Examining Similarities and Differences in Consumer Motivation for Playing and Watching Soccer

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Abstract

Knowing similarities and differences between sport participants and spectators can be advantageous for sport marketers as it may allow sport organizations to increase their consumer base beyond their traditional consumers. Therefore, the present study is aimed at examining similarities and differences of consumer motivation for both playing and watching sports. Using a sample of soccer consumers who both play and watch soccer (N = 237), the study found that for the most part, motivations for playing and watching soccer were different. However, affiliation was found to predict commitment to both playing and watching for highly involved individuals. Similarly, stress reduction was found to predict commitment to both playing and watching for lesser involved individuals. These findings help marketers in the soccer industry determine how spectator sport can be marketed to sport participants, and likewise how participant sport can be marketed to spectators.

Introduction

Two major consumption activities in sport are (a) participant sport (i.e., playing sport) and (b) spectator sport (i.e., watching sport), which produce two types of consumer groups (Cohen & Avrahami, 2005; Shamir & Ruskin, 1984). Accordingly, consumers of these respective activities are called ‘sport participants’ and ‘sport spectators.’ Since sport participants and sport spectators consume different activities, they are usually considered separate independent consumer groups, and most studies have focused on only one of the two activities (Milne, Sutton, & McDonald, 1996). Given current economic conditions and a saturated market, it is more likely that some sport organizations need to market not only to their traditional consumers (e.g., spectators), but also beyond their traditional consumers (e.g., participants) in order to increase their consumer base. Thus, identifying similarities and differences between consumers of the two activities would help sport marketers determine how spectator sports can be marketed to sport participants, and likewise how participant sports can be marketed to spectators.

Soccer within the United States is a good example of one sport that could benefit from this information.

Major League Soccer (MLS) is one entity that has been attempting to increase their spectator base by marketing to soccer participants. Undoubtedly, soccer is one of the most popular sports to both play and watch throughout the world, however, this is not the case in the US (Carlin, 2010; Saporito, 2010). Although soccer has become one of the most popular sports to play, especially among youth, it does not seem that many of these soccer participants watch soccer games as passionately as they play (Brown, 2007). This may be an important factor to explain why MLS is still seen as a second-tier sport league in the US (Collins, 2006). To deal with this issue, MLS sponsors many grassroots tournaments throughout the country, not to make a profit, but to create interest toward the league among soccer participants (Warfield, 2004). This marketing strategy clearly indicates that 16 million soccer participants in the US (Levitan, 2008) are a major target group for MLS.

The important question, then, is “how should Major League Soccer market to soccer participants?” Since soccer participants are different consumers from soccer spectators, the ways MLS markets to traditional soccer spectators may not be effective when marketing
to soccer participants. Thus, knowing soccer participants’ reasons for watching soccer is critical in developing successful marketing plans. This example illustrates a significant gap in the literature, as only a limited number of studies have looked at similarities and differences of consumer characteristics for participant sport and spectator sport. As a result, sport marketers are still left with little knowledge of how to effectively encourage spectators to play the sport or get players to watch the sport. Therefore, this lack of attention in the literature needs to be addressed.

**Participant Sport and Spectator Sport**

Although most of previous sport consumer studies examined sport participants and sport spectators separately, there are a few studies that incorporated both participant and spectator sport components together—examining whether similarities exist between consumers of the two activities. Stone (1971) discussed how totally different these two consumer groups could be by labeling sport participation as 'play' and spectatorship as 'display.' The author argued that these two activities were different in their nature because the antecedents and consequences for each activity were entirely different. Milne and Mason (1990) examined the relationship between consumers of the two activities using 'niche analysis,' which indicated the degree of the two groups' overlap based on motivation factors. The study revealed that the degrees of overlap between participants and spectators were relatively low, concluding that these two groups were less likely to share characteristics in motivation.

