

MANAGING POTENTIAL NEGATIVE EFFECTS FROM SPORT CONSUMPTION: A CROSS-CULTURAL EXAMINATION OF THE ROLE OF NON-VIOLENT MEDIATED SPORTS ON YOUTH AGGRESSION REDUCTION

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Abstract

Background

In an effort to maximize product consumption, some industries (e.g., pharmaceutical) devote significant economic investments to studying and minimizing any negative effects of their products. However, while other industries see the value of such investments, in the sport industry little is known about the potential negative effects of mediated sporting events. In this respect, it is important for sport managers to have a better understanding of any negative effects related to their content. Moreover, sports companies often use violence as a promotional tool and thus sport media violence may raise controversial questions. There is a body of literature that has examined the contributing effects of media violence on aggression (e.g., Anderson et al., 2003). Thus, it is imperative to extend such research into the sport industry and in particular investigate the relationship between viewing sport media violence and youth aggression. Further, given the easy access to sport media violence through new media platforms, it is vital to examine the factors that may minimize the negative effects from the consumption of sport media violence. In addition, considering the extensive and global accessibility of Internet, a cross-cultural study is of value as cultural factors may be able to moderate the potential negative influences.

Objectives

Based on the findings of previous studies and the literature in sport marketing and mass communication, the main purpose of this study was to examine the role of non-violent mediated sports on aggression reduction. In particular, this study is rooted in excitation transfer theory which –originally proposed by Zillmann (1971– explains the intensified emotional responses from viewing media violence affect the following experiences. The secondary purpose of the study was to examine if there are cultural differences between Korean youth and American youth who view violent and non-violent sport media content.

Methods

The current study employed a repeated experimental design where subjects were exposed to both violent/violent/violent sport media stimulation and violent/non-violent/violent sport media stimulation. The data came from a total 100 subjects and all subjects were recruited in the U.S. and Korea between the ages of 8 and 17. The experiment consisted of two stages: A survey containing scaled measures taken from the personality traits (e.g., trait aggressiveness) and an experiment composed of exposures to violent and non-violent sport media content and aggression level tests. Video clips were composed of mixed martial arts (MMA) matches and ice hockey fights for the violent sport media content, while figure skating footage was used for the non-violent sport media content. Aggression levels were tested with the Web-based aggression measurement program (WAMP). The subjects levels of aggression were tested after their exposure to each treatment.

Results

The findings of this study revealed that there is a significant difference regarding the effects of non-violent sport media content on aggression reduction between youth from Korea and youth from the United States ($F(1, 65) = 8.1, p < .05, \eta^2 = .110$). The mean of aggression level of Korean participants significantly decreased after viewing non-violent sport media content, while U.S. participants showed not significant changes. In addition, trait aggression levels had a significant influence on the subjects from the United States as they showed an inherent relationship with personal traits, while the findings revealed that Korean participants did not have such a significant relationship ($r = .52, p < .01$).

Conclusions

In the sport industry, violent sport media content has often been used to promote sporting events and athletic contests (Lim et al., 2009). This has only increased in the past few years with the increase (and diversity) of new media platforms and more accessible sport media content. Consequently, concerns have risen and assumptions have been made regarding the relationship between consuming sport media violence and subsequently participating in aggressive or violent behavior. Therefore, this study investigated the effect of non-violent sport media content on youth aggression levels and if there are cultural differences in the consumption of sport media content. The data analyses revealed that aggression levels can be reduced by viewing non-violent sport media content. Also, there are cultural differences in the aggression levels associated with personal traits for youth from different countries.

References:

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