

Measuring the Motives of Sport Event Attendance: Bridging the Academic-Practitioner Divide to Understanding Behavior

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Abstract

The ability to draw attendees to performances is vital to the success of a sport organization. As a result, sport managers and academics attempt to investigate motivations that drive decisions to attend events. In order to make predictions, academic demands have lead to the proliferation of instruments and constructs to capture a wide variety of motives, but these tools have limited ability to explain game attendance; and practitioners demand shorter scales to increase efficiency. The purpose of this research is to provide a parsimonious measuring tool of motives to explain sport event attendance. A 10-item scale was distributed to sport spectators and the general population ($N = 2,831$) to measure five facets of motivation: Socialization, Performance, Excitement, Esteem, and Diversion (SPEED). Confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the psychometric properties of the SPEED scale. MANOVA results indicate the five SPEED motives are able to differentiate prior game attendance behavior. Multiple linear regression results indicate three facets explain 30% of the variance in the frequency of

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game attendance. The SPEED scale also demonstrated the ability to explain 75% of the variance in team commitment. Suggestions are made for further application and employment of the SPEED scale, along with the marketing of Excitement, Performance, and Esteem.

Measuring Core Facets of Motivation for Sport Event Attendance

Sport event attendance represents a significant aspect of leisure and recreation in many countries. Few hedonic consumptive experiences create greater interest and investment than watching competitive sports (Baade, 2003; Pons, Mourali, & Nyeck, 2006). In 2005-06, 10.5 million Australians over the age of 15 participated in organized sport and physical recreation (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007a). Furthermore, 7.1 million Australians over the age of 15 attended at least one sport event (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007b). These numbers reflect the large audience in place for sport organizations; however, the demand for spectator sport can fluctuate and fragment due to market forces (Andreff & Szymanski, 2006), while competition among mass entertainment sport in Australia has increased.

A number of challenges exist for sport franchises to confront the fluctuation of spectator interest to build and sustain volume. General population surveys reveal overall attendance at sport events has remained virtually unchanged from 1995 despite the introduction of the Hyundai A-League in 2005 and expansion of teams in the National Rugby League and Australian Football League. Gender and age considerations demonstrate men (56%) are more likely to attend a sport event than women (41%), but both groups steadily declined after age 24. This decline is problematic given Australians are living longer than ever—life expectancy for women is 83 years of age, while men are expected to live to 78

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(Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007c). In addition, the cost of replacing one spectator can be six times more expensive than retaining an existing spectator (Rosenberg & Czepiel, 1983).

An aging population with a declining attendance rate, along with increased competition among sport and entertainment products, has made it important for sport managers to better understand what motivates individuals to attend events. Academic research has provided some guidance in this area by developing an array of multi-attribute scales to measure motives for attending professional and collegiate competitive sport events (Funk, Mahony, & Ridinger, 2002; Madrigal, 2006; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995). On the surface, attending a sport event would appear a simple behavior, but academic tools used to explain such behavior are complex and use a number of measures so as to be comprehensive enough to capture a wide variety of individual motives. In addition, the specific sport event (e.g., football, women's basketball, motorsport) also involves contextual differences (Wann, Grieve, Zapalac, & Pease, 2008) that must be considered. This has led to a proliferation of survey tools with multiple constructs, making survey content decisions difficult for academics and industry professionals. However, the ability of these scales to explain past game attendance is often not reported and the few studies that do report this information reveal explanatory ability of 20% or less.

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The purpose of this research is to provide a parsimonious measurement tool capable of providing guidance to academics and practitioners for explaining sport event attendance behavior. A 10-item multi-attribute scale that assesses five facets of motivation: Socialization, Performance, Excitement, Esteem, and Diversion (SPEED) is offered and tested. Details of this research are divided into five sections. First, a review of prior work on sport consumer motivation is given. Second, scale requirements by academe and industry are discussed. Third, the conceptualization of the SPEED scale is provided. Fourth, the research methods employed are described. Finally, the results are reported, leading to conclusions regarding managerial implications, limitations, and directions for future research.

Literature Review

Sport Consumer Motivation

Motivation represents an activated internal state that arouses, directs, and leads to behavior (Iso-Ahola, 1982;

Mowen & Minor, 1998). A general definition suggests motivation reflects a process with five sequential stages a) need recognition; b) tension reduction; c) drive state; d) want; and e) goal-directed behavior (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2001). The want stage within this process receives considerable attention from academics and marketers because it represents the pathway toward a specific form of behavior to satisfy a need or acquire benefits. There are numerous pathways a person may take to receive desirable outcomes based on a unique set of experiences, socio-cultural upbringing, and personality. Hence, motivation reflects an internal desire to take a pathway because it provides opportunities to satisfy needs and receive benefits through acquisition (MacInnis, Moorman, & Jaworski, 1991)

