

The Profile and Motivation of Golf Tournament Attendees: An Empirical Study

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Abstract:

We conducted surveys at the 2006 Chrysler Classic of Greensboro and the 2007 Wyndham Championship to determine a spectator golf profile and motivation. We performed regression analysis. Our explanatory variables were past attendance, motivations to attend tournament, importance of player’s names, and participation in peripheral activities. Our dependent variables were overall rating of the tournament and intention to attend a future tournament. Our analysis indicated that the effect of motivation and participation were significant on both dependent variables. The effects of past attendance on the dependent variable were significant only on intention of future attendance and the effects of names of players were found to be mixed.

Keywords: Sport spectators | PGA tournaments | marketing strategies | golf industry | peripheral activities | audience participation activities | identity theory

Article:

Introduction

A constellation of factors linked to consumer characteristics and transformations in the entertainment landscape is pushing through a fundamental shift in sport spectators’ behaviors. On that front, a key trend has been an increasing popularity of some forms of entertainments, which has worked against sport attendance. For instance, during 1964-1992, sports events in Canada experienced a drop in attendance as well as in family expenditures in constant dollars (Colbert, 1997). During the same period, attendance and consumer expenditure on stage performance increased (Colbert, 1997).

In a rich body of theory and empirical research, scholars have examined the determinants of demand of sports events. There has been a proliferation of studies in this area in recent years (Baimbridge, Cameron and Dawson, 1995; Morley and Thomas, 2007). In this paper, we argue that determinants of profile of attendees and motivation attendance at sports events, while well documented, are only partially understood.

First, although researchers have acknowledged that sport spectators comprise a distinct subculture from the standpoint of consumption patterns (Underwood *et al.*, 2001), they have paid relatively less attention to the characteristics of this subculture. Current understanding of theorization on this front is sketchy because little empirical work exists. A related point is that development of marketing tools and techniques to attract potential spectators has received very little attention from marketers and organizers of sports events. At a higher level of analysis, while an enormous body of literature in economics and marketing has documented exchanges which primarily provide utilitarian satisfaction, there has been less effort on products or services that are consumed for more hedonistic purposes (Babin *et al.*, 1994; Arnould and Price, 1993; Price *et al.*, 1995). The pace and proliferation of research on consumer behavior in the area of leisure services have also been slow (Taylor *et al.*, 1993).

The purpose of our study is to fill this void. We seek to understand profiles of people watching live golf tournaments and their motivations in order to understand ways of attracting them. This is important, because as theoretical research on marketing and psychology suggests, understanding profiles of people and their motivations is a prerequisite to understanding how organizers can devise strategies to better serve them. Our theoretical contribution is aimed primarily at identifying very clear contexts and attendant mechanisms associated with attendance at sports events.

Our focus on determinants of attendance at sports events, especially PGA tournaments, is also important from managerial and policy standpoints: (1) The sports market is becoming increasingly saturated with multiple sports choices (Burnett, Menon and Smart, 1993). A given sport event thus has to compete with other sports events and entertainment alternatives in terms of consumers' time and money. Speaking of challenges to attract attendees in golf tournaments, Tim Finchem, Commissioner of the PGA Tour, recently put the issue this way: "[T]ime is impacting everybody in terms of the compression of people's days challenges us to get people to watch a golf tournament for a couple of hours"¹; (2) Marketing strategies and techniques used to increase fan attendance have been constantly evolving in response to changes in internal and external environments (Dick and Sack, 2003). However, some sports organizers have failed to account for such changes and from the marketing standpoint, their innovation pipeline has been dry. For instance, NBA teams spend over \$1 million a year in marketing but their marketing tools and techniques are about 30 years old (Dick and Turner, 2007). While there have been some attempts to try new techniques, effectiveness of such techniques have not been assessed (Dick and Turner 2007). Franchises that do not give close attention to marketing are putting themselves at risk (Dick and Sack, 2003). Prior researchers have recognized that marketing research is crucial in tracking the effectiveness of marketing strategies (Dick and Sack 2003). In turn, this transition to a marketing orientation makes it imperative for sports marketers to better

¹ See "Meeting of the Minds", January 27, 2005, URL: <http://www.pga.com/news/show/news/conferencetranscript012705.cfm>.

