Characterizing Consumer Motivation as Individual Difference Factors: Augmenting the Sport Interest Inventory (SII) to Explain Level of Spectator Support

Daniel C. Funk, Daniel F. Mahony, Lynn Ridinger

Abstract

The central focus of this study was to examine how individual difference factors could be used to explain various levels of consumer support for a specific sport property. The present study extends the Sport Interest Inventory (SII) in order to enhance current understanding of consumer motives in relation to sport in general and women's competitive sport in particular. Confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the 54-item Sport Interest Inventory, measuring 14 individual difference factors related to spectator interest in soccer. Multiple linear regression analysis revealed that five motivational characteristics—(a) sport interest, (b) team interest, (c) vicarious achievement, (d) role modeling, and (e) entertainment value—explained 54% of variance in level of spectator support for women's professional soccer. These results suggest that augmenting traditional spectator measures offers a better understanding of motivational characteristics in different sport situations and of the impact these motivations have on behavior. Implications for marketers of women's professional sports and of sports in general are discussed.

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Introduction

Participation in women's sports has been increasing consistently since the passage of Title IX of the Educational Amendments in 1972 (e.g., Acosta & Carpenter, 1994; Coakley, 1998; Mahony & Pastore, 1998; Sabo & Snyder, 1993). However, a more recent change has been the increasing spectator interest in women's sports (e.g., Lough, 1996). Attendance at women's sporting events and media coverage of women's sports have been increasing steadily (e.g., Coakley, 1998; Lough, 1996). This increase in interest has given rise to several questions of interest to sport consumer researchers: What motivates people to watch women's sports? Are these motivations the same as or different from the motivations for watching men's sports? Do these motivations

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For sport managers, the advent of the Women's United Soccer Association (WUSA) and numerous commercial soccer enterprises has made it imperative to examine these questions. A better understanding of the factors contributing to spectator motivation is crucial for the continued financial viability and growth of the women's professional sports leagues that have emerged recently in the United States.

Women's World Cup

Spectator interest in women's professional sports hit a high point in the United States during the 1999 Women's World Cup (WWC). The attendance and media attention exceeded the optimistic projections of those associated with the event (Mitchell, 1999). In fact, the attention paid the team was so extensive that they ultimately were named the "Sportswomen of the Year" by *Sports Illustrated,* marking the first recognition ever for a women's sports team (Bamberger, 1999). While many in the media hypothesized about reasons for the strong interest in the team (e.g., Bernstein, 1999) and whether that interest might be used to help jump-start a new professional women's soccer league in the United States (e.g., Mullen, 1999), only Funk, Mahony, Nakazawa, and Hirakawa (in press) actually attempted to assess scientifically the various motivations of Women's World Cup spectators.

Motivations of Spectators

General Literature

The study of motivation in consumer research seems to involve two fundamental challenges. The first is to understand the interrelationships between motives and specific behavior, and the second is to develop a list of consumer motives comprehensive enough to capture the wide variety of motivating forces that stimulate and shape behavior (Foxall & Goldsmith, 1994). *Motivation* refers to an activated state within a person—consisting of drive urges, wishes, and desires—that leads to goal-directed behavior (Mowen & Minor, 1998). Within the social-psychological viewpoint of sport behavior, motivation has been examined from two different perspectives: (a) as an outcome variable measured in the form of choice, effect, and/or persistent behavior and (b) as an individual difference factor that initiates a sequence of events leading to behavior (Weiss & Chaumeton, 1992). The latter perspective focuses on how individuals who vary in levels of motivational characteristics differ on criterion measures of concern (e.g., interest, attitudes, behavior); it is especially relevant for understanding differences in spectator and fan support of managed professional sport teams.

The central purpose of the present research was to identify different motivational factors and to examine their usefulness in explaining various levels of support in a specific sport. However, there appears to be little consensus in the literature as to which factors or combination of factors best explains and predicts the motives and behavior of sport spectators and sport fans. A variety of theories have been set forth in an attempt to explain the appeal of spectator sports (Duncan, 1983; Sloan, 1989; Smith, 1988; Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2000; Wann, 1995), but empirical evidence is scant.