Motives for sport event attendance are dynamic, multifaceted, and have been examined through a number of different frameworks. These approaches include Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs, Iso-Ahola's (1982) escape-seeking model, the premise of push-pull factors (Crompton, 1979), psychological needs (Sloan, 1989), and stages of increasing involvement (Funk & James, 2001). The variety of paradigms underscores the challenges that exist in effectively assessing sport consumer motivation. Research suggest that motives for leisure activity are dynamic and should be viewed as changing throughout a consumer's lifetime (Beaton & Funk, 2008; Iso-Ahola, 1980). Such fluctuations can also be found in spectator sport (Funk & James, 2006; Ross, 2007). In addition, comparative studies reveal motives may vary by country, sport, and emotional attachment (Koo & Hardin, 2008; Wann et al., 2008; Won & Kitamura, 2007). These ongoing challenges, along with increasing importance for understanding the motivations driving sport consumers among sport managers, contributed to the development of a vast array of instruments for investigating consumer motivation to attend sport events.

Existing Motivation Scales

Sport event research has utilized a number of discrete facets of motivation or motives among spectators and fans (Funk, Ridinger, & Moorman, 2004; Madrigal, 2006; Pease & Zhang, 2001; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995). In general, these motives can be categorized as utilitarian or hedonic (Hirshman & Holbrook, 1982). Utilitarian motives are functional and represent objective desires or tangible attributes of a sport product or service including venue services, admission costs, marquee players and coaches, promotions, scheduling of games, new arenas, accessibility, and the relationship between socio-demographic variables and watching sports (Gladden & Funk, 2002; Ross, 2007; Wakefield & Sloan, 1995). In contrast, hedonic motives are experiential in nature

involving subjective emotional responses to the product such as excitement, fantasy, eustress, vicarious achievement, escape, aesthetics, group affiliation, and social interaction (Funk et al., 2004; Madrigal, 2006; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995). The dominance of scales to measure hedonic motives compared to utilitarian motives stems from the subjective nature of the sport experience and the unique aspects of various sport experiences (Madrigal, 2006; Kahle, Kambara, & Rose, 1996).

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The growing body of knowledge in sport consumer behavior has provided a number of beneficial scales to measure intrinsic motives for attending sport events. This line of inquiry represents a micro approach to understand spectator motivation by dividing the construct into smaller representative dimensions (i.e., motivational content types or motives) to assess the intimate workings of motivation. Kiesler, Collins, and Miller (1969) suggest one way social science can understand constructs like motivation is via “the delineation of gross variables into more atomistic ones” (p. 279), which divides motivation into smaller representative factors. This has led to the proliferation of scales ranging from 7 to 18 constructs to measure motivation. In general, each construct is measured with three items requiring 21 to 48 questions to be placed on a survey.

A critique of published research using existing motivation scales reveals most studies rarely report or explain game attendance behavior. Only four published articles were found that report this information and the variance explained in game attendance ranged from 15% and 20%. Hoye and Lilis (2008) used the *Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption* (MSSC) to explain 20% of the variance in attending away games among 93 members of an Australian football club. Ridinger and Funk (2006) used the *Sport Interest Inventory* (SII) to explain 14% and 18% in home game attendance among 951 spectators at men’s and women’s NCAA basketball games. Neale and Funk (2006) used the SII to explain 19% of the variance in home game attendance among 651 club supporters in Australia. Mahony and colleagues (2002) used elements of the SII and MSSC to explain 15% of the variance in games attended among 1201 spectators at J League matches. Beyond these studies, the vast majority of published research uses existing constructs and scales to explain variance in attitudes (e.g., team commitment, behavioral intention) or a composite attitude-behavior measure (e.g., loyalty variable of commitment and

attendance behavior) or describe differences between segments (Funk et al., 2002; Theodorakis, & Alexandris, 2008; Trail & James, 2001). Hence, the multi-attribute scales appear to be more relevant for explaining attitude-related information among consumer groups than game attendance behavior.

An alternative approach used in related disciplines of leisure and marketing has adopted a macro perspective to measure complex constructs such as motivation (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988; Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004). The macro approach focuses on developing a nomological understanding of a construct to help examine its interrelationships with other key variables. Motivation to engage in a leisure activity can either be measured with four dimensions of escape, competency, mastery, and socialization (Beard & Ragheb, 1983) or a single strength of motivation dimension (Carroll & Alexandris, 1997). Early work on the involvement construct examined the internal structure and definition (Dimanche, Havitz, & Howard, 1991), while later efforts examined links with other key constructs (Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004). The involvement construct as an enduring state of motivation has been measured as unidimensional (Mittal, 1995; Zaichkowsky, 1985) or three dimensions of pleasure, sign, and centrality (Kyle & Mowen, 2005). The macro approach has been used in sport to explain larger constructs such as identification and satisfaction, allowing a more parsimonious examination of the constructs’ relationship to antecedents and outcomes (Kahle, Kambara, & Rose, 1996; Laverie & Arnett, 2000). In addition, some researchers suggest the feasibility of a single-item measure for a psychological construct (Drolet & Morrison, 2001; Kwon & Trail, 2005), but this can become problematic for model testing.

