Fans vs. Spectators: An Analysis of Those Who Attend Intercollegiate Football Games

Matthew J. Robinson, Galen T. Trail, Ronald J. Dick, Andrew J. Gillentine

Abstract

During the 2001 college football season more than 40 million individuals attended intercollegiate football games across the four divisions sponsored by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Although it would be easy to classify all of these individuals as either being spectators or fans, that would be inaccurate. Trail, Robinson, Gillentine, and Dick (2003) developed a model based on the relationship between motives and points of attachment that classified attendees as either spectators or fans. The purpose of this study was to use the model to determine how individuals who attend college football games should be classified at the four NCAA divisions of college football. Data were collected from spectators at games at the four different NCAA college football divisions. A MANOVA was performed on the motive factors and on the points of attachment factors proposed by Trail et al., using the division level as the independent variable. Results indicated that there was some support for the Trail et al. model. In general, Division I attendees have motives and points of attachment that are consistent with what Trail et al. (2003) classified as a fan characteristics. Division III attendees have motives and points of attachment that are consistent with what Trail et al. (2003) classified as spectator characteristics. Division II and I-AA have motives and attachment indicative of both fans and spectators. Discussion of the results and suggestions for future research are presented.

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for a fan's consumption behavior may differ from a spectator's and vice versa: thus each may need to be marketed to differently. Trail et al. (2003) set out to quantify the differences by developing a model that was based on the relationship between motives (various achievement, acquisition of knowledge, aesthetics, socialization, drama/eustress, escape, and physical skill) as measured by the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC) and points of attachment (the players, the coach, the community, the sport, the university, the team, and the level of the sport) as measured by the Points of Attachment Index (PAI). The present study furthered the Trail et al. (2003) work by using the latent variables presented in the model to classify those who attend college football games at the various levels as being spectators, fans, or both.

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**Motives for Spectating**

Deci (1971) suggested that motives are either innate or learned and generate behaviors because of the satisfaction or enjoyment generated by the activities therein. Most spectator or fan behaviors fulfill social or psychological needs. Many researchers have suggested potential motives for sport spectator consumption (Pease & Zhang, 2001; Sloan, 1989; Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2000; Wann, 1995; Zillmann, Bryant, & Saposky, 1989; Zillmann & Paulus, 1993) and several have developed scales for measuring the motives for attending sporting events or being a fan (Funk, Mahony, Nakazawa, & Hirakawa, 2001; Funk, Mahony, & Ridinger, 2002; Kahle, Kambara, & Rose, 1996; Milne & McDonald, 1999; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995). We chose to use the motives proposed by Trail et al. (2000), which were partially based on theories espoused by Sloan (1989) and Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, and we chose the Motivation Scale for SportConsumption (MSSC) developed by Trail and James (2001) to measure the specified motives.

**Identification and Points of Attachment**

Trail et al. (2000) presented the theoretical framework for investigating identification as well. Fink, Trail, and Anderson (2002) stated that the examination of team and fan identification is grounded in social identity theory. Tajfel and Turner (1986) contended that self-concept is composed of personal identity and social identity. Trail et al. (2000) defined identification as "an orientation of the self in regard to other objects including a person or group that results in feelings or sentiments of close attachment" (p. 165-166). Further, Trail et al. (2000) stated that identification influences cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses, and many authors have suggested that team identification is a key predictor of sport consumption (Cialdini et al., 1976; Sloan, 1989; Zillmann et al., 1989). Anderson and Stone (1981) have long argued that sports teams are symbolic representations of a community and can provide individuals a sense of belonging to that community. Those authors and others (e.g., Wann & Branscombe, 1993) have solely focused on identification with, or attachment to, a team. Robinson and Trail (2003) and Matusuoka and Fujimoto (2002) both argued that individuals may have multiple points of attachment besides the team and therefore are worthy of investigating.

**Relationships Between Motives and Identification**

Previous research has shown that motives have been associated with team identification (Fink et al., 2002; Trail, Fink, & Anderson, 2003; Trail & James, 2003; Wann, 1995; Wann, Brewer, & Royalty, 1999; Wann, Royalty, & Rochelle, 2002). At this point though, research that has examined relationships among individual and specific motives and points of attachment is sparse (i.e., Robinson & Trail, 2003; Trail et al., 2003). However, indirect evidence exists to suggest that there may in fact be relationships between specific motives and points of attachment (Funk et al., 2001; Funk et al., 2002).

