Sport Fan Motivations for Viewing Television Programs:
A Case of Iranian Navad Program

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present research was to examine the motivations of sport fans for viewing television programs using the case of Iranian Navad program. 1000 fans were randomly selected as the sample. A questionnaire with 35 items was used to measure 8 motives: information, escape, attraction, interest in critical programs, entertainment, SMS contests, aesthetics, and knowledge of the sport. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation coefficient, and a model was developed. The results showed that the most important motives for watching the program was its critical nature and the least important motivation was escape. Moreover, entertainment was the strongest and escape was the weakest predictor of sport fan motivation.

KEYWORDS: Motivation, Sport Fan, Viewer, Program Navad, Television Programs.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important factors in the success of television programs is awareness of the motivations and expectations of viewers. There are a broad range of viewers for a program and a broad range of programs for each viewer. Why do people prefer a specific program to others? Why are people interested in a specific television program or network? What psychological and sociological factors affect viewers' choices and preferences? How can television programs satisfy viewers' needs?

Fan attendance in sporting events increases not only the excitement of the event, but also the appeal of the event for those who follow the game through media [1]. Due to the critical role of television programs in the lives of people, it is necessary to study the factors that affect viewership of sporting events.

Navad is one of the most popular television programs in Iran. The program is hosted by Adel Ferdosipour. The main subject of the program is the football matches played in the Iranian Premier League every week. Navad has more than 20 million viewers. Because of its high popularity, this program is a good case for studying the factors that motivate viewers to watch sport programs. The results can help program developers, producers, andhosts in attracting more viewers. Ignoring these factors may lead to budget loss, waste time, and compromise the goals of television stations. Therefore, the present research tries to examine the motivations of viewers of Navad as the most popular Iranian television show.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Fan motivation has been broken down into eight factors: eustress, self-esteem, escape, entertainment, economic gains, aesthetics, affiliation needs, and family [2]. Correia and Esteves [3] carried out an exploratory study of spectators' motivation in football. The results showed that that team affiliation and loyalty were significant contributors to interest in football events in Portugal. Several other studies reported personal motivation and each event's attributes [4], the stadium conditions [5, 6, 7], including weather, time convenience and latest competitive results [6] and identification [7] as important motivators for sport attendance.

Previous studies have reported significant gender differences. In one study, a scale was developed for sport fan motivation. Fan Motivation Scale (FMS) consisted of 6 components: game quality, escape, boredom avoidance, social factors, entertainment, and sport atmosphere. The results showed significant gender and ethnicity differences between participants in the total FMS and some of the subscales. In particular, there were differences between men and women in the total FMS, the quality of the game motive, the escape motive, and the boredom avoidance motive [8, 9].

The Sports Interest Inventory (SII) was developed[10] to understand consumer interest in a sporting event. This scale included 10 factors: sport interest, excitement, vicarious achievement, team interest, supporting women's opportunity in sport, socialization, aesthetics, national pride, drama, and player interest. This scale has been applied to different sporting contexts. In one study, six motivators—i.e. team interest, sport interest (football), self-esteem, drama, supporting women's opportunity in sport, and excitement—explained 34% variance in interest in the game [11, 12, 13].

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Funk and et al., [13] proposed a refined version of SII with eighteen constructs: interest in the game, interest in players, bonding with friends, socialization, drama, team interest, community pride, role model, support of women's opportunities, bonding with family, style of play, customer service, excitement, entertainment value, wholesome environment, knowledge of the sport, escape, and vicarious achievement. The scale was distributed in a sample of season ticket holders and single game attendees of a sport team. The results supported their proposed model (Team Sport Involvement or TSI), revealing that 9 antecedents represented four higher order facets of involvement—i.e. attraction, self-expression, centrality to lifestyle, and risk.

Woo et al.,[9] examined sport consumer motivations at fan and viewer levels. They showed that fan motivation is associated with social identity, the quality of the game, stars, and entertainment, while viewer motivation was associated with team identity and support. Previous research [2, 12, 11] has identified various motivators for fan attendance in sport events: entertainment, economic gains, social needs (family or group affiliation), and psychological needs (self-esteem and success). The SFMS, developed by Wann et al, includes the most common motivational factors: eustress, self-esteem, diversion from everyday life, entertainment, economic value, aesthetic value, need for affiliation, and family needs [14].

Fans have different motivations for spending time (investing) to watch or attend a sporting event [15, 16, 17] case study of Norwegian sport viewership and showed that football was the third most popular sport. However, although football came third, a higher proportion of football fans were willing to pay for watching it on TV than fans of other sports.

