Why We Watch, Why We Play: The Relationship Between Fantasy Sport and Fanship Motivations

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This study compares the tendencies and motivations of the traditional sport fan (who consumes sport to see if his or her favorite teams/players are victorious) and the relatively newer fantasy sport fan (who consumes with the added variable of wanting to see certain players do well in order to secure personal fantasy team victories). A total of 1,261 traditional and fantasy sport consumers were surveyed, with results indicating that fantasy sport users had elevated levels of enjoyment, entertainment, passing time, social interaction, and surveillance motivations when compared to traditional fans. No significant difference was found between the two groups in terms of arousal, whereas traditional fans scored higher regarding escape motivations. In addition, all motivation behaviors increased significantly based on the amount of fantasy

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sport involvement, leading to the conclusion that fantasy sport participants have many of the same fanship motivations as traditional nonplaying fans, albeit at higher and often significantly higher levels. Theoretical and applied conclusions are extrapolated as well.

INTRODUCTION

Given the share of sport offerings within our media diets, a fair amount of research has been devoted to understanding the reasons for avid, moderate, and even occasional/sporadic sport fanship. Raney (2006), for instance, found that sports fandom is ''more than an ignoble, and potentially [is] a beneficial, human pursuit'' (p. 327). In addition, Wenner and Gantz (1998) presented a detailed and layered analysis of how relationships and other life variables influence how sport fans consume media offerings. It is fair to say that we have some insight into the nature of sport fans, even though most scholars (see Hugenberg, Haridakis, & Earnheardt, 2008; Lomax, 2006) conclude that they are far from monolithic.

However, what we know even less about is a group of 32 million Americans within that subset: fantasy sport participants (Fantasy Sport Trade Association; http://www.fsta.org). We know they are much more likely to be avid sport fans (Bernhard & Eade, 2005) and that they consume sport media in much heavier doses. However, what we do not know—and what provides the impetus for this study—are the motivations beyond the escalation of the fantasy sport as uberfan. Moreover, there is an economic emphasis that must be placed on understanding not just the uberfan, but the fantasy sport uberfan (see Einolf, 2005). Fantasy sport players spend an estimated $1.5 billion playing fantasy sport games each year (Klaassen, 2006), with these numbers escalating even in struggling economic times. Moreover, they are an advertiser's dream when considering that ESPN's Department of Integrated Media Research (2010) reported that although the typical sport viewer (ages 12–64) consumes more than 7 hours of ESPN media each week, the fantasy sport player consumes more than *three times* that amount: 22 hours 40 minutes. Given how these populations still overlap in terms of their love of sport but differ so greatly in how they consume the games and ancillary sport media offerings, it is critical to compare these two populations. This study offers a wide-ranging comparative analysis, surveying 1,261 people to ultimately answer the question, ''In what ways is sport fanship different from *fantasy* sport fanship?''

RELATED LITERATURE

Sport Fan Motives

In many ways, the examination of fantasy sport motivations for play and media consumption stems from the type of work conducted by Gantz (1981) three decades earlier. In a series of carefully crafted and heuristic studies, often in consultation with Wenner (see Gantz, 1981; Gantz & Wenner, 1991; Wenner & Gantz, 1998), the motivations and behaviors surrounding sports fans were uncovered. These studies collectively found sports consumption to be one of escalated emotion with a strong tie between enjoyment and team identification. The dramatic arc provided in sports programming often was a desired contrast to comparatively mundane daily lives. Moreover, sports fans were clearly unique from other media fans, participating in far more preevent planning and postevent analysis than any other form of media offering (Gantz, Wang, Bryant, & Potter, 2006).

Led by the initial efforts of scholars such as Wann (1995), a great deal of work has also been conducted related to how these types of variables manifest themselves in behaviors and rationalizations (also see Wann, Hamlet, Wilson, & Hodges, 1995). Raney (2006) outlined three main categories of sport fan motivations: emotional, cognitive, and behavioral/social. Within the first of these categories, emotional, there are four subareas: (a) entertainment, (b) eustress, (c) self-esteem, and (d) escape. The second area involved cognitive motivations, in which Raney identified two: (a) learning and (b) aesthetic. Finally, there are behavioral and social motivations for becoming a sport fan, which include (a) release, (b) companionship, (c) group affiliation, (d) family, and (e) economics. When combining these 11 subcategories, one not only begins to picture the prototypical sport fan but also can see ties to how fantasy sport can enhance and/or change that sporting experience in noteworthy ways.

The Fantasy Sport Variable

Into this complex understanding of generalized sports fandom enters fantasy sport, an activity that appears to dovetail with Gantz's work of the past decades, yet increasingly becomes a part of the larger conversation through its mainstreaming along with the Internet in the 1990s. From its origin in the 1960s to modern understandings of today (see St. Amant, 2005; Walker, 2006), fantasy sport is still an unknown quantity to many who are not initiated into this potentially consuming and addictive side of sport fanship (see Levy, 2009). Football and baseball remain the most popular

forms of fantasy sport (Fantasy Sport Trade Association, 2013), but there are increasingly more diverse options, ranging from fantasy racing, golf, and hockey, to fantasy basketball, and even fantasy bass fishing. Fantasy sports obviously come in a wide variety of formats for a wide range of fan palates. However, more than 90% of fantasy sport played is related to just two sports: football and baseball (see Spinda & Haridakis, 2008). In these formats, fantasy sport involves a group of people (usually 10–12), typically friends or coworkers, who draft players from a certain league (National Football League, Major League Baseball) and become pseudo-owners of their own franchises with their own nicknames (e.g., Anchorage Xskimos, Jerry's Juggernauts, Thunder Over Bob's).