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**Model for Distinguishing Between Spectators and Fans**

Sloan (1989) contended that fans and spectators could have different motives for attending. For example, the fan may be more motivated by the achievement of a favorite team, while the spectator may be motivated more by the aesthetics or the skill displayed in a sport. Fisher and Wakefield (1998) suggested that different motives and different effects for the individual could change based on the performance of a team and/or the outcome of a contest. This implied that an individual, whose favorite team is not successful, might change the focus to other aspects rather than dwell on a negative association. Based on Sloan's (1989) and Fisher and Wakefield (1998) findings, Trail et al. (2003) successfully tested a model that consisted of three different latent
variables derived from the MSSC (see Figure 1). One group, the "Overarching Motive" variable, consisted of the motives of socialization and escape that are applicable to both fans and spectators. The second variable, "Vicarious Achievement Motive," applied to fans of successful teams and the third latent variable, labeled "Spectator Motive," consisted of the aesthetic, drama/eustress, acquisition of knowledge, and appreciation of physical skill motives applied to spectators and fans of unsuccessful teams. These three latent variables were found to be differentially related to the Points of Attachment derived from the PAI. The "Vicarious Achievement Motive" was directly related to a latent variable termed "Organizational Identification" that consisted of the five points of attachment: team, coach, community, university, and player. The "Spectator Motive" was directly related to a latent variable labeled "Sport Identification" that consisted of two points of attachment constructs: type of sport and level of sport. However, the attachment to the player construct did not represent the Organizational Identification latent variable well. Thus, for the present study we analyzed attachment to the player separate from the Organizational Identification.

**Differences in Four NCAA Divisions of College Football**

Deschriver (1999) stated that competitive quality distinguished professional sport from intercollegiate sport. It can be argued that philosophies, budgets, and the offering of scholarships lead to differences in competitive quality among the four classifications of NCAA college football and this competitive quality may lead to whether or not a division has spectators or fans or both attending.
The more than 1,000 individual institutions that are members of the NCAA are divided into three divisions: NCAA Division I, Division II, and Division III, with each division having a unique philosophy that is the driving force in creating three very distinct environments and levels of competition. Institutions competing at the Division I level aspire for regional and national athletic excellence and prominence. They offer athletic scholarships and strive to finance the athletic program with funds generated by the athletic enterprise. These institutions typically recognize that they serve both internal constituencies as well as the general public (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2001). The average revenue for a Division I athletic department is $21,900,000 with ticket sales being the greatest source of revenue (Fulks, 2000).

"It was hypothesized that the differences that exist between the divisions in terms of philosophies, budgets, and level of competition would lead to differences in terms of the classification of the attendees as being either spectators or fans at the different levels."

In the sport of football, Division I is divided into I-A and I-AA classifications with I-A being viewed as the higher level of the two. In order for an institution to be classified as a I-A institution, 60% of its schedule must be against fellow I-A teams, the institution must have at least 17,000 spectators for home games or 20,000 for all games played over the previous four years, and have a 30,000 stadium seat capacity. NCAA I-A institutions are permitted to offer 85 scholarships for football. Fulks (2000) reported that the average budget for an NCAA Division I-A football program is $5,260,000. Division I-A football is viewed as the highest level of competitive quality and it can be supported by the fact that the majority of those individuals who play professional football in the National Football League (NFL) competed at an NCAA I-A institution.

An NCAA I-AA institution’s schedule must consist of 50% of its games against I-A or I-AA opponents, there are no football attendance or stadium size requirements, and institutions are permitted to offer 63 football scholarships (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2001). Fulks (2000) reported the average operating budget for a Division I-AA football program was $1,100,000.

NCAA Division II athletic programs also recognize the dual responsibility of meeting the needs of the internal community and the general public, but not to the degree of Division I in terms of the general public. Division II institutions permit athletically related financial aid and believe in offering participation opportunities to as many students as possible (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2001). Division II operating budgets are significantly less than Division I. The average budget for an entire Division II athletic department with football is $1,900,000 (Fulks, 2000). Also at Division II, ticket revenue is not a significant source of revenue because athletic departments rely on institutional support and student fees as funding sources (Fulks, 2000). In terms of competition, Division II is not considered as high a level of competition as Division I-A or I-AA.

