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Collaborative Consumption Sport Hosting: Value and Consumption Constraints

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1 Collaborative Consumption Sport Hosting: Value and Consumption Constraints

2 Abstract

3 **Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to find evidence of the benefits and constraints of
4 collaborative consumption experiences by investigating the perceptions of hosts and visitors that
5 attended professional regular season basketball and baseball games in the USA.

6 **Design/methodology/approach** – Data were collected through four focus groups with 37 total
7 participants, and were analyzed through qualitative content analysis.

8 **Findings** – The results show that participants in a collaborative consumption experience perceive
9 four types of value: social interaction and belonging, new fandom, travel bucket list experiences,
10 and local and sport knowledge. In addition, the results provide evidence of five consumption
11 constraints related to collaborative consumption: expenses, average experiences, seat location,
12 interpersonal disconnects, and personal risk.

13 **Practical implications** – Practitioners can use this initial study to better understand the benefits
14 hosts and visitors perceive in the experience, and therefore the kind of experience design that
15 would encourage increased purchases and loyalty.

16 **Originality/value** – This paper provides qualitative insights into the benefits and detriments of a
17 collaborative consumption sport experience, based on participants' involvement in an innovative
18 peer-to-peer platform.

19 **Keywords:** Collaborative consumption, Value, Constraints, Collaborative Economy, Shared
20 economy, Sport hosting

21 **Paper type:** Research paper

22

23

24 **Introduction**

25 Of the many concerns a given business must confront, one perpetual difficulty is the
26 continuous change in consumer preferences. Studies suggest that under the current market
27 economy, consumers are not only shifting their attitudes towards traditional business interactions
28 (i.e., traditional B2C practices) but have developed an overall concern towards the ethical
29 standards of certain corporations (Hamari *et al.*, 2016). While there is a growing apprehension
30 amongst consumers towards issues such as ecological and environmental practices, consumer
31 concerns also entail matters such as authenticity and trustworthiness (Hamari *et al.*, 2016).
32 According to Eckhardt, Belk, and Devinney (2010), consumers are beginning to question their
33 interactions with larger B2C corporations because they perceive such corporations to be faceless
34 and are often unaccountable for past issues. In turn, according to these consumers, interacting
35 with larger B2C corporations may be considered disreputable, or even unethical.
36 Subsequently, consumers are showing a reluctance to trust certain B2C marketing messages, and
37 are turning away from what is sometimes considered ‘unethical consumption behavior’
38 (Eckhardt *et al.*, 2010). Therefore, it is no wonder that the collaborative economy (defined as
39 ‘the peer-to-peer-based activity of obtaining, giving, or sharing the access to goods and services,
40 coordinated through community-based online services’ (Hamari *et al.*, 2016) has since become
41 an attractive alternative for consumers. While one could argue the use of one term over another,
42 the two most common terms used interchangeably are the collaborative economy and the sharing
43 economy. However, Gössling and Hall (2019) do make a distinction that the sharing economy
44 mainly refers to private and non-commercial transactions, with the collaborative economy being
45 focused on peer exchanges that are driven by commercial platforms and businesses. This
46 collaborative economy allows consumers to rely on each other, rather than larger faceless B2C

47 corporations. As such, consumers can begin to build a sense of trust towards fellow consumers
48 rather than a corporation itself. Further, as a community-oriented set of activities, collaborative
49 economies also permit consumers to be somewhat autonomous. Overall, a community-oriented
50 consumption experience allows consumers to find a trustworthy alternative to corporations and
51 bypass interactions with B2C corporations altogether.

52 These new consumer preferences have garnered the attention of a range of industries.
53 Companies such as Airbnb and Uber, which rely on such collaborative economies, have seen
54 substantial profits over the last decade (Hamari *et al.*, 2016). These companies have witnessed a
55 flow of positive consumer appraisals, and in turn, have become some of the most notable leaders
56 in the industry. As recently as 2010, sharing systems achieved market volumes of \$100 billion
57 USD (Lamberton and Rose, 2012). Not only have companies welcomed the process of creating a
58 modern-age source of revenue but in that the process is collaborative, consumers are equally
59 interested in the concept. According to Hamari *et al.* (2016), revenue ‘flowing through the
60 sharing economy directly into people’s wallets’ exceeded \$3.5 billion USD. Altogether, the
61 collaborative consumption experience represents a modern way of conducting commerce which
62 is beneficial to both industries and consumers.

63 The topic of collaborative economies has flourished in the tourism field. The tourism industry
64 interacts with collaborative economies in the form of lodging services (e.g., Airbnb), interactive
65 restaurant services (e.g., Eatwith, Seamless), and tour guide services (e.g., Vayable). However,
66 in saying this, the same cannot be said about the sport marketing field or of sport organizations
67 evoking the use of collaborative economies. This is interesting because similar to the tourism
68 field, the sport marketing field is heavily based on the accommodation of customer needs and
69 wants due to its experiential and interactive nature (Tsiotsou, 2016, Yoshida, 2017). The extent

70 of the research in the sport setting has explored singularly within academia the creation of value
71 through membership and participation in sport fan consumption communities (Hedlund, 2014)
72 and an exploration of sport fandom through online communities (Kirkwood *et al.*, 2019).

73 This study attempted to elucidate the consumer effects of the collaborative consumption
74 process in sport. In that this study was exploratory, the authors sought to investigate any values
75 and constraints that emerged when both sport consumers and sport organizations utilize the
76 collaborative consumption experience and hence form a collaborative economy. In doing so, we
77 intended for this research to fit within a larger body of the emerging research regarding
78 collaborative economies in sport.