Hybrid Approach

This research adopts a hybrid approach incorporating both macro and micro means to measure and explain sport attendance behavior. The hybrid approach blends the demands of both academics and practitioners for theoretical and applied scales to investigate motives capable of explaining sport event attendance. Academics have labeled practice-oriented research as unintellectual and desire a clear delineation between theory and practice-oriented research (Razzaque, 1998). Although academics focus on theorizing and producing new knowledge, practitioners typically desire pragmatic solutions with a bottom line focus (Razzaque, 1998). Henderson, Presley, and Bialeschki (2004) suggest such demarcations are unnecessary and call for bridging the academic-practitioner divide. Flynn and Percy (2001) argue that the “the ideal characteristics of a scale are not the same if a researcher is measuring a construct for diagnostic or managerial reasons vs. measuring the

same construct for theoretical explanation”(p. 415). The authors suggest that if “the aim of the research is to test theory by examining constructs in relation to other phenomena then ‘no longer is an inventory of items necessary’” (p. 418). Although academic demands have led to the proliferation of multi-attribute scales, explanations of game attendance remain limited. In addition, practitioners demand shorter scales to increase efficiency because shorter scales place fewer burdens on respondents (DeVellis, 2003).

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The hybrid approach meets both academic and practitioner demands. A concise list of core constructs to measure motives could provide an efficient means to explain game attendance and examine motivation’s relationship with other theoretical constructs in complex models (Flynn & Percy, 2001; Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004). In addition, the number of items used to measure each construct could be reduced to two, allowing for complex model testing (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). Such an approach would also allow for tests of convergent, discriminant, and nomological validity to provide a stable and known factor structure so theorists may rely on its consistent performance in complex models (Flynn & Percy, 2001; Spector, 1992). In doing so, it is important to recognize that to provide a stronger research-practice relationship, the key words and language of constructs used and tested by researchers needs to correspond to that of practitioners (Henderson et al., 2004). The hybrid approach represents a refinement of existing work in order to guide future research on sport consumer behavior and places significance on both theoretical and practical relevance. The next section provides a discussion from which a parsimonious set of motives capable of explaining game attendance is developed.

SPEED Facets of Motivation

The present research conceptualizes spectator motivation as representing five motivational content facets: Socialization, Performance, Excitement, Esteem, and Diversion (SPEED). These themes represent a parsimonious set of motives for why individuals seek out and attend sport events that have been used in previous research. The themes also represent a convergence of constructs from previous instruments. The five themes reflect core motivational facets that drive indi-

viduals to seek out sport experiences to satisfy needs and receive benefits. The acronym SPEED is useful for industry to refer to core motivational themes. A detailed description of each SPEED facet of motivation is provided in the Appendix and the facets are briefly reviewed next.

Socialization relates to the interpersonal aspect of sport. Specifically, socialization represents a desire for sociability and the extent to which a person perceives attending a sport event as an opportunity to interact with family, friends, and other spectators. Individuals are motivated to seek a sport event experience due to opportunities for the enhancement of human relationships through external interaction with other spectators, participants, friends, and family. This definition overlaps with group affiliation, family bonding, friends bonding, social interaction, and camaraderie (Funk et al., 2004; Madrigal, 2006; Trial & James, 2001; Wann, 1995). Performance relates to the extent to which an individual believes that sport events provide excellence, beauty, and creativity of athletic performance.

Individuals are motivated to seek a sport event experience due to opportunities to enjoy the grace, skill, and artistry of athletic movement. Performance encompasses motives of aesthetics, aggression, physical skill, flow, and performance evaluation (Funk et al., 2004; Madrigal, 2006; Trial & James, 2001; Wann, 1995).

Excitement represents the extent to which a sport event is perceived as providing stimulation provided by the consumption experience. Excitement represents a desire for intellectual stimulation. Individuals are motivated to seek a sport event experience due to opportunities for mental action and exploration from the atmospheric conditions created by the uncertainty of participation and competition, and the spectacle of associated activities. Excitement includes motives of entertainment, eustress, economic, drama, entertainment, player and sport interest, wholesome environment, and physical and celebrity attraction (Funk et al., 2004; Madrigal, 2006; Trial & James, 2001; Wann, 1995). Esteem reflects the extent to which an individual perceives attending a sport event as providing an opportunity for vicarious achievement. Individuals are motivated to seek a sport event experience due to opportunities for achievement and challenge that produce a sense of mastery and a heightened sense of personal and collective self-esteem. Esteem relates closely to motives of self-esteem, group affiliation achievement, community support, and vicarious achievement (Funk et al., 2004; Madrigal, 2006; Trial & James, 2001; Wann, 1995). Finally, diversion reflects the extent to which a person perceives attending a sport event provides an opportunity to escape the hassles and normal routine of everyday life. Diversion represents a desire

for mental well-being. Individuals are motivated to seek a sport event experience due to opportunities to escape and remove themselves from daily work and life routines that create stress. Diversion highlights previous motives of escape and fantasy (Funk et al., 2004; Madrigal, 2006; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995).

