

An Examination of Sport Watching Behaviours of Students at Universiti Putra Malaysia

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to investigate sport watching behaviours of students at Universiti Putra Malaysia and to determine differences in sport watching behaviours in terms of gender and nationalities. Data was collected from 259 students using survey questionnaires which were developed based on Capella's (2001) Fan Behavior Questionnaire. Independent-samples t-tests revealed that male and female students had a significant difference in terms of sport watching behaviors in all dimensions: positive behaviors ($t = 3.308$, $p < 0.05$), negative behaviors ($t = 4.104$, $p < 0.05$) and emotionality ($t = 5.383$, $p < 0.05$). The results also showed a significant difference between local and international students in terms of positive behaviors dimension ($t = 2.203$, $p < 0.05$), but there was no significant difference in the dimensions of negative behaviors and emotionality. The results of the study were discussed in light of earlier findings concerning spectator and watching sporting event behaviors.

Key words: Sport events • Sport fan • Fan motivation

INTRODUCTION

Currently, sports have been identified as a mean of developing national identities. Performance in international sports competition has been linked with a country's image and international status [1]. In addition, sports have also become the most important element of human life because watching or playing sports can be a form of entertainment and relaxation. Moreover, popularity of spectator sports has enhanced interest in spectatorial behaviors in around the world [2]. Thus, the role of spectator behaviors is very important to develop strategic marketing activities for sport events [3]. However, according to Capella [4] watching sporting events might affect spectators' behaviour in terms of positive and negative behaviours and emotion. Therefore, it is important to study the behaviors of people when watching sporting event, identify the kind of sports event that they watch and how they watch sporting events.

Given the significance of understanding behaviours of sport watching, it is surprising that there is a lack of literature on sport watching behaviours in Malaysia. This lack of data makes it difficult for sport marketers in Malaysia to implement effective market segmentation and targeting and to develop new strategies to engage sport consumers. While there is a lack of research on sport event watching behaviours in Malaysia, there is a

wealth of research from international perspectives. Researchers [5-6] suggest winning record, team performance and number of star players all contributed to attract people to watch and attend sports events. Other factors such as new stadium [7], weather conditions [8], socio economic status [9] and a person's active participation in sports [10] were found to influence attendance and sport watching.

Sport events have also created the best chance for global companies to showcase their brands and products. The findings by Filo, Funk, & Hornby [11] suggested that consumers' Web site experience were more satisfactory when they took direct information retrieval. Additionally, fifteen information themes (Event Ticket Procurement, Venue Site, Shopping Location, Accommodation, Event Schedule, Local Attractions, Entertainment Opportunities, Travel Costs, Public Transport, Food and Concessions, Location of Event, Parking, Safety and Security Measures, Weather Forecast and Conditions and Traffic Conditions) of sport event Web sites are identified and developed into a template of event information that increased consumer's attitude and attention toward the event, including those who were low in strength of motivation

This study aims to investigate the differences in behaviours in watching sporting event among UPM students in terms of gender and nationalities. Four research questions were formulated for this study:

- What are the most three popular sports that students play according to gender and nationalities?.
- What are the most popular sports that students watch according to genders and nationalities?.
- What are the most popular way for watching sports according to gender and nationalities?.
- Are there differences in watching sporting event behaviors of UPM's students, according to gender and nationalities?.

The results of this study will be beneficial to the university's administrators to understand students' sport watching and playing behaviours in order to promote and support appropriate ways for students participation in sport. In addition, sport marketers might use the finding to enhance sporting events attendance among university students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants: Quantitative data was collected from 259 participants studying in Universiti Putra Malaysia using questionnaires. The survey questionnaire was completed by 259 out of 270 who were approached. This translates into a response rate at 95.9%. The sample size consisted of 129 males (49.8%) and 130 females (50.2%). The respondents were aged between 19-56 years, with an average age of 38 years. Approximately forty two percent were studying at the Bachelor's degree level, followed by Master's degree (35.1%), Doctoral degree (20.8%) and other degree (1.9%). The highest annual income of respondents was between RM 1000 and RM 1500 per month. The participants were from 15 countries: Africa, Bangladesh, China, India, Iran, Iraq, Indonesia, Nigeria, Malaysia, Thailand, Tanzania, Syria, Sudan, Yemen and Zambia. All participants were divided into two groups: local and international students. The two groups were almost equal at 51.4% and 48.6%, respectively.