NCAA Division III athletic programs are financed, staffed, and controlled through the same general procedures as other departments on campus. The average budget for a Division III athletic department with football is $1,000,000 (Fulks, 2000). Division III athletics place a special emphasis on meeting the needs of internal constituencies such as the students, alumni, and institutional personnel rather than on the general public’s entertainment needs. In addition, these institutions do not offer athletic scholarships to student-athletes and strive for league and regional excellence rather than national excellence (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2001). Attendance at athletic events is minimal and not viewed as a significant revenue source for an athletic department. Division III is viewed as the lowest level of competition within the NCAA.

"... those attending I-A games were motivated by vicarious achievement to a greater degree than those attending games at the other levels."

The purpose of this study was to use Figure 1 to help determine if those attending college football games at each of the four levels of the NCAA can be classified as fans and/or spectators. It was hypothesized that the differences that exist between the divisions in terms of philosophies, budgets, and level of competition would lead to differences in terms of the classification of the attendees as being either spectators or fans at the different levels. The researchers hypothesized that at the Division I level the attendees would exhibit more fan tendencies and at the Division II and III levels the attendees would exhibit more spectator tendencies. This hypothesis was based on the belief that those who attend games at the highest level, Division I-A, would be motivated more by achievement and would attach more to the high profile teams, coaches, communities, universities, and players. On the other hand, those who attend the lower level games, I-AA, II, and III, would be motivated more by the spectator motives and attach more to the sport and level of competition. Lastly, based on the Trail et al. (2003) model, the researchers hypothesized that there would be no differences among
attendees at the different division level games on the Overarching Motive variable. On the Vicarious Achievement variable and the Organizational Identification variable (minus attachment to player), the researchers expected that attendees at the Division I-A level would score higher than the other three levels. On the Spectator Motives variable, the Sport Identification variable, and the Attachment to Player variable, researchers expected that the attendees at the Division I-A level would score lower than the other three levels.

Method

Data were collected from spectators at four intercollegiate football games (Division I-A, n=191; Division I-AA, n=221; Division II, n=229; and Division III, n=220) during the 2001-2002 academic year. Out of 910 questionnaires distributed, 861 usable questionnaires were returned, for a return rate of 94%. The selection of the schools for the study was based on the geographic proximity to the researchers. The data were collected at one game for each of the divisions. All four of the schools selected had winning seasons the year of the collection, all of the schools had a tradition of success in football (e.g., postseason competition, All-American players), and all of the teams were coached by individuals who had an above average winning percentage as a head coach.

Instrumentation

The questionnaire was comprised of two scales: the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC) and the Point of Attachment Index (PAI). The MSSC consists of seven subscales (vicarious achievement, acquisition of knowledge, aesthetics, socialization, drama/eustress, escape, and physical skill) and has shown adequate psychometric properties in previous use (Fink et al., 2002; Robinson & Trail, 2003; Trail et al., 2003; Trail & James, 2001). The 21 items (seven subscales, three items per subscale) have a seven-point response format ranging from “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Agree” (7). For this study, the motives were combined into the higher level variables depicted by the Trail et al. (2003) model: Overarching Motive (escape and social), Spectator Motive (skill, aesthetics, drama, and knowledge), and the Vicarious Achievement Motive.

The Point of Attachment Index has seven subscales that focus on identification with 1) the players, 2) the coach, 3) the community, 4) the sport, 5) the university, 6) the team, and 7) the level of the sport (e.g., college, not professional). Each subscale had three items and thus the PAI has 21 items total, with a seven-point response format ranging from “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Agree” (7). The PAI had shown good reliability and construct validity previously (Robinson & Trail, 2003; Trail et al., 2003), with one exception as noted above. The identification with player subscale did not load well on the Organizational Identity factor. Again, the subscales were combined into the variables depicted by the Trail et al. (2003) model with the exception of identification with player, which was maintained as a separate variable. Thus, Organizational Identification was represented by four subscales (team, coach, community, and university) and Sport Identification was represented by two subscales (level and sport).

