

The Impact of Sport Consumption Motives on Individuals' Expected Hedonic Experience of Sport Events

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Abstract

The realization of sport events pursues various targets. On the one hand, monetary goals play a major role, when commercial or noncommercial providers create sport events as services for several target groups (e.g., spectators, media, and sponsors). On the other hand, within the scope of sponsoring and event marketing, sport events can serve as marketing tool to achieve mainly nonmonetary communication objectives. In both cases, the success of events depends, among others, on the number of attendees, since it influences the proportion of sold tickets and merchandising articles as well as the attractiveness of the event for potential sponsors or companies that stage marketing events. In order to gain a wide audience, event providers have to know their target groups' expectations of the sport event experiences in the run-up of the event.

Generally, consumers' choices are driven by hedonic and utilitarian expectations [1-3]. Experiences like attending sport events can be seen mainly as hedonic consumption [4], which is primarily characterized by an affective and sensory experience of aesthetic or sensual pleasure, fantasy, and fun [5]. However, the expected hedonic value only provides little indication for creating marketing tools to attract potential event audience. This raises the research question about possible influencing factors of the expected hedonic value of an event.

Answering this, the authors focus on the motives of sport consumption in two empirical studies. The motives' influence on the expected hedonic experience was examined for attendees of the Mentos Splashdiving World Championship 2007 (n=140) and the FIBT World Championships (WC) Bob & Skeleton 2008 (n=261). These events can be differentiated by their international standing as well as their commercial objectives. The Mentos Splashdiving WC is rather an event marketing tool, since it was run by two companies (Mentos and Arena). Using the fun sport splashdiving to address young target groups, the companies mainly follow communication objectives like image transfer or recognition. Splashdiving includes all freestyle dives (e.g., abstract somersaults, twists) carried out from a diving platform with the aim to create a large water fountain. Contrary, the FIBT WC Bob & Skeleton represents more conventional kinds of sport with higher international awareness and notably higher monetary objectives.

Based on several scales measuring sport consumer motivations like Sport Fan Motivation Scale [6], Sport Interest Inventory [7], and Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption [8], the motives mostly used are selected. Furthermore, according to literature [9, 10], the authors distinguish the motives between pull- and push-factors.

Pull-factors, which are strictly related to the kind of sport, are therefore, only consumable during this very event (e.g., competition drama, physical skills, and interest in athletes). Push-factors provide an incentive indeed, but generally, they are offered on other events as well (e.g., escape, family bonding, and social opportunities).

The considered motives vary slightly due to the adaptation on the subjects of investigation. Therefore, the authors analyze 11 motives for attending the Mentos Splashdiving WC and 9 motives for attending the FIBT WC Bob & Skeleton, each of them measured by 3 items. The spectators' expectation regarding a hedonic benefit from their event attendance is measured by 4 indicators.

The influence of the selected motives on the expected hedonic value is examined with the help of structural equation modelling using PLS (partial least squares) for both samples. The reliabilities of all measures (alpha, AVE) are above the required thresholds. The PLS estimates indicate an acceptable model fit (e.g., all $Q^2 > 0$, $R^2 > .60$) and the evaluation of Fornell and Larcker's (1981) [11] discriminant validity criterion shows positive results for all constructs.

The findings reveal significant impact of some sport consumption motives on the attendees' expectations of hedonic event experience. Especially the motives for social interaction and competition drama mainly impact the anticipated hedonic value for both types of WC. Additionally, for the FIBT WC Bob & Skeleton, the motive escape is a main antecedent for the expected hedonic experience, while for the Mentos Splashdiving WC the motive novelty was dominant.

Summarizing, the results show that for both events pull- (e.g., competition drama) and push-factors (e.g., social interaction) determine the expected hedonic value of sport events. Regardless the nature of the sport event, marketing communication in the run-up of the event should focus on the sport content (pull-factors), whereas the push-factors must not be neglected either to attract a wide audience.

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