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Women's Sports

Several studies have sampled spectators of women's sports to assess various factors including fan satisfaction (Madrigal, 1995), involvement (Kerstetter & Kovich, 1997), commitment (Weiller & Higgs, 1997), and marketing strategy (Antonelli, 1994). However, most of this research applied models or theories that were developed based on men's sports or on sports in general. Few efforts have been made to determine whether there are any factors that may be unique in contributing to consumptive behavior as it applies to women's sports. These studies have focused exclusively on issues pertaining to the spectators at women's sporting events.

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Weiller and Higgs (1997) identified achievement seeking and entertainment as motivations for committed fans of the American Girls Professional Baseball League (AGPBL) of the 1940s. Armstrong (1999) examined factors that influenced attendance of professional women's basketball games in the now-defunct American Basketball League (ABL). She investigated some of the traditional motives and objects of identification found in the literature, along with a few exploratory factors. These new factors included the opportunity to support professional women's basketball and the opportunity to see positive role models. Armstrong's results revealed that entertainment, support of the women's league, the quality of play, the opportunity to see role models, and the players themselves substantially influenced overall attendance. Surprisingly, the opportunity to see role models had only a marginal influential on attendance at professional women's basketball games. In contrast, Funk, Ridinger, and Moorman (2000) reported that support for competitive opportunities for women in sport, players serving as role models, the traditional style of play, the wholesome environment, and the entertainment value of games were rated as being important attendance motives among season-ticket holders and single-game attendees of a Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) franchise.

Interestingly enough, while the more traditional sport spectator motives have been based on hedonic principles, the new factors that have emerged in preliminary investigations of women's sports are based more on a utilitarian perspective (Armstrong, 1999; Weiller & Higgs, 1997). Rather than being motivated simply by factors associated with individual pleasure, women's sports fans also may be motivated by the utility or function served by those sports (i.e., providing positive role models for youth and representing an avenue for equal rights that transcends the world of sports).

The general literature addressing sport consumption by spectators continues to evolve. Researchers have investigated a variety of motives and other factors linked to fan behavior; however, few of these studies have focused on or even included women's sports. Funk et al. (in press) used a number of prior studies on spectator motivation (e.g., Kahle, Kambara, & Rose, 1996; Madrigal & Howard, 1999; Sloan, 1989; Sloan, Bates, Davis, & Schwieger, 1987; Wann, 1995) to develop a 30-item Sport Interest Inventory (SII). The SII was used to assess 10 potential motives of spectators attending the 1999 Women's World Cup (WWC), including drama, vicarious achievement, aesthetics, interest in team, interest in player, interest in soccer, national pride, excitement, social opportunities, and support for women's opportunities. The psychometric properties of the SII were tested, drawing upon 1303 spectators at five different venues across the United States during opening-round matches of the 1999 WWC. Confirmatory factor analysis supported the instrument's reliability, and regression analysis indicated that six of the motives predicted 34% of the total variance in interest in the tournament (i.e., interest in team, excitement, interest in soccer, vicarious achievement, drama, and support for women's opportunities). A significant negative relationship between interest in the 1999 WWC and both drama and vicarious achievement was observed.

> Open-ended questions also were used to determine whether additional motives existed for women's professional soccer spectators (Funk et al., in press). A qualitative analysis of these open-ended questions indicated four additional factors that emerged to explain spectator motivation in this setting. A number of the spectators made comments suggesting the importance of these factors: (a) The players served as important role models for young children; (b) the entertainment provided at the World Cup was a good value for the money; (c) the event provided a valuable opportunity for family members to bond with one another; and (d) the matches presented a wholesome environment.

The current study attempted to confirm and extend the Sport Interest Inventory by examining the level of continued interest in the U.S. Women's team subsequent to 1999 Women's World Cup. The U.S. Women's team toured the United States and played a number of games as part of the 1999 U.S. Cup. The final game was played in Louisville, Kentucky, in October of 1999. Spectator motive items were generated for 14 possible factors, which included the 10 original fac-

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Methodology

Procedures

The data for the current study were collected using the following procedures. Spectators attending the 1999 U.S. Cup on October 10, 1999, in Louisville, Kentucky, were surveyed. The SII questionnaire contained 15 behavioral and demographic items in addition to the 42 items measuring 14 individual difference factors (three items per factor). The SII was distributed to males and females aged 12 and older. The surveyors randomly selected sections in the stands at each venue and approached spectators at their seats before the first match and between matches. Efforts were made to include a broad representation of the people sitting in each section, and no more than two persons per party were given the survey. Participation was voluntary, so those who chose not to participate were replaced; however, a surveyor's request was rarely rejected. It took respondents approximately 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. A sample of 580 spectators received the SII. Of these, 520 surveys were returned, for a response rate of 90%. Of the collected surveys, 504 were usable, for a final response rate of 86%.

