



## **Full Length Article**

# **Constraints and Motivators of Sport Consumption Behavior**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of the present research was to identify the internal and external constraints and motivators of sport consumption behavior of Iranian fans in volleyball, basketball, and football league games. 385 spectators were classified in 4 groups based on whether they followed the games from the radio or the television and whether they had knowledge of the game itself. The results indicated that the effect of internal and external constraints and motivators on sport consumption behavior is mediated by sport identification and sport attachment. Also consumption behavior was not affected by demographic characteristics of the spectators.*

**Keywords:** Consumer behavior, motivators, constraints, demographic characteristics

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Spectators are a significant source of revenue and support for sport teams [34]. Due to the importance of spectators for the success of teams, sport marketers have tried to develop marketing strategies to increase attendance and ticket revenue. As a result, the motivators and constraints of sport consumption behavior have received much attention from researchers [7, 34, 30, 8, 24, 2, 9, 23, 10, 3]. Because of the criticism of previous studies about the motivators and constraints sport consumer behavior and the attempt to provide new models for different sports and different consumer segments [5, 14]. Kim and Trail (2010) proposed a model to explain the relationship between motivators, constraints [15], and attendance, and they empirically tested the model within the spectator sport context. Also Kim et al [14] argued that the impact of cultural differences on fan motivations has not been examined extensively, and there is a need to compare cultural differences in fan motives for similar sporting events contested within each country's respective environment. Thus, this research attempts to identify the constraints and motivators of league games attendance in Iran.

### **Review of the Literature**

Research from various disciplines (e.g., tourism, recreation, sport sociology, and sport psychology) have examined constraints as a key factor in understanding an individual's behaviors and choices, but little research has examined the constraints of sport spectator consumption behavior [15]. In the leisure realm, a constraint is defined as a factor that prevents or prohibits an individual from participating and enjoying a leisure activity [13]. Crawford and Godbey [10] divided leisure constraints into three categories: intrapersonal [10], religiosity, reference group attitudes, subjective evaluation of the appropriateness and availability of various leisure activities), interpersonal (e.g., lack of an appropriate partner with whom to participate in a leisure activity), and structural (e.g., financial resources, season, climate, and the scheduling of games). They argued that the model is cross-culturally relevant, that the model may examine forms of behavior other than leisure, and that there is a high potential for the theory to be expanded in order to advance leisure constraints research to the next level. Kim and Trail [15] added two categories to the constraint mode. The new model consisted of four dimensions: internal motivators, internal constraints, external motivators, and external constraints. They defined internal motivators as internal psychological cognitions that encourage consumption, and internal constraints as internal psychological cognitions that discourage consumption. They also defined external motivators as environmental factors that motivate the individual to attend a sporting event, and internal motivators as environmental factors that discourage people from attending a sporting event.

Sport marketers have to design marketing plans that would increase participation and spectator attachment. Reinforcing fans' attachment to a team can increase attendance and create additional revenue streams for teams [9]. Van Leeuwen *et al.* [26] showed that fan identification and club identification both influence sport consumption behavior. Theodorakis and Wann [25] argued that team identification can involve many different points of attachment [25], including one's identification with a specific target team and one's identification with a favorite or preferred team. There are many motivators for attendance in sport events, such as team identification, sport interest, socialization, escape, vicarious achievement, interest in players, and team identification [30,16,31,9]. Thus, the first hypothesis of this research pertains to internal motivators of sport consumption behavior:

- Internal motivators can predict sport consumer behavior.

It is particularly important for teams that try to achieve a solid fan base to examine the constraints of attendance, because poor attendance can imply that constraints are more important to potential spectators than motivators. Thus, teams need to determine the significant barriers to attendance using marketing strategies [15]. Beaton *et al.* (2011) defined sport involvement along a psychological continuum, where the first stage is awareness [1], followed by attraction, attachment, and allegiance. Describing their six-factor model of market demand in professional team sports, Byon *et al.* (2010) mentioned win/loss of the home team as a major factor that affects attendance [3]. They also divided spectators into two groups—those who focus on the attributes of the game (win/loss, team/athlete performance, or stars), and those who focus on environmental features (stadium, promotion, or entertainment). Winning is as important for spectators as it is for the athletes [26]. Moreover, although providing high-quality services in a sporting event can be an advantage, the majority of spectators enjoy games when their team is the winner or displays a good performance [24]. Based on the literature, factors such as win/loss, team performance, knowledge, having someone to attend with, and interest from others can be considered internal constraints. However, each of these factors has had a different effect on attendance in different populations and different sports [15,30,23,3,1,27]. Therefore, the second hypothesis pertains to the internal constraints of sport consumption behavior:

- Internal constraints can predict sport consumer behavior.