Various studies have been conducted on sport fan motivations for attending or watching sporting events [18, 19, 10, 4, 13, 16, 3, 20, 21]. Smith and Stewart [22] identified several factors that were central to fans' decisions to engage in sport-related experiences: the underlying drives of fans, factors that mediate fan motivation, factors that impact upon fan identification and team attachment, and contextual influences that are linked to the team, game, or league fixture.

Spectators can be subdivided into two groups: direct and indirect sport consumers. Direct sport consumers are individuals who actually attend a sporting event. Indirect sport consumers are individuals who view the event on television, listen to it on the radio, or read about it in the newspaper or on the Internet [23, 24]. In NHL and NFL, 45 percent of spectators are female and this is an increasing trend [25, 20]. Gender differences are almost disappearing in spectatorship. Although fans of sports such as rugby are mostly male [5]. The number of female spectators is on the rise [26, 4, 7, 27, and 28].The increasing demand for sport broadcasting is the most important development in the sport industry over the past two decades [29].

Sport has political, historical, and social implications which are manifested in fans' choices [30]. Empirical findings have shown that football and motor sports are "male sports". These two sports were considerably more popular among men than women in a sample of Norwegian viewers [17]. In 1998 World Cup, football matches became top television programs in 75 percent of European countries [29]. Izzo et al.,[31] studied soccer fan motivations in Romania and showed that a six factor model can explain the motives of Romanian consumers: vicarious achievement, escape, socialization while watching the game, drama, physical skill, and socialization while attending the game.

A review of the literature showed that only one research has been conducted on Navad television program. The results of this study showed that the most important motives for the viewers were entertainment, knowledge of the sport, and monitoring the league [32].The national Iranian media organization (IRIB) broadcasts a variety of sports programs, the most popular of which is Navad [33]. The host of the program is Adel Ferdosipour and its main subject is the football matches played in the Iranian Premier League every week. Every episode has two guests, one who analyzes the technical aspects of the matches, and the other discusses the referee's decisions and errors. On some shows, famous football players are invited and interviewed as well [34].

However, the popularity of this show is mainly due to its focus on trivia, the popular "SMS & Win", the use of vernacular language along with technical language, involvement of people of both genders, different ages, and ethnicities, the critical style of the show, challenging officials, coaches, and players in debates, and discussing the current issues of Iran's football.

The number of text messages to the SMS contests and polls of the show indicates its widespread popularity. In 2009, a SMS poll was conducted to identify the reasons for failure of Iran's national football team in World Cup qualification games. A total of 3 million text messages were received. The highest number of text messages were sent for commemorating Nasser Hejazi's death (5 million text messages) [35]and for the World Cup 2014 draw (6,700,000 text messages) [34].

METHODOLOGY

The present research was descriptive-correlational, carried out as a field study. The population consisted of all the viewers of Navad Program. Using Morgan's table, 1000 viewers were randomly selected as the sample. The instrument was a questionnaire with 35 items measuring 8 motives: information, escape, attraction, entertainment, interest in critical programs, knowledge of the sport, SMS contests, and aesthetics. Each item was rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 for totally disagree and 5 for totally agree). Cronbach's alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of the instrument. Accordingly, the questionnaire was distributed among 30 viewers of the program, leading to a Cronbach's alpha of 0.839 and temporal stability of 0.926. The respondents were instructed on how to complete the questionnaire and were ensured of confidentiality so that they would express their views freely. Overall, 993 questionnaire were returned. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution), Pearson

correlation coefficient, and multivariate prediction models. All the statistical operations were done in SPSS and AMOS at the 0.01 significance level.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics show that the majority of the respondents were male. The highest age frequency was 26-30 years and the lowest was 51 years and above. The number of single respondents was more than married ones. Also the majority of respondents had a master's degree.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	744	74.9
	Female	249	25.1
Age	< 20 yrs.	56	5.64
	21-25 yrs.	121	12.19
	26-30 yrs.	225	22.66
	35-31 yrs.	171	17.22
	36-40 yrs.	199	20.04
	41-45 yrs.	129	12.99
	46-50 yrs.	62	6.24
	> 51 yrs.	30	3.02
Marital Status	Single	519	52.3
	Married	474	47.7
Education	Less than a high school diploma	54	5.4
	High school diploma	326	32.8
	Associate degree	175	17.6
	Bachelor's degree	356	35.9
	Master's degree	82	8.3

The respondents believed that Thursday was the appropriate day and 9 PM was the appropriate time for the program, which is currently broadcasted on Monday at 11 PM. The majority of the respondents had been watching the program for more than 5 years and more than 3 times a month.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics related to the program