Thus, fantasy sport players often live in a world of perceived conflicting loyalties where, for instance, they may find themselves an avid Indianapolis Colts fan but also with a rooting interest against Andrew Luck if the fantasy team they are playing has Luck as the starting quarterback. Being a fantasy sport player can sometimes be seen as dual-purposed with being a sport fan, resulting in, as Sandomir (2002) argued, a fan who will "root, root, root for no team." As a fantasy football player reported in Serazio (2008), "fantasy football corrupts the way we watch the games" (p. 239) because, as another articulated, playing fantasy while also being a fan of a "reality" team can feel like "taking two girls to the same dance without telling either one" (p. 240).

One truism of fantasy sport fans, in the same way it is true of traditional participants, is that it is based on entertainment, unpacked here as "any activity designed to delight and, to a smaller degree, enlighten through the exhibition of fortunes of others, but also though the display of special skills by others and/or self" (Zillmann & Bryant, 1994, p. 438). Although uses and gratifications theory can certainly be used to explain fan media choices, entertainment theory advances knowledge in this area even more explicitly. Understood largely as a research program more than any singular theory (see Vorderer, 2003), entertainment theory has been applied in a variety of settings with one of them being sport (Bryant & Raney, 2000). This series of theories ranging from mood management (see Zillmann, 1988) to selective exposure (see Zillmann & Bryant, 1985) attempts to jointly study and explain the consumption habits people make when opting for one form of media offering over another. Many of these works have focused on communicative affect and disposition, drawing the correlation between desired mood and ultimate media choices. Such theories seem appropriate vantage points for a study of fantasy sport motivations, as the "game within a game" aspect potentially muddies the waters of directly attributing consumption choices to relationships that are far from linear. It is fair to query whether fantasy sport players choose to be fans (and, thus, media consumers) for

similar or different reasons than traditional fans that are not fantasy sport players.

Entertainment theory also connects sports fandom and media because of the immediacy of the results that makes media so critical to understanding fantasy sport fans. Although they are "playing" a game when opting to participate in fantasy sports, they are ultimately informing themselves, maintaining their teams, and watching events unfold through a variety of media offerings, most directly on television and on the Internet. Thus, there becomes a close relationship between "playing" and "watching"—a relationship that many other non-sport-related entities continually try to emulate, usually to disappointing effect.

Fantasy Sport Participant Motives

In a much more compact period than the generalized exploration of sports fan motives, we have also gained a fair amount of insight regarding the character-istics of the fantasy sport participant (Davis & Duncan, 2006; Seo & Green, 2008). Incorporating a uses and gratifications (see Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973) framework endorsing the belief that people select and use media for the fulfillment of personal needs, Farquhar and Meeds (2007) identified five needs that are satisfied through participation in fantasy sport. The first two, arousal and surveillance, were determined to be the primary motivations, whereas entertainment, escape, and social interaction functions were uncovered as well. Spinda and Haridakis (2008) defined these types of needs as motives for play, uncovering six main factors: ownership, achievement/self-esteem, escape/pass time, socialization, bragging rights, and amusement.

Roy and Goss (2007) offered a conceptual framework for the under-standing of the fantasy sport participant, determining that there are psycho-logical, social, and marketer-controlled needs that can be fulfilled through participation in fantasy sport leagues. Parallels can fairly easily be drawn between these motivations (and the needs that undergird them) and the ones listed in composite lists from Raney (2006). For instance, research (Raney, 2006; Roy & Goss, 2007; Ruihley & Hardin, 2011) identifies social benefits and even notions of companionship as a subset within this broader category. The camaraderie is likely of a different nature when with a group of sport fans bond over a Broncos game than when a group of fantasy sport parti-cipants watch games together (where they, by definition, do not share com-mon players and game outcome interests.) There could be, as a result, a more competitive/aggressive component to the sense of social kinship involved in fantasy play. Nonetheless, social companionship is a shared desire of both types of fans, real and fantasy.

However, there are also areas in which the fantasy participant could be entirely unique from the traditional sport fan. Consider, for example, Spinda and Haridakis's (2008) notion of ''ownership'' as a key motive. The desire to have some sort of control of the outcome is foundational to the fantasy sport experience but virtually impossible for the fan of the real sport games being played. If a fantasy participant is frustrated with the performance of his or her shortstop, the owner can waive or trade that player; meanwhile, the traditional sport fan must wait for management to make a decision regarding possible remedies to the shortstop position.

There is, indeed, something new that happens within fan interactions surrounding fantasy sport, especially considering that this fanship is more likely to occur online (see Felps, 2000; Real, 2006). The interactions seem to advance far beyond older notions of fantasy play and new social worlds (see Fine, 1983) to a more advanced, layered conception of fanship that is a mixed cocktail of obsession (Gregory, 2009), deviance (Poulton, 2007, 2008), and traditional sport fanship (Lomax, 2006) that leads to the conclusion that fantasy sport play is adjacent but not equivalent to traditional sport media consumption habits and attitudes (Trail, Fink, & Anderson, 2003).