On the other hand, some studies contended possibilities that sport participants and spectators were somehow related to one another in their characteristics although they were consumers of different activities. Based on motivational theories, Sloan (1985) pointed out that sport participants and spectators could be similar because their motivations toward consuming sports are similar, concluding “it was reasonable to theorize that sport participants and sport spectators had a lot in common in numerous ways” (p. 178). The Wann, Schrader and Wilson (1999) study seemed to support Sloan’s argument. In their study, one analysis focused on examining the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of athletes and spectators. Results indicated that intrinsically motivated athletes were more likely to be intrinsically motivated to watch sports, and extrinsically motivated athletes were more likely extrinsically motivated to watch sports. These results demonstrated that individuals with the same orientation (intrinsic or extrinsic) tended to have similar motivation for both playing and watching sports.

Shamir and Ruskin (1984) examined effects of motives on level of sport participation and level of sport spectatorship. Motives examined were relaxation, excitement, aesthetic experience, fitness, social experience, and ascetic experience. The study reported mixed findings: some motives (fitness and ascetic experience) were more important for playing, some motives (social experience and aesthetic experience) were more important for watching, and some motives (relaxation and excitement) were commonly important for both. The Shamir and Ruskin study was a first to attempt to identify similarities and differences in motivation. However, the study neglected to consider the effect of sport involvement. Since a number of previous studies have illustrated the effects of sport involvement on sport consumer motivation, this variable needs to be included in a study examining sport consumer motivation.

Based on these previous studies, several things were clear. Researchers have not reached a consensus on whether sport participants and sport spectators share similar consumer characteristics related to motivations. A cause of this may be the fact that only a limited number of empirical studies have directly examined the relationship between consumers of the two activities in the past (e.g., Milne et al., 1996; Shamir & Ruskin, 1984; Wann, Schrader, et al., 1999). Accordingly, several studies suggested that further investigations were necessary (Kenyon & McPherson, 1973; McDonald, Milne, & Hong, 2002; Shamir & Ruskin, 1984).

**Consumer Motivation**

Shank (2002) defined motivation as “an internal force that directs behavior toward the fulfillment of needs” (p.157), indicating that motivational factors strongly impact consumers’ decision-making processes. Accordingly, motivation is considered to be key in understanding sport consumers (Kahle, Duncan, Vassilis, & Aiken, 2001; Milne & McDonald, 1999; Shank, 2002; Wann, 1995). In particular, a number of previous studies have reported the effects of motivation on various behavioral characteristics, including emotional reactions to games attended, number of games attended, purchase of team merchandise, team related media consumption, and level of spectator support for a women’s sport (Funk, Mahony, & Ridinger, 2002; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, Brewer, & Royalty, 1999). Similarly, Cohen and Avrahami (2005) indicated motivations to be influential factors of direct consumption, which referred to watching games in person, and also indirect consumption, which referred to watching games via media outlets. These studies indicated effects of some specific motives on particular behaviors. Thus, consumer motivation could be a fac-
tor explaining differences in why people play or watch sports.

A number of previous studies attempted to develop a scale to measure underlying motivations of sport consumers (e.g., Milne & McDonald, 1999; Pelletier et al., 1995; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995). While most motivation scales measure either motives of sport participants or sport spectators, the Motivation for Sport Consumer (MSC) scale developed by Milne and McDonald (1999) is the only scale to date that measures motivation of both playing and watching sports with the same dimensions, allowing a comparison of motives for the two activities. The MSC assesses 12 common dimensions of motivation for both playing and watching, including self actualization (fulfilling one’s potential), self esteem (holding oneself in high regard), value development (leaning important values), stress reduction (reducing tension), aesthetics (pursuing artistic aspects of sport), aggression (reducing aggression level), competition (enjoying being in competitive settings), risk taking (seeking thrill in sport), achievement (achieving a desired goal), social facilitation (spending more time with others), affiliation (associating oneself with a specific group), and skill mastery (enjoying difficult aspects of a particular sport).

