THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT ON SPORT FAN MOTIVATION

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Synopsis:

Abstract:
BACKGROUND
Understanding the factors that drive consumers to attend matches is a critical part of a sport organisation's efforts to recruit new fans and retain existing ones. Current sport marketing research provides insights into the most important variables influencing fan behaviour. Previous research shows that vicarious achievement is a key motive leading to sport consumption (Fink, Trail, & Anderson, 2002). However, Jones (1997) argued that the social context in which a team exists shapes which motives are salient for consumers. In this study, our purpose is to explore Jones' (1997) contention, using consumer culture theory (CCT) to examine how the social and cultural context in which a team exists influences sport fan motives. We conduct this research in three regions of one developing country (i.e. Vietnam), which have distinct social and cultural settings (e.g., dialects, ethnicity, population, economic status, and social structure hierarchies).
METHOD
A multi-sample cross-sectional quantitative design was utilised for this research. The participants were fans of three teams in the Vietnam Football League, situated in the three largest cities in the country (i.e., Hanoi, Saigon, and Da Nang). There were 650 questionnaires distributed in each city. In total, there were 863 fully completed questionnaires collected from the three cities (Saigon, n = 294, Da Nang, n = 243, and Hanoi, n = 326). The questionnaire consisted of two parts: 1) participant motive items, and 2) demographic questions. We measured sport fan motives using an adapted version of the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC; Trail & James, 2001). The instrument was translated into Vietnamese and went through a rigorous process of back-translation before being administered (Su & Parham, 2002).

The final instrument consisted of 39 items measuring 12 sport fan motives: achievement, knowledge, aesthetics, drama, escape, family, physical attraction, physical skills, social interaction, cultural affiliation, community pride, and wholesome environment.

ANALYSIS

We used a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) to test whether the independent categorical variable 'location' explained variations in the 12 dependent sport fan motives. There was a main effect (Wilks' L = .932, $F(24, 2432) = 3.651$, $p < .001$), explained by significant between-group differences for 11 of the motive dimensions (i.e., family, community pride, escape, wholesome environment, achievement, aesthetics, physical skills, cultural affiliation, drama, social interaction, and knowledge). There was no significant difference for the physical attraction motive by location. The post-hoc test (Bonferroni) indicated that the key motives for sport fans in Saigon were physical skills, achievement, and a wholesome environment. In Da Nang, drama and community pride had the highest mean scores. In Hanoi, physical skill, drama, and achievement were the three highest mean scores.

CONCLUSION

The differences in motives across three surveyed cities in the same country demonstrate the impact of social and cultural context on sport consumer motivation. Logan (2005) ascertained that Saigon is the busiest city of Vietnam featuring fast paced life, and expanding economics. Meanwhile, Hanoi, the current capital of Vietnam values the achievement and the embodiment of pride to strengthen the country's sense of cohesion and identity. Danang is the smallest city among the three surveyed cities. It is a port-endowed town very close to the old ancient city (Hue). Consequently, people are more family oriented. The discrepancies among three cities in combination with the findings from this research indicates the social and cultural context in which people live play a discernible role in which motives are salient. The findings of this research empirically support the contention of Jones (1997) that the social and cultural context influence sport consumer motives.

In a practical sense, the findings of this research help sport club managers in Vietnam to understand how the social and cultural context in which they operate shapes the motives that are salient for fans. This understanding provides a basis for team marketers to design promotional campaigns to align with the culture of home fans. In addition, teams should exchange knowledge of the social and cultural context in different regions to attract visiting fans from other teams across Vietnam.

References:

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