Recent studies have delineated these consumption differences, with scholars such as Drayer, Shapiro, Dwyer, Morse, and White (2010) finding a qualitative difference in NFL game consumption among fantasy sport participant. Similarly, researchers have found that the market for fantasy sport play is a remarkably upscale and desirable demographic (young to middle-aged males of above average income; see Dwyer & Drayer, 2010). Without question, there is a relationship between fantasy sport play and ultimate fanship actions (Nesbitt & King, 2010).

Fantasy Sport and Expertise

Many have become familiar with the concept of mavenism through Malcolm Gladwell's (2000) popular book, *The Tipping Point*, which describes this unique type of person as one who not only seeks out large amounts of information, but also does so in order to share it with others. Years before that, Feick and Price (1987) were studying the topic within the realm of marketing, noting that market mavens are important not only for their loyalty to marketplace knowledge and information-seeking attitude but also because of their willingness to inform others. Gladwell concurred, noting that these people possess one of the critical traits that cause trends to ''tip'' and become epidemics.

Within sport, the maven is commonplace—or at least the pseudo-maven persists. Given the various motivations for fandom, this becomes an outcome variable because it is the ability to be seen as knowledgeable. Ruihley and

Runyan (2010) furthered this concept with measures of Schawbism, dubbed with this name because of the ESPN show, *Stump the Schwab*, in which fans (usually futilely) attempted to best a true sport aficionado, Howie Schwab. Knowledge, as measured in broader mavenism scales (see Feick & Price, 1987) as well as in sport-specific contexts (see Ruihley, 2010) becomes a useful measure to understanding sport fandom as well, certainly in this area of study related to fantasy sport, which is foundationally based on statistics both mainstream (e.g., home runs, touchdowns) and obscure (WHIP [e.g., walks and hits per innings pitched; PPR [points per reception]).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Direct communicative impact on motivations for media consumption provides a theoretical impetus (see Bryant & Raney, 2000) for asking questions related to the fantasy sport participant in contrast with the modern sports fan. Both are tied to cognitive, emotional, and behavioral motivations that take root in entertainment theory, yet research has not yet determined the degree in which these two groups are similar (or different.) Distinguishing the differences between the groups can be critical to advancing understandings within entertainment theory, as direct causal attributions between mood management and motivations to consume sports media may not be as linear as previous understandings of media consumption have assumed. Thus, several main questions rise to the fore of academic interrogation:

RQ1: In what ways do fantasy sport consumers differ from traditional sport consumers?

RQ1a: Does fanship differ between traditional and fantasy sport consumers?

RQ1b: In what ways do motivation factors differ between traditional and fantasy sport consumption?

RQ1c: Are there differences in how traditional and fantasy sport consumers view their sport knowledge?

RQ2: What motivational differences exist between heavy, moderate, or light fantasy sport usage?

METHODS

To determine ways in which fantasy sport consumption differs from traditional sport consumption, a quantitative survey was developed to address consumption and motivational areas. A detailed discussion of the

sample, the instrument, the procedure, and analyses are included in the following section.

Sample

A purposive sample of two groups was recruited for this research. The first group was adult traditional sport consumers that do not participate in fantasy sport (defined here as anyone who *has not* played a fantasy sport in the past 12 months). The second targeted group was adult fantasy sport consumers (defined here as anyone who *has* played a fantasy sport in the past 12 months). Trained recruits contacted potential participants through interpersonal means and invited them to participate in this research. In their contact, if the person agreed to participate, then electronic mail containing a hyperlink was sent to the participant. The hyperlink connected the participant directly to the online survey instrument. People were invited to participate based on their fantasy sport experience or lack thereof. Recruits were trained and advised to locate either sport fans or fantasy sport users. When recruits contacted those of the target population, they asked those people to participate. If they agreed, a survey hyperlink was presented, typically e-mailed, as a direct connection to the online survey.

Instrument

The instrument for this research was developed in the form of an online questionnaire. Google Documents was used to create, host, and store the data for this research. Initially, participants were asked to respond to demographic information (i.e., gender, age, relationship status), a simplified fan statement (Likert-type response to: *I consider myself a sports fan*), and an open-ended response measuring amount of time consuming sport (Approximately how many hours per week spent consuming sport-related content—watching sports on TV, listening on radio, reading sport websites, magazines, newspapers, etc.).

After completion of the demographic information and basic sport consumption questions, the survey shifted in one of two directions based on a single question regarding fantasy sport play as the participants were asked if they had participated in at least one fantasy sport in the past 12 months. If they answered yes, they were directed to one part of the instrument addressing fantasy sport motivations. If they answered no, they were directed to another part of the instrument focused on motivations of traditional sport consumption. The surveys they completed were identical except for the crucial fact that fantasy sport participants were asked questions about their

fanship related to their fantasy sport teams whereas traditional sport fans were asked about their favorite "real" teams.

Beyond this integral difference, the same motivational factors were measured for each type of consumption. Participants were asked to identify their level of agreement or disagreement to the statements on a 7-point Likert scale anchored by 1 (*strongly disagree*) and 7 (*strongly agree*). The following variables measured the motivational aspects of traditional and fantasy sport consumption and were tested in prior research.