Instrument: Cappella's Fan Behaviour Questionnaire [4] was used to measure sport watching behaviours of the subjects. The instrument also asked for demographic data of the subjects (age, sex, country of origin, education and income). concerning in terms of positive and negative behaviors and emotional responses.

Procedure: A self-administrated questionnaire survey was conducted in the main library building of Universiti Putra Malaysia. A convenience sampling method was used to select the subjects. The exercise entailed

approaching and requesting any student who was found near the lounge of the University's library to participate in the study. The university's library was used as the location for data collection as it is the best place on campus to meet students from different academic programs, gender, ethnicity and nationalities.

RESULTS

Data were analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 19. Descriptive statistic tools (frequencies, means and standard deviations, crosstab) were used to describe the demographic information. Independent-samples t-tests were used to test different behaviours of watching sporting events between international and local students and between genders. A statistical significance level for testing a hypothesis was set at $p < 0.05$. The first objective of this study was to investigate what the most three popular sports that UPM's students play and watch, according to genders and nationalities. The results showed the three most frequently played sports for male students were soccer (38.6%), swimming (16.8%) and tennis/badminton (13.1%). On the other hand, female students reported playing badminton (30.2%) most often, followed by swimming (17.4%) and basketball (17.1%). For local students, the three most popular sports they frequently played were badminton (42.4%), swimming (19.8%) and running (19.0%). However, international students reported playing soccer (30.6%) most often, followed by swimming (19.3%) and tennis (19.7%).

The results for watching sporting events by gender suggest soccer (65.6%) as the most frequently watched by male students followed by badminton (25.3%) and basketball (15.7%). On the other hand, female students watched badminton (33.6%) most frequently, followed by soccer (26.9%) and tennis (15.2%). Local students prefer watching badminton (42.5%) most often, followed by soccer (26.7%) and basketball (17.1%). However, international students most often watched soccer (58.5%), followed by tennis (26.4%) and the basketball (14.6%). The results showed watching television as the most popular way of watching sport events (86.1%) for both gender and national groups, followed by "Listen or watch on the internet" (7.7%), "In stadium" (5.8%) and "Listen to the radio" (0.4%).

T-tests were performed to examine differences in sport watching behaviours between males and females. The study shows (Table 1) male and female students differed significantly in the dimension of positive

Table 1: T-test on mean differences of watching sporting event behaviours by gender