79 **Review of Literature**

80 *Collaborative Economies and Consumption*

81 There are challenges to developing one true definition of a collaborative economy. Many
82 terms including *collaborative economy* (Gössling and Hall, 2019, Hamari *et al.*, 2016, Piscicelli,
83 2016), *sharing economy* (Boateng *et al.*, 2019, Činjarević *et al.*, 2019, Gössling and Hall, 2019,
84 Hamari *et al.*, 2016, Möhlmann, 2015, Schiel, 2015), *peer or peer-to-peer economy* (Boateng *et*
85 *al.*, 2019, Gössling and Hall, 2019, Schiel, 2015), *participative economy* (Gössling and Hall,
86 2019), and *access or access-based economy* (Schiel, 2015) are interchangeably used. While one
87 could argue the use of one term over another, the two most common terms used interchangeably
88 are the collaborative economy and the sharing economy. However, Gössling and Hall (2019) do
89 make a distinction that the sharing economy mainly refers to private and non-commercial
90 transactions, with the collaborative economy being focused on peer exchanges that are driven by
91 commercial platforms and businesses. Therefore, collaborative economies can be an organized
92 system of recirculating goods, increasing the utilization of durable assets, providing an exchange

93 of services, and sharing productive assets through platforms that encourage social transformation
94 (Möhlmann, 2015).

95 According to Gössling and Hall (2019), collaborative consumption represents the concept of
96 consumers relying upon each other to satisfy a set of wants or needs. While much of the
97 collaborative consumption experience occurs using social and digital platforms, its results are
98 often perpetuated through face-to-face interactions. As engagement in a collaborative economy
99 typically requires action, consumers are likely to engage in ‘the peer-to-peer-based activity of
100 obtaining, giving, or sharing the access to goods and services’ (Hamari *et al.*, 2016). Such
101 access is often coordinated via community efforts and fulfilled through community-based online
102 services or face-to-face interactions. Ikkala and Lappinen (2015) demonstrated that collaborative
103 consumption has both financial and social benefits. While there is a monetary exchange, this
104 exchange provides a framework for individuals to attain a desired level of sociability. Ikkala and
105 Lappinen’s (2015) study showed that over time, social factors became more important than the
106 monetary exchange, even for those who initially became involved with the sharing economy just
107 to generate revenue. More recently, Sthapit and Jimenez-Barreto (2018) confirmed that social
108 interactions were a key component for individuals to have positive memorable experiences.

109 In consideration of these financial and social benefits, Table I provides examples of how
110 collaborative consumption provides benefits to consumers.

111 <TABLE I HERE>

112 While there are benefits to collaborative consumption, it is important to acknowledge that
113 there may also be constraints that prevent the incorporation or success of activities driving these
114 interactions. Some of these are more general, such as people choosing not to meet their leisure
115 goals or being at a transitional point in their lives (marriage, children, death of family,

116 relocation), preventing active participation in consumptive communities (Jackson, 2000). From a
117 professional sports perspective, these constraints include unaffordability of attendance, other
118 social commitments, and alternative sport spectating options (Kim and Trail, 2010, Trail *et al.*,
119 2008). Some constraints may also be caused by a lack of relationship with others, hence
120 preventing the opportunity for collaboration (Kim and Trail, 2010, Trail *et al.*, 2008).

121 Constraints also exist when participating in collaborative consumptive activities. The first
122 area would be related to having a poor user experience. This can be directly affected by the
123 design of the experience by the service provider, but can also be as a result of strained person-to-
124 person interactions, which the service provider has little control over (Piscicelli, 2016). A second
125 constraint involves the service provider having the inability to reach scale in terms of both the
126 supply of collaborators and the demand of customers due to not having a clear value proposition
127 that addresses a consumer need, not being able to scale up due to lack of funds, not having brand
128 recognition in the marketplace, or not being able to maintain authenticity and differentiation in
129 comparison to competition (Piscicelli, 2016). Another constraint is determining whether the
130 offerings are trustworthy. There are numerous unethical or unregulated offerings that justify the
131 use of economic rationalization to drive consumer purchasing behavior of consumers, as many
132 consumers will either not care or exhibit inconsistencies between their beliefs and behaviors
133 (Eckhardt *et al.*, 2010).

134 *Collaborative Consumption in Sport*

135 Sport organizations are acknowledging the importance and evolution of collaborative and co-
136 creation services as part of the sport fan experience (Hedlund, 2014). Sport fans often do not
137 attend sporting events alone (Hedlund *et al.*, 2018), which provides ample opportunities for sport
138 organizations to be catalysts for developing networks of like-minded fans through sport fan

139 consumption communities (Hedlund, 2014). Luckily for the sport industry, sport organizations
140 have ample opportunities to partake in collaborative consumption experiences. A given sport
141 organization has the opportunity to offer membership to a sport fan community through
142 participation in various activities such as the rituals and traditions connected with fandom of
143 NCAA Division I College Football teams (Hedlund, 2014). There are also opportunities linked
144 to attendance at professional football games in Europe and digital interactions through club-
145 sponsored channels (Biscaia *et al.*, 2018). Furthermore, sport entities offer consumers an outlet
146 for word-of-mouth experiences and social media recommendations for others to attend sporting
147 events as part of an overall social experience (Bednall *et al.*, 2012). This has now even extended
148 to shared services associated with attending professional sports games, such as with J-League
149 club Cerezo Osaka in Japan, who have engaged with supporters to help with parking shortages
150 (Ninomiya, 2021). These examples – most of which are common to many sport organizations –
151 can lend themselves to the collaborative consumption experience.