Arousal (Wann, 1995) is a motivation concerning the emotional stimulation received from participating or consuming a sport activity. Although the term *arousal* has many different connotations, in a sport communication context it is the excitement one might receive from consuming a last-second play to win or lose a contest or a close call at the end of a sporting contest, consistent not only with Wann (1995) but the assertions of Raney (2006). Enjoyment (newly created, Brown, Billings, & Ruihley, 2012) is a newly created motivating factor determining if the participant takes pleasure in the activity. The entertainment motive (Seo & Green, 2008) measures excitement and amusement in the activity. The two factors of enjoyment and entertainment are closely tied yet measure different functions; for instance, watching one's favorite team play a game may cause excitement (entertainment) while a losing outcome may not result in their regarding this consumption as pleasurable (enjoyment.) The motivating factor of escape (Hur, Ko, & Valacich, 2007; Seo & Green, 2008) measures how much a participant uses an activity to mentally flee or forget about the daily grind or routine. Fanship (Seo & Green, 2008; newly created, Author[s], 2011) measures the participants' fan interest of sport in general. In this particular case, both fantasy sport users and traditional sport consumers are measured using the same scale items focusing on sport in general. The pass time motive (Seo & Green, 2008) measures how participants use a sport activity to literally pass the time in free time or when they are bored. The self-esteem motive (Spinda & Haridakis, 2008) identifies how a person feels about himself or herself in relation to their fantasy sport or traditional sport team's performance. Social interaction (Hur et al., 2007; Seo & Green, 2008) attempts to measure the socializing motives involved in sport-related activities. The motive of surveillance (Hur et al., 2007; Seo & Green, 2008) examines how fantasy and traditional sport consumers seek out information related to their activity. This may involve gathering information related to schedule, players, statistics, injuries, matchups, and so on. All of these items were measured utilizing three scales items per motivating factor. For a list of scale items for each factor, see Table 1.

To test the areas of sport knowledge (RQ1c), areas of Mavenism (Feick & Price, 1987) and Schwabism (Ruihley, 2010) are measured using three items

TABLE 1
Statements, Sources, Alpha Level, and Mean of Analyzed Factors

Fantasy sport questionnaire scale items	*Traditional sport consumption scale items*
Arousal (Wann, 1995)	Arousal (Wann, 1995)
• I get pumped up when I am watching my team	• I get pumped up when I am watching my team
• I enjoy being emotionally aroused by the competition	• I enjoy being emotionally aroused by the competition
• I like the stimulation I get from participating in fantasy sport	• I like the stimulation I get from watching sports
Enjoyment (Newly created, Brown, Billings, & Ruihley, 2012)	Enjoyment (Newly created, Brown, Billings, & Ruihley, 2012)
• Playing fantasy sport is fun	• Watching sports is fun
• Playing fantasy sport is enjoyable	• Watching sports is enjoyable
• Playing fantasy sport is a hobby of mine	• Watching sports is a hobby of mine
Entertainment (Seo & Green, 2008)	Entertainment (Seo & Green, 2008)
• Fantasy sport is exciting	• Being a sports fan is exciting
• Fantasy sport is cool	• Watching sports is cool
• It is entertaining	• Watching sports is entertaining
Escape (Hur, Ko, & Valacich, 2007; Seo & Green, 2008)	Escape (Hur, Ko, & Valacich, 2007; Seo & Green, 2008)
• I can escape from reality	• I can escape from reality by watching sports
• I can forget about work	• Sports allow me to enter a non-thinking, relaxing period
• It allows me to escape from my daily routine	• Sports allows me to escape from my daily routine
Fanship (Newly created, Brown, Billings, & Ruihley, 2012; Seo & Green, 2008)	Fanship (Newly created, Brown, Billings, & Ruihley, 2012; Seo & Green, 2008)
• I am a huge fan of sport in general	• I am a huge fan of sport in general
• I am a big fan of my favorite (non-fantasy) team	• I am a big fan of my favorite (non-fantasy) team
• Seeing my favorite non-fantasy team win is important to me	• Seeing my favorite team win is important to me
Pass Time (Seo & Green, 2008)	Pass Time (Seo & Green, 2008)
• It gives me something to do to occupy my time	• Sports gives me something to do to occupy my time
• It passes the time away, particularly when I'm bored	• Sports helps pass the time away, particularly when I'm bored
• It is something to do in my free time	• I watch sports in my free time
Self-Esteem (Spinda & Haridakis, 2008)	Self-Esteem (Spinda & Haridakis, 2008)
• I feel a personal sense of achievement when my fantasy team does well	• I feel a personal sense of achievement when my favorite team does well
• I feel like I have won when my fantasy team wins	• I feel like I have won when my favorite team wins
• Winning at fantasy sport improves my self-esteem	• My favorite team winning improves my self-esteem

(Continued)

TABLE 1
Continued

Fantasy sport questionnaire scale items	Traditional sport consumption scale items
Surveillance (Hur, Ko, & Valacich, 2007; Seo & Green, 2008)	Surveillance (Hur, Ko, & Valacich, 2007; Seo & Green, 2008)
• Fantasy sport provides me with quick and easy access to large volumes of sport information	• Being a sports fan provides me with quick and easy access to large volumes of sport information
• I am able to obtain a wide range of sport information	• I am able to obtain a wide range of sport information by being a sports fan
• I can learn about things happening in the sport world	• I can learn about things happening in the sport world by being a sports fan
Mavenism (Feick & Price, 1987; Walsh, Gwinner, & Swanson, 2004)	Mavenism (Feick & Price, 1987; Walsh, Gwinner, & Swanson, 2004)
• I like helping people by providing them with information about fantasy sport	• I like helping people by providing them with information about sport
• My friends think of me as a good source when it comes to fantasy sport information	• My friends think of me as a good source when it comes to sport information
• If someone asked me fantasy sport related questions; I could provide them with answers	• If someone asked me sport related questions; I could provide them with answers
Schwabism (Ruihley, 2010)	Schwabism (Ruihley, 2010)
• I probably know more about sport statistics than anyone in my fantasy sport league	• I probably know more about sport statistics than anyone in my fantasy sport league
• When someone has a question about sport statistics, they ask me first	• When someone has a question about sport statistics, they ask me first
• I know more about fantasy sport than most people in my league	• I know more about sports than most people in my league

each. Mavenism identifies if the participants take part in gathering information about an activity or product and enjoys sharing the knowledge and information with others. Schwabism measures how much a participant considers themselves "know-it-alls" when it comes to a particular activity. This may include statistics and other useful information about the activity. These scale items are also listed in Table 1.