Questions	MaleMean, (SD)	FemaleMean, (SD)	(df)	Mean differences	t-tests	P-value (2-tailed)
1. Buy season tickets	1.57(0.96)	1.38(0.71)	236	0.189	1.804	0.073 ^{NS}
2. Wear team colors	2.33(1.30)	2.06(1.26)	252	0.267	1.738	0.083 ^{NS}
3. Talk to others about team	3.40(1.10)	2.85(1.18)	254	0.551	4.032	0.000 ^{**}
4. Lost sleep	2.56(1.14)	2.09(1.20)	256	0.470	3.386	0.001 ^{**}
5. "Boo" players	2.19(1.13)	1.96(1.13)	254	0.229	1.621	0.106 ^{NS}
6. Painted face or made sign	1.65(1.04)	1.44(0.92)	249	0.207	1.692	0.092 ^{NS}
7. Drink during game	2.46(1.43)	1.95(1.32)	257	0.504	2.947	0.004 ^{**}
8. Neglect responsibilities	2.08(1.12)	1.62(0.82)	234	0.454	3.720	0.000 ^{**}
9. Done something later regretted	2.11(1.10)	1.72(0.96)	238	0.395	3.207	0.002 ^{**}
10. Get in fights with opposing fans	1.64(1.00)	1.38(0.80)	243	0.256	2.265	0.024 [*]
11. Cause stress	2.20(1.21)	1.80(0.91)	237	0.402	3.010	0.003 ^{**}
12. Feel better about yourself when winning	3.88(1.18)	3.60(1.12)	257	0.276	2.018	0.045 [*]
13. Team's name on vehicle	2.12(1.36)	1.57(0.91)	233	0.555	4.048	0.000 ^{**}
14. Cheer for team, regardless of performance	3.05(1.38)	3.05(1.30)	256	0.008	0.048	0.962 ^{NS}
15. Taunt opponent's fans	2.17(1.11)	1.79(0.92)	244	0.383	3.011	0.003 ^{**}
16. Behavior change during game	2.46(1.27)	2.11(1.15)	254	0.350	2.526	0.012 [*]
17. Watch games until end, if team is losing	3.46(1.23)	3.05(1.29)	257	0.411	2.737	0.007 ^{**}
18. Attend at least two games per season	2.23(1.20)	1.86(1.00)	246	0.366	2.660	0.008 ^{**}
19. Shout at players/coaches or yell obscenities	2.18(1.25)	1.75(0.96)	243	0.429	3.228	0.001 ^{**}
20. Feel hatred toward other team/players	2.12(1.15)	1.78(0.87)	235	0.333	2.623	0.009 ^{**}
21. Ever been reprimanded for behavior	1.98(1.00)	1.71(0.84)	252	0.271	2.341	0.020 [*]
22. Fan involvement most exciting thing	2.78(1.31)	2.52(1.23)	256	0.258	1.630	0.104 ^{NS}
23. Threatened violence	1.84(1.29)	1.40(0.74)	214	0.437	3.541	0.000 ^{**}
24. Get angry over team loss	2.43(1.20)	2.02(1.02)	250	0.419	3.019	0.003 ^{**}
25. Feel euphoria or a "high" after win	3.19(1.37)	2.93(1.38)	257	0.255	1.611	0.108 ^{NS}
26. Become depressed after loss	2.60(1.20)	2.23(1.12)	257	0.366	2.546	0.011 [*]
27. How long do feeling last	2.58(1.10)	2.20(0.90)	230	0.383	2.986	0.003 ^{**}
28. Know team cheers or fight songs	2.49(1.36)	2.17(1.02)	240	0.322	2.236	0.026 [*]
29. Know names of team starters	3.20(1.48)	2.55(1.19)	242	0.648	4.174	0.000 ^{**}
30. How much money spent on team interests	2.34(1.22)	1.69(0.90)	229	0.648	4.813	0.000 ^{**}
31. How much time spent on team Interests	2.80(1.24)	2.00(1.06)	235	0.802	5.749	0.000 ^{**}
Positive Behavior (Q1,Q2,Q6,Q13,Q18,Q28)	2.165(0.834)	1.742(0.754)	233	0.31292	3.308	0.001 ^{**}
Negative Behavior (Q3,Q7,Q12,Q14,Q15,Q16, Q19,Q20,Q21,Q24)	2.646(0.800)	2.369(0.614)	215	0.37761	4.104	0.000 ^{**}
Emotionality (Q4,Q5,Q8,Q9,Q10,Q11,Q17,Q22, Q23,Q25,Q26,Q27, Q29,Q30,Q31)	2.549(0.755)	2.170(0.673)	210	0.46872	5.383	0.000 ^{**}

* p < 0.05

** p < 0.01

NS = Non- significant result

Table 2: T-test on mean differences of watching sporting event behaviours by nationality

