

Motivation for following College Sports Teams' Social Media Accounts

Jae-Ahm Park^{1*}, Stephen W. Dittmore¹

¹Department of Health, Human Performance and Recreation, University of Arkansas

대학스포츠팀 소셜미디어의 이용동기

박재암^{*}, 스테판 W. 디트모어¹

¹아칸소대학교 여가·스포츠학과

Abstract This study attempted to verify what motivates fans to follow college sports teams' social media and identify the motivational factors that can best predict fans' social media consumption. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) indicated that previously identified seven motives for online consumption, i.e., information, diversion, socialization, pass-time, fanship, team support, and technical knowledge, are compatible with the use of college sports teams' social media. In addition, a results of multiple regression found diversion, socialization, fanship, team support, and technical knowledge to significantly predict the level of social media consumption while information and pass-time did not significantly affect social media consumption. In particular, socialization had the greatest influence on social media consumption.

요약 이 연구의 목적은 스포츠팬들이 대학 스포츠 팀의 SNS를 이용하는 동기를 분석하는 것에 있다. 연구대상자는 NCAA Division1 대학교에 재학 중인 대학생을 모집단으로 선정하여 비확률 표본추출법(non-probability sampling)중 편의 표본추출법(convenience sampling method)을 이용하여 3개의 NCAA Division1 대학에서 총 320명을 표집 하였다. 최종 응답률은 49%(N=159)이었으며, 이 중 질문문항의 일괄적인 처리 혹은 무응답, 오기입 등 신뢰성이 떨어진다고 판단되어지는 13부의 설문지를 제외하고 총 146부를 분석에 사용하였다. 확인적 요인분석과 다중회귀 분석을 실시한 결과, diversion, socialization, fanship, team support, 그리고 technical knowledge 동기가 대학스포츠팀 SNS이용에 유의한 정(+의) 영향을 미치는 것으로 나타났다. 그러나 information 그리고 pass-time 동기는 SNS이용에 유의한 영향을 미치지 않는 것으로 나타났다.

Key Words : Motivation, Social media, College sports

1. Introduction

According to a report from PEW Internet and the American Life Project, 75% of adults use social media[1]. Social media is Internet-based communication and the technological foundation of Web 2.0 allowing users to share the User Generated Content (UGC) including useful information, pictures,

and the video with friends or other users[2,3]. Particularly, Facebook, YouTube, Google Plus, and Twitter are one of the most popular social media with over hundred billion monthly active users[4]. On the basis of this increased popularity, sport organizations such as Olympics, NASCAR, National Basketball Association (NBA), and Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) have also begun to adopt social

*Corresponding Author : Jae-Ahm Park(University of Arkansas)

Tel: +1-479-799-7208 email: nakhwaam@naver.com

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media for their public relations and marketing strategy[5-11]. College sports teams also actively use social media [12-14]. For example, although it is currently banned by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), some college athletic departments such as Mississippi State University, Texas A&M University, and Michigan State University painted their social media address on the football field[13]. More than five million messages about games were generated by fans on social media during the NCAA men's basketball tournament[12,14]. Many coaches of college sports use social media to communicate with their fans. For instance, Les Miles, a football coach at Louisiana State University, has reached more than 100,000 followers on his Twitter account. This demonstrates the growing importance of the social media in sport marketing and public relations. In this sense, many previous studies have actively examined the motivation for online media consumption since knowing specific motivations could be valuable data to establish effective public relations and marketing strategy driving more fans to teams' online platform.

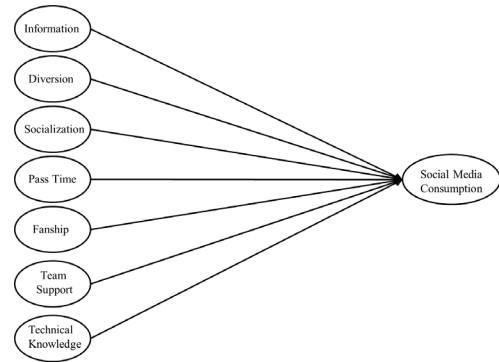
Motivation is defined as "the driving force within individuals that moves them to take a particular action"[15:6]. In sports, previous studies have identified several motives for online consumption. Hur, Ko, Valacica[16] authored one of the foundational studies identifying online consumption motivation in sport. They applied uses and gratification theory, suggesting consumers use media to satisfy their specific needs and gratifications[17]. This theory has been adopted by various studies from traditional media (e.g., television and radio) consumption through online consumption to identify motives, social and psychological antecedents, and behavioral outcomes[17-20]. Thus, based on the uses and gratification theory, Hur et al.[16] developed the Scale of Motivation for Online Sport Consumption (SMOS) with 5 motivational factors including convenience, information, diversion, socialization, and economic motive. They examined sport online consumption, which is sport-related information and