Analysis

Descriptive statistics were utilized to develop a general profile of spectator characteristics. A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using Joreskog and Sorbom's LISREL 8.3 (1999) to purify the scale and to estimate how well the 42 scale items represented 14 latent motivational factors.[1] Per Kline's (1998) recommendation, five fit indices were used to evaluate the model's fit ((2/*df*, RMSEA, NNFI, CFI, SMRM). Alpha coefficients were computed to examine the interreliability of the derived factors and were reported along with factor means and standard deviations. Multiple linear regression analysis was employed to examine the relationship between the 14 factors and spectator support level. An individual's spectator support level was derived from five Likert-type scales with end points ranging from 1 to 4 and 1 to 7. Respondents were asked to rate (a) their level of interest in women's soccer, (b) their degree of interest in the 1999 Women's World Cup, (c) the number of years they had been fans of soccer, (d) their knowledge of the rules of soccer, and (e) how often they watched soccer on television.

Well over half (61%) of the spectators in the sample were female, and the mean age of all spectators was 31. The mean age of the females (29.0) was significantly lower than that of the males (34.0), indicating the presence of a younger female audience. The modal response (MODE = 15) indicated that a vast number of attendees were young, Caucasian females who lived in Louisville, Kentucky, and attended in groups of approximately six persons. While these individuals indicated a high interest in the 1999 FIFA Women's World Cup, they generally had no history of attending men's or women's soccer games in person. They considered soccer to be their favorite sport, and had played in organized soccer for 7 years.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Cronbach Alphas for Spectator Motives and Spectator Level of Support for Soccer

Spectator motives	*M*	*SD*	a
Role model (ROLE)	4.58	.71	.88
Excitement (EXC)	4.34	.70	.81
Drama (DRAMA)	4.29	.74	.74
Wholesome environment (WHOENV)	4.28	.72	.83
Entertainment value (ENTV)	4.17	.84	.88
Interest in soccer (SOCCER)	4.16	.95	.87
Interest in team (TEAM)	4.08	.77	.78
Support women's opportunity in sport (SWOS)	3.98	.87	.82
Bonding with family (BON)	3.79	.98	.87
National pride (PRIDE)	3.81	.83	.70
Vicarious achievement (VIC)	3.77	.93	.84
Socialization (SOCIAL)	3.33	.83	.64
Interest in player (PLAYER)	2.78	.92	.82
Aesthetics (AESTH)	4.21	.76	.76
Spectator support level	3.83	.79	.78

Results

Behavioral Profile

Well over half (61%) of the spectators in the sample were female, and the mean age of all spectators was 31. The mean age of the females (29.0) was significantly lower than that of the males (34.0), indicating the presence of a younger female audience. The modal response (MODE = 15) indicated that a vast number of attendees were young, Caucasian females who lived in Louisville, Kentucky, and attended in groups of approximately six persons. While these individuals indicated a high interest in the 1999 FIFA Women's World Cup, they generally had no history of attending men's or women's soccer games in person. They considered soccer to be their favorite sport, and had played in organized soccer for 7 years.

Table 2

Correlation Matrix of Involvement Antecedents From Standardized Phi Matrix (N = 300)

Note. swos = Support Women's Opportunity in Sport
vic = Vicarious Achievement
bon = Family Bonding
social = Socialization
player = Interest in a Specific Player
aesth = Aesthetics
soccer = Interest in Sport of Soccer
pride = National Pride
supp = Soccer Support Level
exc = Excitement
role = Role Model
drama = Drama
entv = Entertainment Value
team = Interest in the Team
whoenv = Wholesome Environment

In addition, spectators indicated they possessed a high level of soccer knowledge and a strong understanding of the rules. Of the sample, 45% indicated gender was not an important factor in their preference for watching soccer. Taken together, these results indicate that the event drew a young group of Caucasian spectators who had been soccer fans for many years. The spectators attended in groups, often with family members and friends.