Questions	Local studentMean, (SD)	Inter studentMean, (SD)	(df)	Mean differences	t-tests	P-value (2-tailed)
1. Buy season tickets	1.53(0.97)	1.43(0.82)	257	0.98000	0.929	0.354 ^{NS}
2. Wear team colors	2.38(1.25)	1.99(1.20)	256	0.39100	2.571	0.011 [*]
3. Talk to others about team	3.27(1.17)	2.95(1.26)	254	0.32100	2.302	0.022 [*]
4. Lost sleep	2.49(1.11)	2.15(1.25)	256	0.33700	2.398	0.017 [*]
5. "Boo" players	2.38(1.20)	1.74(1.06)	249	0.64400	4.767	0.000 ^{**}
6. Painted face or made sign	1.62(1.17)	1.46(0.98)	250	0.16500	1.355	0.177 ^{NS}
7. Drink during game	2.27(1.48)	2.13(1.41)	257	0.13600	0.782	0.435 ^{NS}
8. Neglect responsibilities	1.93(1.05)	1.76(1.06)	257	0.17000	1.365	0.173 ^{NS}
9. Done something later regretted	1.98(1.00)	1.84(1.01)	255	0.13600	1.087	0.278 ^{NS}
10. Get in fights with opposing fans	1.57(1.05)	1.42(0.74)	239	0.17000	1.513	0.132 ^{NS}
11. Cause stress	1.78(1.09)	2.23(1.15)	247	-0.44800	-3.363	0.001 ^{**}
12. Feel better about yourself when winning	3.65(1.03)	3.83(1.28)	257	-0.18700	-1.359	0.175 ^{NS}
13. Team's name on vehicle	1.90(1.22)	1.79(1.03)	254	0.11700	0.830	0.407 ^{NS}
14. Cheer for team, regardless of performance	3.35(1.21)	2.74(1.30)	256	0.61000	3.895	0.000 ^{**}
15. Taunt opponent's fans	2.06(1.18)	1.90(1.08)	254	0.16500	1.289	0.199 ^{NS}
16. Behavior change during game	2.38(1.20)	2.18(1.04)	255	0.19300	1.391	0.165 ^{NS}

Table 2: Continued

Questions	Local studentMean, (SD)	Inter studentMean, (SD)	(df)	Mean differences	t-tests	P-value (2-tailed)
17. Watch games until end, if team is losing	3.17(1.16)	3.34(1.30)	257	-0.17600	-1.156	0.249 ^{NS}
18. Attend at least two games per season	2.08(1.28)	2.00(1.05)	254	0.08300	0.600	0.549 ^{NS}
19. Shout at players/coaches or yell obscenities	2.06(1.10)	1.86(1.16)	254	0.19700	1.464	0.144 ^{NS}
20. Feel hatred toward other team/players	2.09(1.15)	1.80(1.08)	255	0.29100	2.287	0.023*
21. Ever been reprimanded for behavior	1.95(0.95)	1.72(0.90)	252	0.22300	1.922	0.056 ^{NS}
22. Fan involvement most exciting thing	2.77(1.31)	2.53(1.24)	256	0.23900	1.506	0.133 ^{NS}
23. Threatened violence	1.72(1.11)	1.51(0.99)	250	0.21400	1.713	0.088 ^{NS}
24. Get angry over team loss	2.13(1.18)	2.33(1.29)	257	-0.19800	-1.406	0.161 ^{NS}
25. Feel euphoria or a "high" after win	3.03(1.24)	3.09(1.33)	257	-0.05700	-0.359	0.720 ^{NS}
26. Become depressed after loss	2.39(1.11)	2.44(1.24)	257	-0.04600	-0.313	0.755 ^{NS}
27. How long do feeling last	2.54(1.014)	2.21(1.00)	243	0.32500	2.526	0.012*
28. Know team cheers or fight songs	2.48(1.13)	2.16(1.26)	253	0.32200	2.246	0.026*
29. Know names of team starters	2.95(1.24)	2.80(1.33)	254	0.15600	0.974	0.331 ^{NS}
30. How much money spent on team interests	2.17(1.28)	1.84(1.03)	251	0.33100	2.380	0.018*
31. How much time spent on team Interests	2.55(1.24)	2.23(1.18)	250	0.32200	2.202	0.029*
Positive Behavior (Q1,Q2,Q6,Q13,Q18,Q28)	2.006(0.849)	1.898(0.768)	244	0.21830	2.203	0.029*
Negative Behavior (Q3,Q7,Q12,Q14,Q15,Q16, Q19,Q20,Q21,Q24)	2.529(0.886)	2.350(0.774)	242	0.16847	1.804	0.072 ^{NS}
Emotionality (Q4,Q5,Q8,Q9,Q10,Q11,Q17,Q22, Q23,Q25,Q26,Q27, Q29,Q30,Q31)	2.472(0.757)	2.202(0.630)	234	0.17054	1.874	0.062 ^{NS}

* p < 0.05

** p < 0.01

NS = Non- significant result

behaviours ($t = 3.308$, $p < .05$). Table 1 also shows significant difference between males and females in terms of negative behaviours ($t = 4.104$, $p < .05$). T-tests were performed to determine different behaviours of watching sporting events between local and international students. The results (Table 2) showed that there was a significant difference between the means of the two groups in terms of positive behaviours dimension ($= 2.203$, $p < .05$). However, there was no significant difference in terms of negative behaviours and emotional dimensions.

