

The Effects of Fans' Motives on Televised Sports Viewing in South Korea

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Abstract

The primary purpose of this study was to examine how different motives affect the frequency and length of time with which people in South Korea watch televised sports. The goal was to provide baseline data and fundamental information that will be useful in the creation of marketing strategies that offer what fans want from sports events, in order to increase satisfaction, promote consumption, and encourage fans to continue watching specific televised sports. Data was collected from a randomly selected convenience sample in Seoul and Gyeonggi Provinces from June to July 2011. An exploratory factor analysis, Pearson's correlation coefficient, Cronbach's alpha, and multiple regression analysis were executed using Windows SPSS/PC 19.0. The results show that the frequency and amount of time with which people in South Korea watch televised sports was affected by five factors—attachment, entertainment, information, aesthetics, and vicarious achievement—of which entertainment had the most significant effect.

Keywords: televised sports, frequency, time spent

People consume sports for different reasons and various motives affect people's choice to attend a game, buy team merchandise, or watch a game on television. Effective sports management encompasses the same principles as the management of any other "product." The key to effective product management is understanding and satisfying customers. In the case of sports, understanding customers (sports fans and audiences) involves understanding what motivates them (Kahle, Duncan, Dalakas, & Aiken, 2001).

Previous sports marketing research has studied an array of consumer behavior antecedents, including motivation, involvement, and loyalty. In addition to these heavily researched constructs, the strength and direction of sport consumer attitudes have been examined in an attempt to fully understand sport consumer behavior (Mahony & Howard, 1998; Mahony & Moorman, 1999). Sport consumer motivations are a classic topic in the literature of sport consumer behavior. However, it is unclear what factors determine consumers' choices of different sporting event alternatives, particularly what factors motivate people to watch televised sports.

Identifying the motives of televised sports viewers is important because they can be a useful resource for the application of strategic planning for sports organizations and the effective utilization of corporate sponsorship to increase broadcast ratings. Yet, despite the large number of televised sports viewers, little research has been performed in this area with regard to sport consumer behavior. Although media and sports research can provide accurate and useful information about fans' consumption patterns, previous research has been limited to understanding the feelings and pleasures of viewing. A study of the motives for watching televised sports is needed in order to understand what drives media consumption, as empirical studies on this subject are lacking, especially in South Korea. The current study examines people's motives for watching televised sports and the relationship between those motives and viewing patterns. A viewer's motives for watching a televised sports program can influence whether or not that viewer watches, how long he/she will watch, and whether or not he/she will return to watch a future program. In this context, the basic hypothesis of this study is that differences in televised sports viewing frequency are dependent on differences in motivation.

This study examines how different motives affect the per-week frequency of televised sports viewing and the length of time per viewing, and develops an instrument to categorize the specific viewing motives of South Koreans. The goal is to provide baseline data and fundamental information that will be useful in the creation of marketing strategies to offer what fans want from sporting events, in order to increase satisfaction, promote consumption, and encourage fans to continue to watch specific televised sports.

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Literature Review

Studies of sports consumer motivation have been shifting from the general research-related sports consumption studies of the early 2000s (e.g., Kahle et al., 2001; Trail, Robinson, & Dick, 2003) to a wider variety of research areas. Many scholars (Sloan, 1989; Wann, 1995; Wann & Branscombe, 1993) have been interested in the effects that sports fans' motives have on their attitudes and behaviors toward players and teams (Kwon & Trail, 2001). Similar research on the per-week frequency of televised sports viewing and the length of time per viewing was conducted by Mahony, Nakazawa, Funk, & Gladden (2002). In addition, many studies have produced varied sports-viewing motive typologies (Kahle, Kambara, & Roseet, 1996; Milne & McDonald, 1999; Trail & James, 2001a; Wann, 1995; Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Rubin (1981, 1983) presented a media-use typology in later studies in order to develop the Television Viewing Motives Scale (TVMS).

Studies of sports media consumption behavior have also been evolving from general research-related topics (e.g., Trail & James, 2001b; Wann, 1995) to a variety of research areas. One of the shifting areas is the subject of marketing strategy (e.g., Kwon & Tail, 2001; Robinson, Trail, & Dick, 2005). Researchers have also explored demographic differences within a target market. Other more specialized and experimental research areas concern television programming schedule changes in the NFL (Mahony & Moorman, 1999), analysis of NFL attendance (Robinson et al., 2005), and analysis of cross-national differences in the consumer behavior of Mixed Martial Arts fans (Kim, Andrew, & Greenwell, 2009; Ko, 2002; Levin & McDonald, 2009).