Sport Involvement

Sport involvement is an individual’s perceived personal importance of sport (Shank & Beasley, 1998). This construct is not necessarily involvement with one activity (playing or watching) but sport in general. Findings from previous studies have found a significant relationship between motivation and level of sport involvement (Fink, Trail, & Anderson, 2002; Lascu, Giese, Toolan, Guehring, & Mercer, 1995; Wann, Royalty, & Rochelle, 2002), concluding that motives were more likely to be different for individuals depending on level of sport involvement. Further, level of sport involvement has been found to have a significant effect on various consumption behaviors (Greenwell, Fink, & Pastore, 2002; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Havitz, Dimanche, & Bogle, 1994), meaning consumers with differing levels of involvement are more likely to behave differently. These studies suggested that different marketing strategies were necessary for consumers with different levels of involvement. Based on findings of these previous studies, it is important to account for differences in sport involvement when investigating participant or spectator motivations.

Psychological Commitment

In addition to understanding which motivations sport consumers possess, this study seeks to understand how those motivations connect to behavior. Specifically, this study seeks to understand how sport motivation may contribute to customers’ psychological commitment. Psychological commitment refers to the degree of desire to continue to participate in or watch a sport (Scanlan, Carpenter, Schmidt, Simons, & Keeler, 1993). Previous studies have found psychological commitment to be a promising predictor of various behavioral characteristics, including future intention, duration of being a fan, frequency of attending sporting events, purchase of season tickets, and frequency of sport participation (Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004; Kim, Scott, & Crompton, 1997; Mahony, Madrigal, & Howard, 2000). Results from these studies were consistent—psychological commitment has a significant positive effect on various consumption behaviors. These findings indicate that individuals with high commitment to playing (or watching) a sport are more likely to actually play (or watch) that sport.

Purpose of the Study

In today’s highly competitive sport marketplace and troubling economic conditions, knowing similarities and differences between sport participants and sport spectators may allow sport organizations to increase their consumer base beyond their traditional consumers. The North American soccer industry is one that may benefit from this information. However, only minimal attention has been directed toward examining similarities and differences of consumer characteristics of the two activities, specifically the different reasons why they play and watch (Milne et al., 1996; Shamir & Ruskin, 1984; Wann et al., 1999). Further, these three studies neglected to take sport involvement into account. Since previous studies reported the effect of sport involvement on consumer motivation and on consumption behavior, lumping both highly and lesser involved consumers together in the analysis would have skewed the results. Therefore, the present study used soccer involvement as a grouping variable in order to understand 1) what motivates highly involved consumers to become committed and 2) what motivates lesser involved consumers to become committed. Specific research questions are stated as follows.

RQ1: For soccer consumers with high soccer involvement, what motives are significant in explaining commitment to playing and commitment to watching soccer?

RQ2: For soccer consumers with low soccer involvement, what motives are significant in explaining commitment to playing and commitment to watching soccer?

RQ3: What motives are similar and different for playing and watching soccer?
Method

Sample and Procedures

The sample was selected from a survey population (N = approximately 1,000) of adult recreational soccer participants (age of 18+) who were playing in leagues or tournaments organized by a local soccer association located in the Mid-Western region of the US. The association offers a variety of soccer programs year-round, including tournament formats, league play, and training sessions. The association has several divisions of play, including men’s, women’s, and coed leagues, which are further organized by skill levels and age groups. With the variety of programs offered, well-maintained facilities, and relatively inexpensive playing fees, the association attracts a wide range of soccer players, in terms of age, gender, and skill levels. A paper and pencil survey was administered in April of 2009. The researchers went to the club’s facility to distribute surveys. Data collection was implemented for two consecutive weeks in order to approach all teams since teams may have a bye-week. Players were approached and asked to complete a 10-minute survey. In attempting to increase response rate (Dillman, 2000), interested participants were offered a chance to win prizes as incentive to be part of the study.