Correlation and reliability testing were conducted on all the motivating factors. *First*, a test for unidimensionality was conducted by testing the correlation coefficient. Any items not correlating above 0.30 were dropped from the analysis. *Second*, a test for reliability was administered with Cronbach's alpha coefficient employed to determine the reliability of the scale items of a projected factor. When the alpha level was below 0.70, then unreliable items were dropped from the analysis (De Vaus, 2002). For

fantasy-sport-related items, all scale items correlated and were reliable (greater than 0.70) with other factor items with one exception. The scale items for the factor of social interaction had poor correlation ($r \leq .248$ for all three items) and low reliability ($\alpha = 0.438$) and were, therefore, excluded from the analyses.

The motivation factors measuring traditional sport consumption acted in a similar fashion. All scale items correlated and were reliable with other factor items with the same exception with one scale item in the fanship factor ($r = .297$), causing removal of the scale item. Another adjustment involved the factor of social interaction. Although the correlation and reliability scores were low in the fantasy sport consumption, the traditional consumption scores were acceptable. With that said, this item was removed from analysis because of the comparative nature of this study.

It is important to note that although there are two groups of measurement, the scale items are the same and have been altered only to address either fantasy sport participation or traditional sport consumption. After correlation and reliability testing, the remaining scale items for both measurements were averaged and converted into one mean factor score.

Analyses

PASW Statistics software (18.0) was used to analyze this data. Correlation and reliability tests were conducted to determine relation and fit of scale items. Descriptive statistics, frequencies, and crosstabs were used to compile and address demographic information. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) procedures were administered to examine the differences between traditional and fantasy sport consumers. The variables were grouped and tested based on the research question. Bonferroni's correction was present for the appropriate analyses. In the case of a comparison of three or more groups (fantasy sport usage groups), a Bonferroni post hoc test was administered.

RESULTS

Profile of Respondents

Table 2 reports the overall demographic information of the 1,261 respondents. The sample in this study consisted of adult traditional users ($n = 730$) and fantasy sport users ($n = 531$). Note that some responses were missing minimal data. Regarding the composite sample, the mean age was 31.1 years ($SD = 13.0$), whereas male ($n = 641$, 50.8%) and female ($n = 620$, 49.2%)

TABLE 2
Demographic Participant Information

Variable	Fantasy Sport Consumption[a]		Traditional Sport Consumption[b]		Total[c]	
Gender						
Male	65.7% ($n = 349$)		40.0% ($n = 292$)		50.8% ($n = 641$)	
Female	34.3% ($n = 182$)		60.0% ($n = 438$)		49.2% ($n = 620$)	
Marital/Household status						
Single	40.7% ($n = 216$)		41.2% ($n = 301$)		41.0% ($n = 517$)	
Married/Partner	35.4% ($n = 188$)		37.7% ($n = 275$)		36.7% ($n = 463$)	
In a relationship	19.8% ($n = 105$)		18.6% ($n = 136$)		19.1% ($n = 241$)	
Divorced	3.4% ($n = 18$)		1.8% ($n = 13$)		2.5% ($n = 31$)	
Other	0.8% ($n = 4$)		0.7% ($n = 5$)		0.7% ($n = 9$)	
Variable M						
Age[a]	30.0	($SD = 11.5$)	31.8	($SD = 13.9$)	31.1	($SD = 13.0$)
Hours consuming sport[a]	18.0	($SD = 14.9$)	9.6	($SD = 11.8$)	13.1	($SD = 13.8$)

[a]$n = 531$.
[b]$n = 730$.
[c]$N = 1,261$.
[d]Significant difference between the two groups at $p < .05$.

individuals were both well represented. Most of the sample was either single ($n = 517$, 41.0%) or married ($n = 463$, 36.7%). Among fantasy sport participants, greatest proportions were male ($n = 349$, 65.7%) and single ($n = 216$, 40.7%), the average number of leagues per year was 2.6 leagues ($SD = 2.6$), average time spent devoted to fantasy sport was 4.3 hours per week ($SD = 5.6$), and the average number of years participating in the activity was 4.9 years ($SD = 4.5$). Among traditional sport consumers and greatest proportions were female ($n = 438$, 60.0%) and single ($n = 301$, 41.2%).

Addressing the Research Questions

RQ1 and its subquestions focus on differences between traditional and fantasy sport consumption. An ANOVA was conducted to examine age differences between the two groups, $F(1, 1254) = 5.705$, $p = .017$, $\eta^2 = .005$. Fantasy sport users ($\mu = 30.0$ years, $SD = 11.5$) were slightly (but statistically significantly) younger than the traditional sport consumers ($\mu = 31.8$ years, $SD = 13.9$) in this sample. An ANOVA procedure was utilized to compare the number of hours each group spends consuming sport, $F(1, 1255) = 122.694$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .089$. On average, fantasy sport users ($\mu = 18.0$ hours, $SD = 14.9$) spend 8.4 more hours consuming sport than do traditional sport consumers ($\mu = 9.6$, $SD = 11.8$), a significant difference.