products in general rather than focusing on a specific Website. On the other hand, Seo and Green[21] developed the Motivation Scale for Sport Online Consumption (MSSOC) by analyzing users of professional sport teams' Websites. They suggested 11 motives such as information, entertainment, interpersonal communication, escape, pass-time, fanship, team support, fan expression, economic, and technical knowledge. Interpersonal communication was a unique motive compared to Hur et al.[16]'s study. Cooper and Southall[22] examined the motivational factors for online consumption related to non-revenue sport teams in college athletics. They analyzed a total of 451 users from two national wrestling message boards and found 8 motives affecting online consumption including individual matchups, achievement, wrestling loyalist, individual wrestler affiliation, team affiliation, social, entertainment, and learning opportunity. Hardin, Koo, Rauhley, Dittmore, & McGreevey[23] analyzed a total 499 subscribers from a network Website of media professionals. They found that the team support, information pursuit, and interactivity had a significant influence on media use directly or mediated by perceived value. On the other hand, several studies specifically focused on social media consumption.

Clavio and Kian[24] identified three motives for subscribing to athlete's social media including organic fandom, functional fandom, and interaction. Organic fandom explains intrinsic motivations such as "perceived entertainment value of the athlete, viewing the athlete as a role model, and having followed the athlete's career"[24:493]. Functional fandom refers to impersonal motivations including looking for business related advantage or information about purchasing the athlete's products. Interaction involves enjoying the communication with athletes and other fans. Frederick, Lim, Clavio, and Walsh[25] also examined motives for subscribing to athletes' social media (e.g., Twitter and Facebook). They applied the Parasocial Interaction (PSI) to understand the fan motivation. The PSI

activates the social interaction between the media and users by seeking guidance from media personae or seeing media personalities as friends[26]. Through the PSI, media users have strong desire to meet media performers and be part of the media's social world[26–28]. Thus, Frederick et al.[25] found four motives such as newsgroup, modeling, engaged interest, and media use. Newsgroup falls in line with information in previous studies[16,21] and modeling explains the business purpose or seeing athletes as a role model[25]. Engaged interest is the motive to share interest and the media use, which is similar to interpersonal communication, interaction, or social in prior studies[21,22,24,25]. Witkemper, Lim, and Waldburger[29] explored the motivation and constraint for social media use focusing on Twitter. By analyzing a total of 1,124 students from business school and sport management courses, they identified four motives (e.g., information, entertainment, pass-time, and fanship) and four constrain factors including economic, skill, accessibility, and social. As details above, many motivational factors of online consumption have been identified. However, these factors could be categorized into, but not limited to, seven categories based on similarity of the definition such as information,

diversion, socialization, pass-time, fanship, team support, and technical knowledge[Table 1].



[Fig. 1] Proposed structural model

1.4 Research objective

Although many previous studies have examined motives for online consumption in sports[16,21–25,29] there has been no examination of the motivating factors behind college sports teams' social media in particular. Therefore, the following research question was established.

RQ: What motivates fans to follow college sports teams' social media accounts?