The five SPEED facets reviewed provide a parsimonious conceptualization of the multi-faceted nature of sport consumer motivation. The current research follows a hybrid approach to conceptualize core facets of motivation in order to develop a valid number of practically useful motivational constructs as a means toward better understanding their relationship with consumption activities (Flynn & Percy, 2001). Such conceptualization is not without controversy as the potential for theoretical overlap among the five facets is likely, as well as the potential loss of specific information in reducing the number of constructs and items to measure each construct.

The SPEED conceptualization represents an initial step in bridging the gap between academics' and practitioners' demands in hopes of creating further research discussion (DeVellis, 2003). Such conceptualization also conforms to the idea of "sensemaking" proposed by Weick (1993) such that reality is an ongoing accomplishment that emerges from efforts to create order and make retrospective sense of what occurs "... [and] make things rationally accountable to themselves and others" (p. 635). Hence, five facets are considered to measure motivation rather than attempting to directly reconcile existing scales and literature. As the initial step, empirical evidence is needed to substantiate these core motivational facets. Of particular relevance would be the ability of a 10-item SPEED scale to explain game attendance.

In summary, explaining and predicting sport event attendance remains important to sport marketers and academics. Academic research has provided a variety of measurement tools with various motivational constructs to examine sport attendance, but such tools often are perceived as burdensome and complex by practitioners and the prediction of attendance behavior is limited. To meet the research demands of both practitioner and academic, a theoretical and applied measurement tool is required to foster a stronger research-practice relationship. The examination of constructs from a number of scales led to the identification of five motivational themes used in previous empirical studies from which a parsimonious set of motives was developed: Socialization, Performance, Excitement, Esteem, and Diversion. These SPEED facets represent a hybrid approach to measuring a parsimonious set of motives to explain game attendance

behavior. The method employed to test the reliability and validity of these measures is described next.

Method

The objective of the data collection was to assess the psychometric properties of the SPEED scale and test its ability to explain game attendance. A survey was developed to measure the five facets based on the existing literature and commonalities shared among the instruments reviewed. The SPEED scale was distributed to spectators at a professional football game and to individuals in the general population.

Participants

The survey group consisted of 410 spectators attending an Australian Rules Football (AFL) game and 2,421 individuals intercepted at various locations within the geographic location of three sport teams in southern Queensland. The sample characteristics were 65% male, 44% in the age range 25-44 years, 38% had a high school degree followed by 37% with a university degree, 48% were of Oceania/Australia ethnicity followed by 27% European and 9% Asian, 52% were living with a partner, 37% had children, and 56% earned between \$2500-6000 AUD per month. The breakdown per sport team surveyed were (Australian Rules Football; AFL = 49%), (Australian Football League; A-League = 27%), and (National Rugby League; NRL = 24%).

Materials

A paper and pencil questionnaire was used to collect responses. The 10-item SPEED questionnaire was adopted and adapted from previous work in measuring spectator sport motives (i.e., Funk et al., 2004; Madrigal, 2006; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995). Each facet was assessed using two items randomly placed within the questionnaire on Likert scale items using seven-point scales anchored with [1] strongly disagree to [7] strongly agree. Outcome measures of game attendance behavior and team commitment were included to examine the explanatory ability of the SPEED facets. Behavior was assessed with a single self-report measure of past behavior "number of games attended last season." A three-item commitment scale (Neale & Funk, 2006) was used to measure the level psychological commitment to the team (i.e., I am a committed fan of the team, I am a loyal supporter of the team; Win, lose or draw I'm a loyal fan of the team) on Likert scale items using seven-point scales anchored with [1] strongly disagree to [7] strongly agree. A battery of questions was used to assess demographics of gender, income, ethnicity, education, and age.

Table 1.

Correlations, Means, Standard Deviations and Reliability Measures for the SPEED Facets of Sport Event Motivation, Game Attendance and Team Commitment (N = 2,831)

	SOC	PER	EST	EXC	DIV	BEH	COM	M	SD	α
SOC	1							4.08	1.73	.86
PER	.43*	1						3.79	1.73	.83
EST	.47*	.56*	1					3.70	1.95	.85
EXC	.53*	.68*	.67*	1				4.57	1.77	.77
DIV	.62*	.52*	.52*	.61*	1			3.89	1.66	.83
BEH	.32*	.41*	.51*	.49*	.37*	1		3.53	2.01	
COM	.45*	.57*	.84*	.71*	.52*	.60*	1	4.11	2.08	.95

Table 2.