To examine why soccer participants watch soccer, and likewise why soccer spectators play soccer, the study sample needed to be soccer participants as well as soccer spectators. While soccer participants and spectators are usually considered separate independent consumer groups, the reality is that there is another group that takes part in both activities—individuals who would be able to provide data on both activities. Therefore, the decision was made to use these soccer consumers who could represent soccer participants as well as soccer spectators. To identify these individuals, two general questions were asked on the questionnaire: “How often do you play soccer in your league?” and “How often do you watch professional soccer games in person or on TV?” Five response options were provided: (a) very often, (b) often, (c) sometimes, (d) seldom, and (e) never. Consequently, those respondents who indicated at least a moderate level (i.e., very often, often, or sometimes) for both activities were selected as the study participants.

Instrument

The survey instrument contained sections measuring: (a) demographic information, (b) level of activity engagement, which was used to select study participants, (c) motivation to play soccer, (d) motivation to watch soccer, (e) level of soccer involvement, (f) level of commitment to playing soccer, and (g) level of commitment to watching soccer. Age was asked with an open-ended question. Gender, ethnicity (Caucasian, African American, Hispanic, and other), and previous soccer background (recreational, high school, college, semi professional, and professional) were asked with categorical options. The independent variables in this study were 12 dimensions of motivation to play soccer and 12 dimensions of motivation to watch soccer. The Motivation for Sport Consumer (MSC) scale developed by Milne and McDonald (1999) was used to measure consumer motivation. Motivations assessed were self actualization, self esteem, value development, stress reduction, aesthetics, aggression, competition, risk taking, achievement, social facilitation, affiliation, and skill mastery. The MSC uses a 7-point Likert-type scale with three to four items for each dimension. In this present study, Cronbach’s alpha indicated that all subscales for both activities were found to be reliable, ranging from .75 (aggression) to .89 (self-esteem) for playing and from .78 (competition) to .90 (affiliation) for watching soccer.

To assess level of soccer involvement, the Sport Involvement Inventory (SII) developed by Shank and Beasley (1998) was used. The SII uses a semantic differential scale with eight items, which include: (a) boring/exciting, (b) interesting/uninteresting, (c) valuable/worthless, (d) appealing/unappealing, (e) useless/useful, (f) not needed/needed, (g) irrelevant/relevant, and (h) important/unimportant. In this present study, the SII produced a Cronbach’s alpha of .93, indicating that the scale was reliable. Upon findings from previous studies indicating the effect of sport involvement on consumer motivation (Fink et al., 2002; Lascu et al., 1995; Wann et al., 2002), the effect for level of soccer involvement was controlled for in the analyses. Since the literature has further shown that consumers with differing levels of involvement will behave differently (Greenwell et al., 2002; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Havitz et al., 1994), the researchers decided to use soccer involvement as a grouping variable. Therefore, while the scale was continuous, with a higher score reflecting a higher level of soccer involvement, this variable was converted to a categorical variable with two levels (high or low soccer involvement). As utilized in previous studies (Greenwell et al., 2002; Lascu et al., 1995; Shank & Beasley, 1998), this conversion was determined using a median score split technique, and all study participants were assigned into either a high or low soccer involvement group.