Scale Analysis

Internal consistency measures were computed for each of the 14 factors from the overall purified sample (*N* = 432) and ranged from (= .64 to (= .91. Only the SOCIAL ((= .64) dimension was below the .70 benchmark (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The means, standard deviations, and Cronbach alphas for the sample are reported in Table 1. The means for each construct ranged from 2.78 for PLAYER to 4.58 for ROLE. Standard deviations ranged from .70 to .98. It is interesting to note that the four factors added to the SII examined by Funk et al. (in press)—ROLE, WHOENV, ENTV, and BON—were rated as the first, fourth, fifth, and ninth most important factors, respectively. These results appear to support the addition of these four factors to the SII. A correlation matrix was computed and is reported in Table 2. Examination of the correlation matrix (see Table 2) revealed moderate discriminant validity among the 14 factors. All correlation coefficients except three were well below the $r < .85$ ceiling (Kline, 1998).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The results of the confirmatory factor analysis revealed that the Sport Interest Inventory was psychometrically sound and confirmed the existence of 14 unique factors related to women's professional soccer. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis are presented in Table 3, and the regression model is presented in Table 4. See the Appendix A for detailed discussion. While the

Table 3

Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis: Factor Loadings for Individual Items, Path Coefficients, t-Values, and Average Variance Explained by Latent Factors

Item	Factor loadings	Lambda X	*t*-values	Avg. var. explained
Interest in soccer (SOCCER)				77%
First and foremost, I consider myself a fan of soccer.	.68	.86	20.53	
I love to follow the game of soccer.	.80	.87	23.53	
I am a huge fan of soccer in general.	.84	.95	24.32	
Vicarious achievement (VIC)				67%
When my favorite team wins, I feel my status as a fan increases.	.43	.70	14.68	
I feel a sense of accomplishment when my team wins.	.74	.88	21.32	
When my team wins, I feel a personal sense of achievement.	.80	.96	22.61	
Excitement (EXC)				60%
I find the U.S. Cup matches very exciting.	.51	.60	16.53	
I enjoy the excitement surrounding a U.S. Cup match.	.60	.63	18.42	
I enjoy the high level of excitement during the U.S. Cup competition.	.69	.70	20.57	
Interest in team (TEAM)				54%
I consider myself to be a big fan of my favorite U.S. Cup team.	.54	.73	17.28	
Compared to how I feel about other sports teams, the Women's U.S. Cup team is very important to me	.51	.69	16.67	
I am a loyal fan of my favorite U.S. Cup team no matter if they are winning or losing.	.56	.66	17.77	
Supporting women's opportunity in sport (SWOS)				62%
I attend the U.S. Cup games because I believe it is important to support women's sport.	.52	.74	16.54	
I see myself as a major supporter of women's sports.	.59	.81	18.17	
Attending the U.S. Cup demonstrates my support for women's sport in general.	.75	.81	21.58	
Aesthetics (AESTH)				57%
There is a certain natural beauty to the game of soccer.	.68	.75	20.57	
I enjoy the gracefulness associated with the sport of soccer.	.75	.77	20.37	
Successful plays and strategies performed by the players are an important component of the soccer game being enjoyable.	.32	.54	12.09	
Social opportunities (SOCIAL)				45%
I like to talk with other people sitting near me at the U.S. Cup soccer games.	.17	.44	8.03	
The U.S. Cup soccer games give me a great opportunity to socialize with other people.	.77	.86	17.17	
I attend the U.S. Cup because of the opportunities to socialize.	.42	.72	12.82	
National pride (PRIDE)				45%
I attend the U.S. Cup to support my country's team.	.32	.62	11.83	
When my country's team wins, I feel proud to be a citizen.	.63	.77	17.86	
Patriotism is a big reason I attend the U.S. Cup.	.41	.70	13.71	
Drama (DRAMA)				52%
I prefer watching a close game rather than a one-sided game, even when my favorite U.S. Cup team is playing.	.50	.71	15.17	
I like watching matches where the outcome is uncertain.	.35	.52	12.39	
A close match between two teams is more enjoyable than a blowout.	.72	.73	18.39	
Interest in player (PLAYER)				60%
I tend to follow individual players more than the team.	.58	.77	16.92	
I am more a fan of individual players than I am of the team.	.69	.88	18.74	
The main reason I attend the U.S. Cup is to cheer for my favorite player.	.53	.79	16.05	
Role model (ROLE)				71%
U.S. Cup players provide inspiration for girls and boys.	.68	.68	20.53	
I think U.S. Cup players are good role models for young girls and boys.	.80	.65	23.53	
The U.S. Cup players provide inspiration for children.	.84	.69	24.32	
Entertainment value (ENTV)				73%
The U.S. Cup is affordable entertainment.	.73	.79	21.63	
The U.S. Cup is great entertainment for the price.	.84	.78	23.97	
I attended the U.S. Cup because it is an entertaining event for a reasonable price.	.61	.76	18.82	
Wholesome environment (WHOENV)				62%
I like attending the U.S. Cup because it is good, clean fun.	.63	.65	19.43	
There is a friendly, family atmosphere at the U.S. Cup.	.64	.66	19.51	
I value the wholesome environment evident at the U.S. Cup.	.60	.69	18.62	
Family bonding (BON)				69%
I enjoy sharing the experience of attending the U.S. Cup with family members.	.68	.83	19.89	
Attending the U.S. Cup gives me a chance to bond with my family.	.76	1.00	21.52	
An important reason why I attend the U.S. Cup is to spend time with my family.	.62	.93	18.71	

