A Study on Sport Consumption in Malaysia

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Abstract:

 There is a considerable body of research in many parts of the world on factors that influence sport consumption. However, there is a lack of such research in Malaysia. With the Global Sports Industry projected to grow in revenue and size into a multi-billion dollar industry, the purpose of this study was to analyse factors influencing sport consumption in Malaysia, and their impacts. Data for this study was collected through self-administrative questionnaire. A total of 120 respondents completed the questionnaire, and the data collected was analysed using SPSS. The study found that New Media had the strongest influence on sport consumption as well as being a strong predictor of sport consumption. Respondents with access to new media such as a gaming console are more likely to consume and participate in sport more than those who do not. The results suggest a paradigm shift towards New Media being the main vehicle for sport consumption. This may be due to new media increases respondents time and emotional investment into sport. These results are of use to sport managers, sports marketers as well as corporate brand managers.

Key words: new media, sport consumption

1. Introduction

A report conducted by PwC (2011) stated that the importance of the global sports industry has been increasing of late, with compound growth hovering around 3.7% per year. The report found that the Asia Pacific region contributed US$22.7 billion or 19% towards the global sports market revenue of 2010, cementing its place as the third largest region for sports market. This region is also projected to have the third fastest growth rate with an expected figure of 3.9% through to the year 2015, which places its expected growth higher than the global average.

Therefore, an understanding of factors that have a bearing on sports consumption is of paramount importance to all relevant stakeholders in the global sports industry and economy alike. Evidence from Perform (2013) states that research has been conducted on sport consumption in other countries, notably in sporting powerhouses such as United States, United Kingdom, France and Italy. As a result of continuous and relevant research, the above mentioned enjoy strong domestic sports consumption. With Sport Consumption as the focus point, what makes, and why do people in Malaysia consume sport?

This could be related to the rise of technology that has witnessed a global shift from the way messages and information disseminated and consumed globally (Walker, 1991; Bezjian-Avery et. al, 1998; Xu et. al, 2014). The traditional way of attaining knowledge and information – print, radio, and television, is making way for digital media such as the Internet, social and other interactive media. New media has revolutionised the world, given its interactive and more individual nature compared to traditional media which tended to be mass, impersonalised and lacked room for interaction, as found by Lim et al (2013). For example, LA Biz (2013) reported that the latest Sony Playstation gaming console sold one million

units within 24 hours of release. Alpert (2007) reinforced that gaming – a branch of new media, has seen its popularity raise at an astronomical rate such that it would surpass music industry in terms of revenue. Thus, the effect brought by new media on sport consumption in Malaysia should be examined.

A study conducted by Beccarini & Ferrand (2006) sought to understand football consumers' motives to purchase a season ticket, as well as motives for attending a game at the club's stadium. Their study concluded that a good financial deal and team performance was the primary motivation for consumers purchasing season tickets. Sports interest, self-expression and entertainment motivated match attendance. Also, there are a lot of similar studies which have highlighted how motivation affects consumer's behaviour (Pitts and Stotlar, 1996; Mahony et al., 2002; Schiffman and Kanuk, 2007; Souiden and Diagne, 2009; Hawkins and Mothersbaugh, 2010). These motivators lead to the consumption of the sport and therefore, motivational factors should be considered in the model in order to identify the influence on sports consumers.

Sponsorship also has proven to be a vital brand management and marketing communication tool at the disposal of an organisation and its brands. Eddy (2013) highlighted that corporate sponsorship is commonplace across the sports industry leading them to investigate sports fans' (sport consumers') attitudes towards corporate sponsorship, tradition, and commercialism in the sports industry and its impact on fans' purchase intentions. This study found that fans with positive attitudes towards sponsorships exhibited more positive behavioural intentions toward both the sports program and the potential corporate sponsor. Sponsorship also enables communication of market offerings through generating positive publicity to a certain target audience through anchoring an activity not directly linked to the company's typical business (Fullerton et al., 2007; Fortunato, 2013; Walraven et al., 2014). Sponsorship provides a much-needed financial lifeline to the

activity. The sponsor benefits from abundant opportunities to gain customer trial, create brand loyalty, leverage the brand internally, and increase financial value, making sponsorship a win-win situation for both the sponsor and recipient, as found by Cliffe & Motion (2005). Therefore in this study, it is important to analyse sport consumption amongst the respondents and the impact of motivation, new media, and sponsorship towards sport consumption in Malaysia.

2. Research Design

In 2012, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development explains that higher education students play an important role in the societal and economic wellbeing of any nation, as education attainment is commonly used to gauge the stock of human capital. Therefore looking into the sampling methodology, the population in this study is comprised of all tertiary education students enrolled into higher education institutions in Malaysia. The sample in this study refers to those students currently enrolled in universities in Malaysia. In terms of sampling methodology, this paper shall use non-probability sampling methodology.