152 The consumption experience of sport fans can be enhanced through fantrepreneurship, which
153 is the concentrated small-scale and potentially commercial exploitation of fan knowledge in the
154 production and consumption of sport and entertainment activities within the event space by
155 highly committed fans to satisfy their own needs through the co-creation of the experience (Hills,
156 2017, Sibbritt *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, fantrepreneurs are ‘fans that organize and manage an
157 enterprise with initiative and risk in order to meet the perceived needs of their sport fandom.’
158 (Lundberg and Ziakas, 2018). The actions of fantrepreneurs when they are involved in
159 collaborative consumption have similar qualities to the concept of neotribalism and the inherent
160 lifestyle characteristics. Neotribalism is the sociological theory that people migrate towards
161 networks of people with similar interests, beliefs, lifestyles, rituals, and languages through

162 activities, communications, product usage, and emotional connections (Lundberg and Ziakas,
163 2018). The tribal concept includes having a local sense of identification that is grounded in the
164 establishment of a community (Cova and Cova, 2001). These social communities have
165 substantial influence over consumer behavior within the sphere of influence with a foundation of
166 offering and supporting a high level of a sense of community through tribal sport marketing
167 efforts (Cova and Cova, 2002). In considering the evolution of postmodernism in society,
168 individuals search for experiences that involved shared emotions with others in various
169 environmental settings, with sports facilities and fan interactions providing a particularly rich
170 opportunity to offer social interactions between consumers (Meir and Scott, 2007).

171 The shared experiences of tribes have evolved consumers to become prosumers because they
172 create products, services, and experiences, and they participate in the creation, updating, and
173 transfiguration of them (Cova and Dalli, 2009). As such, customers do not just expect to be
174 provided products and services; they want to be actively involved in the co-creation process and
175 view brands as shared cultural property (Cova and Dalli, 2009). This is especially true with
176 millennials, whose generational characteristics include the desire for interactive, connected,
177 networked, collaborative, authentic, and shared experiences that include being actively involved
178 in the co-creation and development of products and services (Fromm and Garton, 2013, Yim and
179 Byon, 2020).

180 Applying both the concepts of fantrepreneurship and neotribalism to collaborative
181 consumption demonstrates the potential for fantrepreneurs to organize neotribal events that
182 extend to a co-creation process of an event such as a professional sports game that drives the
183 motivations, behaviors, and needs inherent to enhance sport fandom and sport fan consumption
184 patterns (Lundberg and Ziakas, 2018). However, for it to be fruitful, it is important that

185 collaborative consumption be ‘moderated by a perceived sense of authenticity, nostalgia,
186 autonomy, and anticommercialization’ (Lundberg and Ziakas, 2018).

187 A natural extension of fantrepreneurship and neotribalism is the development and evolution of
188 sport fan consumption communities, which from a sport marketing standpoint have been
189 important strategic initiatives for professional sport teams. Professional sports teams have been a
190 catalyst for the evolution of collaborative consumption for decades. For example, ‘designated
191 family seating areas, family ticket packages, family promotions, and special events and activities
192 targeted to promote family attendance... [thereby] creating a unique event culture and
193 consumption experience for consumers’ (Armstrong, 2008). Other consumptive communities
194 may include renting of corporate boxes and group tickets with friends or work colleagues
195 (Menzies and Nguyen, 2012), facilitating online brand communities (Popp and Woratschek,
196 2016), providing season ticket holders the opportunity to bring others to games for free during
197 special occasions, or becoming a member of the fan club for a team.

198 In consideration of increasing fantrepreneurship and tribalism in driving collaborative
199 consumption, ‘many sport organizations have shifted their focus from motivating individual
200 consumption to the creation and development of sport fan consumption communities that engage
201 in the co-creation and collaborative consumption of the sporting event experience’ (Hedlund,
202 2014). Such a process has required sport organizations to allocate resources for the development
203 of these communities through co-created group activities that cultivate connections and
204 relationships, hence fostering social acceptance, group affiliation, and an overall feeling of
205 belonging to a community. These engagements can help build individual sport fandom that can
206 lead to increases in future intentions to attend a game, purchase merchandise, and recommend
207 attending games to others (Hedlund, 2014). This, in turn, can lead to the development of stronger

208 social bonds that promote support for and engagement in the sport fan consumption community
209 (Hedlund, 2014, Santos *et al.*, 2019).

210 *Purpose of this Study*

211 For years sport organizations have been utilizing their events as a medium to provide a
212 structured space for collaborative consumption experiences. Sport organizations not only offer
213 unique experiences to consumers (e.g., the sport fan community, participation in niche peer-to-
214 peer rituals, peer-to-peer traditions, etc.), but these experiences make the sport field appropriately
215 relevant to the notion of collaborative consumption. Recently, some sport organizations have
216 recognized that the collaborative consumption experience can be extended to serve as a
217 framework for host-visitor interactions and have begun to allow their most avid fans (e.g., season
218 ticket holders, or members of support groups) to host visitors who may not be familiar with the
219 sport organization.

220 This current study sought to find evidence of the benefits and constraints of collaborative
221 consumption experiences by investigating the perceptions of hosts (members/season ticket
222 holders) and visitors (international tourists) that attended National Basketball Association (NBA)
223 and Major League Baseball (MLB) regular season games in the USA via a formalized
224 collaborative consumption program offered by a third-party vendor. For our investigation, two
225 overarching research questions were developed to assess the benefits and constraints a
226 collaborative consumption experience can offer sport organizations:

227 *RQ1: What value do hosts and visitors experience through collaborative consumption in*
228 *a sport setting?*

229 *RQ2: What consumption constraints do hosts and visitors experience through*
230 *collaborative consumption in a sport setting?*

231 In that the collaborative consumption paradigm is community-centric, understanding the values
232 and constraints the community itself (i.e., consumers) realized through the collaborative
233 consumption experience will subsequently influence the merit of the associated sport
234 organization. The goal of this study is to determine what values the users (i.e., the visitors) and
235 hosts obtain through the connections, as well as what constraints prevented quality collaboration.
236 It is also hoped that the results of the study demonstrate how a sport organization can benefit the
237 interactions between hosts and visitors.