Measurement Results for Confirmatory Factor Analysis of SPEED Facets (N = 2,831)

	β	T values
Socialization (SOC)	VE = .60	
The chance to socialize with others	.74	33.07
The opportunity to interact with other people	.80	34.72
Performance (PER)	VE = .78	
The gracefulness associated with the game	.89	38.79
The natural elegance of the game	.87	34.76
Excitement (EXC)	VE = .77	
I enjoy the excitement associated with the games	.88	30.85
I find the games very exciting	.88	29.35
Esteem (EST)	VE = .75	
I feel like I have won when the team wins	.92	45.24
I get a sense of accomplishment when the team wins	.80	41.15
Diversion (DIV)	VE = .75	
I can get away from the tension in my life	.85	35.65
It provides me with a break from my daily routine	.88	32.35
Note:		
β = Standardized Regression Coefficients		
VE = Average Variance Extracted		

Procedure

The 10-items representing the five SPEED facets were included in a single-page questionnaire administered to spectators attending an Australian Rules Football match in Brisbane, Australia. Questionnaires were distributed by 10 student researchers stationed at five randomly selected gates at the venue. Every fifth spectator was intercepted upon entrance and asked to complete the questionnaire and return the instrument to the researcher upon completion. The number of refusals

was low. A total of 410 usable questionnaires were collected.

The SPEED scale was also administered at various locations within geographic proximity of three sport teams (Australian Rules Football, A-League Soccer, and National Rugby League) in southern Queensland. Questionnaires were distributed by 20 trained researchers at shopping malls, local sport competitions, train stations, cinemas, car washes, and sport centers. Individuals were intercepted and asked a qualifying question: "Are you aware of Team X?" If the response

Table 3.
MANOVA Comparison of Past Attendance Group on
SPEED Facets Ratings (N = 2,831)

	No Prior Game Attendance N = 1,224	Prior Game Attendance N = 1,607
SPEED Facet	Mean *	Mean +
Socialization	3.39 (1.77)	4.62 (1.50)
Performance	3.00 (1.67)	4.42 (1.52)
Esteem	2.57 (1.77)	4.66 (1.62)
Excitement	3.49 (1.77)	5.41 (1.25)
Diversion	3.12 (1.50)	4.45 (1.76)
* Mean scores significantly lower the 4.0 midpoint $p < .01$ + Mean scores significantly higher than 4.0 midpoint $p < .01$		

was affirmative, the individual was asked to complete the questionnaire and return it immediately to the researcher. Again, the number of refusals was low. A total of 2,421 usable questionnaires were collected for the analysis. The surveys were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 14.0 for analysis.

Results

The means and standard deviations for each of the five SPEED facets are reported in Table 1. The mean scores ranged from 3.70 to 4.57, with Excitement revealing the highest mean score and Esteem the lowest mean score. The Cronbach alphas were calculated since multi-item scales were used and indicate the items used to measure the constructs were reliable and all above the $\alpha = .70$ benchmark (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Correlations are presented in Table 1 and reveal significant correlations between the five constructs ranging from 0.43 to 0.68.

Measurement Details

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using AMOS 7.0 (Arbuckle, 1994) indicated an acceptable fit for the psychometric properties of the SPEED facets: $\chi^2 = 280.12/df = 25$. A covariance matrix taken from these respondents was used as the input data. The measurement model examined the relationships between the five SPEED facets and 10 manifest items. The five latent SPEED facets were left to freely correlate. The parameter estimates and the accompanying t -test of significance for the relationships between each scale item and its respective SPEED facet were significant ($p < .01$). The standardized regression coefficients (β) reported in Table 2 for each construct exceeded the required .707 minimum, the squared multiple correlation coefficient for each item exceeded .50, and the average variance extracted by the three items for each construct was above the .50 benchmark (Bagozi & Yi, 1988). A test of discriminant validity revealed the average variance extracted by each of the items representing a construct exceeded the square of correlation between each construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). See Table 2 for Average Variance Extracted (VE).

Five fit indexes were used to evaluate how well the measurement model fit the data collected: Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Standardized Route Mean Squared (SRMR) (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Bollen, 1989; Hair et al., 2006; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). Fit statistics were: RMSEA = .06; SRMR = .02; GFI = .98; NFI = .99; and CFI = .99.

A comparison of SPEED facets by game attendance is presented in Table 3. Reported number of games attended was used to create two groups: No Prior Game Attendance (N = 1,224) and Previous Game Attendance (N = 1,607). The two groups were used to compare responses to SPEED facets to assess the role of prior attendance on responses. Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) revealed respondents in the previous game attendance group were more likely to agree attending games provided SPEED benefits of SOC $F(1, 2892) = 38.37$, PER $F(1, 2892) = 539.97$, EXC $F(1, 2892) = 1123.11$, EST $F(1, 2892) = 961.86$, and DIV $F(1, 2892) = 551.60$. A one sample t -test using a test value of 4.0 revealed that the No Prior Game Attendance group rated the SPEED facets significantly below the 4.0 mid point, indicating they did not agree that attending games provide SPEED benefits. In contrast, the Prior Game Attendance group rated the SPEED facets significantly higher than the 4.0 midpoint, indicating they were more likely to agree that games provided SPEED benefits.