RQ1a focuses on fanship difference between traditional and fantasy sport consumers. An ANOVA analysis was used to examine any difference. Statistically significant differences at $p = .05$ level, $F(1, 1258) = 217.474$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .147$, were found. As Table 3 shows, there is a mean difference of 1.1 in favor of the fantasy sport user scoring higher on the fanship scale items. (fantasy sport user $\mu = 6.3$ and traditional sport consumer $\mu = 5.2$).

RQ1b examined the motivation factors measured in this study. A MANOVA, accounting for Bonferroni's correction ($p = .007$), Wilks's $\lambda = .819$, $F(7, 1253) = 39.572$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .181$, was used to examine differences in the motivating factors between the two groups. Significant differences were found. Fantasy sport consumers scored higher on an array of motivating factors including the areas of self-esteem ($p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .031$), surveillance ($p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .057$), pass time ($p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .019$), and enjoyment ($p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .011$). The analysis also indicated traditional sport consumers having higher motivating in the area of escape ($p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .009$). The remaining two motivational factors of entertainment ($p = .039$, $\eta^2 = .003$) and arousal ($p = .743$, $\eta^2 = .001$) were not found to contain significant differences in the MANOVA analysis as a result of not falling below the corrected significance level ($p < .007$). Entertainment scores were higher for fantasy sport consumption, whereas the arousal factor was nearly equal between the two groups (fantasy sport user $\mu = 4.75$ and traditional sport consumer $\mu = 4.72$).

TABLE 3
Motivation Differences Between Fantasy and Traditional Sport Fanship

Variable	Consumption			F	η^2	Sig.
	Fantasy sport[a]	Traditional sport[b]	Total[c]			
Arousal	4.8 (SD=1.5)	4.7 (SD=1.7)	4.7 (SD=1.6)	0.108	.001	.743
Entertainment	5.7 (SD=1.1)	5.6 (SD=1.4)	5.6 (SD=1.3)	4.279	.003	.039
Enjoyment[d]	5.6 (SD=1.2)	5.3 (SD=1.5)	5.4 (SD=1.4)	13.670	.011	.001
Escape[d]	3.9 (SD=1.5)	4.2 (SD=1.6)	4.1 (SD=1.6)	11.748	.009	.001
Pass time[d]	5.1 (SD=1.4)	4.7 (SD=1.6)	4.9 (SD=1.5)	24.255	.019	.001
Self-esteem[d]	5.0 (SD=1.3)	4.5 (SD=1.6)	4.7 (SD=1.5)	40.592	.031	.001
Surveillance[d]	5.5 (SD=1.2)	4.8 (SD=1.6)	5.1 (SD=1.5)	76.413	.057	.001
Mavenism[e]	4.5 (SD=1.5)	3.6 (SD=1.8)	4.0 (SD=1.8)	80.001	.060	.001
Schwabism[e]	3.8 (SD=1.7)	3.0 (SD=1.9)	3.3 (SD=1.9)	73.475	.055	.001

[a]$n = 531$.
[b]$n = 730$.
[c]$N = 1,261$.
[d]Statistically significant at $p < .007$ (accounting for Bonferroni's correction).
[e]Statistically significant at $p < .025$ (accounting for Bonferroni's correction).

RQ1c queries if any differences exist between the ways these two groups of consumers perceive their sport knowledge. Two concepts were measured to answer this question: Mavenism and Schwabism. A MANOVA was conducted, Wilks's $\lambda = .938$, $F(2, 1258) = 41.387$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .062$, with Bonferroni post hoc tests, and statistically significant differences were found at Bonferroni's corrected level ($p < .025$). Both Mavenism and Schwabism were found to measure higher for fantasy sport users. Mavenism was measured at 4.50 ($SD = 1.50$) for fantasy sport users and 3.63 ($SD = 1.84$) for traditional sport consumers. Schwabism was measured at 3.85 ($SD = 1.70$) for fantasy sport users and 2.96 ($SD = 1.76$) for traditional sport consumers. This resulted in a statistically significant difference ($p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .055$) at Bonferroni's corrected level ($p < .025$).

RQ2 specifically focused on fantasy sport usage, with results illuminated in Table 4. Fantasy sport consumers were separated into three groups based on the amount of time, per week, they devoted to fantasy sport. A MANOVA was administered to examine length of participation, number of leagues per year, motivating factors, Mavenism and Schwabism, and fanship, Wilks's $\lambda = .781$, $F(24, 1030) = 5.635$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .116$. The groups