238 **Methodology**

239 To examine the collaborative consumption experience within the lens of sport, the authors
240 worked with a start-up organization named SportsHosts. The authors chose to work with
241 SportsHosts because it offers a representative collaborative consumption experience for a sport
242 organization and its respective consumers, and outside of Airbnb Experiences, was the only such
243 experience in the market. Airbnb Experiences provided a platform for people to share not just
244 their homes, but also their interests, hobbies and passions, including sport experiences. In
245 Mexico for example, an Airbnb Experiences host named Alexis was offering an opportunity to
246 join him for a scheduled Liga MX soccer game at one of Mexico City's iconic stadiums. The
247 experience included tickets, drinks and transportation, and promised that the guest would "learn
248 about their histories and the history of Mexican soccer... we'll also share stories about our own
249 experiences so you get a true sense of the importance of soccer in Mexico" (Airbnb, 2020).

250 SportsHosts is a company that connects international travelers to local sport fans to attend
251 local sport events (which may include pre- and post-game festivities), and earns a commission on
252 ticket revenue. SportsHosts represents the collaborative consumption experience because it
253 allows local sport fans (i.e., hosts) to guide travelers (i.e., guests) through the consumption

254 experience themselves; in doing so, the guest experiences the sport organization through an
255 individual consumer rather than the sport organization itself. The hosts and guests pay their own
256 ticket, merchandise, and concession costs, are connected through the SportsHosts platform,
257 coordinate when they will meet up before the game, and plan the shared activities they will
258 participate in before, during, and after the game. The hosts are not paid by the sport organization
259 or SportsHosts. Not only does this represent a peer-to-peer economy, but such a paradigm is an
260 accurate representation of the fanpreneurship aspect of sport consumption.

261 In this study, the three authors (without the participation of SportsHosts or the professional
262 teams involved) hosted focus groups to obtain information regarding the values and constraints
263 of the sport-oriented collaborative consumption experience. Focus groups have been used in
264 previous sport marketing research, especially where a greater degree of spontaneity in the
265 expression of the viewpoints of hosts and visitors is desired (Sassenberg, 2015). The presence of
266 high levels of fan group membership, comfort and knowledge of each other, and cohesiveness
267 through shared experiences contributed to the support and empowerment felt by participants
268 (Hennink, 2007, Peters, 1993). Focus groups were selected to be consistent with previous sport
269 marketing research that aimed to surface different opinions through participant interaction
270 (Sassenberg, 2015).

271 Four focus group sessions of 75 minutes each, totaling 37 participants, were conducted
272 during 2018 with *hosts* and *visitors* of the NBA's Brooklyn Nets (eight and 11 participants,
273 respectively) and MLB's San Francisco Giants (seven and 11 participants, respectively; see
274 Table II). Previous research found that a moderating size group of between six and 10
275 participants were appropriate (Sim, 1998). Focus group participants were recruited by
276 SportsHosts through convenience sampling using lists of previous hosts of, and visitors to, Nets

277 and Giants games. SportsHosts were interested in understanding the authentic experiences of
278 hosts and visitors, as well as the benefits and costs of participating. Both professional sport
279 organizations had participated in a SportsHosts trial project, are global sport brands, and operate
280 in major sport markets. The group of hosts had previously acted as game and experience hosts to
281 international visitors attending their first Nets or Giants game. The group of English-speaking
282 visitors had previously participated in a SportsHosts trial event a few weeks before as non-fans
283 of the teams, and were available at the time of the focus groups in New York or San Francisco.
284 The visitors were originally from France, Italy, Brazil, Canada, and the UK. The focus groups
285 were hosted at the respective sport organization facilities on a non-game day.

286 The authors developed and refined a moderator guide to investigate the following research
287 questions. These questions were asked in the context of their previous participation in the
288 SportsHosts trial event, and were supported by follow-up questions where relevant, while staying
289 in the background to allow participants to discuss the topics with one another (Sarstedt and
290 Mooi, 2014).

- 291 1. Do you attend team sports when traveling? Why? Why not? Can you tell me about these
292 experiences?
- 293 2. How do you feel about going to a game with a local fan? What do you think works and
294 what doesn't work? Which parts of the experience are appealing to you? Why? What
295 about the experience is a turn-off? Why?
- 296 3. How do you feel about going to a game with a visitor from out of town or abroad? What
297 do you think works and what doesn't work? Which parts of the experience are appealing
298 to you? Why? What about the experience is a turn-off? Why?

299 4. How would you describe the relationship with someone you would go to a game with?
300 What about someone you had just met? (hosting, hosted)

301 The topics during the focus group discussions began with a broad discussion of sport-related
302 travel and attending games with other people. The discussion also covered their views and
303 experiences of hosting visitors at a game or being hosted at a game. Participants were grouped
304 into host and visitor groups to discuss more specific experiences based on their role in the
305 experience. The level of involvement by the moderator ranged from a directive to a more non-
306 directive approach, depending on the flow of the discussion and level of depth initially offered
307 by the participants (Hennink, 2007). For example, the moderator amplified minority views to
308 mitigate the expected peer influence of stronger voices, and allowed positive group pressure to
309 challenge some thinking (Sarstedt and Mooi, 2014). The focus groups also included rich data due
310 to argumentative interactions (Sim, 1998), such as when Brooklyn Nets participants debated the
311 potential interpersonal risks of being hosted at a game. Following Miles and Huberman (1994),
312 and with the permission of the participants, the focus groups were recorded, transcribed, and then
313 coded by hand and manually analyzed to draw conclusions regarding the themes observed in the
314 data. The researchers conducted an initial broad coding process to look for similar ideas. Once
315 these broad codes were developed and agreed to by all three researchers, one of the researchers
316 developed a list of more specific codes. Data was coded according to a realist perspective, which
317 saw the researcher use keywords and short phrases provided by the participants to directly
318 develop the codes (Schreier, 2012). An initial list of 27 codes was developed from this process.
319 The researchers then collaboratively developed higher-order themes, and discussed these until
320 consensus on the nine themes was reached. The trustworthiness of inferences was ensured by
321 multiple coding and an audit trail of inter-coder discussion and agreement. The content of each

322 code was checked independently to ensure the consistency of the code. The researchers were in
323 agreements with all the categories developed. The findings are provided in the following section.