Table 4.
Regression of Past Attendance and Team Commitment
on SPEED Facets (N = 2831)

	Game Attendance	Team Commitment
SPEED Facet	Beta	Beta
Socialization	.01	-.03
Performance	.07 *	.03 *
Esteem	.30 *	.66 *
Excitement	.21 *	.25 *
Diversion	.04	.03 *
F	244.56	1705.39
Adjusted R ²	.30	.75
* $p < .05$		

The means, standard deviations, and correlations for past game attendance and team commitment are reported in Table 1. Multiple linear regression was employed to examine the predictive ability of the five SPEED factors for game attendance and team commitment. The regression model presented in Table 4 indicate that 30% ($R^2 = .30$) of the variance in past attendance was explained by three of the SPEED facets, PER, EST, and EXC $F(5, 2,825) = 244.56$ $p < .01$. Multiple linear regression was next employed to examine the predictive ability of the five SPEED factors for team commitment. The regression model is presented in Table 4 and indicates that 75% ($R^2 = .75$) of the variance in team commitment was explained by facets of SOC, EST, EXC, and DIV $F(5, 2,825) = 1705.39$ $p < .01$.

Discussion

The current research provides a 10-item multi-attribute measurement tool capable of measuring parsimonious facets of motivation for sport event attendance. The SPEED motivational facets of Socialization, Performance, Excitement, Esteem, and Diversion represent five unique but related reasons why individuals seek out spectator sport experiences because the consumption experience provides opportunities to acquire needs and benefits (MacInnis et al., 1991). The psychometric properties of the SPEED motives and their ability to explain past attendance behavior and team commitment were tested using data collected during an Australian Rules Football (AFL) match and surveys

distributed to the general population at various locations within geographic proximity of three sport leagues. The following section provides a discussion of the research findings.

SPEED Conceptualization

The SPEED motives represent a hybrid approach to conceptualize sport event attendance motivation. The hybrid approach provides a parsimonious set of motives to meet theoretical and practical demands (DeVellis, 2003; Flynn & Pearcy, 2001). SPEED motives are not intended to provide new theoretical development nor scale development advancement, but are listed based upon the principles of “sense making” to build a stronger research-practice relationship (Weick, 1993). Definitions for each motive were provided in the Appendix to clarify definitional meaning for the constructs. Hence, SPEED creates a stronger research-practice relationship as the work of researchers can easily be translated and used by practitioners (Henderson et al., 2004). SPEED motives can now be used to focus on interrelationships with other key variables (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988). This work reverses the micro trend in sport consumer research that has led to the proliferation of scales and items to measure a list of factors comprehensive enough to capture a wide variety of individual characteristics (Koo & Hardin, 2008; Wann et al., 2008; Won & Kitamura, 2007). The SPEED scale reduces the number of factors to explain motivation, allowing a more parsimonious examination of the constructs’ relationship to antecedents and outcomes (Laverie & Arnett, 2000). This conceptualization represents an initial step in bridging the gap between academics and practitioners.

SPEED Measurement

The measurement of each SPEED motive was also based on a hybrid approach. Item measures were adapted from previous scales to explain sport consumer behavior (Funk et al., 2004; Madrigal, 2006; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995). Each SPEED motive was measured with two items per construct compared to the common practice of using three items and the feasibility of using a single item to measure each construct. Confirmatory factor analysis results support the reliability of 10 items as a means to measure a parsimonious set of five motives. Each SPEED motive represents a relatively narrow, one-dimensional facet of motivation. As such, arguments could be made for the use of single-item measures in the name of parsimony (e.g., Drolet & Morrison, 2001; Kwon & Trail, 2005). To do so, however, would require the unrealistic assumption that each facet can be measured without error and proves difficult to use in model testing (Hair

et al., 2006). Therefore, each facet was measured with two items to allow reliability to be assessed and reported. Overall, the results provide evidence of reliability for the SPEED measures. However, reliability is sample dependant (Streiner, 2003), and although a necessary condition of validity, it does not ensure validity (Hair et al., 2006). A discussion of the explanatory validity of the SPEED measures follows.

SPEED Explanatory Validity

The results provide evidence of explanatory validity for the SPEED measures. The MANOVA results in Table 3 indicate the five SPEED motives are able to differentiate individuals based on previous consumption experience. The experience gained from direct consumption of the live sport product was evident as individuals who had attended at least one game perceived receiving benefits of socialization, performance, excitement, esteem, and diversion from attendance more than individuals who had not attended a prior game. This level of knowledge reflects the realization that a specific sport consumption activity provides opportunities to satisfy needs and acquire benefits (Funk & James, 2006; MacInnis et al., 1991). In addition, responses for the prior attendance group were significantly above the 4.0 midpoint, indicating their agreement that attending a sport contest provides the five SPEED benefits. Hence, the scale is particularly useful for individuals who have prior direct experience with attending games to understand what benefits the spectator sport experience provides.