The dependent variables in this present study were level of psychological commitment to playing soccer and level of psychological commitment to watching soccer. To assess an individual’s commitment level,
Correlation Matrix for Motives and Soccer Commitment (lower left: playing; upper right: watching)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self Growth</td>
<td></td>
<td>.64*</td>
<td>.14*</td>
<td>.58*</td>
<td>.52*</td>
<td>.64*</td>
<td>.58*</td>
<td>.54*</td>
<td>.53*</td>
<td>.29*</td>
<td>.42*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress Reduction</td>
<td>.68*</td>
<td></td>
<td>.43*</td>
<td>.58*</td>
<td>.50*</td>
<td>.33*</td>
<td>.45*</td>
<td>.46*</td>
<td>.64*</td>
<td>.37*</td>
<td>.59*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetics</td>
<td>.81*</td>
<td>.70*</td>
<td></td>
<td>.26*</td>
<td>.57*</td>
<td>-.14*</td>
<td>.18*</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.58*</td>
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<td>.21*</td>
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<td>.55*</td>
<td>.43*</td>
<td>.50*</td>
<td>.18*</td>
<td>.44*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>.62*</td>
<td>.73*</td>
<td>.58*</td>
<td>.46*</td>
<td></td>
<td>.38*</td>
<td>.50*</td>
<td>.31*</td>
<td>.64*</td>
<td>.62*</td>
<td>.60*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk Taking</td>
<td>.34*</td>
<td>.11*</td>
<td>.31*</td>
<td>.45*</td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td></td>
<td>.60*</td>
<td>.41*</td>
<td>.23*</td>
<td>.06*</td>
<td>.05*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>.70*</td>
<td>.59*</td>
<td>.65*</td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td>.59*</td>
<td>.29*</td>
<td></td>
<td>.60*</td>
<td>.48*</td>
<td>.26*</td>
<td>.32*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Facilitation</td>
<td>.71*</td>
<td>.58*</td>
<td>.79*</td>
<td>.16*</td>
<td>.49*</td>
<td>.25*</td>
<td>.60*</td>
<td></td>
<td>.48*</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>.17*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation</td>
<td>.70*</td>
<td>.77*</td>
<td>.66*</td>
<td>.32*</td>
<td>.68*</td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td>.57*</td>
<td>.72*</td>
<td></td>
<td>.59*</td>
<td>.67*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill Mastery</td>
<td>.72*</td>
<td>.61*</td>
<td>.64*</td>
<td>.40*</td>
<td>.52*</td>
<td>.43*</td>
<td>.63*</td>
<td>.58*</td>
<td>.55*</td>
<td></td>
<td>.52*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer Commitment</td>
<td>.65*</td>
<td>.70*</td>
<td>.70*</td>
<td>.08*</td>
<td>.57*</td>
<td>.06*</td>
<td>.69*</td>
<td>.63*</td>
<td>.68*</td>
<td>.50*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * p < .05

Items developed by Scanlan, Simons, Carpenter, Schmidt, & Keeler (1993) were adapted to apply to either commitment to playing or commitment to watching. Six items assessed commitment to playing and commitment to watching soccer on a 5-point Likert-type scale. In this present study, Cronbach's alpha indicated the scales were highly reliable (α = .93 for commitment to playing and α = .93 for commitment to watching).

**Statistical Analysis**

Multiple regression was utilized to analyze the data. Since the independent variables were 12 motivations, correlation among these variables was expected. Thus, multicollinearity was first examined with correlation analysis among 12 motivations and VIF statistics. After checking multicollinearity, four separate regressions were performed. Commitment to playing soccer was regressed on the 12 motivations for playing soccer for both the high and low involvement groups. Similarly, commitment to watching soccer was regressed on the 12 motivations for watching soccer for both the high and low involvement groups. A beta statistic was used to determine which dimensions were more important for soccer consumers committed to playing and watching soccer. Since predictors were expected to correlate to one another, part correlation coefficients were also examined. The high and low soccer involvement groups were analyzed separately in order to control for effects due to differing levels of involvement.

**Results**

During the designated two weeks, 750 players were asked to complete the survey. A total of 319 players responded with usable surveys, indicating a response rate of 42.5%. For the purpose of the present study, those who both play and watch were identified. Of those 319 respondents, 237 indicated they both play and watch soccer at a moderate level or higher. Thus, these 237 individuals were the study sample. The average age of the sample was 30.23 (SD = 7.13), with 81.3% male and 18.7% female. The majority indicated they also played in either high school or college (66.1%). Caucasian players dominated the proportion of the sample with 82.8%, followed by Hispanic (8.2%), Other (5.6%), and African American (3.0%). According to the director of the organization, the characteristics of the sample, in terms of age, gender, and ethnicity, basically reflected the whole survey population (its members), although the Hispanic group is actually larger (approximately 10-15%; personal communication).