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Appropriate Broadcast Day	Thursday	543	54.7
	Friday	423	42.6
	Other	27	2.7
Appropriate Broadcast Time	8 PM	101	10.2
	9 PM	476	47.9
	10 PM	370	37.3
	11 PM	46	4.6
Sport Interest	Football	885	89.1
	Other	108	10.9
Viewership Time	Less than a months	6	0.6
	Less than a year	6	0.6
	1-5 yrs.	101	10.2
	> 5 yrs.	880	88.6
Frequency of Views per Month	1	38	3.8
	2	153	15.4
	3	419	42.2
	4	383	38.6

Interest in critical programs, information, attraction, SMS contests, aesthetics, knowledge of the sport, entertainment, and escape respectively had the highest means for viewers' motives.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for viewers' motives

Motives	Mean	SD	Rank
Information	20.59	0.086	2
Escape	11.41	0.106	8
Attraction	17.54	0.060	3
Entertainment	11.42	0.085	7
Interest in a Critical Program	29.25	0.116	1
Knowledge of the Sport	12.33	0.063	6
SMS Contests	15.79	0.100	4
Aesthetics	14.57	0.095	5

Table 4. Normality of the data

Variable	N	Normal Parameters		Z	Sig.
		Mean	SD		
Information	993	4.12	0.512	5.327	0.001
Escape	993	2.27	6.63	4.333	0.001
Attraction	993	4.38	0.439	5.009	0.001
Entertainment	993	3.81	0.878	5.534	0.001
Interest in a Critical Program	993	4.19	0.497	4.600	0.001
Knowledge of the Sport	993	4.10	0.672	5.794	0.001
SMS Contests	993	3.95	0.787	6.175	0.001
Aesthetics	993	3.64	0.754	4.520	0.001
Motivation	993	3.80	0.394	2.084	0.001

Notes: $P < 0.05$

The results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test indicate that the significance value for all the variables is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the variables are not normally distributed at the 95% CI.

Proposed Model
Before developing a model, the non-normally distributed variables were transformed using bootstrapping technique in AMOS software.
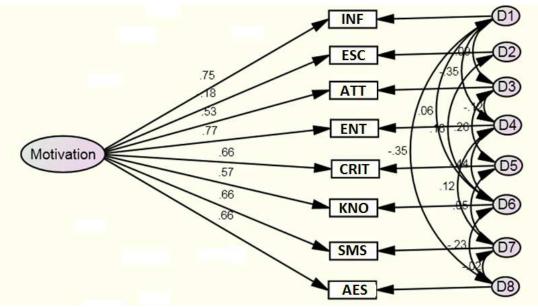

Figure 1. First-Order Factor Model of Motivation

Table 5. Standardized factor loadings and the significance level of the variables

Latent Variable	Observable Variable	Proxy	Standardized Factor Loading	SD	Critical Value	p-Value
Motivation	Information	INF	1	-	-	-
	Escape	ESC	-0.18	0.051	-5.11	0.000*
	Attraction	ATT	0.53	0.050	12.67	0.000*
	Entertainment	ENT	0.77	0.100	15.22	0.000*
	Critical Program	CRIT	0.66	0.073	11.66	0.000*
	Knowledge of the Sport	KNO	0.57	0.069	12.66	0.000*
	SMS Contests	SMS	0.66	0.110	11.01	0.000*
	Aesthetics	AES	0.66	0.086	12.76	0.000*

Notes: * Significant at the 0.001 level

Table 6. Goodness of fit indices for the proposed model

Index	Value	Desired Value	Condition
χ^2	2.607	-	-
RMR	0.012	< 0.05	Desirable
NFI	0.96	≥ 0.90	Desirable
IFI	0.99	≥ 0.90	Desirable
CFI	0.98	≥ 0.90	Desirable
RMSEA	0.04	< 0.1	Desirable
Normalized χ^2	2.576	2-3	Desirable

The data in Table 6 suggest that the model adequately fits the data.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The majority of the respondents were male (74.9 percent). Being female is the strongest predictor of family motive and being male is the best predictor of entertainment, eustress, group affiliation, self-esteem, escape, and aesthetics [36]. Navad deals mainly with football matches, which is probably the reason why the number of male viewers was more the female viewers.

The majority of the respondent were 26-30 years old (22.66 percent), while the minority were 51 years and older (3.02 percent). In an exploratory study, 22-35 years old individuals were more strongly motivated to watch football [6]. The present findings also showed that the majority of the participants were single (52.3 percent), which is probably because they have more spare time than married individuals.

Most of the respondents had a master's degree (35.9 percent). One study showed that there are various demographic variables that affect fan attendance, including age, gender, education, job, and ethnicity. The results of this study suggested that a typical spectator is most probably male, young, educated, and of higher income [37]. More educated people were probably more interested in gaining information and increasing their knowledge of football.