The SPEED facets demonstrate evidence for predictive validity as three facets possess the ability to explain an individual's past behavior and current team commitment level (Heiman, 1999). In regard to past attendance, multiple linear regression reported in Table 4 indicate the more games an individual attended the more likely he/she agreed attending games provided the opportunity for excitement, to enjoy live performances, and increase esteem. The three facets explained 30% of the variance in past game attendance. The explanatory ability of these three SPEED motives represents an increase in predictive validity from the 20% or less reported in previous research (Hoye & Lilis, 2008; Neale & Funk, 2006; Ridinger & Funk, 2006). The remaining two measures of diversion and socialization were not significant predictors explaining prior attendance behavior. This finding is surprising given past research but these two motives may reflect benefits that individuals can obtain through non-sport related entertainment consumption activities.

The ability of the SPEED facets to explain current levels of team commitment was robust. Individuals

who reported higher levels of team commitment were more like to agree that attending games provided the opportunity for excitement, to enjoy live performances, increase esteem, and escape daily routines. These four motives explained 75% of the variance in team commitment. The socialization facet was not significant. These findings indicate that higher levels of team commitment are associated with consumption activities that provide four unique but related benefits.

In summary, the SPEED scale provides a parsimonious measurement tool of motives to explain past sport event attendance. Each motive within the scale represents a construct examined within existing motivation scales. The SPEED motives demonstrate reliability and were able to explain 30% of past game attendance and 75% of team commitment. Collectively, the SPEED scale is a reliable and valid measurement tool that is relatively concise, facilitating implementation by practitioners, while effectively representing sport event attendance motives uncovered through existing academic research.

Implications

The findings of this research introduce a variety of theoretical and practical implications. First, the results provide empirical evidence that the SPEED scale represents a concise 10-item instrument with sound psychometric properties to measure and explain why people attend spectator sport contests. The SPEED scale integrates previous scales applied to sport consumer motivation research and provides a reliable and valid tool that researchers can apply and further test in additional sport contexts.

Second, this research further highlights the importance of delineating among different types of motives useful for explaining behavior versus attitudes (Koo & Hardin, 2008; Pritchard & Funk, 2006). Research applying the SPEED scale can continue to classify consumers to further investigate motivational differences that may exist (Ross, 2007). Finally, the findings demonstrate the relative importance of esteem, excitement, and performance facets for both behavior and team commitment (e.g., Neale & Funk, 2006; Ridinger & Funk, 2006). This finding highlights benefits provided by the gameday sport experience (Zuckerman, 1983).

From a practical perspective, the application of the SPEED facets presents managers with a relatively brief tool for the assessment of consumer motivation. Administration of the SPEED scale in both a gameday environment and natural setting through intercepts demonstrates the convenience of being able to solicit feedback without extended interruption. This procedure illustrates how a core set of motives based on theoretical and practical relevance can be easily examined

to provide a stronger research-practice relationship (Henderson et al., 2004). The results can aid sport marketing professionals in survey development decisions related to selecting the most appropriate motives and items (DeVellis, 2003) that can later shape marketing communication.

Specific findings of the current research indicate marketing communication should highlight the benefits of excitement, performance, and esteem associated with attending professional sport contests. Excitement reflects the desire for intellectual stimulation of which thrills related to the contest and associated activities are attractive. In marketing excitement, Durgee (1988) advocates a focus on storytelling with an emphasis on setting, characters, opposition, symbols, mood, and plot associated with the product. As a means to facilitate this, the author suggests interacting with consumers about the stimulation inherent to their experiences, focusing on the minor details that reflect how individuals experience the product (Baker, Grewal, & Parasuraman, 1994). Performance represents the desire to watch an artistic movement that provides the excellence, beauty, and creativity of athletic performance. Marketing content should emphasize pictorial and verbal forms of performance that communicate these aesthetic characteristics (Madrigal, 2006). For consumers with direct first-hand experience attending a previous game, this task revolves around reinforcing the positive outcomes that can be achieved through attendance. However, for individuals who are aware but have not previously attended a game, efforts should be more informational to increase the knowledge and realization that these benefits can be obtained through attendance.

Finally, the relative importance of esteem reaffirms the importance of leveraging the potential sense of accomplishment received from a sport team (Kahle et al., 1996). Trail, Anderson, and Fink (2005) indicate that as a consumer builds and maintains self-esteem through a sport team, they are more likely to attend future games and purchase merchandise. The authors suggest facilitating these behaviors through means such as post-game events involving players, coaches, and fans is critical; as well as the creation of specific sections within stadia for the most loyal fans. Furthermore, to capitalize on the emotions and accomplishment evoked by a sport team, managers can launch season ticket and membership sales campaigns immediately following the completion of the season (Trail et al., 2005). Even after unsuccessful seasons, these campaigns can still work to leverage this construct as negative influences on esteem among highly involved fans may be temporary (Bizman & Yinon, 2002).