[Table 1] Summary of motivational factors for online consumption in sports

Motivational factors	Definition
Information (Hur et al., 2007; Seo & Green, 2008; Witkemper et al., 2012), information pursuit (Hardin et al., 2012), and newsgroup (Frederick et al., 2012)	Motive to get sport related information and learn about inside the sport world (Seo & Green, 2008)
Diversion (Hur et al., 2007; Hardin et al., 2012), escape (Seo & Green, 2008), and entertainment (Cooper & Southall, 2010; Witkemper et al., 2012)	Desire to escape from the routines of daily life and stress to seek pleasure, fun, and enjoyment (Hur et al., 2007)
Socialization (Hur et al., 2007), social (Cooper & Southall, 2010), engaged interest (Frederick et al., 2012), fan expression (Seo & Green, 2008), interpersonal communication, (Seo & Green, 2008), interaction (Clavio & Kian, 2010), interactivity (Hardin et al., 2012), and media use (Frederick et al., 2012)	Motive to share experience and knowledge with others by developing and maintaining social relationships (Hur et al., 2007; Seo & Green, 2008)
Pass-time (Seo & Green, 2008; Witkemper et al., 2012)	Motive to simply spend free time through internet use (Seo & Green, 2008)
Fanship (Seo & Green, 2008; Witkemper et al., 2012), achievement (Cooper & Southall, 2010), organic fandom (Clavio & Kian, 2010), individual wrestler affiliation (Cooper & Southall, 2010), and individual matchups (Cooper & Southall, 2010)	Motive to pursue athletes' achievements and view them as a role model (Clavio & Kian, 2010; Cooper & Southall, 2010)
Team support, (Seo & Green, 2008; Hardin et al., 2012), team affiliation (Cooper & Southall, 2010), and wrestling loyalist (Cooper & Southall, 2010)	Motive to show support for favorite team and athletes (Seo & Green, 2008)
Technical knowledge (Seo & Green, 2008) and learning opportunity (Cooper & Southall, 2010)	Motive to obtain specific knowledge of rules and skills such as strategies and techniques from the athlete (Cooper & Southall, 2010)

2. Methods

2.1 Participants

A total of 320 undergraduate students from three NCAA Division 1 universities were selected through a convenient sampling method with students attending NCAA Division 1 universities as population. An email that has a hyperlink to the online survey was sent to selected students on March 19, 2014 through March 23, 2014. A total of 159 participants responded to the online survey, a response rate of 49.7%. Of the 159 surveys gathered, 13 were discarded owing to having missing values through the listwise deletion method. Therefore, finally, a total of 146 surveys were analyzed for this study. Of the research participants, males accounted for 47.3% ($n = 69$) and females accounted for 52.7% ($n = 77$). A majority of participants was age 21 (37.0%) and juniors (39.7%).

2.2 Measurement

The survey instrument was broken down into 2 sections including items assessing motives for subscribing to social media and social media consumption. To measure motives for subscribing to social media, we adopted the Scale of Motivation for Online Sport Consumption[16] (SMOS) and Motivation Scale for Sport Online Consumption[21] (MSSOC) and modified it to fit into college sports teams' social media. SMOS and MSSOC indicated acceptable reliability in previous studies, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .60 to .90[16] and .61 to .88[21]. Thus, a total of 21 items with 7 motives were adopted and developed such as information (3 items), diversion (3 items), socialization (3 items), pass-time (3 items), fandom (3 items), team support (3 items), and technical knowledge (3 items). These seven motives were specifically selected based on previous studies examining online consumption motivation. Although various motives were identified by previous studies, these factors could be categorized into, but not limited to, seven categories based on similarity of the

definition. The definition of each motive that was used in this study is presented in [Table 1]. To measure social media consumption, a researcher-designed scale was developed and used through a discussion with three experts in social media analysis and college sports for content validity. Social media consumption was measured by the frequency of visiting social media and reading and posting a message, picture, or video. A total of 5 items were asked. All item responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (very frequently).

2.3 Data Analysis

All skewness and kurtosis values of items were assessed to check for normality of variables based on Kline[31]'s suggestion, absolute values less than 3.0. The reliability was assessed by Cronbach's alpha, greater than .70[30]. A Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using Amos 20.0 was measured by several fit indices including chi square/degrees of freedom (< 5.0), Comparative Fit Index (CFI) ($> .90$), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) ($< .08$), Root Mean Square Residual (RMR) ($< .08$), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) ($< .08$)[32,33]. After the CFA, multiple regression using SPSS 20.0 were calculated. Multiple regression is used to predict an outcome variable from several predictor variables[34]. In this study, multiple regression analysis confirmed social media consumption was predicted by certain motives through multiple regression.

3. Result

3.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

All skewness and kurtosis values of items were within an acceptable level, with absolute values less than 3.0[31]. The values of Cronbach's alpha ranged from .76 to .92 indicating that all items within the scale were reliable[30]. All items had the standardized loadings greater than the suggested .50 threshold[32].