Trail and James (2001) constructed their own measure, entitled the Motivation Scale for Sports Consumption (MSSC). In their study, motives for watching sports on television included (a) achievement (e.g., to feel accomplishment when an athlete wins), (b) knowledge (e.g., to learn about sports), (c) aesthetics (e.g., to experience the beauty of sports), (d) drama (e.g., to experience excitement), (e) escape (e.g., to forget about the pressures of everyday life), (f) companionship (e.g., to be with family), (g) physical attraction (e.g., to watch attractive athletes), (h) physical skills (e.g., to learn the physical skills required to compete), and (i) social utility (e.g., to watch with others) (Earnhardt & Haridakis, 2008).

Conceptual Background

This section presents a number of interrelated theoretical constructs that provide a foundation for the current investigation of television viewing motivation. The literature describes various motives that impact fans' decisions to consume televised sports. These include the following.

Entertainment. Entertainment is one of the primary reasons why people watch televised sports. Entertainment includes the variables "thrilling," "entertaining," "fun," "exciting," and "enjoyable." This finding is consistent with studies that found similar motives for sports and general television viewing (Gantz & Wenner, 1991; Rubin, 1981, Wenner & Gantz, 1989).

Attachment. Funk & James (2006) indicate that the emotional and loyal qualities of the sports fan can result in consistent and enduring behaviors, including attendance at events and watching games on television. Since only a small number of fans have access to game tickets, watching the NFL on television remains a necessary condition to visually experience the sport live (e.g., Lever & Wheeler, 1993; Wenner & Gantz 1989).

Vicarious Achievement. Sport consumers are attracted by the possibility that they will feel a sense of personal achievement and increase their self-esteem and public image if their favorite team performs well (Mahony et al., 2002). The feeling of accomplishment experienced while watching a sport is a positive factor that determines viewing patterns. Watching a favorite team winning a game can provide fans with a feeling that they cannot achieve in their actual lives.

Information. One of the most common motivations for watching sports is to learn about players, teams, and games. Fans watch games in order to keep up with facts about players and statistics because they like to be walking encyclopedias of sports knowledge and trivia (Lee, 2011). Learning motivation might suggest something about the co-viewing nature of sports television. When watching with other people, fans learn about sports. This substantiates the findings of Wenner and Gantz (1989), who identified "learning about the game" as a reason why some fans watch sports on television.

Aesthetics. Some people are motivated to watch sports because of the aesthetic qualities of the competition, such as the artistic beauty and grace of sports movements.

The term “aesthetics” refers to the “excellence, beauty, and creativity of athletic performance” (Smith, 1988). Lee (2011) argued that “a splendid athletic performance rivals any great work of art.” Individuals who want to experience excellence and beauty may consume sports as an art form (Wann, 1995).

Social Interaction. Sports are viewed because they are a way to spend time with family and friends, who presumably are going to view them anyway. This also corroborates prior research, which found that the opportunity to spend time with family and friends served as a motive for watching sports (Gantz & Wenner, 1995). Fans consistently report enjoying sports more if they have their friends with them to talk about the action. Wann, Melnick, Russell, and Page (2001) stated, “Sport fandom and sport spectating can help fulfill the human need for social interaction by providing a sense of belongingness.”

Unwinding. Sports fans watch or attend sporting events to temporarily forget their problems or to revitalize their lives by escaping from their routines (Trail & James, 2001b; Wann, 1995). Many fans report that watching sports allows them the opportunity to release emotions by letting loose, having a few beers or drinks, and letting off steam.

Passing Time. The motivation to pass the time has emerged as a reason why people watch sports on television. Fans are motivated to watch sports on television to “get away from the rest of the family” (i.e., escape) and to occupy their time (i.e., pass the time). This lends support to prior findings that suggest that people watch television to pass the time (Rubin, 1981, 1983; Rubin & Perse, 1987) and to escape (Earnhardt & Haridakis, 2008; Rubin, 1981, 1983; Wenner & Gantz, 1989).

Methods

Sample

Data was collected from 753 usable responses out of 800 self-administered questionnaires that were distributed to a randomly selected convenience sample in Seoul and Gyeonggi Provinces in July of 2014. As to the respondents, 54.1% (407) were female, 45.9% (346) were male, and their ages ranged from 20 to 60s and above.