Procedures

Undergraduate sport management students assisted with the distribution and collection of the questionnaire at each contest. The students were trained in data collection methods prior to the data collection. Students were placed at randomly selected entrances to seating areas in the football stadiums. This was done to help ensure more varied representation among spectators (i.e., not all students, not all season ticket holders, not all donors, etc.). The questionnaires along with a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>DV</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Power</th>
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<td>Division Level</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>37.26</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.115</td>
<td>.117</td>
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<td>Player Identification</td>
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<td>Sport Identification</td>
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<td>17.29</td>
<td>.000</td>
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Table 2
Means and (Standard Deviations) of DVs by Level (DIA, DIAA, DII, DIII)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>DIA</th>
<th>DIAA</th>
<th>DII</th>
<th>DIII</th>
<th>Sample</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Achievement</td>
<td>6.11</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>5.25</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Overarching</td>
<td>5.82</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>5.34</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Spectator</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>5.37</td>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>5.47</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Organizational Identification</td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>4.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Player</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>3.72</td>
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<td>Identification</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Sport</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>4.60</td>
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<td>Identification</td>
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</table>

Note. * indicates differences between DIA and DIAA at p < .05, † indicates differences between DIA and DII at p < .05, ‡ indicates differences between DIA and DIII at p < .05, †† indicates differences between DIAA and DII at p < .05, †‡ indicates differences between DIAA and DIII at p < .05, ††† indicates differences between DII and DIII at p < .05.

Clipboard and pencil were distributed to the spectators prior to the game and the respondents were asked to complete the scales measuring the motives and identification. The students collected the questionnaires when completed. The purpose of the study, as well as the instructions for completion of the survey, was included in the questionnaire.

"In terms of points of attachment, it is evident again that differences also exist among the divisions."

Data Analysis
A MANOVA was performed using the GLM procedure in SPSS 10.5. There was one independent variable (division level) and six dependent variables (Overarching Motives, Spectator Motives, Vicarious Achievement Motive, Organizational Identification, Sport Identification, and Player Identification). This allowed researchers to test whether mean differences among the division levels on a combination of dependent variables existed (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989) for both the motives and the points of attachment.

Results
For the MANOVA, with the use of the Wilk's criterion, the combined dependent variables were affected by division level, F(18, 2410) = 19.40, p < .001. The results reflected a moderate association between the division level and the combined DVs ($\eta^2 = .12$).

The test of between-subjects effects indicated that attendees differed by division level on all six of the dependent variables (Table 1). The post-hoc (Bonferroni) tests indicated that those attending the Division I-A game ($M = 6.1$) were motivated by vicarious achievement to a much greater extent than those at either the I-AA ($M = 5.0$), DII ($M = 5.2$), or DIII ($M = 4.8$) levels. Differences existed between the latter levels also (Table 2). Level of division explained 11.5% of the variance in vicarious achievement. Differences in the overarching motive were also apparent, although not as a great ($\eta^2 = .08$), as DI-A differed from both all other levels again (Table 2). Relative to the spectator motives, Division I-A differed from I-AA and II, but not Division III and the differences were less ($\eta^2 = .05$).

The test of between-subjects effects also indicated that attendees differed by division level on the three aspects of points of attachment (Table 2). Division...
level explained the most variance in organizational identification ($\Omega^2 = .16$), a moderate amount of variance in player identification ($\Omega^2 = .12$), and also explained a small amount of variance in the sport identification ($\Omega^2 = .06$). The post-hoc (Bonferroni) tests indicated that those attending the Division I-A game ($M = 5.5$) scored higher on the organizational identification than any of the other divisions DI-AA ($M = 4.5$), DII ($M = 4.2$), DIII ($M = 4.6$), which all differed also, except for I-AA and III. The results relative to the sport identification variable were slightly different though. Attendees at the Division III school ($M = 5.4$) were more highly identified with the sport/level than those at the other schools DI-AA ($M = 4.8$), DII ($M = 4.6$), DI-A ($M = 4.9$). Relative to player attachment, again Division III attendees scored highest ($M = 4.4$), followed by DII ($M = 4.1$), DI-A ($M = 3.4$), and DI-AA ($M = 2.9$), with all differences being significant except between DII and DIII.