The majority of the respondents believed that Thursday (weekend in Iran) was a more appropriate day for broadcasting the program (54.7 percent). Past research has shown that changing game time to workweeks decreases attendance and viewership [38]. Moreover, most of the respondents considered 9 PM to be a more appropriate time for broadcasting the program (47.9 percent). Evening games are associated with less fan attendance [39, 40, 41, and 42]. However, viewership may increase in the evening as many individuals find this time ideal for rest and watching television.

The majority of the respondents reported that their sport of interest was football (98.1 percent). Research has shown that football and motor sports are "male sports", as these sports considerably more popular among men [17]. About 88.6 percent of the respondents had been watching the program for more than 5 years. Behavioral loyalty in sport is manifested in buying tickets and merchandise and watching games on TV [43]. The high level of viewer loyalty observed in the present research may be due to the fact that this Navad has been broadcasted for about 15 years. Also 80.8 percent of the participants watched the program more than three times in a month. One of the signs of loyalty to a television program or network is frequent viewing [44, 45, 46, and 47]. About 20 percent of the respondents did not watch the program frequently which may be due to the fact that the program continues until very late at night.

The results showed that critical programs, information, attraction, SMS contests, aesthetics, knowledge of the sport, entertainment, and escape respectively had the highest means for viewers' motives. Interest in critical programs had the highest mean, which is probably due to of the host's honesty and questioning and disagreeing with high authority officials. Every episode has two guests: one who analyzes the technical aspects of the matches and the other

discusses the referee's decisions and errors. These discussions are very instructive and that is one possible reason for the high mean of the information construct. Attraction ranked third in viewer motives, which can be attributed to the charisma of Ferdosipour, the host of the show, as well as his skillful commentating. The fourth motive was SMS contests, which provide the viewers with an opportunity win rewards or support their favorite teams. Aesthetics ranked fifth in viewer motives, followed by knowledge of the sport, entertainment, and escape. The low mean for escape motive is one of the strengths of Navad, as it suggests that the viewers did not watch the show randomly casually, or to kill time.

The first-order factor model of motivation showed that all the proposed motives were significantly related to motivation. The strongest predictors were respectively as follows: (1) entertainment, (2) information, (3) interest in critical programs, (4) SMS contests, (5) aesthetics, (6) knowledge of the sport, (7) attraction, and (8) escape. Except for escape, all the variables were positively associated with motivation. Moreover, goodness of fit indices showed that the model adequately fits the data.

There was a positive relationship between entertainment and motivation. In a research on fan attendance in Women's Korean Basketball League (WKBL)the most important social motive for women's attendance was entertainment [48]. With regard to Navad, the reason that viewers find the program entertaining is family debates about the varied items and subjects of the show.

There was also a positive relationship between information and motivation. The Sport Fan Motivation Scale (SFMS) lists eight motives for fan motivation (i.e. eustress, self-esteem, diversion from everyday life, entertainment, economic value, aesthetic value, need for affiliation, and family needs[14].

The reason for inconsistency of present finding with this scale is probably due to differences between fan attendance and fan viewership, the former being direct sport consumption and the latter being indirect sport consumption.

There was a significant positive relationship between interest in critical programs and motivation. This motive is somewhat relevant to vicarious achievement in the Sport Interest Inventory (SII). Vicarious achievement is defined as a need to gain success or feelings of accomplishment vicariously through another [18]. When a show host challenges sport officials, referees, and team players, coaches, and managers regarding their decisions or performance, they are speaking on behalf of all the fans that may not be able to voice their complaints.

Moreover, SMS contests were positive predictors of motivation. This is to some extent relevant to the economic value construct in SFMS.

There was a positive relationship between aesthetics and motivation. Aesthetics is one of the major factors in sport fan motivation that positively affects attendance and viewership [10]. Aesthetic value may lie in the appearance of the host and the guests or in the visual features of the show. Moreover, there was a positive relationship between knowledge of the sport and motivation. The efforts of Wann [2], Milne and McDonald [49], and Train and James led to development of the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC), where acquisition of knowledge is a significant predictor of motivation [8]. Navad provides very useful commentaries on technical aspects of matches and referees' decisions.

There was a significant positive relationship between attraction and motivation. Attraction and other artistic features can increase people's enjoyment [49, 14].

Finally, there was a negative relationship between escape and motivation. Escape provides a diversion from everyday life for sport fans[50, 51, 52, and 53].

The developers, producers, the host, and all the people involved in the Navad show can use the present findings to identify the needs of viewers and develop the show accordingly, taking into account the preferences of the majority of viewers who are male, single, and educated.

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