DISCUSSION

The results for watching sporting events by gender suggest football/soccer as the most popular sports watched by male students, followed by badminton and basketball, respectively. On the other hand, female students watched badminton the most, followed by football and tennis. In terms of sport watching behaviours by nationalities, badminton, football and basketball are most popular with Malaysian students. However, international students watched football the most, followed by tennis and basketball. The study findings suggest differences in watching behaviour between males and females. Specifically, male students have higher mean score than female in positive behaviours such as painted face or made sign, put team's name on vehicle, attend at least two games per season and know team cheers or fight songs. On the other hand, male students were also

more likely to engage in negative behaviours while watching sporting events such as shouting at players or coaches, feel hatred towards other team and gets angry when team lost.

Murrell & Dietz-Uhler [12] noted males are likely to be sports fans than females. Additionally, the positive and negative behaviours of male students in this study are consistent with the phenomenon common among sports fans known as basking in reflected glory (BIRG) and cutting off reflected failure (CORF). Researchers [13-15] have noted individuals who are highly identified with a sport team experienced emotional attachment with the team and are likely to share glory with the team. A study by Cialdini [12] showed university students were more likely to wear the team's attire following a victory and used the pronoun "we" in describing the game. The team becomes so important that the individual defines his identity in relation to the team and are more likely to experience team defeat as though it were a personal defeat. Laverie and Arnett [16] suggest highly identified fans are more likely than spectators to attend games regardless of their level of satisfaction and Fink, Trail & Anderson [17] found that highly identified fans expressed a greater likelihood of attending away games, a contributing factor to sport tourism.

One framework which can be used to examine sport event watching behaviours is consumer behaviour theory. Sport consumer behavior has been developed from general consumer behavior field such as marketing,

sociology, anthropology, psychology, education and communication. Many topics from these fields are examined for sport consumption including purchase behavior of durable and non-durable products, influence of culture intentions, attitudes toward entertainment and social services [3]. (Several researchers have studied about fan behavior. For example, Halloran [18] studied NASCAR fan and indicated that most NASCAR fans were influenced by their family and close friends into the sport of NASCAR. They articulated their affinity for fellow NASCAR fans and spending time with other fans at the track, they also tried to exclusively purchase NASCAR sponsor brands. In addition to this, Funk & James [19] (have developed a model of fan psychology which is called the Psychological Continuum Model (PCM). The model consisted of four steps to connect sport spectators and fan with specific sports and teams. The first step was *Awareness* which a spectator learns firstly sport or team, but he or she does not have a specific favorite sport or team. The second step was *Attraction* which a spectator has a favorite sport or team. The third step was *Attachment* which is the perceived importance attached to physical and psychological features associated with a team or sport. The last step was *Allegiance* which a spectator has become a loyal fan of the sport or team. Consistent with Funk and James [19], this study showed students in UPM is at the *Attraction* stage where they have a favourite sport which they frequently played. The study finding showed that the most popular way for watching sporting events of UPM students was "On television" in both gender and national groups, followed by "Listen or watch on the internet". This means all students were always watching sporting events on television and suggests UPM students have not yet reach the *Allegiance* stage since they have yet to become a loyal fan of a sport or a team where they will frequently watch their favourite teams play live at the stadium. It is possible that television is very comfortable to watch a sport game at home and it also can save money for buying a ticket.

Sport consumer behaviour is the basis for the examination of all factors that influence attendance at sporting events and watching and listening to games from mass media. More university students attending sport events mean more money, so attracting students to attend sport events is the major avenue for sport teams and sport event organizer in Malaysia. Similarly, if more people watch or listen to games from mass media, media providers will be able to generate more advertising revenue and from sports events. Sports events in the

mass media also provide the best chance for global companies to showcase their brands and products. To increase attendance and get university students to watch sport events, sports marketers in Malaysia need to effectively utilize marketing strategies and understand the basis for sports marketing within the theory of consumer behaviour. Sport marketers might use the finding of this study to get more students to watch and listen to games on the mass media by focusing on sports programs that involves soccer, badminton, basketball and swimming events.

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