Table 1: Characteristics of Respondents

		N	%
Gender	Male	407	54.1%
	Female	346	45.9%
Age	20s	179	23.8%
	30s	189	25.1%
	40s	158	21.0%
	50s	131	17.4%
	60s & above	96	12.7%
Per-week frequency of watching televised sports	1 Day	212	28.2%
	2 Day	202	26.8%
	3 Day	134	17.8%
	4 Day	106	14.1%
	5 Day	53	7.0%
	6 Day	8	1.0%
	Every day	38	5.1%
Length of time spent watching televised sports per viewing	Less than 30 minutes	230	30.5%
	30 minutes to 1 hour	249	33.1%
	1 to 2 hours	209	27.8%
	2 to 3 hours	65	8.6%
	More than 3 hours	0	0%

Questionnaire: Item Generation and Scale Development

For the present study, the researcher modified a previously developed instrument, the Watching Televised Sports Motivation Scale (WTSMS). The scale-modifying process involved the generation of a list of items for each component of the television sports motive framework. Multiple measures for each of the sub-dimensions of WTSMS were modified from the items in existing scales (e.g., motives for watching television sports; Earnhardt & Haridakis, 2008; Haridakis & Rubin, 2003; Mahony et al., 2002; Rubin, 1983) and previous related studies (e.g., Kim et al., 2009; Spinda & Haridakis, 2008; Wann, 1995). After these revisions were made, a field test of the instrument was conducted by two panels of experts who are professors in South Korea. A pilot test was conducted and the items were refined. The final instrument had a total of 36 items that reflected the eight sub-dimensions of WTSMS: entertainment, information, aesthetics, vicarious achievement, attachment, unwinding, social interaction, and passing time. This was assessed for internal consistency (i.e., Cronbach's alpha and item-to-total correlations) and content validity by the panel of experts.

The first section of the questionnaire asked subjects to report their motives for watching televised sports, in accordance with the aforementioned eight sub-dimensions. The second section of the questionnaire contained eight items and asked subjects to report their level of satisfaction with watching televised sports and their attitudes related to watching. The final section contained questions about participants' demographic characteristics. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

Measurement Details

Data analysis was executed in three steps. The first included descriptive statistics about the respondents, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA), a correlation coefficient, Cronbach's internal consistency, construct validity, and inter-item reliability with maximum likelihood estimation analysis using Windows SPSS/PC 19.0. Second, the researcher verified the convergence and discrimination, evaluated the optimal configuration of the constructs and variables, and determined a fit index theoretical model (36 items and 8 sub-dimensions) and a measurement model for WTSMS (5 factors and 21 items) through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and path analysis using AMOS 7.0. Third, using the verified models, the researcher analyzed the motives that affect the per-week frequency of televised sports viewing and the per-view length of viewing time.

A Theoretical Model of the Watching Televised Sports Motivation Scale (WTSMS)

The proposed model of service quality is comprised of eight sub-dimensions—entertainment, information, aesthetics, vicarious achievement, attachment, unwinding, social interaction, and passing time—based on previous studies (e.g., Earnhardt & Haridakis, 2008; Rubin, 1983; Haridakis & Rubin, 2003). This study's theoretical model hypothesized that a sequence of relationships among these eight sub-dimensions would influence fans' intent to watch televised sports. After three of the original 36 items were deleted, a series of CFAs were performed through AMOS 7.0 to examine the validity of the scale and to determine how well the indicators captured their specified constructs (Bollen, 1989; Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998).

As noted in Table 2, the compliance verification resulted in the removal of three sub-dimensions—unwinding, social interaction, and passing time—and 12 items, leaving five remaining sub-dimensions and 21 items through examined Fit Indexes (X^2/df , RMSEA, CFI, NFI, IFI, TLI, and p value).

Table 2: Goodness of Fit Indexes for Factor

Factors	X^2	df	X^2/df	RMSEA	CFI	NFI	IFI	TLI	p	Fit
Entertainment	78.235	5	15.647	.10	.97	.97	.97	.95	.001	O
Information	19.275	2	9.637	.09	.99	.98	.99	.97	.001	O
Aesthetics	8.31	2	4.15	.04	.99	.99	.99	.99	.001	O
Vicarious Achievement	14.63	2	7.31	.06	.99	.99	.99	.98	.001	O
Attachment	15.10	2	7.55	.01	.99	.99	.99	.98	.001	O
Unwinding	109.99	2	54.99	.20	.94	.94	.94	.84	.001	X
Social Interaction	35.95	2	17.97	.11	.97	.97	.97	.92	.001	X
Passes Time	194.47	2	97.23	.26	.79	.79	.79	.39	.001	X

Results

The correlation coefficient for a single identified dimension factor was analyzed (see Table 3). The maximum relationships between factors that were in the same positive (+) direction with statistically significant correlation coefficients appear to be less than one. The discriminate validity of the correlation was therefore considered to have been demonstrated (Challagalla & Shervani, 1996).