The total population of higher/tertiary education students in Malaysia in the year 2010 was approximately 1.1 million according to the Ministry of Higher Education. This figure is considered a fairly large sample group. The results from Raosoft Sample Size Calculator suggested that 68 is the minimum sample size of the survey. (Margin of error = 10%; confident level = 90%). A total of 120 respondents will be selected based on the ratio of 50:50, which represented the category for female and male (Table 1).

Table 1: Number and percentage of male and female respondents

Gender	Percentage	Number
Male	50	60
Female	50	60
Total	100	120

This sampling method was chosen due to the unavailability of the full list of all tertiary education students in Malaysia thus it is impossible to get all the names of the students. This method allows for the segmentation of the respondents into exclusive sub-groups to allow for the selection of respondents from each sub-group. This also avoids the bias of surveying all respondents from one particular segment.

This study will require primary and secondary data. Primary data collection will be achieved through distributing questionnaire to respondents. This will be a self-administered questionnaire. Questionnaire will be distributed physically. Respondent located in universities in Kuala Lumpur will be chosen to become the respondents in this research, as the researcher can conveniently reach them.

In addition, relevant information will be collected through literature review. Various academic literature, textbooks, online journals, government departments such as Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Sport and Youth, and various online sources such as Google scholar will also be utilised in this research. Sources of online journals include directory of open access journals (DOAJ), Taylor and Francis, Science Direct, and Sage. Furthermore governing bodies of sports such as Malaysia Athletics Federation, National Sports Council of Malaysia and National Sports Institute will provide vital secondary data critical to the research such as list of popular sports in Malaysia.

3. Data Analysis

This paper intends to employ quantitative methods and thus, SPSS software is the most appropriate choice for analysing the gathered data. The SPSS program will enable this paper to easily evaluate and manage information gathered from primary data. The research will employ a pre-test to check for content validity of the questionnaire. Thereafter a pilot test will also be utilised to check for questionnaire reliability. Data collected will be analysed using descriptive statistics. Normality will also be tested using the P Plot and Kurtosis. Data reliability will be tested using Cronbach's Alpha. The relationship between the variables will be tested using regression. Graphical presentation such as histogram, bar charts and pie charts will be used so as to make the interpretation work easier.

This paper will take into consideration ethical issues in conducting the primary research. The research is designed in a manner that will not bring discomfort, loss of privacy, or physical harm of any kind. This paper intends to protect and respect the human rights of the respondents, respect the respondents' privacy, and uphold confidentiality. This paper intends to conduct the research with honesty and communicate aims and objectives clearly. Data collected from the research will be treated with confidentiality and to ensure this, the questionnaire will not ask for identities from respondents.

In the first and fifth section of the questionnaire, respondents were asked basic information such as gender, age group, ethnicity and family socio-economic status. From the 100% responded questionnaires, the breakdown of respondents by gender; age, ethnicity, and family socio-economic status are as Table 2.

Table 2: Breakdown of respondents according to gender, age, ethnicity and family socio-economic status.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	60	50
Female	60	50
Ethnicity		
Malay	22	18.3
Indian	10	8.3
Chinese	65	54.2
Other	23	19.2
Age Group		
18 and Below	32	26.7
19 – 24	76	63.3
25 – 29	7	5.8
30 and Above	5	4.2
Household Income Range		
Below RM2000	21	17.5
RM2000 – RM5000	51	42.5
Above RM5000	48	40.0

4. Statistical Analysis

A stepwise regression was conducted to find out the best combination of predictors of sport consumption amongst the three independent variables; motivation, new media and sponsorship. Only two models - New Media and Motivation met the statistical criteria. The two models where included in the order of their ability to explain variance in the dependent variable – Sport Consumption. Sponsorship was removed, as it was not assisting in the prediction of sport consumption.