understand their consumers in order to reach them more efficiently with appropriate communications strategies (Burnett, Menon and Smart, 1993). It is, however, argued that a seemingly homogeneous group may be further broken into a number of segments to better understand the consumer and to assess how various segments can be better utilized and served (Burnett, Menon and Smart, 1993); (3) Americans spend tens of billions of dollars annually on spectator amusements (movies, theaters, sporting events) and commercial participant amusements (video arcades, water slide parks, amusement parks, casinos, golf courses, etc (Wakefield and Blodgett, 1996). Moreover, the market is becoming saturated with multiple sports choices for consumers, and this intense competition is niche-picking the sports market to dangerous levels (Burnett, Menon and Smart, 1993). Finally, sports marketers have not yet clearly identified their consumers and have paid for this oversight (Burnett, Menon and Smart, 1993).

The golf industry's impact to the U.S. economy is estimated at \$62 billion dollars, which is bigger than that of the motion picture (scoregolf.com, 2007). PGA tournaments provide a significant economic boost to local economy. For instance, sponsors, businesses serving the tournament and spectators traveling from outside to watch PGA tournaments spend on lodging, gas, gifts, foods and local area attractions. Estimates suggest that PGA tournaments generate \$25-50 million in economic activity for local communities (Halbritter, 2007)². Beyond all that, PGA Tour events also engage in charitable fundraising. For instance, Each year the Greater Hartford Jaycees use about \$600,000 in profits from the Greater Hartford PGA Open to help fund community programs such as those related to AIDS patients and orphans and sponsoring a jazz festival and youth soccer leagues (Wojtas, 2006).

Theory and hypotheses

We focus on two interrelated reasons to examine the determinants of spectator satisfaction: spectator profile and motivation.

Past attendance

Different theoretical contributions and various empirical studies have led to the accepted view that spectators' past attendance influences the assessment of the current event. It is argued that past attendance increases the marginal utility associated with the current and future attendance (Morley and Thomas, 2007). For instance, Borland and Lye's (1992) study of Australian Rules Football indicated that gradual learning about the game enhanced enjoyment from future matches (Morley and Thomas, 2007). The study also found that spectators also derived utility from the 'tradition' of attending matches.

A second point to bear in mind is that repeat spectators differ from the first time spectators in terms of the "symbolic self-expression" and "the identity affirming activity" dimensions (Armstrong, 2007). Perception of the consumption of the event tends to be more meaningful for the latter group compared to the former (Armstrong, 2007).

² One estimate suggested that the tournament's economic impact on the Philadelphia region was over \$30 million (George, 2003).

H_{1a} : *An individuals' overall rating of the tournament is positively related to the past attendance.*

H_{1b} : *An individuals' intention to attend a future tournament is positively related to the past attendance.*

Motivation of spectators and satisfaction

An extensive stream of research has been aimed at accurately conceptualizing motivations of spectators. In the last two decades, the field of sports behavior has witnessed a proliferation of research documenting the motivations of sport fans and spectators (Wann, Schrader and Wilson, 1999). Sloan (1989) identified five categories motivations of sport spectators: salubrious effects, stress and stimulation seeking, catharsis and aggression, entertainment, and achievement seeking. Similarly, Wann (1995) developed the *Sport Fan Motivation Scale* (SFMS). SFMS includes eight factors: *eustress, self-esteem, escape from everyday life, entertainment, economic factors, aesthetics, group affiliation, and family needs*. SFMS is subsequently refined by Wann, Schrader and Wilson (1999).

H_{2a} : *An individuals' overall rating of the tournament is positively related to the number of motivations for attending the tournament.*

H_{2b} : *An individuals' intention to attend a future tournament is positively related to the number of motivations for attending the tournament.*

Importance placed on the names of the players or team

While a number of extraneous factors such as weather, alternative attractions affect satisfaction, the basic features determining inherent match attractiveness, as reflected in spectator attendance, relate to the characteristics of the participating teams and players (Morley and Thomas, 2007).