Table 3: Means (Standard Deviation) and Correlation Matrix

Motivation	ENT	INF	AES	VIC.A	ATT
Entertainment	-				
Information	.820	-			
Aesthetics	.809	.830	-		
Vicarious Achievement	.715	.662	.691	-	
Attachment	.814	.717	.804	.898	-

The results of the confirmatory factor analysis (i.e., measurement model) and descriptive statistics are presented in Table 3. Cronbach's alpha estimates for the five sub-dimensions of WTSMS ranged from 0.57 to 0.91, generally exceeding the 0.70 minimum value, which were regarded as acceptable levels (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

To empirically verify the measurement model of WTSMS (5 factors and 21 items), Cronbach's internal consistency, construct validity, and inter-item reliability with a maximum likelihood estimation analysis were determined. This result indicates that the WTSMS model showed good construct validity and reliability. These scales and subscales had good internal consistency, construct validity, and adequate representation of the theorized construct, so we were confident in using them within the study model.

Figure 1 shows that the measurement model was found to be adequate with the following indexes. The Chi-square/df ratio (8.500) was more than the suggested threshold (i.e., more than 1.96; Carmines & McIver, 1981; Kline, 1998). The RMSEA value (0.078) was acceptable as it was less than 0.08, indicating adequate fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hu & Bentler, 1999). Other indexes (i.e., GFI, CFI, IFI) were greater than the recommended 0.90 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Kline, 1998). The NFI (0.89) and TLI (0.88) levels ($p < 0.001$) were slightly less than the recommended 0.90; however, they were considered acceptable in accordance with the opinion of other scholars (Arbuckle & Wothe, 2000; Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002) regarding whether the fit of a model should take into account other determined fit indexes. Thus, the measurement model had a generally acceptable value.

Table 4 and Figure 2 report that the entertainment factor was most significant among the five sub-dimensions of WTSMS in its effect on the frequency of and the amount of time spent watching televised sports ($p < 0.05$).

Table 4: Goodness of Fit Indexes of the Measurement Model Test

		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Consuming Level	← Aesthetics	.342	.581		.413
Consuming Level	← Entertainment	.843	.550	.818	.024*
Consuming Level	← Information	-.525	1.413	-.532	.595
Consuming Level	← Vicarious Achievement	-1.358	1.043	-1.833	.067
Consuming Level	← Attachment	1.374	.946	1.822	.068