Note. Factor loadings represent the squared multiple correlation coefficients for manifest indicators. For example, the latent variable Family Bonding accounts for 68% of the variance in scale item "I enjoy sharing the experience of attending the U.S. Cup with family members." Lamba X's are the standardized measurement paths for each parameter from the Lambda Matrix. The average variance extracted is the average amount of variance that the latent factor explains in all three of the scale items used to measure the construct.

Table 4
Regression of Spectator Support Level on Fourteen Motives (N = 504)

Variable	*b*	*SE*	*b*
SOCCER	.47	.04	.57 *
TEAM	.41	.06	.40 *
VIC	-.09	.04	-.11 *
ROLE	-.13	.06	-.12 *
ENTV	.09	.04	.10 *
WHOENV	-.11	.07	-.10
PRIDE	-.05	.04	-.06
BON	.03	.03	.04
EXC	-.05	.06	-.05
DRAMA	-.03	.04	-.04
AESTH	.04	.05	-.04
SWOS	.03	.04	.04
PLAYER	-.01	.03	-.02
SOCIAL	-.01	.03	-.02

Note. Full Model: R^2 = .54; Adjusted R^2 = .52; F = 40.33, p < .01 df = 503. AESTH = aesthetics, BON = family bonding, DRAMA = drama, EXC = excitement, ENTV = entertainment value, PLAY = interest in players, PRIDE = national pride, ROLE = role modeling, SOCCER = interest in soccer, SOCIAL = social opportunities, SWOS = support for women's opportunities, TEAM = interest in team, VIC = vicarious achievement, WHOENV = wholesome environment.*p < 05.

14 dimensions explained 67% of the variance, National Pride and Socialization each had a single item that should be reworded to increase the predictive validity. Overall, these results validate the SII's predictive ability in measuring unique motives using a survey questionnaire. Once the SII was confirmed, multiple linear regression was employed to examine the relative importance of the 14 factors to level of spectator support in women's soccer.

Regression Analysis

Since the goal of the present study was to explain the spectator support level among those attending the 1999 U.S. Cup, simultaneous regression was employed to examine the 14 motives (Stevens, 1998). The mean response for spectator support level was 3.83 (SD = .79), and the interreliability measure was (= .78. The correlation matrix for the independent and dependent variables is presented in Table 2. The regression model is presented in Table 3 and indicates that 54% (R^2 = .54) of the variance in spectator support level was explained by SOCCER, TEAM, VIC, ROLE, and ENTV (F = 40.33, df = 503 p < .01). Examination of the Beta coefficients revealed that SOCCER (b = .47) was the most influential with regard to spectator support level, followed closely by TEAM (b = .41) and, to a lesser degree, VIC (b = .09), ROLE (b =-.13), and ENTV (b = .09). Assumptions of multiple regression were examined and indicated the residuals did not deviate from a normal distribution, were constant in variance, and were not correlated with the independent variable. The R-square value (R^2 = .54), adjusted (R^2 = .52), and the small standard error (SD = .70) indicated the model was robust (Stevens, 1998). Moreover, the 54% of the variance in support level predicted in the current study represents a considerable improvement over the 35% of interest in the Women's World Cup predicted by Funk et al. (in press).