To understand how importance placed on the names of the players may influence satisfaction with the tournament and intention to attend future tournaments, it may be helpful to consider identity theory (Madrigal 1995; Laverie and Arnett, 2000). The central premise of identity theory is that an individual's concept of "self" consists of multiple role-identities which accommodate the social nature of past experience (Trail, Anderson and Fink, 2005). These multiple role-identities, which are shared and socially recognized through actions, give meaning to past behaviors and provide guidelines for future behavior (Trail, Anderson and Fink, 2005; Ervin and Stryker, 2001).

Prior literature has successfully applied the identity theory to link spectators' identification with a sport team or a player and enjoyment of the game. Madrigal (1995) came up with the influential concept of *basking-in-reflected-glory* (BIRGing) to explain this linkage. He suggested that BIRGing influences an individual's enjoyment of the game and both BIRGing and enjoyment impact attendance satisfaction (Madrigal, 1995). Prior researchers have successfully incorporated a core support element related to a team to predict satisfaction and intention to attend future events (Borland and Lye, 1992; Peel and Thomas, 1996).

H_{3a} : *An individuals' overall rating of the tournament is positively related to the importance placed on the names of the players.*

H_{3b} : *An individuals' intention to attend a future tournament is positively related to the importance placed on the names of the players.*

Participation in peripheral activities

The influence of the sport setting and environment on spectator satisfaction is well documented in the literature. The contagion effect and collective crowd behavior associated with the sport setting is tightly linked to the level of satisfaction (Mann, 1989). Leyner (2000) argued: Except for the opportunity to begrudgingly share cheesedrenched nachos with complete strangers or stand in line and chat with other people who also have to urinate badly, there will be no valid reason to attend a live sports event as a spectator. All sports, and especially football, will continue to be better on TV.

One way to increase interest in attendance at sports events arguably is to incorporate spectators into the action and introduce audience participation activities (Armstrong 2007; Leyner, 2000). A setting which allows audience to participate in activities may help create a dynamic arena culture (Armstrong, 2007). *Spectators* may get more meaningful experience from such a setting. The concept of peripheral activities might be helpful to understand this dynamics. In the sports market, a core service is the game itself while the peripheral dimension includes a host of activities that range from parking to entertainment means which affect spectators' satisfaction (Iacobucci *et al.*, 1994; Leeuween *et al.*, 2002).

H_{4a} : *An individuals' overall rating of the tournament is positively related to the level of his/her participation in peripheral activities.*

H_{4b} : *An individuals' intention to attend a future tournament is positively related to the level of his/her participation in peripheral activities.*

Methodology analysis and findings

The questionnaire was designed based on the information needed by the tournament staff regarding attributes such as purchasing habits, reasons for attending the event, attitudes towards the price of the ticket or the overall experience, potential determinants of the buying/attending behavior and demographic characteristics (gender, age, marital status, income, education, etc.). The survey consists of 21 questions (see Appendices 1 and 2). The questions, their form, wording and sequence were carefully chosen to make the questionnaire concise, clear and as complete as possible. In order to have consistent answers, most of the questions were closed-end. Just a few were open-end, allowing the respondents to answer using their own words; one of the most important open-end questions asked the respondents to explain their favorable or unfavorable attitude toward attending the next tournament.

There were a few questions with two possible answers (yes/no) and some multiple-choice questions. The scales used to depict the answer consisted mostly of the importance scale (very

important, important, somewhat important, somewhat unimportant, unimportant), the rating scale (excellent, very good, good, poor, very poor) and the intention to buy scale (definitely would, probably would, might/might not, probably not, definitely not). Pre-testing of the questionnaire was performed using 15 students, who were interested in golf.

Data collection

The survey was based on a simple random sample. The questionnaire was administered on each day of the golf tournament (October 5-8, 2006 and August 16-19, 2007) except for the practice days, between noon and 6:00 pm. The time interval was chosen so that the participants could complete the survey on their way out of the event (the evaluation of the event has to be significant); around noon the first people started to leave the premises. In 2006, 342 questionnaires were completed (about 180 during the first two days and the rest on Sunday and Saturday). In 2007, 535 questionnaires were completed.

Demographic profiles of respondents in 2007 are presented in Tables 1a-1f.