Limitations

Three limitations to this research should be recognized. First, respondents were required to self-report their consumption behaviors. Inconsistencies may exist between what was reported and an individual's actual game attendance and other related behaviors. Second, the sport teams have experienced varying degrees of success and the history of each franchise is quite diverse. Third, the sport teams examined were professional and the SPEED scale should be implemented using non-professional sport teams as the object.

“Collectively, the SPEED scale is a reliable and valid measurement tool that is relatively concise, facilitating implementation by practitioners, while effectively representing sport event attendance motives uncovered through existing academic research.”

Future Directions

Using this research as a starting point, future work can be done to replicate the findings of the current study and to continue developing the SPEED motives. First, the hybrid approach adopted by this research provides the ability to use SPEED facets to create consumer profiles through segmentation research similar to enduring involvement research that commonly utilizes facets to develop unique involvement profiles (Havitz & Dimanche, 1997). A SPEED profile allows researchers and practitioners to examine specific aspects of motivation that provide unique information about a consumer. For instance, an individual may regularly attend cricket matches because s/he enjoys meeting with friends to take in the game and appreciates the excitement and uncertainty surrounding the outcome of each match, while paying little attention to, and having limited knowledge of, the skills and techniques exhibited by the players. This individual's SPEED profile towards cricket may reflect high levels of excitement, along with low levels of performance.

Second, qualitative data can be collected to further examine the relative importance of each motive and perhaps broaden the items underlying each construct. Focus groups can be organized with aware non-consumers, light, medium, and heavy users to explore the differences found among these groups. In addition, one-on-one interviews can be conducted prior to matches to further study the game attendance experience and the factors that drive attendance. An important area is to further explore why socialization and diversion were not rated as important as other SPEED facets especially among non-sport game attendees. Third, the current study looked at three different types of professional sport. Future research can apply the

SPEED motives to a wider variety of sports, including both men's and women's, as well as different levels (e.g., amateur, semi-professional, youth). Furthermore, the SPEED motives could be examined across different geographical regions as the current study focuses solely on Australian sport.

Next, the current study concentrated on game attendance as sport consumption behavior; however, the SPEED motives may be relevant and important for individuals who choose to follow and watch sport via media (e.g., television, Internet) (Pritchard & Funk, 2006). Additional work examining these consumers can assist sport marketers in maintaining or improving television ratings and customizing Internet marketing communication. Finally, the instrument can be further employed within the sport event context. The SPEED motives can be assessed for the different types of events (mega, hallmark, major, and local) to assist event managers in tailoring their event marketing communication. Finally, a link between the SPEED motives and the event location as a tourist destination could be explored.

Conclusion

This research introduces and tests a 10-item instrument to measure sport consumer motivation and explain past game attendance behavior. Results reveal that the SPEED facets of Socialization, Performance, Excitement, Esteem, and Diversion (SPEED) demonstrate adequate reliability and validity. Results provide both academics and sport marketing professionals guidance in survey development decisions related to selecting the most appropriate motives and items needed to understand sport consumers. This research can lead to further application and examination of the SPEED motives across a variety of sport contexts.

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Appendix

Construct Definitions Measure for SPEED Facets of Sport Event Motivation

Socialization

The extent to which a person perceives attending a sport event is viewed as an opportunity to interact with family, friends, and other spectators

- Socialization represents a desire for sociability. Individuals are motivated to seek a sport event experience due to opportunities for the enhancement of human relationships through external interaction with other spectators, participants, friends, and family.

Performance

The extent to which an individual believes that sport events provide excellence, beauty, and creativity of athletic performance

- Performance represents a desire for aesthetic and physical pleasure. Individuals are motivated to seek a sport experience due to opportunities to enjoy the grace, skill, and artistry of athletic movement and physiological movement.

Excitement

The extent to which a sport event is perceived as providing excitement and drama with an element of uncertainty as to the outcome of the game

- Excitement represents a desire for intellectual stimulation. Individuals are motivated to seek a sport event experience due to opportunities for mental action and exploration from the atmospheric conditions created by the uncertainty of participation and competition and the spectacle of associated activities.

Esteem

The extent to which an individual perceives a heightened sense of personal and collective esteem based on vicarious achievement when his/her favorite team wins

- Esteem represents a desire for competency. Individuals are motivated to seek a sport event experience due to opportunities for achievement and challenge that produce a sense of mastery and a heightened sense of personal and collective self-esteem.

Diversion

The extent to which a person perceives attending a sport event provides an opportunity to escape or “get away” from the hassles and normal routine of everyday life

- Diversion represents a desire for mental well-being. Individuals are motivated to seek a sport event experience due to opportunities to escape and remove themselves from daily work and life routines that create stress.