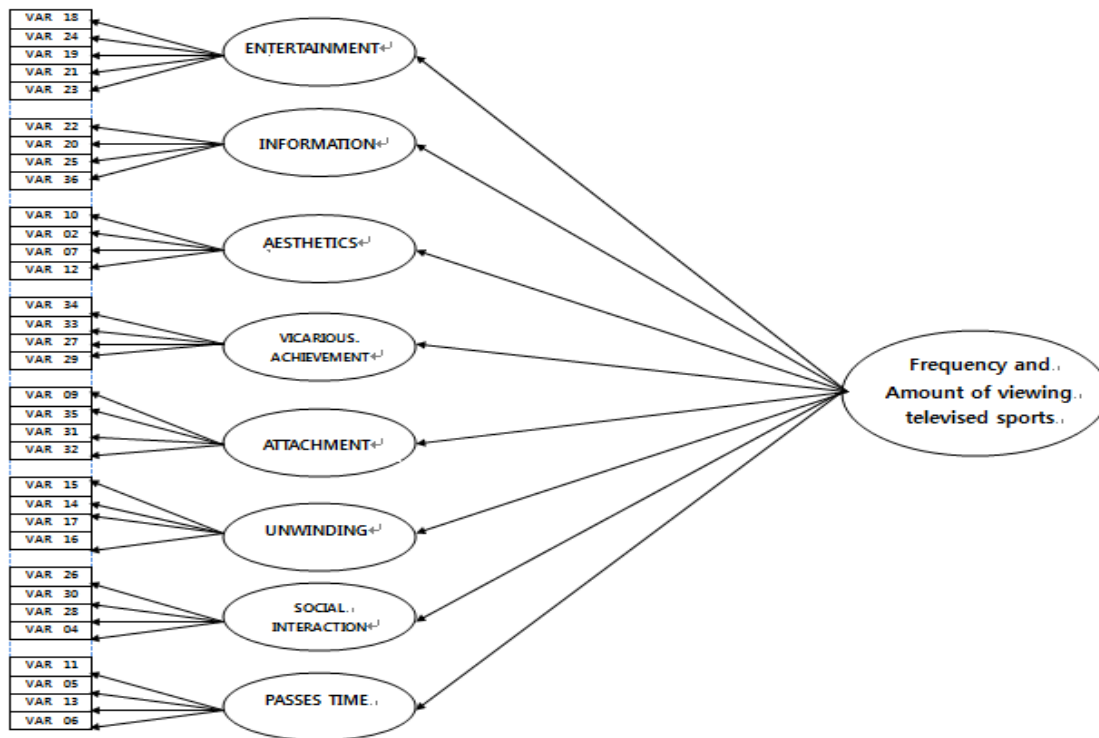


Figure 1: A theoretical model for the Watching Televised Sport Motivation Scale (WTSMS)

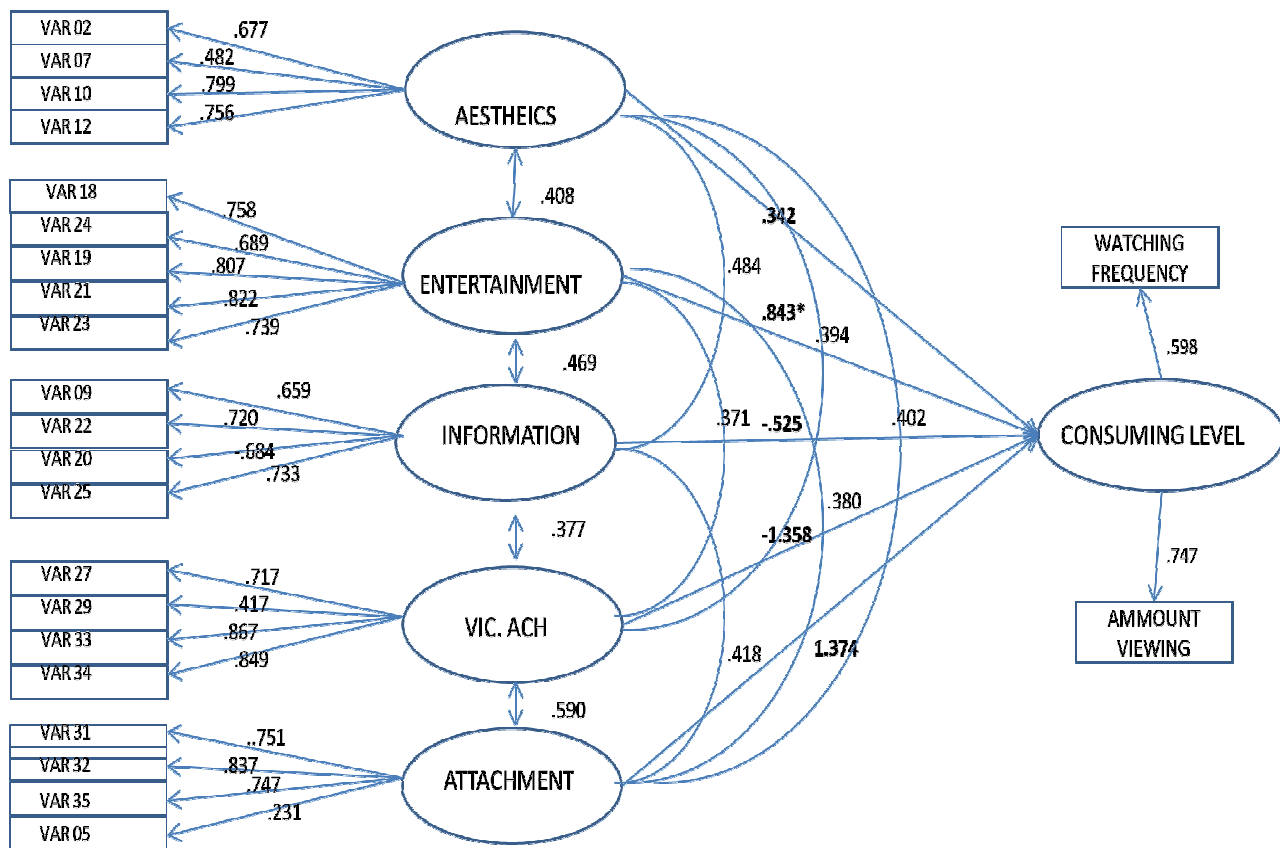


Figure 2: The Results of the Measurement Model

Discussion

Watching televised sports is deeply ingrained in South Korean culture and appears to be a complex process. To accomplish the aims of this study, related motivation scales (e.g., Earnhardt & Haridakis, 2008; Haridakis & Rubin, 2003; Rubin, 1983) were modified in a cross-national context and were then categorized based on eight factors. This measurement model was then used to examine differences in motives for watching televised sports.