TABLE 4
Fantasy Sport Consumption Mean Scores and Differences by Involvement

Variable	Low user[a]	Medium user[b]	High user[c]	Total[d]
Self-esteem[e]	4.3 ($SD = 1.5$)	4.9 ($SD = 1.2$)	5.8 ($SD = 0.9$)	5.0 ($SD = 1.3$)
Surveillance[e]	4.7 ($SD = 1.4$)	5.5 ($SD = 1.2$)	6.1 ($SD = 1.0$)	5.5 ($SD = 1.2$)
Entertainment[e]	4.9 ($SD = 1.2$)	5.7 ($SD = 1.0$)	6.4 ($SD = 0.7$)	5.7 ($SD = 1.1$)
Escape[f]	3.4 ($SD = 1.4$)	3.9 ($SD = 1.4$)	4.5 ($SD = 1.5$)	3.9 ($SD = 1.5$)
Pass time[e]	4.2 ($SD = 1.7$)	5.1 ($SD = 1.3$)	5.9 ($SD = 1.1$)	5.1 ($SD = 1.4$)
Enjoyment[e]	4.7 ($SD = 1.4$)	5.6 ($SD = 1.2$)	6.3 ($SD = 0.7$)	5.6 ($SD = 1.2$)
Arousal[e]	4.0 ($SD = 1.5$)	4.7 ($SD = 1.4$)	5.6 ($SD = 1.3$)	4.8 ($SD = 1.5$)
Mavenism[e]	3.4 ($SD = 1.5$)	4.4 ($SD = 1.5$)	5.5 ($SD = 1.2$)	4.5 ($SD = 1.5$)
Schwabism[f,g]	3.0 ($SD = 1.6$)	3.7 ($SD = 1.7$)	4.9 ($SD = 1.5$)	3.8 ($SD = 1.7$)
Fanship[e]	5.8 ($SD = 1.3$)	6.3 ($SD = 0.9$)	6.6 ($SD = 0.5$)	6.3 ($SD = 0.9$)
No. of years	3.9 ($SD = 4.0$)	4.8 ($SD = 4.3$)	6.2 ($SD = 5.2$)	4.9 ($SD = 4.5$)
No. of leagues[f,g]	1.9 ($SD = 1.5$)	2.4 ($SD = 2.4$)	3.8 ($SD = 3.3$)	2.6 ($SD = 2.6$)

[a]$n = 59$.
[b]$n = 378$.
[c]$n = 94$.
[d]$N = 531$.
[e]Significant differences between all group means (Bonferroni's adjusted level of $p < .004$).
[f]Significant differences between high and low group means (Bonferroni's adjusted level of $p < .004$).
[g]Significant differences between high and medium group means (Bonferroni's adjusted level of $p < .004$).

were titled: (a) Low: those devoting 1 hour or less ($n = 59$), (b) Medium: those devoting more than 1 hour and less than 7 hours ($n = 378$), and (c) High: those devoting more than 7 hours per week ($n = 94$). The authors chose to split the groups based on the 1-hour and 7-hour splits.

Results indicate no significant differences between the types of users when analyzing fantasy sport length of participation (Low = 3.9, Medium = 4.8, and High = 6.2; $p = .005 - .506$) at the Bonferroni's corrected level ($p < .004$). When analyzing number of leagues per year (Low = 1.9, Medium = 2.4, and High = 3.8), the high user had significantly ($p = .001$) more league usage than both the low and medium users. The mean scores on motivation, Mavenism, and Schwabism showed an increase in factor score as the usage increases across all three levels. The high group has significantly higher mean scores than the other two groups on all measured items at the Bonferroni's corrected level ($p < .004$). Nonsignificant pairings occurred when examining the motivating factor of escape ($p = .019$ comparing low to medium user and $p = .006$ when comparing medium to high user). Another nonsignificant pairing occurred in the analysis of fandom ($p = .005$ when comparing low to medium user). Consequently, these factors did not meet the Bonferroni's corrected significance level ($p < .004$).

DISCUSSION

From an entertainment theory perspective, nearly all of the same motivations for sport consumption hold true for the fantasy sport player, with five of the seven motivations being elevated in the process of participating in fantasy sport play. By far, the largest gap between the fantasy and the traditional was in the area of fanship, with more than a full-point difference between the two groups. Based on the extremely high ratings exhibited by fantasy players in this area (an average of 6.3 on a 7-point Likert scale), one conclusion that appears warranted is that although people can be traditional sports fans without playing fantasy sport, the inverse does not appear to typically be true. Indeed, it appears sports fanship is a key credential to entering the fantasy sport world, consistent with the findings of Levy (2009).

The second area in which fantasy participants scored substantially higher than traditional sports fans was in the area of self-esteem, with a half-point difference between the two groups (5.0 vs. 4.5 on a 7-point scale). Wenner and Gantz (1998) specifically tied sports fandom to self-esteem as they noted that one's perceived self-worth could rise and fall depending on the success (or lack thereof) of their favorite sports teams. Given that Spinda and Haridakis (2008) noted that ownership is a critical component of fantasy sport

play, fantasy sport appears to offer more opportunity for esteem-boosting results as it appears the dual nature of fantasy sport also offers a duality of successes and failures as one cares about both the game outcome and the ramifications on fantasy game play. Thus, the stakes seem to be higher in regard to self-esteem factors of fantasy sport participants.

Some of the more interesting findings occur when addressing the aspects of sport fanship that do not appear to be enhanced by fantasy play, namely, arousal (scoring roughly the same levels regardless of whether a person played fantasy sport) and escape (which traditional fans scored higher than fantasy sport fans). The former could perhaps be explained by the fact that arousal is already heightened even before including the fantasy variable into the equation. The latter finding could be a case of fantasy sport being more connected to personal/daily lives. Fantasy sports typically are played among friends, coworkers, and acquaintances, meaning that when one is engaged in fantasy sport play, he or she also consumes the games with a more active focus on the ramifications on other parts of life. Defeating a coworker or lamenting a friend's poor fantasy performance requires a sport fan to think about more than just the game they are consuming in the media, making far more connections to daily life and, in turn, lowering a sense of escape.