The confidence interval (\pm two standard errors) around the correlation estimate between the two factors did not include 1.0 [32]. Therefore, the measurement exhibited adequate reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The CFA indicated a favorable model fit: the SRMR = .071; RMR = .097; RMSEA = .092; CFI = .907; χ^2 (63) = 373.564, $p < .001$ [32,33].

3.2 Multiple Regression

Multiple regression was calculated to predict social media consumption by seven motives[Table 2]. The results of multiple regression indicated that five motives including socialization ($\beta = .22$, $p < .001$), technical knowledge ($\beta = .22$, $p < .001$), diversion ($\beta = .21$, $p < .01$), fanship ($\beta = .18$, $p < .05$), and team support ($\beta = .14$, $p < .05$) significantly predicted social media consumption. On the other hand, information ($\beta = .10$, $p > .05$) and pass-time ($\beta = .08$, $p > .05$) did not significantly predict social media consumption. Approximately 77% of variance in social media consumption was accounted for by these motives.

[Table 2] Result of multiple regression for motives predicting social media consumption

Dependent	Independent	SE	B	t	p
Social media consumption	(Constant)	.18		.17	.864
	Information	.06	.10	1.88	.062
	Diversion	.05	.21	3.56	.001
	Socialization	.05	.22	3.91	.000
	Pass-time	.05	.08	1.19	.236
	Fanship	.05	.18	2.61	.010
	Team support	.06	.14	2.04	.043
	Technical knowledge	.05	.22	4.08	.000
	$R = .88$, $R^2 = .78$, Adjusted $R^2 = .77$, $F = 70.13$, $p = .000$				

4. Discussion

This study attempted to verify what motivates fans to follow college sports teams' social media and identify the degree to which motivational factors can predict

fans' social media consumption. First, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) indicated previously identified factors such as information, diversion, socialization, pass-time, fanship, team support, and technical knowledge, are prevalent in the use of college sports teams' social media. Thus, the motivating factors of social media consumption are similar to other online consumptions. Second, multiple regression results indicated that five of seven motives significantly predicted social media consumption while two were not significantly related to social media consumption. In detail, socialization had the greatest influence on social media consumption supporting prior studies of online consumption[23]. Hardin et al.[23] found a significant relationship between interactivity and message board use. Based on the definition of interactivity and socialization[16,23], these two motives are regarded as similar constructs. Moreover, prior studies found that professional athletes also mainly use social media to interact with their fans and others[28,35-37]. It seems that interaction and communication with others could be one of most important motives for social media consumption in sports for both fans and athletes.

In spite of the fact that technical knowledge was identified as a significant motive for using professional sport teams' websites[21] and sport spectating [38,39], prior studies of social media consumption have not examined technical knowledge[25,29]. However, this study found a significant effect of technical knowledge on social media consumption emphasizing the importance of technical knowledge in social media consumption study. Although this study did not ask about specific social media sites, users who are highly motivated with technical knowledge would prefer YouTube since it is the video-sharing application that already provides many different instructional video in sports and exercise[40,41].

Diversion is defined as desire to escape from an insipid daily life and stress through Internet use seeking pleasure and enjoyment[16]. Many prior studies verified diversion as an online consumption motive

with similar terms such as escape or entertainment [21,22,29]. In this study, diversion significantly predicted social media consumption, a result inconsistent with Hardin et al.[23]'s study that did not find a significant relationship between diversion and media use. This difference could come from different online platforms as this study focused on social media while Hardin et al.[23] examined message board use. Most message board users main purpose of using message boards was to develop social relationships and gather information rather than seeking pleasure, fun, or enjoyment[16]. Thus, it seems that users from message board could be less motivated with diversion than users from college sports teams' social media in this study.

Fanship is described as pursuing athletes' achievements and viewing them as a role model[22,24]. This study supported Witkemper et al.[29]'s study indicating the significant relationship between fanship and social media consumption. Witkemper et al.[29] examined one specific social media platform, Twitter. They suggested that fanship could be vitalized by interaction (e.g., interactivity and socialization) between fans and athletes. Therefore, several different motives are interrelated.