324 <TABLE II HERE>

325 **Results**

326 *Values of Collaborative Consumption (RQ1)*

327 The study initially investigated the value hosts and visitors experience through collaborative
328 consumption in a sport setting (RQ1). The qualitative analysis across all focus groups provided
329 strong evidence for four types of value experienced by hosts and visitors through collaborative
330 consumption: social interaction and belonging, new fandom, travel bucket list experiences, and
331 local and sport knowledge (see Table III).

332 In terms of social interaction and belonging, participants spoke about the value of consuming
333 the sport product as part of a bigger group or community. This value was experienced mostly by
334 visitors, as expressed by a female spectator at a Brooklyn Nets game: ‘Like what she said, for me
335 at least three, four people. It would be more fun. Not just two people’ (Female, Nets visitor).
336 The value of social interaction and belonging also included the opportunity to network as well as
337 develop friendships: ‘People that I met, that I hosted, I’m friends with them on Facebook. I’m
338 friends with them on Instagram’ (Female, Giants host).

339 The second value that the focus group participants discussed was new fandom. Visitors
340 expressed the benefit of becoming fans of the San Francisco Giants and Brooklyn Nets through
341 the collaborative consumption experience:

342 I went to Pence’s last game and had never heard about him before. At the end of
343 the game, when he made a speech, I was almost crying because I felt a connection
344 – I’m a Giants fan now (Male, Giants visitor).

345 Hosts also expressed this value and considered the benefit to them of growing their team's
346 fanbase internationally. A female San Francisco Giants host argued: 'You share your passion and
347 then they become passionate', while a male host from the same team expressed a typical
348 welcome: 'Isn't it great to be here? Look at this experience or those objects that we are giving
349 you because everybody loves it here.'

350 The third value of travel bucket list experiences was only expressed by visitors. These focus
351 group participants discussed the important role of sport consumption in their travel and tourism
352 plans: 'When I travel, I think the sport is part of the experience.' (Female, Nets visitor)

353 Lastly, visitors discussed the value of local and sport knowledge, received from the hosts that
354 looked after them during their shared consumption. Importantly, this aspect of value includes
355 knowledge of the sport, local stadium, and surrounding entertainment facilities, all of which may
356 be unfamiliar to visitors.

357 I had no idea... but going with the host and the locals – they explained
358 everything, from the best bar to go to before, to why we were wearing these
359 stupid costumes, to every single role, and why this is on the scoreboard and
360 what's not. I would never have picked all that up. (Male, Giants visitor).

361 <TABLE III HERE>

362 *Constraints of collaborative consumption (RQ2)*

363 Next, the study examined the consumption constraints hosts and visitors experience through
364 collaborative consumption in a sport setting (RQ2). The findings pointed to five consumption
365 constraints related to collaborative consumption: expenses, average experiences, seat location,
366 interpersonal disconnects, and personal risk (see Table IV).

367 In terms of expenses, hosts and visitors in the focus groups highlighted the substantial costs
368 involved in consumption. Hosts expressed the difficulty in covering the costs of concessions for
369 visitors and the perception of having to pay more for a ticket to sit together, than they may
370 already have for the game:

371 What I would like to see would be some kind of concessions voucher, so that I
372 could take these people, because ballpark prices are expensive. I'd like to be able
373 to go to a hotdog or a food stand or take these people, wherever they want to go.

374 (Male, Giants host)

375 Visitors discussed the relatively high costs of merchandise, which may not be covered by their
376 travel budgets.

377 The second constraint focus group participants discussed was the average nature of the
378 collaborative consumption experience. For visitors, the lack of some type of exclusive or VIP
379 access or experience reduced the appeal of the sport product:

380 I think it's cool, also if there was a little extra, if they brought you, I don't know, a
381 little VIP treatment, nothing crazy but just where you felt the Nets were behind
382 this and you really felt welcome, I think that'd be cool. Especially if you know it's
383 connected to the Brooklyn Nets then it's not just some random person; it's a little
384 bit more from the team. (Female, Nets visitor)

385 For the third constraint of seat locations, hosts argued that the prospect of having to relocate
386 from premium seats to general seats to sit with the visitor they are hosting was unappealing:

387 I like to sit in the premium lower box right, behind home plate. How do I
388 coordinate where I want to sit and what I want to pay with someone coming in

389 from out of town? They may have a budget and want to sit elsewhere. (Male,
390 Giants host)

391 The fourth constraint to collaborative consumption was interpersonal disconnects. Visitors
392 and hosts expressed concern about whether the two parties would be appropriately matched and
393 whether they would be able to relate to each other:

394 The sort of people that you're mixing together. If you've got say Bob and his six
395 friends who are going to hit the bar hard before they go... Then you've got a
396 family of four from Germany with their two kids. (Male, Giants host)

397 Lastly, the visitors participating in the focus groups were worried about potential personal
398 risks. Female visitors expressed their unease with the idea and the need to strengthen the vetting
399 and supervision of hosts:

400 In a foreign country, I wouldn't want to be totally feeling vulnerable there. I
401 would want to at least know that there's some sort of supervision going on in
402 terms of accountability on this host. This host has been vetted very well. The team
403 stands by this person. He could drink but I definitely wouldn't want him to be
404 totally wasted with me. (Female, Nets visitor)

405 <TABLE IV HERE>

406 **Discussion**

407 The purpose of the study was to determine the benefits and detriments the collaborative
408 consumption experience can offer to consumers and therefore the sport organizations that benefit
409 from the consumption experience. That is, through this study, the authors sought to determine if
410 users (i.e., visitors) would obtain positive experiences through a collaborative consumption
411 experience, and if hosts and sport organizations could obtain a desirable level of connectedness

412 with each other. Through our qualitative methods, we found many well-informed findings that
413 can help further the topic in academia, as well as also assist the sport industry in navigating the
414 collaborative consumption economy.