This study's results generally support the existing literature on spectator sports events, sports participants, and motivation to view televised sports. The frequency of televised sports viewing was found to be affected by motivation for information, vicarious achievement, and attachment, and was not affected by entertainment, passing time, or social interaction, which confirmed the findings of similar research (Kim, et al. 2009). Researchers have suggested that motives for viewing sports, such as entertainment, are similar to motives related to general television viewing frequency (Bryant & Raney, 2000; Gantz, 1981; Gantz & Wenner, 1991; Wenner & Gantz, 1989).

Mahony et al. (2002), Robinson et al. (2005), and Won and Kitamura (2007) identified vicarious achievement as positively related to the length of time one has been a sports fan; however, the current study does not support the measurement model in which the motive of vicarious achievement affects viewing frequency. The current study also shows that the motive of attachment does not affect viewing frequency, which is not consistent with previous studies which found that sports fans are most interested in games in which their favorite team is playing (e.g., Wann, Schrader, & Wilson, 1999), as well as those which state that the opportunity to see a favorite team win is the number-one motivation for sports viewing (e.g., Gantz, 1981; Wenner & Gantz, 1998; Zillmann et al, 1989).

There is some precedent for the suggestion that one motivation consisted of watching sports in order to learn about the game, as this type of motivation was identified in previous television studies (Wenner & Gantz, 1989). Yet, the motive of "information," i.e., learning about the game, was not consistently accounted for in this study. This motive may be related to identifying with the game and developing an interest in favorite athletes (Wenner & Gantz, 1989). This finding does not, however, lend support to previous studies (Trail & James, 2001a; Wann, 1995), which found that people watched sports for their aesthetic value and natural beauty.

Sporting events are widely used for conversational utility ("something to talk about"), companionship ("something to do with family or friends"), and to establish close relationships with others (Funk, Mahony, & Ridinger, 2002; Trail & James, 2001b; Wann, 1995). Aesthetics motives were added to the TVMS from previous studies because they consistently emerged as reasons why people watched sports on television (Milne & McDonald, 1999; Trail & James, 2001a; Wann, 1995). Yet, because support for this dimension in previous research has been mixed (Madrigal & Howard, 1995; Wann, 1995), it was not included as a motive in the current study's model.

In a study of motives specific to sports content, Gantz (1981) found different motives for watching sports, the strongest of which were habit (e.g., just because it's there) and passing time (e.g., to banish boredom, to let loose, a form of release). This lends support to prior findings that suggest that people watch television to pass the time (Rubin, 1981, 1983; Rubin & Perse, 1987) and to escape (Gantz & Wenner, 1991; Rubin, 1981, 1983) and also emphasizes how the opportunity to unwind or "let loose" can be a motivation for sports viewing (Wenner & Gantz, 1989). Yet, the motives of passing time and unwinding were not supported by the data in this study.

The fact that most spectators consume sports as members of a social group suggests that fans do indeed use sports to satisfy social interaction needs (Lee, 2011). It has long been known that companionship is a motivation that people have for watching television (Rubin, 1983). Previous studies related to television viewing motives have reported that people are motivated by a sense of companionship (Rubin, 1983; Rubin & Perse, 1987). However, in this study, social interaction was not found to affect televised sports viewing.

The results of this study can provide sports marketers and scholars with a better understanding of consumer behavior in relation to televised sports viewing. One implication of great relevance to sports marketers is that televised sports motives explained a great deal of variance in information, vicarious achievement, and attachment to watching sports programs as predictive levels of implication.

Conclusion

Surprisingly, there have been a limited number of researches that have explored “why people watch sports events” (Whannel, 2003); therefore, the present study set out to answer this question. The results of this study indicate that South Korean sports viewers watch televised sports events for entertainment, fun, and excitement rather than for fandom, team attachment, aesthetics, or information. Based on the findings of this study, it is strongly recommended that sports-related media and broadcasting companies produce sports content that is comprised of popular attractions, as indicated by South Korean sports viewers’ characteristics and interests.

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