Table 1a. Gender composition of respondents

Gender	Frequency
Male	418
Female	107
Missing	10
Total	535

Table 1b. Marital status composition of respondents

Marital status	Frequency
Married	360
Single	113
Divorced/Separated/Widowed	43
Missing	19
Total	535

Table 1c. Family size composition of respondents

Family size	Frequency
1	74
2	135
3	82
4	138
5+	68
Missing	38
Total	535

Table 1d. Age composition of respondents

Age	Frequency
18-24	60
25-40	191
41-60	203
60+	56
Missing	25
Total	535

Table 1e. Education level composition of respondents

Education level	Frequency
Less than HS	16
HS graduate	47
Some college	82
College graduate	271
Masters or higher	108
Missing	11
Total	535

Table 1f. Household income composition of respondents

Household income	Frequency
Under \$50,000	68
\$50,000-\$100,000	210
\$100,001 and above	208
Missing	49
Total	535

Table 2a. Correlations matrix 2006

	Reasons for attending	Price	Names of players	Past attendance	Play golf	Attend next tournament	Rating	Education	Income
Number of days attend	.200***	-.008	.131**	.061	.106*	.010	.066	-.091	-.001
Motivations		-.243***	-.009	.164***	-.004	-.039	.002	-.075	-.040
Price			.020	-.189***	.030	.097	.006	.122*	-.062
Names of players				.058	-.273***	.171***	.125**	-.051	-.135**
Past attendance					-0.006	.109*	.045	-.116**	-.066
Play golf						.038	.041	.084	.121*
Attend next tournament							.278***	.095	-.16
Rating								-.026	.046
Education									.292***

*: Significant at 0.1 level, **: Significant at 0.05 level, ***: Significant at 0.01 level

Table 2b. Correlations matrix 2007

	Reasons for attending	Activities participated	Price	Names of players	Past attendance	Play golf	Attend next tournament	Rating	Education	Income
Number of days attend	.089**	.125***	-.040	.150***	.163***	-.075	.169***	.082*	.032	.022
Motivations		.094**	.070	-.064	.189***	.033	.182***	.123***	-.106**	-.104
Peripheral			-.078	.049	.027	.020	.131***	.204***	.072*	.043
Price				-.008	.021	-.097*	.195***	.197***	.026	.028
Names of players					-.021	.027	.012	.082*	.049	.098**
Past attendance						-.089*	.166***	.011	-.077*	-.147***
Play golf							-.021	.112**	-.171***	-.044
Attend next tournament								.467***	.021	.009
Rating									.103**	.132***
Education										.338***

*: Significant at 0.1 level, **: Significant at 0.05 level, ***: Significant at 0.01 level

Table 2a and Table 2b present correlation coefficients between relevant variables. The two dependent variables are overall rating of the tournament (Rating) and intention to attend a future tournament (Attend next tournament). The four explanatory variables used in this paper are: (a) Past attendance; (b) Motivations of spectators in attending the tournament (Motivations); (c) Importance placed on the names of the players or team (Name); and (d) Participation in

peripheral activities (Peripheral). The last variable was only for the 2007 survey. In addition we used seven control variables. They are number of days attended, whether an attendee bought the ticket (Buy ticket?), whether an attendee plays golf (play golf), income, education, gender and age.

The effects of motivations of spectators in attending the tournament (Motivations) and participation in peripheral activities (Peripheral) are significant on both the dependent variables for the 2007 data. The effects of past attendance and importance placed on the names of the players or team (Name) are mixed for 2006 as well as 2007 data (Table 3a and 3b).

Table 3a. Regression analyses 2006

	DV: Attend next tournament	DV: Rating
Constant	2.065 (4.11)***	1.595 (3.48)
No. of days attend	.006	.051 (1.23)
Motivations	-.026	-.003 (-.078)
Buy ticket?	-.134 (-1.35)	.028 (.31)
Names of players		
Past attendance	.091 (1.92)*	.033 (.77)
Play golf		
Education		
R ²	.018	.007
Adj. R ²	.006	-.006
F	1.461	.561
N	319	304

*: Significant at 0.1 level, **: Significant at 0.05 level, ***: Significant at 0.01 level