415 It should be noted that many of the realized benefits (which are discussed below) shed light
416 upon how neotribalism and fantrepreneurship can come to fruition in the collaborative
417 consumption model. Neotribalism suggests individuals migrate towards networks of those with
418 similar interests, beliefs, lifestyles, rituals, and languages through activities, communications,
419 product usage, and emotional connections (Hardy, Gretzel, & Hanson, 2013; Lundberg &
420 Ziakas, 2018). Our study indicates that the individuals who took part in our focus groups did
421 indeed migrate towards those with similar interests, lifestyles, rituals, and the like through the
422 collaborative consumption model put forth by SportsHosts. Further, as was seen on multiple
423 occasions, the fans who were able to “host” were able to organize and manage a number of
424 consumption efforts. Thus, a direct representation of fantrepreneurship was shown within this
425 particular collaborative consumption model. Subsequently, as is suggested by the literature
426 concerning neotribalism, fantrepreneurship and sport, both hosts and visitors were able to
427 enhance their fandom and fan consumption patterns.

428 **Benefits**

429 While there are many benefits to the concept of collaborative consumption, perhaps what
430 seems most relevant is that it offers a wide array of benefits to multiple parties. That is, not only
431 can organizations benefit from taking part in the experience itself, but consumers – both host
432 consumers and guest consumers – have the potential to benefit as well.

433 In looking at local professional sports fans as hosts and international tourists as visitors
434 partaking in a live game experience as part of their travel, this study demonstrated that these

435 consumers value social interaction and belonging, new fandom, travel bucket list experiences,
436 and local and sport knowledge as part of their experience through collaborative consumption
437 interactions in the sport setting. The concept of social interactions and belonging focused on the
438 value of being a part of a community through networking and developing friendships through the
439 sport experience. New fandom articulated the benefits of becoming a fan of the professional
440 sports team and broadening the international brand awareness of the team as a result of the
441 collaborative consumption experience. The travel bucket list was specifically valued by visitors,
442 articulating that sport consumption played an integral role in enhancing their travel experience.
443 Also, visitors believed the knowledge by hosts of the local area and the sport added value to the
444 collaborative consumption experience.

445 It should be said that all the realized benefits – social interaction and belonging, new fandom,
446 travel bucket list experiences, and local and sport knowledge – were consumptive oriented and
447 have secondary effects. This means that each realized benefit is not only beneficial for the time
448 being in its current context but likely offers ancillary or secondary benefits. For example, while
449 consumers realized a sense of social interaction and were able to feel a sense of belonging, this
450 then influences a further benefit to the sport organization. For example, the Nets were able to
451 become the significant mediator that enabled such friendships, allowing the Nets to be held in
452 high esteem without considering the sporting event itself. New fandom is, of course, a primary
453 benefit to all sport organizations, yet here, the idea of new fandom to an international traveler
454 being introduced to the sport in a new way takes on a new meaning. Outside of the fact that new
455 fandom can lead to actions such as purchasing of merchandise or other team-oriented equipment,
456 it is also likely that new fandom from international travelers can help aid brand awareness and
457 increase brand equity. Hence international travelers have the potential to become a type of

458 spokespeople or brand ambassadors for the Nets or Giants. Our results suggest many of the
459 international travelers (i.e., guests) were unfamiliar with the team they were visiting and
460 indicated their local community was as well. By becoming a fan, gaining knowledge, and/or
461 checking off a bucket list item, these fans will bring their new fandom/knowledge/experience to
462 their local community and spread the word – either directly through word of mouth, or indirectly
463 through purchased merchandise or active consumption.

464 **Detriments**

465 The study also identified several constraints to the collaborative consumption experience in a
466 sport setting. The expense of the sport consumption experience in terms of food and
467 merchandise was viewed as being a potential barrier. Additionally, hosts felt negative about the
468 experience if they needed to pay additional money to sit together with the visitor and/or
469 potentially relocate their seating from a premium section to the general section. This extended to
470 the need for the collaborative consumption interaction to be something beyond the norm,
471 necessitating the addition of some type of exclusive or VIP experience to add value to the
472 experience. Beyond the specific experiences in the sport facility, there were genuine concerns
473 over how hosts and visitors were to be matched; if the hosts and visitors would be able to relate
474 to each other; and personal risk due to not knowing the other party.

475 In the fact that there are numerous constraints, it should be realized that the collaborative
476 consumption experience – due to its subjective nature – is to some extent not completely
477 controllable by the sport organization. That is due to the peer-to-peer aspect of collaborative
478 consumption, as the experience relies heavily upon the consumers themselves. Therefore, this
479 can lead to negative experiences such as interpersonal disconnects and personal risk in the form
480 of safety. However, it should be noted that these same constraints are not unique to the sport

481 setting. Interpersonal disconnect and issues regarding safety are present in other collaborative
482 consumption experiences such as Uber rides. Still, with Uber and other collaborative
483 consumptive experience such as SportsHosts, data-driven measures are being taken to not only
484 ensure a better match amongst visitors and guests but to perform better background checks on
485 those willing to become hosts.

486 In recognizing the incontrollable constraints which are present in a collaborative consumption
487 experience, there are still several constraints sport organizations may be able to limit. Constraints
488 such as expenses, average experiences, and seat location are perhaps aspects of the experience
489 which the Giants or Nets can help alleviate. Discounts to those who are willing to become hosts
490 may help assuage these concerns. Further, offering better seating to a host (and subsequently, the
491 associated visitor) may lessen these concerns, and may increase the overall consumption
492 experience for both parties. It should be noted though that such involvement on the behalf of the
493 sport organization may tend to take away the peer-driven aspect of the collaborative
494 consumption experience, which is the main driver of what makes the collaborative consumption
495 experience enjoyable. While it is suggested that the sport organization make the experience as
496 authentic and peer-driven as possible, we feel that the benefits of such involvement (i.e., offering
497 better seats or discounts to those willing to host) may outweigh the negative consequences
498 associated with an experience that is not completely peer-driven.