Discussion

It is apparent from the results that differences do exist among the divisions based on the motive variables and the points of attachment variables. However, although there was some support for the model that Trail et al. (2003) proposed, there were aspects that were not supported.

Specifically, the model was supported by results that indicated that those attending I-A games were motivated by vicarious achievement to a greater degree than those attending games at the other levels. In general, the trend was as expected (Figure 2), except that those attendees at the Division III level indicated slightly higher levels of vicarious achievement than those at the I-AA and II levels. Fink et al. (2002) defined vicarious achievement as the need for social prestige, self-esteem, and sense of empowerment for an individual through his or her association with a successful team. These aspects are probably what motivate an individual to become a fan of a successful Division I-A college football team. Division I-A fans may also be practicing the process of basking-in-reflected glory (BIRGing) that has been defined by Wann and Branscombe (1990) as an individual’s desire to increase their association with successful others. It appears the fans at the Division I level are motivated to attend in order to live vicariously through the achievements of their favorite team. The high degree of vicarious achievement can be attributed to the fact that the average fan never was, nor will be, a scholarship athlete. Furthermore, the fan never had

**Figure 2**

Mean Motives (Achievement, Overarching, Spectator) by Football Division Level.
have a chance to play for the team and coach he or she may have idolized as a youth, and quite probably never played in front of 100,000 people in a stadium and millions on television. Therefore these fans gain a sense of empowerment and increase their self-esteem by being associated with this level of competition. This is further supported by the fact that those who attended the the lower levels of competition had significantly lower levels of vicarious achievement. At these levels of competition the tendency to bask in the reflected glory is probably less due to the lack of prestige and visibility of these programs. For example, Division III players are non-scholarship athletes who play in front of smaller crowds with limited media coverage and there is not as much at stake financially based on the outcomes of games.

Based on Trail et al.'s (2003) model, and the support for the differences in vicarious achievement, the researchers were quite surprised when the anticipated differences were unexpected and the trend for the Spectator Motive variable was not supported (Figure 2). We expected that those attending Division III games would score more highly on this combined variable than those attending Division I-A games, evidenced by a negative trend through the four levels. We assumed that because of the lack of visibility and prestige associated with the lower division schools, attendees would have to be motivated to come by other aspects such as the aesthetic qualities of the game, the appreciation for the physical skills of the athletes, and the drama of the event. This was somewhat supported as the Division III attendees scored higher on this variable than either Division II attendees or Division I-AA attendees. However, the researchers did not expect that the Division I attendees would score higher than all three of the other divisions. The researchers anticipated that because these individuals would be high on vicarious achievement, as they were, they would not be drawn by motives such as aesthetics or drama. The old adage about winning ugly, apparently does not apply. These individuals wanted their team to win and win pretty. We also thought that drama would not be a high motive because typically people motivated by vicarious achievement do not want to be in doubt of a win. They want to win big, with the outcome never in doubt.

The hypothesis about the Overarching Motives not differing across divisions was also not supported. Based on Trail et al.'s (2003) model, the researchers anticipated that because these motives were supposed to be relevant to both fans and spectators alike, there would be
no differences among attendees. As seen in Figure 2, Division I-A attendees were significantly more social and escapist than those who attended games at the other levels. This makes little sense, as typically all individuals, whether they are fan or spectator, want to get away and socialize when they go to a game. Oliver (1999) does note that there are individuals, whom he calls self-isolationists, who attend and have no interest in the social aspects of the event, but yet are still highly involved with the team and game. Perhaps those attendees at the Division II game were self-isolationists.

In terms of points of attachment, it is evident again that differences also exist among the divisions. As noted by Trail et al. (2003), vicarious achievement is typically highly correlated with attachment to the team, coach, community, and university. This was readily apparent for those who attended Division I games. Those individuals seem to attend games for the purpose of supporting their favorite team, which is coached by their favorite coach, who has been hired by the fan's favorite university in their favorite community. The hypothesis that attendees at Division I games would be significantly higher than their counterparts at the lower division games was supported, and the trend was in the expected direction. The exception was again the fans at the Division III school, which scored a little higher than expected (Figure 3).