Kim and Trail (2010) defined factors such as aesthetics, drama, media, promotion, role model, and player behavior as external motivators [15]. They found that no external motivator accounted for a significant amount of variance in attendance. Hall *et al.* (2010) found that there is a significant positive relationship between all attraction factors and attendance and re-attendance at indoors games came to similar conclusions [12,29,4]. Bee and Havitz (2010) considered involvement [2], fan attraction, resistance to change, and psychological commitment as predictors of behavioral loyalty, which according to [14], is one of the determinants of attendance. Based on these findings, the third hypothesis deals with the external motivators of sport consumption behavior:

- External motivators can predict sport consumer behavior.

Trail and James (2012) define external constraints as social or environmental factors that prevent or decrease the likelihood of the individual performing the behavior. Based on Kim and Trail (2010), external constraints include factors such as commitments [23], cost, leisure alternatives, location, parking, participant sport alternatives, and sport entertainment. Van Leeuwen *et al.* (2002) argue that the core service provided to spectators is the game itself [26], and that issues such as parking, concessions, and entertainment is peripheral services. However, spectator satisfaction depends on both core and peripheral services. Another important external constraint that is believed to influence attendance is commitment. Bee and Havitz (2010) define behavioral loyalty as the actual attendance in a sporting event [2]. They include attitudinal loyalty in their model as a predictor of behavioral loyalty, which can be explained by two constructs: psychological commitment and resistance to change. Generally, these factors have been examined as constraints in some studies, while in other studies the same factors have acted as motivators of attendance. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis deals with the external constraints of sport consumption behavior:

- External constraints can predict sport consumer behavior.

Some studies have shown the mediating effect of demographic characteristics of sport consumers. Masoumi (2008) carried out a research on motivators of attendance in soccer games [20]. He reported that most of the respondents were 19-24 years old (47.2 percent); 71.28 percent were single, and most of them had high school diploma (38.4 percent). 35 percent of the respondents attended soccer games 1 to 3 times a year, and 31.1% of them had low-income. [15] examined the motivators and constraints of sport consumption. They reported that approximately 42% of the respondents were 40-49 years old, 28% were 50-59, and 16% were 30-39. The respondents were well educated as 75.3% of the total sample had attended college. The participants were relatively wealthy as over two-thirds had incomes that were

greater than \$60,000. Also the sample was 17% male and 83% female. In line with these studies, the fifth hypothesis of this research pertains to the demographic characteristics of the participants:

- Demographic characteristics can predict sport consumer behavior.

## METHODOLOGY

The population of the research consisted of all the spectators of volleyball, basketball, and futsal games in Iran. Using Cochran's formula, 385 spectators were randomly selected as the sample. Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC; Kim and Trail, 2010) and Constraint Scale for Sport Consumption (CSSC; Kim and Trail, 2010) were used for data collection. Also behavioral measures were evaluated using Behavioral Scale for Sport Consumption (BSSC; Kim and Trail, 2010) [15].

- Internal motivators: Achievement, Attachment to the Coach, Attachment to the Community, Escape, Attachment to the Level of Sport, Attachment to the Player, Socialization, Attachment to the Sport, and Attachment to the Team (18 items in MSSC)
- Internal constraints: Lack of Knowledge, Lack of Success, Lack of Someone to Attend with, and No Interest from Others (13 items in CSSC)
- External motivators: Aesthetics, Player Behavior, Drama, Media, Promotion, and Role Model (18 items in MSSC)
- External constraints: Commitments, Cost, Leisure Alternatives, Location, Parking, Participant Sports, and Sport Entertainment (21 items in CSSC)
- Behavioral measures: Merchandise Purchasing and Attendance (2 items in BSSC)

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the demographic data and the variables. Also path analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modeling were used for data analysis.

In order to examine the fit of the structural models, the sample was divided into four groups using two items in the scale. The first group included respondents who did not follow the games from radio or television and had no knowledge of the game (its rules and technical aspects) (104 respondents). The second group included respondents who did not follow the games, but had knowledge of the game (98 respondents). The third group included respondents who followed the games, but had no knowledge of the game (101 respondents). Finally, the last group included respondents who followed the games and had knowledge of the game (82 respondents).

## RESULTS

Table 1 provides the demographic data of the sample. The data show that the respondents are not uniformly distributed in any of the demographic characteristics which adds to the validity of findings. The significance levels of chi-square test are less than 0.05, indicating the lack of uniformity in distribution of these characteristics.

Table 1. Chi-square test for uniform distribution

Variable	Chi-Square	df	P-Value
Age	8.463	4	0.076
Education	6.868	4	0.143
Sex	3.306	1	0.069
Income	3.268	3	0.352

Based on the data in Table 2 and the factor loadings estimated in the fitted structural equation model for group A, the effect of all the internal and external motivators and constraints on sport consumption behavior is significant at the 0.05 level. Similar results were obtained for Group B. It must be noted, however, that in this group internal and external constraints have a negative effect on sport consumption behavior, while the effect of motivators is positive. Based on the absolute value of standardized coefficients, internal motivators, external constraints, external motivators, and internal constraints respectively have the greatest effect on sport consumption behavior. As the ranking of factors show, the difference between Group A and Group B is in the effect size of internal motivators and external constraints.