Table 3b. Regression analyses 2007

	DV: Attend next tournament	DV: Rating	DV: Rating	DV: Rating	DV: Rating			
Constant	-1.614 (-2.46)**	-1.90 (-3.23)***	-1.874 (-2.99)***	-1.612 (-2.78)***	-.987 (-1.37)**	-1.523 (-2.38)**	-1.527 (-2.15)**	-1.091 (-1.74)**
No. of days attend	.099 (1.96)*	.123 (2.72)***	.138 (2.88)***	.150 (3.39)***	.046 (.824)	.048 (.956)	.036 (.654)	.047 (.98)
Motivations	.100 (3.29)***	.103 (3.65)***	.094 (3.12)***	.112 (4.02)***	.096 (2.88)***	.090 (2.90)***	.085 (2.48)**	.080 (2.64)***
Peripheral	.050 (1.62)	.059 (2.05)**	.055 (1.77)**	.062 (2.16)**	.101 (3.03)***	.130 (4.16)***	.128 (3.68)***	.122 (3.95)***
Buy ticket?	.220 (2.63)***	.265 (3.51)***	.248 (3.05)***		.135 (1.45)	.241 (2.85)***	.250 (2.65)***	
Past attend	.112 (3.15)***	.072 (2.36)**	.066 (1.98)**		-.015 (-.39)	-.023 (-.692)	-.021 (.555)	
Play golf			.011 (.29)				.094 (2.14)**	
Name	-.016 (-.69)			-.001 (-.027)	.031 (1.19)			.041 (1.70)*
Income	.039 (.733)				.149 (2.56)**			
Education	.026 (.643)				.049 (1.08)			
Gender	-.041 (-.48)				-.137 (-1.42)			
Age	-.023 (-.51)				-.161 (-3.21)***			
R ²	.107	.108	.107	.071	.103	.082	.090	.060
Adj. R ²	.086	.098	.094	.064	.081	.072	.075	.052
F	4.997***	11.61***	7.75***	9.697***	4.583***	8.16***	6.034***	7.730***
N	428	488	393	512	408	464	374	487

*: Significant at 0.1 level, **: Significant at 0.05 level, ***: Significant at 0.01 level

Discussion and implications

In this article, we identified factors driving overall satisfaction in sporting events as well as sport fans' intention to attend future event. This study fills a large gap in the literature on hedonistic consumption and also addresses important issues related to drivers of satisfaction for sports

spectators. The analysis of this paper indicates that the seemingly homogeneous group in golf tournament attendance can be further broken into a number of segments. Such segmentation allows organizers to better understand the consumer and to assess how various segments can be better utilized and served (Burnett, Menon and Smart, 1993).

Future research on this topic should help us better understand Live Golf Tournament Attendance, and perhaps to find better ways of managing it. Further research is needed to extend, refine, and assess the generalizability of the models presented in this paper. One extension of the present work is to improve the models used in this paper by including more variables. For instance, variables related to sports involvement such as time spent watching sports on TV, reading sports related periodicals, and frequency of reading the sports section of a newspaper (Gamst, Sutherland and Evans, 1993; Gantz and Wenner, 1991; Shank and Beasley, 1998). Variables related to spectators' preference for a nonaggressive sport vs. aggressive sport can also be included (Wann, 1995; Wann, Schrader and Wilson, 1999).

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Appendix 1. Questionnaire used in 2007