However, the escapism factor being lower for fantasy participants seems to imply that fantasy sport play does not simply make every motivation for consumption enhanced, meaning that the easy conclusion that "fantasy sport players are just like sports fans but with higher motivations and more investment" is, indeed, too simple a summary. The modern sports fan is anything from homogenous in terms of their economic and cultural back-grounds (see Fantasy Sport Trade Association, 2011), just as any multimillion person collective would be and the same now appears to hold true for fantasy sports fans—a group of people traditionally described as statistical-based, social misfits (Ruihley & Runyan, 2010). The profile that is beginning to emerge represents an amalgamation of people built from the traditional sports fan base. Although it appears these 32 million American players exhibit much of the same tendencies as traditional sports fans (albeit at higher levels), it is also important to note that drawing a direct linear correlation greatly simplifies the interaction between being a fan of a favorite team and supporting your selected fantasy sport team.

This study ultimately provides support for previous studies related to elevated modes of consumption within the fantasy sport world (Dwyer & Drayer, 2010) while offering a great deal more nuance and insight to fanship habits and motivations than what has already been uncovered (see Nesbitt & King, 2010). By directly measuring fantasy sport players in contrast with sports fans who currently do not participate in fantasy sport, this study

delves into the manners in which the groups differ from each other. For instance, Gantz (1981) noted that some fans tend to be "walking record books, storing and categorizing information about athletes and teams" (p. 270), a finding that fits fantasy sport participants significantly more than non-fantasy-sport players within this study. In the majority of measures, fantasy sport users represent the core fan: the uberfollower who lives and breathes sport media, a finding consistent with those of Drayer et al. (2010). This study also reports an 8-hour gap in overall consumption rates between traditional and fantasy sport consumers which, although not the 15-hour difference that ESPN reports for their exclusive study of ESPN media, still represents a massive gap between the two groups. Moreover, these fantasy sport users exhibited escalated ratings in the preponderance of motivational measures. Again, being a sport fan seems to be *enhanced* much more than *replaced* by fantasy sport play. It appears that these two groups have a great deal in common in terms of the priorities for participation, lending one to believe that media consumption is still based on winning and losing. Thus, the dichotomy is not "traditional versus fantasy" but, more aptly, one of "fan versus superfan." In essence, one could view fantasy sport users as exhibiting the next level of fanship commitment—a new level of uberfandom.

The results concerning Low, Medium, and High levels of fantasy sport play are intriguing as well. Again, these motivations seem to work in tandem with levels of fandom as the more one played, the more all motivations increased. It is possible that the concepts of traditional and fantasy play work jointly to elevate sport media consumption at a holistic level. Given the reported 32 million American fantasy sport users each year, these findings offer applied ramifications on our understandings of sport media use as well as for sport industry marketers, programmers, producers, and other stakeholders, both in traditional media organizations (e.g., ESPN, CBS, etc.) and fantasy sport trade outlets (e.g., Fanball, Yahoo! Fantasy Sport, etc.).

Finally, the results related to sport knowledge appear to dovetail quite nicely into this new sport fan profile. Given the strong correlations between the amount of fantasy sport use and the desire to be a resident expert on sport, these measures help cement a notion of the fantasy sport user as the ultimate prototype of sport engagement. Ruihley and Runyan (2010) found that showing expertise is critical to the fantasy sport fan experience and the elevated ratings in the area of surveillance support this conclusion. Given the previous conclusion related to the need to be established as a sports fan before truly excelling in the fantasy sport world, it appears that the expertise needed for the former becomes a crucial part of the latter. After all, one cannot demonstrate immense sport knowledge without an audience to demonstrate it to, and fantasy sport provides a direct and immediate

audience in which interaction and expertise demonstration is a behavioral expectation for participation.

A great deal of work still must also be conducted to understand the modern sport fan. First and foremost, although there is a strong correlation between playing a game (such as fantasy sport) and watching a sport, these are not, indeed, synonymous. Thus, future studies should explore the role of play within fantasy sport, particularly in relation to sport-oriented video games and other forms of new media that attempt to merge the worlds of sport and media. In addition, future research must identify other key variables that could influence what is clearly not simply a binary relationship. Issues such as the amount of money one spends to participate in fantasy sport (along with related issues pertaining to gambling) must inevitably be folded into this complex communicative relationship. Moreover, there is a need to internationalize this scholarship in a manner that pinpoints similarities and differences between American and non-American sports fans in terms of their actions, motivations, and needs related to fandom (and the subsequent implications on communication theory that would flow from such an expansion of the fantasy sport heuristic). Additional angles for analysis are present as well. For instance, this study did not examine the role of success in fantasy play as a potential correlate to motivations for play. Given that attendance figures and television ratings show increased interest when one's team is doing well, future research could determine the degree in which this holds true in regard to success and fantasy sport participation.

The impact of fantasy play increases even more when coupling this number with the dual facts that (a) the number of players continues to grow and (b) the current players represent the "core" of sport media consumption. Given the trends in play and diversity of offerings, it is fair to conclude that fantasy sport is not a fad but rather a consistently growing player within the sport world. Endeavoring to determine the ramifications of fantasy sport on decades of previously established trends forces sport communication scholars to include fantasy sport as a key variable to unlocking the puzzle that is the modern sports fan.

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