Table 3: SPSS results for the two models

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics		
					R Square Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
1	.704	.495	.491	.61423	.495	115.835	.000
2	.755	.570	.563	.56943	.075	20.297	.000

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order
Constant	-.242	.302		-.800	.425	
New Media	.510	.067	.537	7.568	.000	.704
Motivation	.446	.099	.320	4.505	.000	.600

Excluded Variables

Variable	Beta	t	Sig.	Correlation
Sponsorship	.058	.826	.411	.397

Model 2 showed that New Media and Motivation where the best predictors for Sport Consumption explaining 56.3% of Sport Consumption. However the fact that 49.5% of Sport Consumption is predicted by New Media alone signals that sport consumption is largely dependent on New Media with an F of 115.835, $p \leq .001$. A possible explanation for this could be due to Malaysia having the highest percentage of digital natives, International Telecommunication Union (2014). From the result in Table 3, the regression equation can be deduced as follows:

Sport Consumption = -.242 + .510 (New Media) + .446 (Motivation) (1)

Sponsorship, although having a positive relationship with Sport Consumption, ranks lowest of all and does not appear to have any importance in determining sport consumption, $t = 0.826$, $p \geq 0.001$. From the results in Table 3, the alternative hypotheses can be deduced as follows,

Table 4: List of alternative hypothesis in this study

	Hypotheses	Significant Value (P)	Result
$H_1 1$	There is significant relationship between the summation score of motivation with summation score of sport consumption	$p \leq .001$	Accept $H_1 1$
$H_1 2$	There is significant relationship between the	$p \leq .001$	Accept $H_1 2$

	summation score of new media with summation score of sport consumption		
H_13	There is significant relationship between the summation score of sponsorship with summation score of sport consumption	$p \geq .001$	Reject H_13

One of the questions of this research was to understand what makes & why do people consume sport in Malaysia? The results answer this question by identifying the factors that contribute to sport consumption. Motivation ($r = 0.600$), new media ($r = 0.704$) and sponsorship ($r = 0.397$) all establish a positive relationship with sport consumption. This also ensures that the research objectives of identifying the factors that influence sport consumption and understanding the effect that these factors have on sport consumption in Malaysia is addressed.

This research also sought to understand the nature of sport consumption in Malaysia. The results revealed that the respondents are active sport consumers. Sports consumption patterns saw participation score highest (80%). Participation in sports like futsal is rising in Malaysia, Hamid, Jaafar & Ali (2014), followed by television consumption (69.2%) and reading sports material (64.1%). Due to the fairly high participation, amateur sports attendance saw a figure of 41.7%. This is explained by the fact that active sports consumers tended to incorporate sports into their daily lives. This was also observed by Armstrong (2002), and helps to meet the objective of researching on the nature of sport consumption in Malaysia.

The results indicate that amongst the variables, New Media ($p \leq 0.01$) is a significant predictor of Sport Consumption, given that smartphone usage to browse sport website or use sport related applications was high (82.5%). New Media was also found by Lee & Schoenstedt (2011) to have a contribution towards sport consumption amongst respondents. The results also show New Media contributed the most weightage to sport consumption given its beta weight value. This is due to the fact that new media gives consumers more control over what they consume for example Astro-On-the-Go,

Astro (2014). This finding is also consistent with Karg & McDonald (2011) that new media contributes significantly towards sport consumption; helping to answer the research question on the effect new media has brought on sport consumption in Malaysia.

Motivation ($p \leq 0.01$) was found to also have relative importance towards sport consumption ($\beta = 0.320$). Further supporting the findings of this research, Wang, Zhang & Tsuji (2011) found motivation to have predictive power towards sport consumption, as motivation is a key aspect in evoking behaviour (consumption). In addition, one of the research questions sought to understand the strongest motivational factor towards sport consumption. Entertainment scored more than the rest, indicating that it is the strongest motivational factor towards sport consumption amongst the respondents. Respondents in Malaysia are motivated to consume sport due to its entertainment value. This result also concurs with the finding of James & Ross (2004). Further supporting this result, Trail & James (2001) also found that respondents rate entertainment highly as a motivating factor to consume sport.

Although Sponsorship has a positive relationship with Sport Consumption, it's not strong enough to establish a significant relationship, leading to the rejection of H_13. This result suggests that corporate sponsorship does not directly cause sport consumption. This result can be attributed to the fact that primarily sponsorship is concerned with raising brand awareness. This process is part of the steps involved in building up purchase intention of a consumer, as was discussed by Pope (1998). In addition, the effects of corporate sponsorship are not immediate but rather yield results over time. Significant positive effects of sponsorship (learning and remembering of a sponsorship stimulus on brand image) occur over time and not an immediate effect, as was found by Woisetschlager & Michaelis (2012).

5. Conclusion

This study sought to analyse factors influencing sport consumption in Malaysia based upon the construct pioneered by Armstrong (2002). The study identified the role Motivation, New Media and Sponsorship play towards sport consumption. Further sport specific research is required as the findings may not apply to all sports consumed in Malaysia. In addition, the findings did not represent the entire population. A cross-sectional study is recommended so as to measure the nature of sport consumption amongst the older population in Malaysia. Lastly, future research can be useful towards understanding the effect of the technological revolution occurring in sport, EA (2010).

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