Before performing a series of multiple regressions, multicollinearity was checked. Correlation analysis among 12 motives for both playing and watching indicated most pairs to be significantly correlated as expected. Especially, self actualization, self-esteem, and value development were highly correlated for both playing (r = .80 to .86) and watching (r = .88 to .92). These coefficients imply that these three are similar constructs and also imply the presence of multicollinearity, which may produce strange results. One of the ways to fix this issue is to combine these highly correlated constructs (Stevens, 2002). Therefore, for the purpose of this present study, these three constructs were combined and treated as one construct. Since all constructs look at personal growth and concern, this new combined motivation factor was named as self growth. Table 1 indicates correlation among ten motives and soccer commitment, after combining aforementioned constructs. Finally, multicollinearity...
was checked with VIF statistics. The highest values for playing and watching were 4.825 and 3.557, respectively—all values were below the cutoff point of 10 (Myers, 1990). Therefore, it was judged that with these 10 motives, collinearity statistics did not detect serious problems that could influence the multiple regression analyses.

To examine which motives predicted commitment to playing soccer for the high involvement group, commitment to playing was regressed on the 10 participant motives. A relatively large amount of variance in commitment to playing soccer was explained by the 10 participant motives [Adjusted \( R^2 = 0.441, F(12, 107) = 10.212, p < .001 \)]. Of the 10 dimensions of motivation, three were found to be significant in relation to commitment to playing at the .05 alpha level: achievement \( (\beta = 0.373) \), affiliation \( (\beta = 0.363) \), and stress reduction \( (\beta = 0.257) \). Similar results were found in part correlation analysis. Thus, these three motives were found to be influential factors in explaining an individual’s commitment level to playing soccer.

To determine which motives predicted commitment to watching soccer for the high involvement group, commitment to watching was regressed on the 10 spectator motives. The 10 spectator motives also explained a relatively large amount of variance in commitment to watching soccer [Adjusted \( R^2 = 0.594, F(10, 107) = 18.151, p < .001 \)]. Beta statistics indicated four significant dimensions at the .05 alpha level: affiliation \( (\beta = 0.271) \), aesthetics \( (\beta = 0.237) \), competition \( (\beta = 0.230) \), and social facilitation \( (\beta = 0.223) \). Similar results were found in part correlation analysis. Thus, these four motives were found to be influential factors in explaining an individual’s commitment level to watching soccer.

Examining similarities and differences of motivations for playing and watching soccer for the high involvement group, the results indicated that similar to the case with the high involvement group, only one motive (stress reduction) was the significant predictor for both activities. Table 2 shows the results of the standard regression analysis, indicating standardized coefficients and part correlation coefficients for both activities.

**Discussion**

Overall, results indicated that for the high involvement group, achievement, affiliation, and stress reduction predicted commitment to playing—illustrating that they play soccer to release their daily life stress, to belong to a specific social group (i.e., soccer community), and to use the opportunity to accomplish desired results, perhaps mainly on the basis of team performance. In terms of commitment to watching soccer, four motives (affiliation, aesthetics, competition, and social facilitation) were found to be significant predictors—illustrating that an opportunity to belong to a soccer community, grace of the sport, and high competition are important aspects to watch soccer. Social facilitation was also a significant predictor, but the relationship was negative, meaning that general social opportunities are not as important for those committed to watching soccer.