499 **Conclusion, Limitations, and Recommendations**

500 It is important to note that these initial results from this study are not free from limitations.

501 Although internal and external validity were strengthened by following the guidance of Miles
502 and Huberman (1994), the selection of only two sites for the study limited the data triangulation
503 that was possible. This study should be replicated across a wider range of teams and countries to

504 confirm the main findings of the study. There also may be opportunities to expand the design
505 method for collecting data by providing online surveys to hosts and visitors shortly after the
506 experience to investigate potential relationships between hosting/visiting and fandom, as well as
507 pairing respective hosts and visitors to examine bi-directional dynamics. Ultimately, expanding
508 this study longitudinally would add significant value, as potentially following a set of hosts or
509 visitors over a season to track how benefits and constraints may shift over time, and how the
510 teams respond. These additional studies could consider the influence of visitor sport fandom,
511 sport organization awareness, performance, rivalry, game type and quality, athlete profile, and
512 newness of the facility on collaborative consumption.

513 Additionally, the lack of prior research on the application in professional sports resulted in the
514 need to utilize research from other fields and make correlative assumptions. Finally, since the
515 study relied only on focus groups, the results are based on the recollection of the event the
516 respondents were a host or guest at. This includes an assumption that the responses were free
517 from any exaggeration or embellishment of events and the selective memory of focus group
518 participants was accurate. These limitations were mitigated by generalizing to the larger
519 collaborative consumption theory base, as is appropriate with qualitative research.

520 For practitioners, this study uncovered a potentially untapped market for professional sports
521 organizations to consider in marketing their teams, enhancing the experience of new fans,
522 expanding the connection and experience of current fans, and extending their fan base
523 internationally. As professional sports organizations need to continuously address the changes in
524 consumer preferences and the expansion of collaborative economies in the global society,
525 empowering their most local customers to engage with new customers through collaborative
526 interactions has the opportunity to increase brand awareness, generate additional revenue, and

527 enhance the live experience in the sport setting. Practitioners can use this initial study to better
528 understand the benefits hosts and visitors perceive in the experience, and therefore the kind of
529 experience design that would encourage increased purchases and loyalty. For example, sport
530 organizations can provide information and training resources to fans, to enhance their role as
531 expert and friendly hosts. Sport organizations can also collaborate more deliberately with city
532 and regional tourism bodies, to strengthen the appeal of sport and general tourism. Importantly,
533 these sport marketing activities should focus on both domestic and international tourism markets,
534 given the appeal of non-local professional and collegiate sport organizations in different parts of
535 the U.S. and around the world. The initial evidence of Airbnb Experiences in Mexico, and
536 SportsHosts' activities in Australia, suggests that sport organizations outside the U.S. will be
537 able to take advantage of these findings. Also, practitioners can use this study to address the
538 constraints of these experiences to maximize the success of these interactive opportunities.
539 Especially important from the standpoint of visitors/new customers is addressing safety and
540 interpersonal issues through strong host vetting and due diligence processes. In terms of hosts,
541 ensuring the engagement goes beyond the norm and does not financially or psychologically de-
542 value their experience is vital to the growth and success of these interactions.

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Benefits	Explanation
Attitude	The behavioral predisposition that is positive or negative with respect to a product or situation through the desire to satisfy natural needs and interests, knowledge, accomplishment, and experiences (intrinsic motivation) or via rewards or incentives used to bring about desired behavior (extrinsic motivation) in terms of use intentions driven by ideology and socioeconomic concerns such as sustainability and reputation (Hamari <i>et al.</i> , 2016).
Convenience	The search for the consumptive activity desired is easy to find and accessible – both of which are predictors of using the sharing economy (Boateng <i>et al.</i> , 2019).
Community Belonging	The aspiration to be part of a group and connect with like-minded people in online and offline communities, thus creating a stress a sense of community that drives participation in sharing activities (Möhlmann, 2015).
Cost Savings	The rewards and economic benefits from services and interactions that result in a positive return on investment (ROI) in terms of providing value for money (Boateng <i>et al.</i> , 2019) and delivering financial benefits that improves the economic situation of individuals (Činjarević <i>et al.</i> , 2019) by incorporating an economic model that enables access over ownership (Hamari <i>et al.</i> , 2016).
Enjoyment of the Activity	Possessing or benefitting from something that provides a pleasurable experience is essential to influencing use intentions, making involvement more communal, and being supportive for a specific ideological cause (Hamari <i>et al.</i> , 2016; Schiel, 2015).
Encounter Satisfaction	The overall satisfaction with an experience with other individuals, an activity, a location, or an online platform that is driven by customization of the activity, flexibility in the offering, and service recovery when something goes wrong (Möhlmann, 2015; Moon <i>et al.</i> , 2019).
Hedonic	The emotional aspects of immersion in activities in terms of individuals preferences for involvement that is fun, entertaining, fantasy, and pleasurable, hence driving happiness and satisfaction of needs (Činjarević <i>et al.</i> , 2019; Schiel, 2015).
Membership	The ability to connect with like-minded individuals in face-to-face or online platforms through participation in organized activities, rituals, and traditions that facilitate meaningful relationships between individuals and between individuals and organizations (Hedlund, 2014).