Discussion

The current study clearly builds and expands on the contributions made by the Funk et al. (in press) study. Therefore, the results of this study have implications for both sport marketers and sport marketing researchers. While the current study focused on U.S. Cup spectators, the results of this study can still be used to better understand sport spectators in a number of settings, particularly those involving women's sports. This study makes important contributions in that it (a) expands the understanding of sport spectator motivation beyond the traditional motives; (b) provides a more complete scale for examining the motives of spectators at women's sporting events; and (c) provides suggestions for marketing a variety of sport events, particularly the games of the new WUSA.

Augmenting Traditional Motives to Better Understand Sport Spectators

The Sport Interest Inventory extends the available knowledge of potential motives useful in determining the type and level of support for women's professional soccer in particular and for team sport in general. In addition to examining traditional spectator motives (e.g., drama, vicarious achievement), the study utilized other motives, including (a) players serving as role models, (b) entertainment value, (c) bonding with family, (d) supporting women's opportunity in sport, and (e) the presence of a wholesome environment at games. All of these factors were confirmed through the use of factor analysis. It is interesting to note that players as role models (M = 4.58) was identified by the spectators as being the most important factor. The mean importance of entertainment value (M = 4.17) and wholesome environment (M = 4.28) was higher than that of such factors as interest in soccer (M = 4.16) and interest in the team (M = 4.08), while that of family bonding (M = 3.79) was higher than that of such factors as

vicarious achievement ($M = 3.77$).

Although many of these differences are small, the results do suggest that, at least in this particular sport setting, there are some new factors that are at least as important as some of the traditional ones. Moreover, these new factors can be used to examine sport spectators in variety of settings. In fact, it might be particularly interesting to examine the importance of these factors at male sporting events, where prices are much higher and the role-model status of players has frequently been questioned. In addition, the results suggest that further research is needed to continue the search for important spectator motives and that such research may be quite fruitful.

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Examining Motives of Spectators at Women's Sporting Events

The current study extends the work of Funk et al. (in press) by providing a more complete scale for understanding spectator motivations. The SII received further support for its construct validity, and its psychometric properties were again confirmed as reliable. Moreover, the 14 motives represented 67% of the variance in the scale items of the SII, an improvement over the 60% predicted in Funk et al. Furthermore, the results of the regression analysis indicated that interest in the sport of soccer, interest in team, vicarious achievement, players serving as role models, and entertainment value explained 54% of the variance in spectator support level. Again, this represents an improvement over the SII presented by Funk et al.

The SII can be a valuable tool for both future researchers and practitioners. The scale is relatively short, requiring only 15 minutes to complete, and can be adapted for use in a variety of settings. In particular, the factors and items utilized in the SII could very easily be adapted to other women's sport events and soccer events. The confirmation of the instrument's psychometric properties, completed in two separate studies, should increase researchers' and practitioners' comfort with using these items. While more research is still needed relative to the factors motivating sport spectators, the SII provides future researchers with a number of potential factors to examine in various spectator sports and provides those researchers with statistically supported items to measure those factors.

The SII is a meaningful tool for sport organizations, enabling them to better understand the motivations of spectators who attend their events. This has a number of potential applications. First, the SII can be used in developing content for advertising campaigns. Understanding why fans are interested in a sporting event makes it much easier to determine what kind of advertisement content to include in promotional materials for that event. For example, a sport marketer can use the SII to measure the relative importance of the various objects of attachment (e.g., team, sport, player) and can then focus his or her advertising efforts on the most critical object of attachment. Second, the SII can be used in determining how to present the event in the sport facility. The presentation of the event involves a variety of aspects, including the music that is played and the half-time entertainment. Third, a motivational profile of spectators can be used in the sale of sponsorships. Corporate sponsors increasingly are concerned with reaching their "consumers." It is the sport organization's responsibility to demonstrate that the sport event's consumers match the sponsor's consumers; creating motivational profiles is one way to do so. For example, the entertainment value attendees attribute to the event might align with businesses that emphasize product value in promotional marketing campaigns.

Providing Suggestions for Marketing Sport Events

Finally, the authors believe the current study provides a number of suggestions for the marketing of women's sports. In particular, the results of the study would be particularly helpful to those organizing the new professional women's soccer league in the United States, the WUSA. A number of suggestions emerge upon examining the means for the 14 motivational factors. First of all, it is important to continue to convince the public that female soccer players are good role models. This has implications both for the way that teams market these players and for the way that the players market themselves. League officials must stress to the athletes the importance of maintaining a positive public image and must convey to them the impact this image has on the success of the league.