For the low involvement group, achievement and stress reduction were important motives predicting commitment to playing soccer, the same as for the high involvement group. Unlike the high involvement group, aggression and risk taking were also important motives (negative relationship), meaning they do not pursue opportunities to reduce their aggression level or seek thrills in playing soccer. Regarding commitment to watching soccer, affiliation, aesthetics, stress reduction, and social facilitation were found to be significant predictors. Stress reduction could be a key in describing the low involvement group, as it was significant for
Table 2.  
Beta Coefficients (Part Correlation Coefficients): High and Low Soccer Involvement Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motives</th>
<th>High Playing</th>
<th>High Watching</th>
<th>Low Playing</th>
<th>Low Watching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self Growth</td>
<td>-.014 (-.006)</td>
<td>.116 (.064)</td>
<td>.008 (.004)</td>
<td>.146 (.079)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress Reduction</td>
<td>.257* (.144)</td>
<td>.106 (.065)</td>
<td>.261* (.121)</td>
<td>.254* (.150)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetics</td>
<td>.134 (.064)</td>
<td>.237* (.146)</td>
<td>.076 (.012)</td>
<td>.314* (.150)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression</td>
<td>-.143 (-.103)</td>
<td>.132 (.084)</td>
<td>-.160* (-.111)</td>
<td>.027 (.017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>-.157 (-.099)</td>
<td>.230* (.130)</td>
<td>-.040 (.023)</td>
<td>.080 (.048)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk Taking</td>
<td>.059 (.043)</td>
<td>-.034 (-.021)</td>
<td>-.159* (-.116)</td>
<td>-.088 (.048)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement</td>
<td>.373* (.226)</td>
<td>.027 (.017)</td>
<td>.307* (.184)</td>
<td>-.005 (.003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Facilitation</td>
<td>-.021 (-.013)</td>
<td>-.223* (.151)</td>
<td>-.008 (.004)</td>
<td>-.210* (.145)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliation</td>
<td>.363* (.199)</td>
<td>.271* (.145)</td>
<td>.143 (.069)</td>
<td>.350* (.198)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill Mastery</td>
<td>-.138 (-.085)</td>
<td>.047 (.026)</td>
<td>.081 (.055)</td>
<td>-.126 (.073)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Adjusted $R^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>.441</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * $P < .05$

those who watch, unlike for the high involvement group. Similarly, it was an important motive for both playing and watching soccer.

Major findings of the present study include: (a) some motives were only important for either playing or watching soccer, (b) some motives were commonly important for both playing and watching, and (c) differences in patterns of motivation between the high and low involvement groups were observed. Theoretical and practical implications of these findings follow.

Different Motivations for Playing and Watching

Looking at the results for both the high and low involvement groups (see Table 2), it was clear there were different patterns of motives predicting commitment to playing and commitment to watching soccer. These findings indicate that soccer consumers are more likely to be motivated to play and watch for different reasons. Thus, soccer organizations should create different marketing strategies for each respective activity. Stone (1971) clearly distinguished the two activities that labeling participant sport 'play' and spectator sport 'display.' Milne et al. (1996) also indicated that the two activities of playing and watching were less likely to have similar characteristics. Thus, in terms of motivation for the two activities, the results of the present study support these previous studies.

From a practical perspective, soccer spectator oriented organizations like MLS could benefit from paying close attention to the identified motives to watch soccer—affiliation, aesthetics, competition, and social affiliation for the high involvement group; affiliation, aesthetics, stress reduction, and social facilitation for the low involvement group. Since the study participants play soccer, these motives could reflect reasons why soccer participants may watch soccer games. Thus, these motives should be considered in developing marketing strategies to reach soccer participants. One of the interesting findings, which could be unique to soccer consumers in the US, was that while both social facilitation and affiliation were found to be important for both high and low groups, social facilitation was negatively correlated, whereas affiliation was positively correlated. The results imply that watching soccer games is not a good social opportunity for soccer participants. Rather, to belong to a 'soccer group' (affiliation motivation) is the important motive. The key word is 'soccer group'—a group of people who know soccer very well; so they can enjoy spending time with someone who has the same or similar perspectives on soccer, while watching a game. Therefore, the findings suggest that MLS should create opportunities for soccer participants that enable them to fulfill their affiliation needs while watching professional soccer games.

Possible Similarities

Although it is more likely for soccer consumers to have different motivations for playing and watching, some similarities did appear as well. Affiliation (high involvement group) and stress reduction (low involvement group) were found to be commonly important for playing and watching soccer (Table 2). This finding implies...
that these motives are common to both playing and watching soccer and possibly the factors contributing to getting them to both play and watch. These results are consistent with the study by Shamir and Ruskin (1984), who reported that patterns of motivation for playing and watching sports were different but some motives were found to be commonly important for both activities. Sloan (1985) also reported that motivation characteristics for both activities were similar. In addition, several other studies (Lascu et al., 1995; Shank & Beasley, 1998; Wann, Schrader, et al., 1999) indicated possible relationships between the two activities. Thus, the results of the present study also seem to partially support these previous studies. Therefore, the position from the present study, regarding whether the two activities share similarities, is somewhere in between—the two activities may share some characteristics in motivation but the extent of this sharing may be minimal.