Based on Seo and Green[21], team support is the motive to show support for favorite teams and athletes through the Internet. Team support was significantly related to social media consumption in this study, which is similar to previous research[23]. However, in Hardin et al.[23]'s study, team support affected media use mediated by perceived value while this study found a direct effect of team support on media consumption. Since Hardin et al.[23] explored paid content (message boards), users would more concern about the quality and value of the contents as the definition of perceived value suggests "consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given"[42:14]. Thus, for some motives of online consumption, perceived value could take an important role to increasing media consumption through a mediating effect.

Information has been one of the major motives for online consumption in previous studies[16,21,29] that is explained as "motive to get large volume of sport information and to learn about things happening in the sport world" [21:86]. Terms, such as information pursuit and newsgroup[23,25], can be thought as similar terms to information. Furthermore, Chen and Dubinsky[43] suggested that value of information is related to reliability, quantity, access to favorite teams, and monetary worth in e-commerce. Nonetheless, this study did not find a significant relationship between information and social media consumption showing opposite result to prior studies [23,29]. Hardin et al.[23] found a significant effect of information pursue on media use mediated by perceived value. Witkemper et al.[29] also found a significant relationship between information and social media consumption by examine the Twitter users. In addition, they suggested that "consumers are utilizing Twitter more for information and entertainment purposes" [29:179]. It indicates the possibility of that user would have different motives based on types of social media.

Pass-time is a "motive to spend free time and to pass the time away"[21:86]. In the current study, pass-time did not significantly predicted social media consumption whereas Witkemper et al.[29] found a significant relationship between pass-time and social media consumption. Witkemper et al.[29] examined Twitter users and noted that the simplistic feature of Twitter (e.g., 140-character limit on message length) allows fans to use it quick and easy during their free time than other social media. Thus, the Twitter users could be more motivated with pass-time.

Several implications should emerge from this study. The athletic department could provide specifically what fans want to see and read on social media, which can draw more fans to social media and increase the team awareness. In detail, the result of this study indicated that socialization has a greatest influence on social media consumption followed by technical knowledge, diversion, fanship, and team support. Since socialization

focuses on “sport consumers’ desire to develop and maintain human relationships through the Internet by sharing experience and knowledge with others who have similar interests” [16:525], The organizers of sport teams’ social media need to emphasize fans’ participation in sharing opinion and User Generated Content (UGC) through diverse promotional events or give-aways. In addition, marketers need to support fans’ community activity on social media to encourage interaction between fans and athletes. On the other hand, fans do not tend to use teams’ social media to seek typical information or simply pass the time. Thus, it seems that providing unique insight into sports teams behind the game could be more effective to drive more fans rather than posting the game schedule or result.

5. Conclusion

This study represents one of the first attempts to identify motives for subscribing to college sports teams’ social media. The current study verified that previously identified motives for media consumption, including information, diversion, socialization, pass-time, fanship, team support, and technical knowledge, are compatible with the use of college sports teams’ social media. However, a result of multiple regression found that information and pass-time did not significantly affect social media consumption while the other motives (diversion, socialization, fanship, team support, and technical knowledge) significantly predicted social media consumption. Especially, socialization had a greatest influence on social media consumption. It emphasizes the role of social media organizers in sports teams to encourage interaction among fans, athletes, and teams. In addition, since previous studies indicated inconsistent results with this study[16,29], further research is needed that identify the difference across type of online platforms (e.g., Website, social media, or

message board), sports (e.g., male and female sports or team and individual sports), and organisations (e.g., professional sports, college sports, non-revenue sport, international or domestic sports). A result of this study will expand the growing literature on social media in sport and offer valuable data for further research and practical marketing strategy.

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Jae-Ahm Park

[Regular member]



- May 2014 : Univ. of Arkansas, Ed.D., Sport Management
- Jun. 2014 ~ current : Univ. of Arkansas, Adjunct Instructor

<Research Interests>

Sport management, Online media, Leisure studies

Stephen W. Dittmore

[Regular member]



- May 1995 : Drake Univ., M.A., Mass Communication
- May 2007 : Univ. of Louisville, Ph.D., Educational Leadership and Organizational Development
- Aug 2008 ~ current : Univ. of Arkansas, Associate Professor

<Research Interests>

Sport Management, Sport public relations, Media rights in sport