Second, league marketers must focus on providing entertainment for the fans both relative to the game itself and during breaks in the game. The spectators at the U.S. Cup indicated entertainment was the second most important motivational factor to them, which suggests that simply presenting the game itself, without ancillary entertainment, would be insufficient for

the fledgling league. However, fans also indicated the importance of drama and of their interest in soccer. Therefore, providing high-quality, exciting soccer games would be essential.

Third, the spectators indicated that the wholesome environment at the game was important to them. This has implications for a variety of decisions made by marketers and promoters, including the type of entertainment provided at the game and the music played in the stadium. For example, XFL-style cheerleaders clearly would not be a welcome addition in the eyes of many WUSA fans.

Fourth, the league must maintain reasonable prices. Many of the spectators at the Cup indicated that the entertainment value influenced their decision to attend the game. As the cost of attendance for team sports continues to escalate (Howard, 1999), women's soccer provides a less expensive alternative. This cost factor may also have been associated with the notion that the event provided an opportunity for parents and children to bond in a wholesome environment, something rarely found at traditional sporting events that are constrained by cost elements and may be seen as less wholesome.

Fifth, league officials must focus on creating fan attachments to the teams in the WUSA. Efforts to foster team identification (Sutton, McDonald, Milne, & Cimperman, 1997) and to strengthen attachment could be utilized to increase a team's consumer base. However, this generally is much more of a challenge for new leagues, which cannot rely on the long-term relationships between teams and their fans that more established leagues enjoy. The U.S. women's soccer team had strong support, in part because of national pride, but the new league will have to create new interest in new teams to be successful. Sutton et al. (1997) suggest increasing team/player accessibility to the public and increasing community-involvement activities as means of creating identification. Another feasible way to increase attachment to and identification with a team is to develop supporter clubs. Such clubs already are common in male soccer leagues around the world (Nakazawa, Mahony, Funk, & Hirakawa, 1999), as well as in multisport organizations (Hall & Mahony, 1997). In many cases, the teams provide a number of incentives for joining the clubs, such as discounts on tickets and merchandise, increased access to tickets, and special events for club members. As a result of such efforts, behavioral patterns relative to purchasing team-related merchandise or game tickets should mirror the increase in team attachment.

Sixth, the league should make an effort to market the WUSA to groups and individuals who support an increase in opportunities for women. The spectators at the Cup reported that support for women's opportunities was important to them. Armstrong (1999) also found support for a similar factor in her examination of the ABL, another women's sport league. It is possible that the league might attract fans who have less interest in soccer than do traditional fans, but who feel it is important that women be given an equal chance. Local women's organizations, for example, would be good targets for marketers.

Seventh, the league should not focus too much effort on marketing individual players in order to spur interest in the league. While the players are important as role models, interest in specific players was rated the lowest of the 14 factors (M = 2.78) and this factor was not a significant predictor of spectator support level. Funk et al. (in press) reported similar findings in that players were rated the lowest of 10 factors during the 1999 FIFA Women's World Cup (M = 2.55) and were not a significant predictor of interest in the event. Despite considerable anecdotal evidence to the contrary, provided through the media, these results suggest that individual players do not in fact appear to be major factors in stimulating interest in women's soccer.

Finally, the regression results suggest that using different marketing strategies for different segments may be particularly effective. A high level of spectator support was associated with a strong interest in soccer, a strong interest in the team, and the desire for good entertainment value. Therefore, a marketing strategy aimed at core soccer fans should focus on these factors. For example, a marketing campaign targeted toward those participating in soccer leagues or those subscribing to soccer-related publications should stress the high quality of soccer being played in the WUSA. The campaign also should focus on the entertainment value of league games, and teams would be well advised to offer reasonably priced entertainment packages to increase attendance during the inaugural year. It might also be effective to approach adult and youth leagues with group-package deals. In fact, encouraging these fans to join team supporter clubs could be useful in increasing the value of the games (e.g., by offering discounts to club members) and could help to increase attachment to the team, something core fans indicated was important to them.