From a practical perspective, both participant and spectator soccer organizations could focus on these motives (affiliation for the high involvement group and stress reduction for the low involvement group) in their marketing in order to promote the sport in general. Since these motives are the common theme that soccer consumers see in both playing and watching soccer, spectator soccer organizations and participant soccer organizations could collaborate in marketing, with these motives as the strategic base. As affiliation is a common motive for both playing and watching for the high involvement group, both types of soccer organizations could create opportunities together that stimulate soccer consumers’ interest in being part of a ‘soccer community.’ For example, MLS could extend their marketing like ‘soccer is your sport,’ in addition to the ‘this is your team’ marketing campaign. Also, stress reduction was a common motive for both playing and watching for the high involvement group. Thus, MLS should offer alternatives for those lesser involved soccer players to relieve stress, in which an extraordinary experience may be more effective (e.g., promoting unusual rooting styles: fans singing songs all the time while the game is on). The strategy should not be specific to one activity (playing or watching) but apply to both activities to maximize the opportunity to promote soccer in general.

**Effect of Level of Sport Involvement**

Another major finding of the present study is related to differences attributable to levels of involvement. Following suggestions from previous studies (Fink et al., 2002; Lascu et al., 1995; Wann et al., 2002), which reported that motives were more likely to be different for individuals depending on level of sport involvement, the level of soccer involvement was attempted to control for its effect in order to examine the unique contribution of motivation on commitment. Results of the study indicated different patterns of motivation between the high and low involvement groups for both playing and watching (Table 2). Thus, results support these previous studies and further suggest that sport involvement should be incorporated when examining sport consumer motivation.

Further, this specific finding can be useful from a market segmentation perspective. Previous market segmentation studies have found the effect of involvement variables (e.g., sport involvement, fan identification) on various consumer behaviors (Greenwell et al., 2002; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Havitz et al., 1994), reporting that people tend to behave differently based on level of sport involvement. Findings of the present study were consistent with these previous studies, further suggesting that level of sport involvement can be a good segmentation base. Thus, MLS, for example, should approach consumers with different marketing strategies based on soccer participants’ levels of involvement.

**Limitations and Future Studies**

One of the major limitations of the present study is related to the sample selection. To examine reasons why soccer participants watch soccer games, for example, it was necessary to find those who both play and watch soccer, which resulted in the exclusion of those who partake in only one of the activities. Therefore, it is important to recognize that the results of the present study could only be generalized to those soccer consumers who both play and watch. Thus, future studies should be conducted that focus on those who only play or those who only watch in order to examine why they consume one activity but not the other. Since soccer is one of the most popular sports to play but not many soccer participants become soccer spectators in the US (Brown, 2007; Levitan, 2008), future studies will help soccer spectator organizations (e.g., MLS) determine how to better reach those who only play.

Another limitation is related to the term ‘watching soccer.’ The present study did not specify whether a watching activity means watching games in person or on TV. Thus, some study participants may have answered motivation items thinking of either way to consume soccer games. Since some motivations may be more important for watching games on TV than watching games in person, specifying the exact way to watch games may have produced different results (Cohen & Avrahami, 2005). Future studies examining watching games in person and on TV may be able to provide more clarity. Finally, the present study specifically looked at one sport, soccer. Thus, results of the present
study cannot be generalized to different sports. Previous studies indicated that people are more likely to have different motivations for different sports (McDonald et al., 2002; Wann, 1995; Wenner & Gantz, 1989). These results imply that different patterns of motivation for both activities could be found in other sports. Also, a degree of popularity for playing and watching may differ from one sport to another, which could play an important role in determining motivation patterns for both activities. Therefore, future studies could replicate the present study with different sports in order to examine similarities and differences of consumer motivation for the two activities in other sports.

References

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