1. How did you hear about the Wyndham Championship? (Check all that apply)
 Friends My company is a sponsor Billboard Web site
 TV Newspapers Radio Other
2. Did you buy your ticket? Yes No
2a. If yes, where did you get it?
 Harris Teeter online Tournament Office Ordered by mail
 Ordered by fax
3. What days will (did) you attend the tournament? (Check all that apply)
 Practice Days Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday
4. Why did you choose to attend Wyndham Championship? (Check all that apply)
 Major sport event in the area Passion for golf Fun
 Social networking Business Networking Tradition
5. Which activities will (did) you participate in? (Check all that apply).
 XM Satellite Radio headset Crocs-Sample try Wyndham-Fan hospitality tent
 19th hole Grey Goose Lounge Putting competition (Wednesday-Saturday)
 Youth Golf Clinic (Tuesday only) Suncom Calling Tent
6. How important was the ticket price in your decision to attend the golf tournament?
 Very important Important Somewhat important
 Somewhat unimportant Unimportant
- 6a. Do you think the price of the ticket is ... ?
 Very reasonable Reasonable Somewhat reasonable
 Somewhat unreasonable Unreasonable
7. Are you aware of the fact that Wyndham Championship tickets can be bought online?
 Yes No
7a. If yes, please rate the Wyndham Championship's new online ticket system.
 Very effective Effective Ineffective Very ineffective
8. Was your decision to attend the tournament influenced by the names of the PGA TOUR players in the tournament field?
 Definitely Somewhat Somewhat/Somewhat Not Somewhat Not
 Definitely not
9. How many times have you attended the Chrysler Classic of Greensboro/Wyndham Championship?
 10+ 5-9 2-4 1
10. Do you play golf? Yes No
If yes: 10a. How often do you play golf per year?
 Less than 20X 20-50X 51-100X 100X+
11. Based on your experience at this year's tournament, would you choose to attend the next tournament?
 Definitely would Probably would Might/might not Probably not
 Definitely not
11a. Please explain why or why not.
12. Overall, how would you rate this tournament?
 Excellent Very Good Good Poor Very Poor
13. Your gender? Male Female
14. Marital status? Married Single Divorced/Separated/Widowed

15. Family size? 1 2 3 4 5+
16. Your Age? 18-24 25-40 41-60 60+
17. Your formal education?
- Less than high school High school graduate Some college
 College graduate Masters or higher
18. What is the approximate combined annual income of your household before taxes?
- Under \$50,000 \$50,001 to \$100,000 \$100,001 and above
19. What is your zip code?
20. Would you like to receive more information about the next golf tournament and other related events? Yes No
- If yes, please provide us with an e-mail address

Thank you for your participation!

Note. the original appeared as a one page document.

Appendix 2. Questionnaire used in 2006

1. How did you hear about the Chrysler Classic of Greensboro? (Check all that apply)
- Friends My company is a sponsor Billboard Web site
 TV Newspapers Radio Other
2. Did you buy your ticket? Yes No
- 2a. If yes, where did you get it?
- Harris Teeter Chrysler Dealerships Jaycees Office Ordered by mail
 Ordered by mail Ordered by fax
3. What days do you attend the tournament? (Check all that apply)
- Practice Days Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday
4. Why did you choose to come to the Chrysler Classic of Greensboro? (Check all that apply)
- Major sport event in the area Passion for golf Fun
 Social networking Business Networking Tradition
5. How important was the ticket price in your decision to attend the golf tournament?
- Very important Important Somewhat important
 Somewhat unimportant Unimportant
- 5a. Do you think the price of the ticket is ... ?
- Very reasonable Reasonable Somewhat reasonable
 Somewhat unreasonable Unreasonable
6. Was your decision to attend the tournament influenced by the names of the PGA TOUR players in the tournament field?
- Definitely Somewhat Somewhat/Somewhat Not Somewhat Not
 Definitely not
7. Are you aware of the fact that starting with 2007 the Chrysler Classic tournament dates will change? Yes No
8. How many times have you attended the Chrysler Classic of Greensboro?
- 10+ 5-9 2-4 First time
9. What PGA TOUR Tournaments do you follow on television?
- The 4 Majors only Majors and other big tournaments Most of the tournaments
 Only this one None

10. Do you play golf? Yes No
 If yes: 10a. How often do you play golf per year?
 Less than 20X 20-50X 51-100X 100X+
11. Based on your experience at this year's tournament, would you choose to attend the next tournament?
 Definitely would Probably would Might/might not Probably not
 Definitely not
 11a. Please explain why or why not.
12. Overall, how would you rate this tournament?
 Excellent Very Good Good Poor Very Poor
13. Your gender? Male Female
14. Marital status? Married Single Divorced/Separated/Widowed
15. Family size? 1 2 3 4 5+
16. Your Age? 18-24 25-40 41-60 60+
17. Your formal education?
 Less than high school High school graduate Some college
 College graduate Masters or higher
18. Your occupation?
19. What is the approximate combined annual income of your household before taxes?
 Under \$50,000 \$50,001 to \$100,000 \$100,001 and above
20. What is your zip code?
21. Would you like to receive more information about the next golf tournament and other related events? Yes No
 If yes, please provide us with an e-mail address

Thank you for your participation!

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