As for Group C, the standardized coefficients show that internal constraints have a negative effect on sport consumption behavior, while the effect of external motivators and constraints is positive. That is, more external constraints lead to higher propensity for sport consumption. The coefficient of internal motivators is close to zero; therefore no definitive conclusion can be made. Given the absolute value of standardized coefficients, external constraints, external motivators, internal constraints, and internal motivators respectively have the greatest effect on sport consumption behavior. Also the ranking of factors is different from that of Group A and Group B.

In Group D, the standardized coefficients show that internal constraints and external motivators had a negative effect on sport consumption behavior, while the effect of internal motivators and external constraints is positive. The ranking of factors in this group is again different from that of the other groups. The data show that the effect of internal and external motivators and internal constraints on sport consumption behavior is significant at the 0.05 level. However, external constraints had no significant effect on sport consumption behavior.

Table 2. Factor loading of the motivators and constraints of sport consumer behavior

Group	Loading	Standardized Loading	T-Statistics	Result
<b>Panel A</b>				
Internal Constraints	-0.28	-0.32	-14.57	Accepted
External Constraints	-0.61	-0.63	-29.62	Accepted
Internal Motivators	0.45	0.44	18.85	Accepted
External Motivators	0.36	0.37	16.61	Accepted
<b>Panel B</b>				
Internal Constraints	-1.55	-0.16	-4.92	Accepted
External Constraints	-3.75	-0.50	-15.48	Accepted
Internal Motivators	4.11	0.58	16.81	Accepted
External Motivators	3.33	0.38	10.97	Accepted
<b>Panel C</b>				
Internal Constraints	-1.49	-0.28	-8.26	Accepted
External Constraints	5.21	-0.78	4.79	Accepted
Internal Motivators	-0.01	0.00	-0.01	Rejected
External Motivators	2.50	0.39	10.75	Accepted
<b>Panel D</b>				
Internal Constraints	-2.06	-0.28	-5.53	Accepted
External Constraints	0.16	0.02	0.38	Rejected
Internal Motivators	9.37	1	19.06	Accepted
External Motivators	-1.59	-0.22	-4.04	Accepted

Since the fitted models in each panel were saturated, GFI and AGFI were not calculated. In all the models, the estimated p-value is 1, showing the full saturation of the models. RMSEA was estimated to be zero in all the models, indicating that all the relationships between the variables in all the panels have been tested.

Eta correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between demographic characteristics and consumption behavior of the spectators. Estimation of the coefficients showed that there is no significant correlation between age and sport consumer behavior. However, sport consumption behavior decreases with age. Eta values of other variables are also not significant. However, the positive sign of this coefficient suggest that sport consumption behavior increases with education and income.

Table 3. Eta correlation coefficient

Demographic Variable	Eta Coefficient
Age	-0.089
Sex	0.025
Education	0.144
Income	0.133

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this research, internal motivators included Achievement, Attachment to the Coach, Attachment to the Community, Escape, Attachment to the Level of Sport, Attachment to the Player, Socialization, Attachment to the Sport, and Attachment to the Team. Internal motivators had the greatest effect on sport consumer behavior. Therefore, these factors must be paid attention to and reinforced. Although achievement and success cannot be controlled, other factors such as attachment to the team or the sport can be strengthened with careful planning. Sport marketers in Iran are recommended to focus on internal and psychological factors, because these factors explain the highest variance in consumption behavior. Our findings showed that external motivators had a significant effect on sport consumption behavior in three of the four studied groups at the 0.05 significance level. However, external motivators had no significant effect on the consumption behavior of the respondents in the fourth group who followed the games from the radio or television and had knowledge the game. The fourth group follows the games because of the strong effect of internal motivators and is not influenced by external motivators. Thus, the model has

been significant for three of the four groups. It appears that spectators must be encouraged to acquire knowledge about a specific sport (basketball or volleyball) in order to have greater motivation to attend the games, for lack of knowledge is one of the most important constraints of attendance in sporting events. In addition to motivators, satisfaction seems to be a determinant of sport consumption behavior and attendance.

The results showed that external motivators are not as effective as internal motivators in sport consumption behavior. However, sport marketers must focus on both internal and external motivators, because the smaller effect size of external motivators may have been affected by the demographic characteristics of the population or the attributes of the sports. In a similar research with a different population and on different sports, external motivators may play a more important role than internal motivators.

External constraints such as entertainment, leisure alternatives, and participant sport alternatives do not seem to apply to the Iranian context. For instance, participant sport alternatives refer to the possibility of spectators performing a recreation sport or exercise during a contest, and this is not common in Iran. However, cost, parking, and location had no significant effect on sport consumption behavior in Iran. This could be attributed to low cost of transportation, ease of access to the stadiums, ample means of transport, and sufficient parking space in Tehran City.

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