In contrast, there was a significant negative relationship between spectator support level and vicarious achievement and the importance of players as role models. There also was a moderately significant negative relationship between spectator support level and the wholesome environment at the games. It is important to note that these factors were not negatively related to attendance, because all of the respondents were attendees at the game. The negative relationship suggests that those fans with a more moderate interest in professional women's soccer—the fringe fans—indicated these factors were more important to them. For example, fans with a low level of interest in soccer may have had a stronger desire for vicarious achievement, something they could experience even if their overall interest was

low. Therefore, different marketing strategies should be used when attempting to attract these fringe fans; a campaign that focuses simply on the high quality of soccer will fail. For example, advertisements directed toward these fans should emphasize that players are role models who can have a positive impact on the lives of young children and that the games provide a wholesome environment, appropriate for children of all ages. Such advertisements could be especially effective if they were directed toward the parents of recreational players, who are less involved in the sport of soccer but have observed their children's admiration of a sport figure (e.g., Biskup & Pfister, 1999).

Limitations of the Study

There are a few limitations of the current study that suggest the need for further research. First, not all individual difference factors were identified. Although 14 factors from previous literature were utilized, 44% of the variance in spectator support level remained unexplained. More qualitative analysis is needed to identify additional motivational characteristics in order to augment understanding of spectator differences. Second, the current study did not utilize an attendance element in the dependent measure. With the advent of the new WUSA, future data collection using the SII could incorporate an attendance-frequency measure to augment the five existing items used to derive an overall level-of-support variable. Third, as is the case with much research in this area, the sample included only those who attended the event—a typical scenario in the study of sport spectators. Eventually, comparisons of attendees and nonattendees will be important in this line of research.

Conclusion

The present study focused on women's professional soccer and demonstrated that consumer motivation can be partitioned into individual difference factors to better understand interest in a specific sport product. The psychometric properties of the Sport Interest Inventory (SII) were confirmed as viable for measuring individual differences in consumer motivation. The results indicate that while 14 distinct motivational characteristics could be identified among spectators, only five were useful in explaining how individuals differed in spectator support level. The five individual difference factors were sport, team, entertainment value, vicarious achievement, and role modeling; combined, they explained 54% of the variance in support for women's professional soccer. Taken together, the results suggest further investigation is needed to fully understand the characteristics of spectator motivations. Simply relying on past studies of sport spectators in other settings to predict motives in future events may be ineffective when developing marketing approaches. In particular, the significant negative relationship between interest in the Women's World Cup and both role modeling and vicarious achievement suggests far more research is needed to more fully understand the motives of sport spectators. It would be advisable to survey consumers in a specific situation before using motives to develop marketing strategies. In general, the current study provides a greater understanding of women's sports consumers, as well as some preliminary suggestions for those seeking to market similar events.

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Appendix A

Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model

Per Tabachnik and Fidell's (1996) recommendation, respondents with missing data points were deleted from the analysis. A covariance matrix was used as the input data from a random sample of 300 respondents (e.g., Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). The measurement model examined the relationships between the 42 observed variables and 14 first order latent variables: Supporting Women's Opportunity in Sport (SWOS), Social Opportunities (SOCIAL), Aesthetics (AESTH), Drama of the Match (DRAMA), Excitement (EXC), Interest in the Team (TEAM), Entertainment (ENTV), Interest in a Specific Player (PLAYER), National Pride (PRIDE), Vicarious Achievement (VIC), Interest in the Sport of Soccer (SOCCER), Wholesome Environment (WHOENV), Role Model (ROLE), Entertainment Value (ENTV), and Family Bonding (BON). The error terms for each of the 42 observed variables were constrained to not correlate, while the 14 latent factors were left to correlate freely.

Results

The *t*-values for each scale item were significant ($p <$ .05) and ranged from 8.03 to 23.97. The factor loadings ranged from a low of $R^2 = .17$ to a high of $R^2 =$ .84, indicating the average variance extracted by each motive ranged from .45 to .77 for a mean of .67, and above the .50 standard (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). These results indicate that, on average, 67% of the variance in the 14 predictors is accounted for by the 42 scale items. The 67% of variance accounted for by the scale items also represents an improvement over the 60% accounted for in the Funk et al. (in press) study of Women's World Cup spectators.

Inspection of the Goodness-of-fit indices further supported the presence of 14 unique motives. The (2 value divided by the degrees of freedom was signifying an adequate fit and was below the 3:1 ratio recommendation (Kline, 1998, p. 131). The RMSEA value of .06 was within the acceptable range of .05 to .08 for an acceptable fitting model (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hair et al., 1998). The NNFI (.90) and CFI (.92) measures were both above the .90 benchmark (Bentler, 1990). The SMRM (.06) was below the recommended .10 ceiling, indicating an adequate fit (Kline, 1998).