Socio-Emotional	The forming of relationship by individuals initiating, cultivating, and responding to others through interactions that may be offered through participation in particular services that encourage social connections, social cohesion, and altruism that meet customer prestige needs (Boateng <i>et al.</i> , 2019; Schiel, 2015).
Social Value and Identity	The use of social drivers to create meaningful interactions with others that provide self-fulfillment, emotional rewards, and positive social behavior virtually and physically – can be with others with similar interests or meeting with new people that expand social contacts (Činjarević <i>et al.</i> , 2019).
Trust	The value of believing the reliability, truth, and ability in a product, service, or individual that drives exchange relationships and human interactions that drives future confidence in collaborative activities and relationship building (Boateng <i>et al.</i> , 2019; Möhlmann, 2015).
Utility	The perceptions that a product, service, or individual is useful or beneficial in terms of suitability, satisfaction, and potential repeat usage (Möhlmann, 2015).

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660 **Table II: Focus Group Profiles**

	Nets Hosts	Nets Visitors	Giants Hosts	Giants Visitors
Number of subjects	11	8	10	7

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663 **Table III: Coding for RQ1 relating to value**

Themes	Sub-themes	Roles	Comments from Participants
Social interaction and belonging	Bigger group	Host	It's cool when you're traveling, you're usually by yourself, or maybe with someone else or a smaller group. It's cool to get that <u>bigger group experience</u> if you're about that. That's great. (Male, Giants host) I think it helps provide a <u>networking</u> opportunity with people that share the same interests as you (Female, Nets visitor)
	Networking	Visitor	I think it's about being <u>part of the community</u> too. You feel like a local and get involved with everyone there. (Male, Giants visitor)
	Community	Visitor	
New fandom	Root for them	Visitor	They are more special to me now so like if I see them on TV I will <u>root for them</u> or something like that. But I haven't started following them religiously or anything like that. (Female, Nets visitor) We want to be able to <u>show something different</u> and say: 'Hey, San Francisco is the place to be. We have AT&T Park, we have a really great diverse community, so why not?' (Female, Giants host)
	Show off	Host	I went to a Galaxy match to see Beckham and I was like, 'Okay, I'm a Galaxy fan.' I can see how this is important for international visitors coming in. They see their first Giants game and they <u>could be a fan automatically</u> (Male, Giants host).
	Become fan	Host	
Travel bucket list experiences	Always wanted to go	Visitor	Came down the coast just to look at the waves and never seen any baseball before. <u>Always wanted to go</u> for a baseball game (Male, Giants visitor)

	Intertwined	Host	Even though we're on vacation, its always, sport is somehow <u>intertwined</u> with our vacation mode. (Male, Nets host)
	Different here	Visitor	It is normal for me. For example, I saw American Football. We don't have that. It's <u>different here</u> . (Male, Giants visitor)
Local and sport knowledge	Locals would know	Visitor	<u>Locals would know</u> where to go versus someone Googling the best sports bars near the stadium. You would have a better experience. (Male, Giants visitor)
	Explain it to me	Visitor	I was never into hockey until I came to see a game here. I sat next to a group of people who are really into hockey, and they managed to <u>explain it to me</u> , and for the two and a half hours, we were the best of mates. (Female, Nets visitor)
	I wouldn't really know	Host	I think if I were going away somewhere, knowing that someone would take me out to all these cool places because if I was coming to Brooklyn, <u>I wouldn't really know</u> what is the good place to go, what places do I stay after. (Male, Nets host)

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665 **Table IV: Coding for RQ2 relating to constraints**

Themes	Sub-themes	Roles	Comments from Participants
Expenses	Money talks	Host	I think good point is obviously <u>money talks</u> . I think if you were to give a season ticket holder either a discounted ticket, or either a free ticket if they go along with two people then, obviously it depends on the section and what kind of game it is, because that's really how expensive the ticket is. (Male, Nets host)
			I did really want a jersey when I was there, but it was getting <u>too expensive</u> . If the host, or as a visitor, you

			could get that price down a bit, I think people will definitely be interested to buy it. (Male Giants visitor)
	Too expensive	Visitor	The price on my season tickets is pretty good. I don't want to <u>pay more than what I normally pay</u> for my season tickets. (Male, Giants host)
	Pay more than I normally pay	Host	
Average experiences	Exclusivity of a certain experience	Visitor	The <u>exclusivity of a certain experience</u> , like if you got to meet player alumni or something like that. If you got to be on the floor with the Brooklyn Nets as they warmed up, that would be a key difference for me. (Male, Nets visitor)
	Don't have any Giants stuff	Host	Most of them <u>don't have any Giants stuff</u> . If you can give hats those to the people who sign up for SportsHosts, I'd say they're coming on a specific day because they get really excited getting a hat or something. (Male, Giants host)
Seat location	Upgrade	Host	If you're on the 200s and the Nets will <u>upgrade you</u> for free to the 100s if you host these people or like get down to the single digits. (Male, Nets host)
Interpersonal disconnects	Person deeply irritating	Visitor	What if my host is annoying? It's like, 'They got good reviews, but I just find this <u>person deeply irritating</u> . It's grating.' (Female, Nets visitor)
	Person is weird	Host	I guess my thing is like what if that <u>person is weird</u> ? It could happen. (Female, Nets host)
	Party animal	Host	Are you a <u>party animal</u> ? Are you like the after-the-game late dinner person? If you are like me, you eat early because for some reason that's just what you do. (Male, Nets host)
	Nothing in common		I don't want to sit next to someone where it's not interesting, we don't have <u>nothing in common</u> . I want someone who's fun, who's outgoing. I want to know

		Host	something about the person first before I would say, 'Okay, I'll host. (Female, Nets host)
Personal risk	Someone you don't know	Host	I could see it being a little dicey to do a drink with <u>someone you don't know</u> . I get that (Male, Nets host)
	Random dude	Visitor	I guess I'm just wary of being in a foreign country with a <u>random dude</u> . (Female, Nets visitor)
	Safety in numbers	Visitor	Sometimes traveling as a solo female, I don't want to be with a dude. If there was a group, maybe I could sign up with a group. At the very least, I can rock up, single female but there's going to be other people too, and I'm not going to be alone. Even if this guy has good reviews. <u>Safety in numbers</u> . (Female, Nets visitor)

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