We hypothesized that Division III attendees would be more highly attached to the players than those at the other three levels, and this was the case. However, the trend did not follow the expected path, as we anticipated that as the level of institution increased the player identification would decrease (Figure 3). We felt that at the Division III level, a greater percentage of the crowd would have some association with a specific player than at the other levels (parents attending to see a son play or an individual attending to watch a classmate), thus elevating the mean score of the responses. This was apparent; however, this cannot be the reason for the mean score for attendees at the Division I level being greater than those at Division I-AA. At the DI-A level, it is more likely that player attachment is due to the visibility and prestige of a star player, rather than the specific association of parent to player, or player to friend. This visibility was the rationale for the inclusion of attachment to player in the Organizational Identity construct in Trail et al.'s (2003) model. Perhaps attachment to player only fits within this construct when there are star players on the team: players who generate vicarious achievement for a substantial number of spectators, players such as Michael Jordan or Walter Payton.

Based on Trail et al.'s (2003) model, spectators who attend games because of aesthetic or dramatic qualities of the game (not vicarious achievement) should have different points of attachment (i.e., attachment to the sport or the level of sport), rather than achievement driven points of attachment. This was somewhat supported in that Division III attendees were higher on Sport Identification than those at the other levels. However, the trend of decreasing sport attachment, as the division level increased, was not supported (Figure 3). Those attending at the lowest division were hypothesized to be attached to football in general and college football in particular, as was supported, but Division I-A attendees were bigger fans of the sport and level than those at the Division I-AA and II levels, which was not consistent with the model.

**Marketing Strategies**

It appears important that the marketing directors develop marketing plans specific to the division. In the case of Division I programs, it is important to highlight the successes by which the fans seek to have their vicarious achievement motives met, while also incorporating the points of attachment of the team, the coach, community, and university. It can be argued that the strengths of vicarious achievement through the team and coach are already evident. NCAA Division I athletic departments have capitalized on spectators' and fans' attachment with a team and university through the sale of licensed products. Licensed products offer a fan the opportunity to demonstrate his or her attachment to a team and/or university. It is not surprising to see that Division I-A generates more revenue than Division I-AA, II, and III. This may be traced back to the stronger attachment, the greater media exposure, and the larger number of fans. In the case of coaches, Division I-A coaches are in demand for speaking engagements within the community and surrounding areas, and in some cases command significant fees to speak to corporations and are asked to serve as endorsers for products. This may facilitate the strong attachment fans have for a coach.

Other strategies that could be incorporated would be creating a hall of fame area that would include team pictures, awards, etc. from the past as well as interactive booths to replay highlights from past team successes. Although a star player may be the centerpiece of a single season marketing effort, the sport marketer must not lose track that it is the team and university attachment that is most significant. Traditions should be emphasized within the marketing efforts and for programs looking to increase attachment, potential traditions should be identified and highlighted in marketing efforts. When individuals identify too strongly with a player, the university may lose those fans once a player no longer plays for the university.
In the case of the lower divisions, it is the players to which individuals attach. In that situation, the marketers should offer special benefits towards parents and friends who are attending to see a specific player play. The challenge for Division III marketers is to try to prevent defections by the friends and family of individual players after the players leave the program. A major point that college marketers need to recognize is that people can become fans of a team and/or university and do not necessarily have to be from the area. Potential ideas include offering benefits for former players and families at games, initiating an active booster club, and communicating to past spectators through a newsletter, webpage, or email list. 

**Conclusion**

There were limitations to the study, the largest being that financial and geographic restrictions led to data being collected at only one site for each of the four divisions and at those sites the sections were not randomized. This does limit the results in terms of the generalization of results and making conclusive statements. In addition, future research needs to test Trail et al.’s (2003) model more extensively, as they noted. However, testing the model to determine if it in fact does distinguish fans from spectators was not an unequivocal success as support was mixed. Future studies can be conducted to test the model to determine if the model holds in other environments (e.g., professional sport, international competitions) and with other techniques. The present research does indicate that college marketers need to recognize that attendees do differ to some extent across divisions and perhaps the fans are more prevalent at the NCAA Division I level and spectators are more prevalent at the lower levels. However, all marketers should do their own market research to determine the characteristics of their own attendees before creating marketing plans.

**References**


