activities, to watch physical activities, or to venerate attractions associated with physical activities” (Gibson, 1998, p. 49). Event sport tourism, where participants travel to watch sports, is an important kind of sport tourism (Gibson, 2003). Crompton (2004) pointed out that similar to mega sport events, small-scale sport events, such as high school basketball tournament games, could considerably generate consumer interests in local attractions, where destination image is an important factor that likely exerts significant impact on the decision making process of sport tourists. In particular, these small-scale, repeating events are often organized by a local community and/or institutions, and usually focus on local attractions and uniqueness.

Adopting a review of literature approach, this study provides an in-depth comprehension, synthesis, and analysis of the relevance and significance of segmenting high school basketball events through sociodemographic and market demand perspectives. In particular, the concept of market demand is examined in terms of core game product, event operations, and local attractions, which are uniquely associated with a high school basketball tournament events. It is anticipated that a well-developed understanding and discussion on these issues would help provide a strong rationale for examining consumer profiles and identifying key market demand factors.